

THE MENTOR EXPERIENCE



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Impact of Mentors—“A Process of Participation”

Dr. John Oesch, Senior Lecturer at the Rotman School of Management University of Toronto, states that, “leadership is a process of participation.” He felt that students need to be included in the process of learning. When students are involved the amalgam was significantly more impactful. John reflected back to a time when he was moved by one of his mentors and teachers, Jack Bristow from Bluevale Collegiate in Waterloo. This teacher used a process for participation, involvement and engagement. John stated, “that’s when I knew I wanted to teach like that.” John mentioned a number of other mentors who influenced him along the way. Throughout our interview, it is

profound that John was open to and listening effectively to his mentors, seeking knowledge and recommendations from the experience of others.

Dr. Oesch was again influenced considerably by his Faculty Advisor for his PhD, Dr. Keith Murnighan. As an advisor for a PhD, you would expect the advisor to be someone who would simply teach you academically. However, John stated that, “Dr. Murnighan helped me think about a balance in life, kindness to students, and modelled the way he balanced his work and family. His wife and children were the most important people in his life. Professionally, he taught me a lot about academics but was more of a role

model philosophically. He seemed to have a much larger sense of mentoring, teaching and the helping process.”

Dr. Oesch talked about some of the biggest decisions he had to make and how his mentors had helped him to make sense of life balance. He talked about the lure for prestige and money to live and work in the United States. However, John stated that, “I wanted to have a family and to keep my lifestyle in focus. Life is much more sane here and that it was more about the bigger picture. I can live, work and teach right here in Canada at one of the top Management Schools in the World.” Dr. Oesch was influenced by his mentors to use a process of participation in mentoring others.