

BOOK REVIEW

Surgical Mentoring: Building Tomorrow's Leaders

Rombeau J, Goldberg A, Loveland-Jones C

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Drs Rombeau, Goldberg and Loveland-Jones from the Department of Surgery, Temple University Hospital in Philadelphia have written an insightful book on mentoring from the perspectives of a mentor as well as a mentee.

They define a mentor as an experienced advisor and trusted friend who is committed to the personal and professional successes of the mentee. The authors further clarify that mentors are both teachers and role models but not all teachers and role models are mentors. The most important difference between the three is the personal commitment of the mentor to the mentee.

The book is written in an easy-to-read format and the authors describe their own experiences with references to the current literature. Specific examples of how mentoring should be performed are mentioned.

For example in the Socratic method of teaching, the mentee is asked to think for him (her) self. Asking probing questions sharpens critical thinking and encourages self-directed learning. In mentoring by example, the mentee learns by observing and emulating the positive aspects of the mentor handling a difficult situation.

The authors acknowledge that surgeons are usually experts on what to teach but they may have had little or no training on how to teach and mentor.

Besides knowledge and technical expertise, strength of character and integrity are high on the list of personal attributes of an outstanding mentor. An example of this is the ability to discuss iatrogenic complications with colleagues and mentees during morbidity conferences.

The final chapter discusses the main modalities of surgical simulation using animals, cadavers, bench models, mannequins, virtual reality and team practice scenarios. However, the objective assessment of technical skills is still evolving.

This book is certainly a welcome addition to our medical library and should be required reading for all surgeons and trainees in a training programme.

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