

Mentorship Is An Act of Justice

By Attorney Brenda Stallings

For the past three years, I've mentored a young lady who recently earned her Doctor of Pharmacy degree. We met during UAPB Homecoming. She was initiated into Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated®, Alpha Rho Chapter. Her line number was 23, and so was mine. That simple connection became our starting point.

In that moment, a seed was planted—not just of friendship, but of shared purpose. Mentorship, especially among Black women professionals, is an instrument of equity. It's how we build bridges across generations and create access that systems often deny.

We meet at least once a month. Sometimes we talk about school, politics, travel, work, food, or fashion. Sometimes we don't talk much at all. But what makes our relationship meaningful is not how often we talk or how deep the conversation goes, it's that I show up.

Did you know that mentorship is not just an act of kindness; it's an act of justice? When we invest in the next generation, we disrupt cycles of exclusion and create access where there was once only gatekeeping. For Black professionals, especially those in law, health, and education, mentoring is a form of resistance and restoration. It says, "I see you. I believe in you. And I'll walk with you."

My mentree knows I'm there for her. But what she may not know is that I need her, too.

Being her mentor gives me purpose, reflection, and joy. My life with its lessons, stumbles, wins, and detours has become her stepping stone. She listens. Sometimes she takes the advice; sometimes she doesn't and that's perfectly okay. Because mentorship isn't about obedience. It's about connection.

We need each other. That's what real mentorship looks like. When you give someone your time, your attention, and your honesty, you create a foundation for growth that no textbook or professional title can offer. It's how we shift power, not by holding it, but by sharing it. And that, too, is justice in action.

In Titus 2:7, we're reminded: "In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness."

That's what I try to do.
Not to be perfect.
But to be present.

If you wonder whether you have anything to offer, you do.
If you think mentoring takes too much time, it doesn't.
And if someone ever poured into you, then you already know: it's your turn now.

Take someone under your wing. Talk to them. Teach them. But most of all listen.
You just might find that in mentoring someone else, you're also mentoring a part
of yourself.

"Mentoring is not about molding someone into your image. It's about helping
them become the best version of themselves." — Oprah Winfrey

About the Author

Brenda Stallings is an attorney, law professor, and community advocate based in Arkansas. She writes on civic empowerment, racial justice, and legal equity. Her articles center on building power in Black communities through education, engagement, and action. This piece is part of an ongoing series on legal empowerment, equity, and justice in our communities.