

January is national mentoring month

But in a technosavy world, what does mentoring mean?

Two Silicon Valley area organizations are using technology to make one of the most important human relationships a 21st century process

What is it that makes a person successful?

Ask any successful person, and they'll probably tell you about someone who took them under their wing: a mentor.

Two Silicon Valley CEOs say they're going to change the world through mentoring.

One, the CEO of a 50 year old non-profit, says that means using new technology to enhance the work of expert "match support" staff who make mentoring relationships that help at-risk kids.

The other, the CEO of an internet mentoring network, says that means using state-of-the-art software to connect potential mentors with ordinary people looking for someone to look up to. People can connect with each other in a democratic manner that remakes all the rules.

One's rooted in neighborhoods, the other on the web. One lets people choose their own mentors, the other requires experts to do it. One uses human instinct to find good matches, the other relies on a battery of tests.

January is national mentoring month, and all this attention comes to mentoring every year for good reason – it's one of the most fundamental human relationships. Most successful people say they had a mentor who helped them along the way, and studies show that one of the most important factors in whether a kid grows up to be a responsible citizen or in jail is whether or not they have a responsible mentor in their lives.

But is the future of mentoring the same as its past? Is mentoring something that never changes, or does technology really change everything?

Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Bay Area, now celebrating its 50th anniversary, and iMantri.com, a mentoring based social network officially opening to the public this month, are both introducing hi-tech elements to enhance people's access to – and experience of – a fundamental human relationship.

For National Mentoring Month, both agency CEOs are available to discuss mentoring's past, its future, and what new technologies can and can't do to improve the lives of businessmen, artists, and kids who are all looking for someone to look up to.

Pictures and interviews with mentors and mentees together will also be available.

(Boilerplate)