

Mentoring Path

The Tao mentoring process is that particular crossroads in life where what you have to offer meets the immediate and future needs of another. Therein lies the enormous exultation that is yours—that of giving your gift of wisdom and having it graciously appreciated and received by others who then carry the gift to all those within their sphere of influence. (Chungliang Al Huang and Jerry Lynch¹)

Mentoring is a path of service, self-development, and mastery for the benefit of others. It is a different path from dance leading, not a higher recognition or distinction. Experienced Dance and Walks leaders need not feel that they should automatically become mentors to others. Dance mentoring is a function that one performs because one feels drawn to sharing what one has learned with others, and because others have requested mentoring.

Mentoring requires the cultivation of skills specific to teaching and guiding. There is an art to sharing this wisdom and giving constructive feedback. Our mentoring relationships challenge us to refine our capacity to listen within, to still the grasping self, and to tune ourselves to that which is called for in each moment.

As Dance mentors we hope to help our mentees develop attunement, cultivate creativity, open to inspiration, and develop their own inner connection to the Spirit of Guidance.

In a dynamic mentoring relationship, mentors aim to co-create with their mentees a reciprocal relationship of giving and receiving in which mutual growth is experienced. *“Wise teachers are always seeking knowledge and wise pupils are always seeking wisdom and guidance. Besides, there are so many subjects of which teachers are ignorant so they listen and learn. And thus their [students] only learn to acquire the habit of listening and learning.”* (Samuel L. Lewis²) Murshid SAM also quotes Hazrat Inayat Khan, *“I learn more from my students than they learn from me.”*³

There may be times when it becomes necessary for the mentor to address undeveloped and/or resistant aspects in a mentee even though this may be difficult and present a challenge. The mentor may want to recommend deeper inner work and provide guidance in the mentee's practices and concentrations. Such guidance can be an important part of the mentoring relationship and may need to be coordinated with the mentee's spiritual guide.

Mentoring relationships change over time, in response to the needs, growth and development of the Dance leader. At the beginning, there is likely to be more interaction and study. As Dance leaders mature, their ongoing course of study becomes more independent, and the relationship may shift to check-in support. In any case, Dance leaders are asked to continue in an ongoing connection with their mentor at all stages of development.

Mentors are asked not to mentor a partner, spouse, or other family member.

Mentor Levels - Requirements and Criteria

Guidelines for Mentors-In-Training

If a Certified Dance Leader is deepening in their commitment to the Dances, wishes to serve the lineage, is inspired to share what they have been given, is drawn to teaching and guiding others,

and is being approached by others to do so, the mentor and the leader may agree that the leader may begin to work as a Dance Mentor-In-Training.

The ongoing relationship between the mentor and the leader enters a new phase, one where emphasis is placed on the mentor guiding the new Mentor-in-Training toward becoming a Certified Mentor. The mentor will notify the [Community Coordinator](#) of this change, and the Mentor-in-Training will forward to the [Community Coordinator](#) the names of their new mentees. Mentors-in-Training are asked not to formally mentor a partner, spouse, or other family member.

The mentor and Mentor-in-Training will continue over time to assess whether mentoring is appropriate for the latter. If the Mentor-in-Training does not develop in this direction, the mentees who have been working with that Mentor-in-Training will be supported by their mentor and/or the Guidance Council, and will be encouraged to seek another mentor.

Training to become a mentor is a rather long and gradual process. It is over an extended period of time that the Mentor-in-Training develops in the experience and process of mentoring others. At some future point, when/if there is noticeable growth in the Mentor-in-training and in at least two of their mentees, the mentor will recommend that the Mentor-in-Training be appointed as a Certified Dance Mentor.

If a mentee of the Mentor-in-Training has developed to the level of being certified before the Mentor-in-Training has become a Mentor, then the mentor will recognize the mentee as a Certified Dance Leader on behalf of the Mentor-in-Training.

Guidelines for Mentors

Dance Mentors are recognized when they are in a committed mentoring relationship with two or more mentees to whom they have been able to transmit mastery in leading the Walks and Dances, and when they have begun to step into a recognizable path of service to the Dance and Walks transmission. This path of service might be by creating learning opportunities for Dance leaders (including but not limited to their own mentees), and by possibly serving DUP International, the Sufi Ruhaniat International, or their local Dance region. Naturally they continue to follow the [Ethical Guidelines and Agreements](#) as well as deepen in their own spiritual practice, the [Elements of Mastery](#), and in their own leadership skills in the Dances and Walks.

Guidelines for Senior Mentors

Senior Dance Mentors will be recognized, to a great extent, on the basis of the quality of leadership of their own mentees. They will have certified a number of mentees, some of whom may have gone on to become Mentors themselves.

It is recognized by their peers that Senior Mentors are holding an ever-widening piece of the transmission for the Dances and Walks. They will have worked extensively and intensively with and for the Dances and Walks for many years and taken responsibility for protecting and nurturing the lineage of the Dances and Walks for the benefit of others and future generations. The quality of their mentoring and leadership usually shines for all to see beyond question. They have become channels where the Spirit of Guidance meets the needs and possibilities of the human spirit.

Process for Recognizing Mentors

For all Dance Mentor appointments, the Mentor making the nomination submits a proposal in writing to the [Chair of the Guidance Council](#). The proposal for nomination must refer specifically to the respective [Requirements and Criteria](#) by including details of how the nominee meets the recommended criteria for that level.

The Mentor making the nomination must have the support of two Senior Mentors. If the Mentor making the nomination is a Senior Mentor, then only one other Senior Mentor is needed to second the proposal.

The Guidance Council Chair presents the nomination to the Spiritual Guide and members of the Guidance Council for consideration.

Mentors Guild

The Mentors Guild is the collective body of all Dance Mentors, Dance Mentors-in-Training, and Senior Dance Mentors. The Mentors Guild provides a forum for communication on such matters as transmitting, nurturing, and protecting this body of work, the training of leaders in the Dances and Walks, and upholding the [Agreements in the Leaders Guild Guidelines](#). In addition, the discussions of the Mentors Guild advise and assist the Guidance Council in all aspects of its work.

Guidance Council

The Guidance Council holds in trust the transmission of the Dances of Universal Peace and Walking Concentrations in the lineage of Murshid Samuel L. Lewis. Four to six Senior Mentors are appointed on a rotating basis by the Pir of the Sufi Ruhaniat International, who is the Spiritual Guide of the Dances of Universal Peace. The Guidance Council has the responsibility of guiding leaders and mentors by encouraging their spiritual expansion and personal development, supporting learning opportunities, determining requirements for level acknowledgment, and upholding standards of conduct and human relationship that are in keeping with the transmission of the Dances of Universal Peace. The Guidance Council keeps in communication with the Spiritual Guide, who provides assistance as required.

Communicating with the Body of Mentors

The Guidance Council communicates actively by email with members of the Mentors Guild. All Mentors, Mentors-in-Training and Senior Mentors are required to have a functioning email address. Failing that, they are requested to make arrangements with another mentor to pass along Guidance Council updates. The Yahoo group MTGMail is an e-group for communication between and among all members of the Mentors Guild. On this e-group, members network and provide support for each other around issues and concerns integral to the process of mentoring Dance leaders. All mentors are encouraged to subscribe to this group by sending an email message to MTGMail-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

Communicating about Mentees

Registering Mentees

In order to commence a new mentoring relationship, the Mentor, Senior Mentor, or Mentor-in-Training needs to provide to the [Community Coordinator](#) the following data about the new mentee: name, mailing address, phone, email address, and beginning date of mentoring. The mentee will thus become a member of the Leaders Guild, subject to remaining current with the annual Leaders Guild fees. The Community Coordinator will confirm registration of the mentoring relationship to both mentor and mentee.

Keeping Track

Mentors are responsible for keeping their own records of their mentees' progress, but must notify the [Community Coordinator](#) and the mentee when a leader has fulfilled the requirements for certification and is acknowledged as a Certified Dance Leader. Mentors are also expected to provide notification when a mentoring relationship has ended.

Where a mentee has been appointed to the level of Mentor or Senior Mentor, the Chair of the Guidance Council is responsible for notifying the mentee, their mentor, and the [Community Coordinator](#) (for updating the database), and for announcing the appointment to all members of the Mentors Guild.

Changing Mentors

Occasionally it may be appropriate to dissolve a mentoring relationship when, over a period of time, fruitful working conditions have been challenging to establish. Once a new mentor has been identified, the Dance leader will ask their former mentor to contact the new mentor to describe the leader's Dance leading experience and progress in Dance training, and to make recommendations. The new mentor will not accept a transferring mentee without making this contact with the former mentor. The new mentor is responsible for communicating the transfer to the [Community Coordinator](#) who will confirm the change of registration to both mentors and to the mentee.

Self-Assessment

Mentors are encouraged to evaluate themselves periodically in terms of the requirements and criteria for their level. Consultation with one's own mentor is recommended during the self-assessment process. Through these means a mentor can identify and address areas for their continued development. For example, if a mentor has only one mentee and finds their mentoring skills are not active, they might ask themselves if they are the mentor to best serve their mentee. A mentor who is more engaged might be more helpful.

Inactive Status of Mentors (Sabbaticals and Life Changes)

As Dance mentors we endeavor to support each other through various life changes with understanding and compassion for all involved. We recognize that mentors are people whose lives change like those of anyone else. From time to time, we may need to assume responsibility for the mentees of another mentor, either temporarily or as a permanent transfer.

A mentor who needs to become inactive is encouraged to be as clear as possible with their mentees, and must notify the [Community Coordinator](#), as well as their own mentor, of this change of status. For sabbaticals or similar circumstances where the mentor intends to be inactive for a definite period, the mentor is responsible for assisting mentees in making interim arrangements with another mentor. If the mentor is discontinuing mentoring for any reason, the mentor has the responsibility of informing the mentees and offering them support in finding another mentor. Assistance with these transfers will be available from the Guidance Council and the Community Coordinator.

Where a mentor has discontinued mentoring for any reason (including retirement, serious illness or death) and has not prearranged a transfer of their mentees, that responsibility then falls to the mentor's mentor. Assistance is available from the Guidance Council and the Community Coordinator.

Footnotes

¹ Chungliang Al Huang and Jerry Lynch. *Mentoring – The Tao of Giving and Receiving Wisdom*. xii. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1995.

² Samuel L. Lewis, *Commentary on Path of Initiation and Discipleship*. *Gatheka*, 2; 29.

³ *Ibid.*