

## Influencers

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Chris Evans and Matt Summerfield  
*Survivor*/ £8.99/ ISBN: 978 1 84291 376 5

***Reviewed by Joel Toombs who is developing the Steelroots Youth Community in the S17 area of Sheffield, UK***

Socrates did it to Plato, Elijah to Elisha and Mr Myagi to The Karate Kid. So why is it so hard to connect younger people with older 'mentors' in a meaningful way? It's only a small, simple task to raise up a history maker; a world changer; or as Chris Evans and Matt Summerfield would have it an 'Influencer'. Isn't it?

Well step forward this snappy handbook for young people that bangs the drum for mentoring and raising up the kind of Jesus followers that aim to stand as a godly influence in their various communities. The idea is that your young person reads this book and does most of the hard work themselves, following its 16 well designed and easy to read chapters which have a range of fill-in-the-blanks and look-up-the-verse tasks and plenty of prompts and challenges for living it back at school.

Even if they don't follow the tips at the front about finding themselves a Mr Myagi to meet up with, they could happily still engage with the pattern of learning, reflection and challenge to action. Jotting down notes after each chapter in the 'Your Key Learning Points' section (overlook the slightly dull sounding title) could even turn it into a form of journal, logging the progress of their changing character at every step from 'Catching The Vision' through to the important 'Counting The Cost.'

I'm guessing most of us won't be tending bonsai's as we teach our 'Daniel-San' about the Screaming Monkey Karate Chop, so we'll ultimately just have to hold our breath in the hope they will form a meaningful, not-awkward relationship with someone. Fair play to the authors for the commendable bias towards using this material in mentoring relationships, but for me successful mentoring remains a difficult goal to achieve that takes more than even excellent discipleship material.

The introduction refreshingly admits that it 'doesn't have all the answers and may even leave you with new questions' which, followed by, 'don't be scared of the questions...questions suggest that God is bigger than our understanding,' is a fantastic sentiment for young and old to read, and it encapsulates the heart of good mentoring for me as much as the classic 80's film about karate.

So if you aspire to being a wizened black belt in the mentoring dojo then you could do worse than handing

this book to a young person, who I'm sure may find this a great platform for growing in a radical, expressive and unselfish Christian faith on their own or with some older slightly wiser help.

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