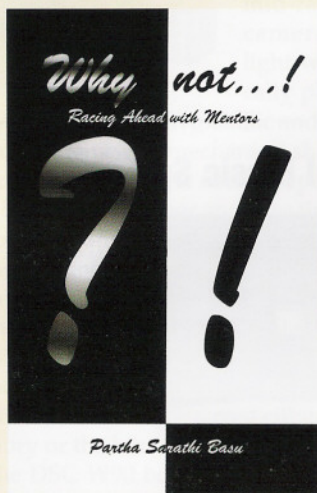


# Mentoring Mentors



**Why Not...! Racing Ahead With Mentors**

**By:** Partha Sarathi Basu

**Publisher:** UBS Publishers' Distributors Pvt. Ltd.

**Price:** Rs.175.00

**Pages:** 175

Here is a self help book by corporate executive Partha Sarathi Basu designed to guide corporate climbers. As Basu admits in the foreword, as an ambitious corporate executive he was always looking for a "... one-stop shop, which could have helped me to define what I need to have in me to reach the top". The concept behind the book is a good idea set within an Indian cultural ethos. It also comes as a welcome break to those who have been reading/watching the latest all-India corporate survey which broadly reveals that it is generally considered okay in India to have an extra-marital affair at work to progress your career.

Mentoring is another term for the eastern ethos of 'guru-shishya param-

para', an act of selfless giving. In the modern world not all cultures can support mentoring. In the USA, many fabled stories of mentoring come out of the Silicon Valley area, which is rooted in the Palo Alto campus town of Stanford University on the west coast. Stanford professors have gone on to become entrepreneurs, mentors, guides and also remained professors at the same time. While across the country, on Wall Street in New York, an act of selflessness is calculated coldly in terms of bonuses earned or denied, a la Gordon Geckko. Reality television shows such as real-estate mogul Donald Trump's "The Apprentice" encourage the darker side of human behaviour in their desire to succeed in business.

Unusually for most self help books however, Basu uses the story of Rehaan Sinha, a hardworking, young management graduate, and his climb from a non-descript worker to becoming the CEO of a company. Rehaan meets several mentors in the course of his career who share their experiences and thoughts with him. For instance, Sundar, his superior at the firm where he first worked, is

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fond of Rehaan and has lengthy sessions on career focus and decisions he ought to take. Then there is Puneet, his childhood friend, who coaxes him to get back into shape, and, of course, the ever-pervasive 'Chief', Rehaan's alter ego, who is there to chat whenever Rehaan needs him. Despite the presence of mentors all along his career, nowhere in the book does the protagonist seem like he doesn't have a mind of his own. Rehaan's views at the end of each chapter show how best he has absorbed his mentors' words of wisdom.

In his book, perhaps based on his personal journey in the corporate world, Basu creates the setting for his main character Rehaan Sinha and his aptly named self-conscious avatar, "Chief". The crux of the book is a series of events which Chief helps Sinha understand, and dialogues between Sinha and his mentor, Sundar.

Rehaan Sinha's profile – solid middle-class background, stable family, educated parents, good education, strong conscience will appeal to many. Sinha has a stroke of luck - a senior anxious to play the role of mentor. However, in reality, in a very competitive environment mentors are not always easy to find. And when found, one is blessed to have a mentor who plays a positive role in one's life for a length of time. Peppered with quotes from almost all famous thinkers, Basu's message in this book is very clear — if you fail to plan, you plan to fail, as one of Rehaan's mentors says.

'Why Not?' could have easily been one of those inconsequential leadership books. But by plotting it around the life of Rehaan, Basu has shown that not all management related books are monotonous. Basu needs to be complimented for taking time to write about something he feels strongly about. Having said that, UBS's production is dull, and the editing could have been better. ■

**Samiran Gupta**