

Discipleship Matrix:

1. DDD	2. DDD	3. DDD
4. ddd	5. d (me!)	6. ddd
7. ddd	8. ddd	9. ddd

1 = Big “D” distant disciplers who influence us even though we don’t have direct access to them (through books, podcasts, videos, conferences, etc.).

2 = Big “D” direct disciplers who have immediate access to us, and visa versa (key pastors, mentors, teachers, counselors, etc.).

3 = Big “D” historical disciplers who continue to influence us via writings, legacy, etc., even after they are gone.

4 & 6 = Little “d” disciples who are peers—either Christian or pre-Christian—with whom we are growing. It’s here where “iron sharpening iron” takes place in the contexts of fellowship, friendship and shared ministry.

5 = Me: the little “d” disciple in the middle of these relationships.

7 & 9 = Mini “d” disciples—either Christian or pre-Christian—who are who are observing our lives. These disciples aren’t our peers; they are either younger or less mature in their faith.

8 = Mini “d” disciples into whom we are directly pouring our lives and faith.

Notes on the Discipleship Matrix:

Many may assume that only the 2-5 and 5-8 discipling relationships define what “discipleship” is all about. While there is a higher degree of “active apprenticeship” happening in these relationships, the others provide important supportive roles and opportunities that should not

be minimized. This 360-degree view of discipleship reminds us that growth is happening across ALL areas simultaneously. Each different relationship is informing the others, creating a holistic, giving-and-receiving model that is necessary for transformational growth.

Seven Principles of Discipleship

1. Discipleship is about helping others becoming more like Jesus...not like me!

“Every single aspect of the way we live out our lives needs to be re-aligned around the person of Jesus and his lordship.” Alan Hirsch, *Untamed—Reactivating a Missional Form of Discipleship*

While we should be able to tell people (as Paul did), “follow me as I follow Christ,” (1 Corinthians 11:1, Philippians 4:9), we’re not creating mini-me’s as we’re discipling others. We’re helping others submit each part of their lives to the lordship of Christ while still retaining their own personality, gift-mix, humor, leadership style, etc.

2. I need to BE the disciple I want to make.

Before I have something to give to others, it’s important that I’ve personally surrendered to Christ and allowed his lordship to begin transforming me. It is ever-so-difficult to lead others where I have yet to go.

3. 360-degree discipleship is best.

One-on-one discipleship goes in all directions. Not only do I need things poured into my life, but there are some things that won’t be fully formed in me until I am giving them away.

4. Two benefits of one-on-one discipleship.

First, **personal affirmation** = we get close enough to others to spot areas that can be affirmed.

Paul was a great affirmer of Timothy, and in 2 Timothy 1:5 we get to eavesdrop on this conversation: “I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also.” (See also: Philippians 2:19-22)

Second, **depth of relational insight** = not only can we see things in the life of the one we’re discipling, but they can watch our life closely as well.

Paul reminds Timothy of this reality in 2 Timothy 3:10-11 & 14. He says, “You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings—what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them. ... But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it,

5. Keep one-on-one discipleship with the same gender.

In the 360-degree view of discipleship there SHOULD be some mixed-gender relationships. But because of the necessary proximity and intimacy shared in one-on-one discipleship, it's important that these happen in the context of same-gender relationships. It would be way too easy for unhealthy relational, emotional and physical bonds to be created, destroying the growth intended in discipling relationships.

6. Be intentional – but leave room for the spontaneous.

You may choose some particular content (sharing weekly devotionals, book studies, etc.) to provide helpful launching pads for discipling conversations—but be most sensitive to immediate needs and questions that arise. People learn best when they're hungry—so be discerning of what they're hungry for, rather than just serving up “pre-packaged” meals.

You may also have a particular routine for meetings and conversations—but watch for opportunities for them to join you in life and ministry. Much learning happens while “on the way” to some other thing.

7. Be loving. Period.

What is your motivation for discipling someone? Maybe you feel obligated because of your position; or you'd like to exert control over this person; or you want to shape them into your image. Only love—with no expectation of anything in return—provides the motivation that will result in real life transformation.

1 Corinthians 13:1 reminds us that if our motivation is anything but love, we will only be clanging cymbals. No one is asking for that!

Love gives us the grace we need to walk with those we're discipling—as long as needed—for them to be transformed more and more into the image of Jesus.