A Bridge to Self Discovery

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USU grad DionJay (DJ) Brookter speaks widely on behalf of the nonprofit he directs, Young Community Developers, based in San Francisco.

Story by Janelle Hyatt
More about the exciting and innovative efforts of the San Francisco-based nonprofit, Young Community Developers

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So, you want to to be a mentor?

DJ Brookter responds:

I think a lot of it happens organically. I've had mentors that I now recognize as mentors) as I look back, like my high school counselor. There wasn't a formal conversation to say, ‘You're going to be my mentor.’ The counselor was able to mentor me by giving advice and saying, 'I'm now challenging you to do something different than the status quo of what you've been doing.'

So I tell people, it's about that relationship, right? It has to go both ways. Even the young people that I spend time with, I let them know that if I'm not learning from you, and you're only learning from me, then that's not what mentoring and mentorship is about.

I tell young people, 'I want to speak to you about my experiences and what I've been through that might be able to help you. However, I need to know about your experiences and what you're going through because there's things nowadays ... that I've never had to face before that I can still help you critically think through.'