

THE POWER OF TRANSFORMATIVE RELATIONSHIPS**By Erenia Mendoza**

In the Bible, we find an unlikely friendship that changed the course of history: Barnabas and Saul. When no one wanted to get near the former persecutor of the Church, it was Barnabas who had the courage to believe in the transformation God was working in him. He brought Saul to the apostles, walked alongside him, and planted the seeds of a ministry that would later impact the world (Acts 9:26-28). A simple act of trust. A meeting with purpose – and a destiny was unlocked.

In the business and professional world, we also see how friendship can be transformative. The story of Warren Buffett and Charlie Munger is a rare example of a partnership spanning nearly six decades, built on integrity, respect, and mutual trust. Buffett described Munger as a primary instrument in his journey. “Charlie must forever be recognized as the architect,” he said after his friend’s passing. More than a business partner, Munger was a loyal friend – someone who challenged, wisely corrected, and expanded horizons. “Even when I made mistakes, he never, never once, reminded me of my errors.”

This quiet fidelity is rare – and deeply powerful. Munger didn’t just walk with Buffett; he transformed him. This is the power of a trustworthy friendship: shaping the other with love, truth, and constant presence.

And I am blessed to have relationships like these, ones that help me become transformed.

I met Jesus Christ in 1998 and had the privilege of walking from the beginning with two incomparable mentors: my mother and my father. From them, I learned about faithfulness, prayer, service, and commitment – lessons I carry with great care and gratitude. It was through my father that I first came across the Monday Manna devotional; he loved it and faithfully forwarded me the email every Sunday.

In 2018, three years after his passing, I stopped receiving the devotionals. Wanting to continue feeding on this content, I sought to learn more about CBMC. And through one of those “God-incidences” (there are no coincidences with God) Edgar Medina, National Director of CBMC Mexico, replied to my message saying that there would soon be a meeting in the city where I lived.

At that event I met Dr. Enrique Cepeda, then Director for Latin America of CBMC. After the program, we had a conversation that became a turning point. He invited me to get more actively involved with CBMC and shared his passion for the Great Commission with me. He also introduced me to his family; his wife, Lydia Cepeda, became my discipler. To this day, her wisdom, firmness, friendship, and love have been fundamental in my journey with Christ.

All of this started with an unexpected encounter. A relationship that transformed my walk — not only ministerially, but spiritually and personally. Relationships like these are gifts from God. People who challenge, shape, disciple, and propel us with faith and courage toward places we

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could never reach alone. They are modern-day Barnabases, sent by God to awaken what we have yet to see in ourselves.

Pray for divine connections. Ask the Lord to place in your life people who will draw you closer to your eternal purpose. And be ready to be that answer in someone else's life. You may be the bridge between now and God's plan for someone who just needs a meeting – with you. As the Bible teaches, "Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another" (Proverbs 27:17).

© 2025. Erenia Mendoza is the National Director of CBMC Brazil and a member of CBMC International's Global Leadership Team. She also serves on CBMC's Executive Committee for Latin America. Born in Nicaragua and raised in Brazil, Erenia built her career in the entertainment industry, specializing in distribution and marketing for films and series. She has worked with and for major studios, including Sony and Walt Disney, across Latin America.

Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. Are you familiar with the story of Barnabas and Paul, how the man first known as Saul – a zealous persecutor of followers of Christ – had a divine encounter with Jesus, and later Barnabas had the courage to come alongside him and help him to grow into a dynamic spiritual leader? If not, take a few moments to read Acts 9:26-28, along with Acts 13:1-3, 42-43.
2. Has anyone served as a 'Barnabas' for you, a supporter, encourager and motivator, urging you to become much more than you ever imagined? If so, describe the impact of that individual in your life.
3. Why, as Ms. Mendoza writes, are such close relationships comparatively rare? What do you think are obstacles to one person being willing to invest time and energy in the development of someone else?
4. How would your life be different if a 'Barnabas' came into your life as a caring mentor, as well as a trusted, constant friend? What do you think it would be like for you to serve in that role for another person?

Challenge for This Week

Do you have someone who serves as a 'Barnabas' in your life, someone with a genuine interest in you, especially in seeing you become everything God wants you to be? If so, you should express appreciation to that person for what he or she means to you.

If you don't have a person like this, would you be willing to pray for the Lord to direct such a person your way? And perhaps you can also pray about how you could become a 'Barnabas' in the life of someone else..

NOTE:

If you have a Bible and would like to read more, consider the following passages: Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; Acts 14:1-3; Colossians 3:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Hebrews 10:24-25

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