



## Stanford eCorner

### More than Mentoring: The Need to Stay Connected

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Senior Advisor for Innovation in the Office of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton Alec Ross offers advice to established entrepreneurs who already have some success behind them: Keep an open line of communication going with those up and coming in your field. While many successful people feel they have a lot to offer their juniors, few take advantage of the relationship working as a learning experience both ways. Don't allow your success to become isolating. Remaining au courant is a great indicator of recurring prosperity.



#### Transcript

So I'm at this really weird point of my career where a lot of my peers are suddenly very important and very powerful. And it's been very interesting for me to see them and others as people ascend in their career, the degree to which people stop engaging with young innovators, the younger people. I think there's a lot of earnestness among young entrepreneurs, among people who are newly successful to say, "Oh, I want to stay connected. I want to mentor young people. I want to make sure I keep it real and stay grounded and pay attention to the innovations that are taking place in the proverbial garages." And what oftentimes happens is that only lives rhetorically, I would argue among most successful people. And I have absolutely no doubt, by virtue of the educations that many of you are getting right now, that you will be successful. And what I think is going to be interesting for many of you is once you are successful, do you focus all of your attention on managing up, getting to know more similarly successful and impressive people, and staying amidst them? Or can you, will you stay grounded make it a priority to stay with young people and young innovators? In Silicon Valley, there are many one-hit wonders. There are many people who have had enjoyed success one time. I would argue that people who have founded and built two great companies, what oftentimes distinguishes the entrepreneurs who has built two great companies versus one great company, is that that person who has built two great companies has managed to keep conversations going, has managed to stay connected with people who are no longer their peers. And if you even think about the conference circuits, if you think about this social milieu that people who are suddenly powerful, who are suddenly rich are pulled into, it distances you from young innovators.

And I would argue that people who mindfully or less mindfully isolate themselves from young people and from young innovators, are more likely than not, not going to have that second big success.