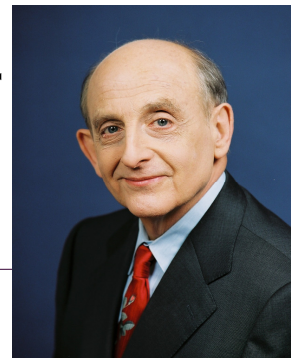


# PEER PARTNERSHIP- A PERSONAL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM

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In my last message I spoke about the importance of having someone to “keep us honest” by ensuring that when we meet our commitments we reward ourselves for this or, if we don’t meet them, that we pay the consequences we had set for ourselves as a “pitchfork in the backside”

As a broker or manager, you may want to seek out a peer partner in a related industry for this purpose. A peer partner should be someone at your level of professionalism that you respect and feel you can trust. For your team members, you should encourage them to find a peer partner who is clearly not in competition and who could be trusted to be both objective and supportive. You may find that team members will ask you to fulfill the role of peer partner, however, because of the reciprocal nature of a peer partnership, it may not be appropriate for you to do this.

The key word in a peer partnership is “accountability”. When you choose to work with someone as a peer partner, you are making a commitment to be accountable to them and to hold them accountable, and vice versa. In this relationship, you give each other permission to “hold your feet to the fire” to ensure that you both really do achieve what you set out to do through setting your goals and making commitments.

To set up a peer partner arrangement there is a standard protocol that I recommend for the first meeting. This is outlined below and may be copied for your team members who are willing to take up the challenge:

Partners should go over the following points with each other in some detail and take notes so that a) you know what you’re supervising and b) you have some sense of how you might help each other move through a challenge or obstacle.

1. Share your business and personal goals with other and write these down.
2. Share the commitments you are ready to make as steps towards achieving the goals. I recommend that you limit yourself to no more than 3 commitments at a time, for a clearly defined time period (ie. to spend 2 hours a day making prospecting calls, on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays for a month starting...and finishing...). Remember, a commitment is linked to your own behavior, you have 100% control of it and it is easily measured.
3. Tell each other the rewards and consequences you are setting around the achievement or non- achievement of each commitment and if possible enlist their support in some way to ensure these are observed (ie. if a consequence is to send a check for a certain amount to a competitor with a note congratulating them on doing a fine job, write out the check, sign it and put it in an addressed and stamped envelope and give it to your peer partner with the understanding that he/she will mail it if you do not fulfill your commitment).
4. Discuss the “mooring lines” likely to emerge as you start to work on your commitments, the things that could get in the way and hold you back from success. What are the usual ways you sabotage your own success? Give clues to what your partner should be looking/listening for as you report in at the end of the day or week. The aim is for you to get each other back on track before it’s too late and that check has to be sent.
5. Set a time for when and how you will account to each other. Some peer partners fax or email each other each day with their commitments and progress, others do it on a weekly basis. The important thing is to agree on an easily remembered procedure and to do it!
6. Share your “10s” with each other. Talk about the ordinary, every day things that bring joy and happiness to you, maybe a good cup of coffee, or a walk around the garden, or a cuddle with your beloved. These are important for your peer partner to know so he/she can remind you of them at those times when you’re feeling low and need to pick yourself up and get on with the job.
7. Review each section and the notes you have made on your peer partner and ask each other – “is there anything I’ve missed, anything else I should know?”

In my view, peer partnership is one of the most important business relationships. If the partnership gets sluggish and doesn’t revive after resuscitation attempts, it’s time to find another and keep trying until you find the right match. I often have to remind people that the goal of a peer partnership is not to “be nice” to each other, but rather to help each other to achieve their business and personal goals. Sometimes this may mean being tough and having to confront each other’s inconsistencies. I have had the pleasure of seeing people double their incomes and do things they thought they could only dream about –I have even had two peer partners from a group marry each other!