

Buddy Up for Accountability

By Sara Hurd, CFCC

As a coach, I understand the real benefit in having someone to be a thinking partner with you, support you in your goals and commitments to yourself, and add some accountability to what you want to do. Those of you who have been in a coaching relationship have likely stretched yourself during that time more than you might have normally. It's great to have someone there who is committed to your success and supporting your forward action.



However, it's not always feasible to engage and work with a coach forever. If you have a likeminded friend, colleague or family member, consider buddying up with that person to provide accountability and support to each other.

This is similar to the idea of a mastermind group. In his classic book *Think & Grow Rich*, Napoleon Hill describes the "Master Mind" as "coordination of knowledge and effort, in a spirit of harmony, between two or more people for the attainment of a definite purpose." He calls this Master-Mind principle "Andrew Carnegie's Secret of Success." According to Napoleon Hill, coming together with a definite and mutual purpose creates a third invisible, intangible force which may be likened to a third mind. Many business philosophers, notably Stephen Covey in *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, call this synergy.

When you partner with someone with the express purpose of supporting each other and holding each other accountable to moving forward on your greatest desires, that synergistic power is available to you. There are several ways that I've implemented this principle in my life:

- I have a coach with whom I identify next goals and desires, brainstorm steps to take, and create commitments to move forward.
- A colleague at Franklin Covey Coaching and I call each other when facing a project or dilemma, to act as a sounding board to each other and gain clarity around the issue.
- My brother who is closest in age is starting a new business, and he will call to strategize details of his business plan and vision for the facility he will be opening. I am also free to share what I'm doing and plan to do for the marketing for my own business, and we discuss ways that we can partner on joint projects.
- When I'm facing a creative project, I'll sometimes approach a colleague to ask for a support and additional accountability for a short period of time. We'll set up a series of check-in calls to report, reflect and celebrate together.

As funny as this sounds too, sometimes I'll tell my husband that I plan to get something done by the end of the day (like laundry or cleaning the bathrooms), and ask him to check in with me to see how it's going. Laundry and cleaning the

bathrooms are definitely not my favorite chores, so it's helpful to have someone else checking in and supporting me. And it's even greater when he takes it on as a joint project.

Make the Invitation

So, if this sounds like something that could help you, you may be wondering how to get started. First, consider who in your life could benefit as well from the extra accountability and support that a regular, purposeful connection would provide. Is anyone you know facing a significant decision, a big transition, a large project, or wanting to move forward on a dream? Once you've identified that person, the first step is to simply ask. One way to ask: "I know that both of us are working on significant goals right now. Are you interested in maybe meeting together regularly so that we can brainstorm together and support each other to move forward on those goals?"

Clarify Purposes

As you enter into an accountability partnership, it will be important to identify your mutual purposes for the arrangement up front. Normally, as you're both moving forward on your respective goals, the purposes of buddying up are to:

- Brainstorm with each other
- Identify the what, why, and how of your goals
- Define next steps
- Act as a sounding board
- Identify potential obstacles and ways to prevent or overcome them
- Explore what might be getting in the way
- Celebrate steps taken
- Give each other support
- Help each other identify needed resources
- Hold each other accountable to specific commitments to move forward on your goals

Clarify Method

In addition to identifying the purposes of your partnership, you'll want to completely clarify the methods you'll use. Discuss what your meetings will look like and feel like. Consider the following questions:

- How often will you meet?
 - Weekly?
 - Bi-weekly?
 - Monthly?
- Are you both open to more frequent check-ins when facing a particularly intense project? How will those check-ins happen and how long will they last?
- How will you meet?
 - In person?
 - By phone?

- By instant messaging?
- In addition to your regular meetings, how else will you be checking in with each other? Are both parties open to that? What are the boundaries or limits around that?
- What is the structure of your meetings?
 - Do you split the time?
 - Does each person make a commitment or goal each time, or do you switch off every other meeting and focus only on one person in each meeting?
- How will you hold each other accountable and support each other in your commitments?
 - What do you want your partner to do when you meet your commitment?
 - What do you want your partner to do when you don't meet your commitment?

Create Mutual Respect

In order for an accountability partnership to work effectively, both parties need to be committed to it and treat the other partner with extreme respect. Make the meetings that you have a high priority. Don't schedule over them or miss them unless in an extreme emergency. If you do need to reschedule, try to find another time as soon as possible to meet. Be on time and stay within the parameters of your meeting time. Although you'll probably spend a bit of time catching up and shooting the breeze, don't spend too much time in your meetings in small talk or things that aren't relevant to your goals. As both parties make the partnership a priority, it can become extremely fruitful.

Note: For a sampler of coaching questions that are great to use in an accountability partnership, [click here](#).

Sara Hurd, the [WAHM! Coach](#), helps Work-At-Home Moms generate income at home while keeping family first. She is a Charter Mentor of [Women's Support TEAM](#), as the Joyful Self-Management for WAHMs Mentor. She is a BSW, Certified Franklin Covey Coach (CFCC), Certified Self-Management Coach (CSMC) and graduate of Legacy Learning Coach Training, and has been a coach and coach trainer for Franklin Covey Coaching / Professional Education Institute since 1998. In 2003, Sara founded [Keyway Strategies LLC](#), a coaching company specializing in helping small business owners grow their businesses, navigate a sea of technological tools, and create healthy relationships with themselves, others and their businesses. www.keywaystrategies.com She cherishes her time with dreamboat Paul, preschooler Roseanna and baby Sally and works from her home office in rural Plain City, Utah. **Sign up for Sara's free ezine at www.wahmcoach.com.**