

BELIEVE IT!

BECOME IT!

MODULE NINE



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PILLAR PRINCIPLE #3 PARTNERING

Case study research on business executives reveals that 98 percent see their position as the result of plans and strategy and that more than half credit their use of a successful person as an example to help define that plan (Gordon, 1998).

“No Man is an Island”

**No man is an island, no man stands alone
Each man's joy is joy to me, each man's grief is my own
We need one another, so I will defend
Each man as my brother, each man as my friend
John Donne**

Yes, we *do* need one another! Especially when we're trying to change our lives and reach our goals. It's simply easier with a little help from our friends.

I once heard that your friends and loved ones are like pillars on your porch. Sometimes they hold you up, and sometimes they lean on you, and sometimes it's just nice to know they're standing by.

This Pillar Principle is simple but essential to consistent success. Partnering with someone as you work toward your goals provides the following benefits:

- Encouragement – We all appreciate a cheering section!
- Strength in numbers – Most tasks are easier with two (or more) working together
- Different, creative ideas – Two heads are usually better than one
- Accountability – We're more apt to do it when we must account to someone
- Sense of humor – We lighten up when we're with people who laugh with us
- Fun – It's usually more enjoyable to share experiences with a friend

Choose your partner(s) wisely. He/she should:

- Sincerely care about you and your well-being

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- Be secure enough to nudge you when you stray off course
- Be nonjudgmental enough to neither reject you if you don't succeed nor become jealous when you do
- Keep your secrets
- Consistently and enthusiastically encourage you

The Partnering Plan:

1. Share your goals and every detail of how you intend to achieve them. Discuss your Daily Action Plan with your partner.
2. Ask if he/she will meet with you regularly (I suggest once a week) for a heart-to-heart progress report.
3. Invite your partner to share advice and criticism when he/she thinks you're stagnating or regressing.
4. When you meet with your friend, report on your daily progress since you last met. Talk about how it's all working for you. Ask for his/her honest suggestions and perspective.
5. If you need encouragement in between "partner progress reports," first try to help yourself with rewards, good self-talk, music, food, whatever works. If you're still discouraged, call your partner.

This is the same basic method that Alcohol Anonymous uses, and any veteran of their program knows the value of a "sponsor." This is someone who partners with you, offers encouragement, and "throws you a rope" when you need it.

Melissa, age 21, lost 30 pounds in three months. She explained that the most effective strategy was "having someone do everything along with me and encouraging me to press onward. It became easier as time went on. My advice to someone wanting to accomplish a similar goal is to "get a partner who is as dedicated as you, so you can both keep checking up on one another. Also, never give up!"

Tara, age 26, decided to compete in a triathlon, but knew that she needed help training. Tara reported, "I had a work-out buddy who I convinced to train and participate in the triathlon with me. We would have daily workouts, some together, so we could help push each other. My friend helped me learn to run better, and I taught her how to swim. Though we didn't stick together during the race, knowing we were both out there to finish was a big help."

Cindy, age 45, was devastated by addictive behaviors that resulted in her divorce. She said, "This left me a single parent with a high school education to provide, love, and care for five children. After many years of trial and hardship we are still striving together to beat the odds and to be productive. The most helpful of all, during my challenge, has been the love and support from loved ones and friends. We need to let others help us when we're trying to reach

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constructive goals.”

Find a Worthy Mentor and Learn

I love learning about people who have “believed it and become it!” One such person is Wilford, 74 years young, who shared his story:

“I had a speech impediment in my youth. I was held back in elementary school, and repeated sixth grade three times. I did very poorly in my early schooling, with very poor social skills as well. The wonder of all this is that I became a professor in the college of Engineering and Technology at a prestigious university. During my thirty-four years as a professor, I was awarded the Distinguished Teacher Award, and Outstanding Teacher of the Year award three times. Additionally, I was awarded the President’s Special Teaching Award. You may ask what helped me achieve, and I’ll tell you. It was a shop teacher named Wilber Day. When I finally entered junior high school they put me in a shop class thinking that perhaps I could succeed ‘in this area.’ Mr. Day became my Anne Sullivan. He took me under his wing and mentored me. He gave me hope and helped me understand that I could do anything I wanted if I was willing to work for it.”

What an inspiring story! Let’s move on now, and think outside the box:

Partners That Lift and Motivate

One of the keys to achievement is knowing how to make yourself feel good when you *don’t* feel good, or when you don’t even *want* to feel good. The great news? Your body can change its state almost immediately. Actually, you’ve done this before, so you’ll recognize how easy it is. For just a moment think back to a time in your life when you heard a song that really motivated you or touched your heart. Maybe it was the theme song from the movie “Rocky” or perhaps it was “God Bless the USA.” Imagine how you felt when you were listening. You were probably excited, motivated or inspired. One powerful way to get yourself into a happier state is to listen to or create music that lifts your soul.

Another way to lift your spirits is to go outside and deep-breathe or exercise. Exercise is almost magical in its power to lift, and it doesn’t have to be strenuous; a short walk usually does the trick. Being out in nature is usually quite therapeutic. Other ideas are to dance, watch a movie, take a warm bath, attend a concert or theatrical production. These can all be “partners” that help take you from where you are to where you want to be.

My personal belief is that the greatest Partner of all is God. He loves us and wants us to be happy and successful in life. He is there to help us hurdle every barrier and to excel like we’ve never dreamed of excelling before. Those who seek Him, and walk life’s path with their hand in

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His, will be blessed beyond measure. They will come to know the truthfulness of the saying, “Two can do anything if one of them is God.” Suggestions of how to partner with God are included in the “Spiritual Goals” section of *Believe It! BECOME IT! Goals for Extraordinary Living* book – it’s the companion volume for this book. (Information about obtaining it is at the back of the book).

Partner with Time

One of your greatest allies is time. It’s true! Have you noticed that sometimes, even though the nature of a problem remains the same, your perspective and your level of intensity towards it changes with time? That explains the popular saying “time heals all wounds.” Time can be your friend and partner as you try to overcome anger, jealousy, revenge, etc. or as you work to honestly forgive.

Have you ever heard someone say, “I need to step away from the problem.” Both my own experience and that of countless others indicates that this is a very wise approach. Those who objectively see the importance of distancing themselves from a problem are less likely to lose control as they get “caught up” in the heat of the moment. They realize that people prone to losing their temper and slashing out with angry words always benefit by taking a step back – actually moving all the way out of the room in some cases – and letting time cool them down. Time is also good at giving people perspective.

Let’s talk about perspective. Think of a problem that’s challenging you *right now*. Imagine it in your mind – create a mental picture of it. Now, imagine pushing the picture away from yourself. Push it farther and farther away until it is very small and far away. Now look at it with a new perspective; it seems smaller, huh? Now, reverse that process.. Take the picture and bring it closer to you. Closer, closer . . . hey, it’s bigger and bigger! And now the problem is right in front of your face! This usually intensifies your feelings about it. So push it away again until it disappears altogether. Gone. All the way gone.

If you did that exercise carefully and with real imagination, it was mind-expanding as you realized that you can, indeed, affect how you feel about a problem. As you imagine it right in your face, and then move it farther away and watch it diminish and disappear, can you sense greater ease and comfort? Your perspective is a valuable partner as you strive for change and improvement.

Years ago, I read “Lessons from the Geese.” This is perfect for a discussion on partnering, and I think you’ll enjoy it.

Lessons from the Geese

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Fact 1: As each goose flaps its wings it creates an 'uplift' for the birds that follow. By flying in a 'V' formation, the whole flock adds 71% greater flying range than if each bird flew alone.

Lesson 1: People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they're going quicker and easier because they are traveling on the 'uplift' of one another.

Fact 2: When a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of flying alone. It quickly moves back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird in front of it.

Lesson 2: If we have as much common sense as a goose, we stay in formation with those headed where we want to go. We are willing to accept their help, and give help in return.

Fact 3: When the lead goose tires, it rotates back into the formation and another goose flies to the point position.

Lesson 3: It pays to take turns doing the hard tasks and sharing leadership roles. As with geese, people are interdependent on each others' skills and unique arrangement of gifts, talents, or resources.

Fact 4: Geese flying in formation honk to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.

Lesson 4: We need to make sure our honking is encouraging. In groups where there is healthy encouragement, production is much greater.

Fact 5: When a goose becomes sick, wounded, or is shot, two geese drop out of formation and follow it down. They stay with the goose until it dies or is able to fly again. Then, they join another formation or catch up with the flock.

Lesson 5: If we have as much sense as geese, we will stand by each other in difficult times as well as when we're strong.

**“We are not primarily put on this earth to see through one another,
but to see one another through.”**

Peter DeVries