

Recruiting Accountability Partners

Raising personal support for ministry is not for “Lone Rangers.” As you begin your ministry with ISI, the first thing we ask of you is to recruit one or two accountability partners.

Accountability to another person has been found to be a *basic ingredient for success* when raising support. The encouragement, counsel, insight, ideas, and perspective of friends will keep you motivated and moving on the path to gaining 100% of your budget. They will be that “...friend who is born to help in time of need,” mentioned in Proverbs 17:17.

ISI provides you with a PD coach who is an ISI staff member at the 100% support level. You will be accountable to report to this coach on a regular schedule. Additionally, we find it significantly cuts down the time needed to make your budget if you have a *local* accountability partner, especially if he/she is a committed financial partner in your ministry. When you are meeting with someone face-to-face on a regular schedule (ideally, weekly), the positive feedback will be as warming as a freshly brewed coffee on a cold, winter morning. As you review the past week’s activity with your accountability partner, it will bring to light the goals met, as well as the areas where you are not doing so well.

“Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart, and the pleasantness of a friend springs from their heartfelt advice” (Proverbs 27:9, NIV).

The person or persons you ask to hold you accountable must be people you trust, because for this to be useful, you will need to give them freedom to be honest with you. If your accountability partners feel they are only allowed to applaud your efforts, you will lose the benefit they could provide. If you resist the counsel you receive, you will squelch your mentors. Allow them to share observations, to instruct, to ask questions that may challenge you, and to help you change course if necessary. Submission is necessary to be a learner.

*“Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account.
Let them do this with joy and not with grief,
for this would be unprofitable for you” (Hebrews 13:17, NASB).*

How many partners do you need? The ideal number would be two (possibly a married couple). If you have only one, you are limiting yourself to one person’s thoughts, ideas, perspective, intercession, and network.

How does it work? Whatever you work out logistically with them, ensure from the beginning that you can all be faithful to the commitment and the schedule. Meeting each week to talk about your plans and what you have actually accomplished is vital. It will do little good to be accountable to someone if they only see you occasionally.

Who is qualified? Look for people who will sit down with you once a week, look you straight in the eye, and ask direct, personal accountability questions. The person or persons you ask may not feel qualified by experience. What matters most is your friendship. Look for people who

care about you, believe in what you are doing, are trustworthy, and will speak the truth in love. It could be a couple, but if an individual meets with you, it should be someone of the same sex.

*“There are only two people who can tell you the truth about yourself;
an enemy who has lost his temper and a friend who loves you dearly.”
—Antisthenes*

Can it be my spouse? No. Although no one will have more interest in your success, you need someone outside your marriage who is dispassionate and objective.

What do they do? Their primary role is to keep you encouraged and moving forward with your plans. They do not make decisions or design plans. That is your job. But they can give counsel as you share what you plan to do. We have provided some material for your partner(s) to help guide them and you in understanding the relationship you can expect from each other. You can find this entitled, *Accountability Partners*, in our online PD resources.

Who needs to know? 1.) Your ISI PD coach will be expecting to hear from you with the names and email addresses of your accountability team. 2.) Plan a brief get-together to also introduce your local supervisor (in your ministry location) and your accountability partners. 3.) Include their names on your regular *First Thing Monday (FTM) Report* and mention how often you have met with them.

To sum up, look for an accountability partner who is . . .

- Not your spouse (if you are married).
- Not ISI staff (your PD coach will fulfill that role).
- A local couple or same-sex friend who will meet with you regularly (ideally, weekly).
- Someone who believes in you and what you will be doing with ISI.
- Someone who loves you enough to tell you what you need to hear, *speaking the truth in love*.
- Ideally, a financial supporter.