

Your Personal Advisory Board

Travel Companions for the Adventures Ahead

By Lynn Schoener
Executive & Team Coach

Today a member of my Personal Advisory Board is retiring. Not from my board—from her job. She never gets to retire from my board—it's a life-long appointment!

I had an advisory board of sorts for years—special friends, family members, and business colleagues I would call upon for guidance, ideas, and feedback. I didn't realize how much these individuals had contributed to my life and success until I was asked to submit an autobiography as part of a Ph.D. application process.

During the arduous process of identifying key events, main characters and supporting cast members over a 40+ year period, I discovered that there were several people I had come to rely on at critical junctures and decision points, and they played very specific roles. Who fills these positions on your own advisory board?

COACH – helps you envision your preferred future, identify potential barriers, craft strategies to reach your goals—and holds you accountable for action

COLLABORATOR – on the same path, doing the same stuff, experiencing similar milestones, challenges, problems—maybe even a competitor that you highly trust

ENCOURAGER – thinks you hung the moon—is a touchstone, a wellspring of unconditional love

EDITOR – provides the burr in your saddle with constructive criticism...this advisor has the courage to tell you the

truth—that you *can* do more, better, faster

FOOTSTEPS FOLLOWER – sees *you* as a role model—their enthusiasm and admiration helps keep you fresh, awake, and grateful for the progress you've made

HISTORIAN – knew you “when”—and insists that you stay true to yourself and connected to your roots...a rich source for laughter, humility, pride, and perspective

JUNIOR – 20 years younger, a smart and savvy whippersnapper who will not let you lag behind—who insists you keep current and shames you into new learning, reminding you that age doesn't guarantee wisdom

MENTOR – has “been there, done that”...can show you the ropes, tell you exactly how to proceed, alert you to pitfalls—shares information and resources with pleasure and is very available to you

PATHFINDER – a role model, already living the life or enjoying the career you dream of—living, breathing proof that it is possible for you, too

REALITY CHECK – gets you out of the weeds and helps you see the issue from 50,000 feet up—has a data-driven approach and the gift of discernment

SENIOR – 20 years older, a guide to your own future as you encounter the tradeoffs of aging...they provide a glimpse of what life might be like—and remind you about what will and won't matter in the long view

SPONSOR – helps you gain the inside track by providing key information, coveted assignments, introductions to other “players”—a champion who sees you on their “team” and wants you to win

Although my autobiography will remain unpublished, that writing exercise compelled me to become intentional about my Personal Advisory Board. When I finished the document, I sent a copy and a note of appreciation to each “advisor”, highlighting the section in which they were mentioned. I continue to recruit people into the specific roles on my board

to help me overcome obstacles and reach my objectives, both personal and professional.

I encourage you to use the table below to create or expand your own Personal Advisory Board. Once identified, schedule one-on-one meetings with current members or potential candidates. Describe how you see and value their unique role, and invite their input. Share your current goals, and ask for help. Show ongoing appreciation for their support in creative ways. They’ll be great traveling companions as you move in the direction of your dreams!

ROLE	CURRENT MEMBER	POTENTIAL CANDIDATE
COACH		
COLLABORATOR		
ENCOURAGER		
EDITOR		
FOOTSTEPS FOLLOWER		
HISTORIAN		
JUNIOR		
MENTOR		
PATHFINDER		
REALITY CHECK		
SENIOR		
SPONSOR		