

Tools for Partnering Effectively with Advisors for Your Inspired Legacy

This appendix offers some useful tools for you to use in partnering with your advisors for optimal outcomes. These tools include a selection of sample memos to your advisors detailing what you are trying to accomplish for self, heirs, and society, and framing for advisors the issues you want to have addressed.

Included earlier in this chapter was a checklist to evaluate the quality, in your opinion, of an advisor's response to your initial memorandum and initial meeting. You can also refer back to the memorandum toward the end of what might be an extended series of planning interviews and planning documents. As the planning engagement draws to a conclusion, you can ask the advisor to clarify for you how the goals you announced upfront have or have not been accomplished. Of course, advisors will add all kinds of new thoughts, and your goals may change in the process, but it is good for you to take the initiative and be forthcoming as to what you hope to accomplish. And it is good for advisors to know that you will expect them to address certain specific things before all is said and done. Otherwise, in all the conversations back and forth, certain goals of importance to you can sometimes get lost.

We thank Phil Cubeta for his support and teamwork in the creation of most of these tools.

TO CANDIDATES FOR MY ADVISORY TEAM

The following information should give you, the potential advisor, a pretty good idea of what I need and expect, not just from you as an expert, but also as a person and trusted advisor, someone in whom I can confide, and on whom I can rely.

My Current Professional Advisors

Key Advisors			
Name or Initials	Role or Profession (Estate Lawyer, Financial Advisor, Trust Officer, or Other)	Technical Skill 1 = Best 5 = Lowest	Strength of Relationship 1 = Best 5 = Lowest

Pet Peeves

Here are my “pet peeves,” based on experiences with other advisors over the years.

- Can't understand the advisor; way too technical
- Too cold, too rushed, does not listen
- Can't rely on advice, not that competent
- Don't trust, am afraid of being handled, sold, or processed
- Other: _____

What I like best about my current advisory team:

(I have circled the skills and “virtues” that I currently recognize and appreciate on my team.)

Competence, accessibility, an open ear, good interpersonal skills, compassion, empathy, imagination, vision, trustworthiness, team player, good leader, sense of humor, character

What I Want More of from my Advisors

Here are the things I really need and want on my advisory team that I may not yet have in sufficient supply. I have checked what applies and circled what matters most.

- Technical expertise in taxes, expertise in finance, expertise in charitable tools and techniques
- Ability to listen to me and to care and have concern for me and those I love; empathy
- Expertise in making gifts more effective in the community
- Expertise in helping me get engaged personally in charitable or civic efforts
- Expertise in family matters, including defusing difficult situations
- Good service, reliability, willingness to go out of their way to help me
- Integrity
- Ability to work well as part of a team
- Other: _____

How to Communicate with Me

To help me “get” what advisors are saying to me, here is what works for me:

- Short, snappy graphical presentations
- Simple, down-to-earth language and examples
- Written materials that have all the facts and reasoning
- Numbers, charts, and analysis I can verify with a calculator
- Stories, examples, case studies
- Technical, detailed presentations, but with a short and clear executive summary
- A conversational approach; I like to go back and forth to be sure I understand and am understood

Know Me as a Person—See Attached Vision Memo

So you can get a sense of me as a human being, I have attached a note to you about my “vision,” “mission,” “values,” and aspirations (sample vision memoranda appear at the end of this appendix). The vision is meant to capture the meaning of our work together, its purpose. By the time we are done, I will ask you how the plan you recommend will advance the vision I articulated in the note. If the vision is not clear, or seems too abstract, please ask for clarification.

My Expectations of What Should Happen Next

Below I have checked the actions that I hope you will take as you meet with me, having considered my vision memo.

- Play back my goals, situation, and finances so I can see that you “really get it.”
- Just sit down and talk to me for a few minutes. What do you see in my situation?
- Ask me for any additional information you need to know.
- Tell me more about your practice, expertise, and style. Help me to see why I should work with you, what the benefits are, and what the experience will be like.
- Let me know how you are paid. Give me a sense of your resources, strategic alliances, and any conflicts of interest you may have in working with me.
- Give me a sense of your “typical” or “ideal” client profile. Am I the kind of client you actively seek? If not can you recommend someone more appropriate to my circumstances?

Prudent and Inspired Planning

Given a choice, I really want

- A prudent plan that does all it can for me, my spouse, and my heirs
- A prudent *and* inspired plan that respects my creativity, my love of my community, and my desire to make a difference now and after I am gone

SAMPLE VISION MEMORANDA

The purpose of a vision memorandum is to give advisors what they need to know first and foremost in order to serve you better. In particular, they need some background information, and they need to know what you are hoping to accomplish overall. There is no single right way to do this. The point is to let the advisor know what counts as “winning.” To the extent that your goals go beyond prudence, this is your chance to articulate them. You will note that a memo is personal but businesslike. It is relatively short and direct but conveys a clear picture of what matters most to you. The memo drives the process. It lets advisors know what is expected of them without commanding them or overriding their own professional judgment.

Writing such memoranda is not hard: the hard part is clarifying your own thoughts about what you are trying to accomplish with your money, your time, and your particular talents in the time you have remaining. Advisors can help achieve your goals, but only you can set them—aim high!

Memorandum

To: Advisors

From: Tracy Gary

As I was taught from childhood up, my life is in service to others. I am not motivated by having large amounts of money just for my own use. I have bills to pay like anyone else, but what gives me greatest joy is to put money to work in the world for justice, compassion, and community. At my death, I would like reasonable provision to be made for those I love, but my legacy is the life I lead and the impact I can have now on those around me, including my “beloveds,” the donor-friends I am privileged to serve. Please in my planning make sure I do have “enough for me,” under all reasonably foreseeable circumstances, based on my current living expenses. More than that, help me structure my ongoing practice, my legal documents, and my finances so that I may

1. Achieve the greatest possible impact while alive
2. Leave a legacy that lives on in the lives of others

I have attached a list of my assets and a current tax return, so you can get a sense of my financial facts.

I recognize that you are an expert at what you do and welcome your thoughts and considerations as you consider my situation from your own professional perspective.

Memorandum

To: Advisors

From: Kathleen Williams

As you may know, I am a single woman who has successfully built a real estate sales firm. At this point in my life I am pretty well set as far as money goes, though I still love my business. I am approaching age fifty and am beginning to think about exit strategies for the firm. We have five brokers, one of whom might want to buy me out. I have no children of my own but have always enjoyed the work I have done with the Boys and Girls Clubs. I am thinking of “down shifting” and putting a lot of my time and some of my money into programs for the kids. What do I need from you?

- Please review my current planning to make sure I have touched all the bases in a prudent plan to care for my own needs going forward, and to minimize unnecessary taxes and risk.
- Make sure my documents are up to date and effective, given my current direction.
- Help me determine whether or not I have enough to engage in my special project for kids.
- Help me figure out what to do with the business, in line with my personal and social goals.
- Help me figure out, or refer me to someone who can help me figure out, the best way to have real impact on the kids, and what pattern of funding makes most sense, given their needs and my own financial resources.

To give us a shared basis for conversation, I have attached a list of my assets and debts. My income is in the \$200,000 range, and my expenses leave with enough to save \$30,000 a year. Before engaging you, I would like you to give me a few preliminary thoughts about how you could help me, how the process would work, and your sense of the potential cost involved.

Thank you. I will call you this week.

Memorandum

To: Advisor

From: Anthony Smith

Re: My Planning Going Forward

I have been an inventor all my life. Most of my inventions came to nothing commercially. Recently, however, I have invented a new process to purify water. A buyer for the process is in conversation with me. My goals at age sixty-seven can be put pretty simply:

- I want to retain enough out of this deal so that I am fixed for life at my current standard of living.
- I want to buy a vacation home in Maine, on the water, where I can fish.
- I want to make sure my wife, Cara, is taken care of “come what may.”
- I have two kids, and I want each to get one million dollars at my death.

That about covers my prudent planning. But, I want more, a lot more.

My mission is to save lives and save souls. I will save lives through pure water. I will save lives by spreading the Gospel message to children in other countries through videotapes and teaching guides produced by Southwest Ministries, a nonprofit to which I have been a donor now for several years. In my giving as in my business life, I want to remain actively engaged. Yes, I will do some fishing, but I also want to have a hand in making my invention succeed, and in distributing the money for the Gospel programs. My wife will join me in that work. The kids are grown now, but I would love to see my grandchildren get engaged in this kind of work, even on their vacations. (My two children have two children each, ranging from five to ten years of age.)

When I am gone, and my wife is gone, after the kids are given their million, the rest can go to the mission work, if it has been successful. I would love to see the grandchildren, or at least one of them, mature into this kind of work.

Those are my general thoughts. I have attached a listing of my assets and liabilities and a little “round number” information on my income and expenses. My legal documents were last reviewed in 1997. Can we get together, please, at your convenience? I would be very interested in your thoughts and observations on my good fortune and new direction.

Memorandum

To: Advisors

From: Leotta Ganz

As you know, having worked with me for several years, I inherited money from my parents. I have been active with my husband, a physician, in the community for many years. He and I are now approaching an age in which we would like to really take control of our finances, our lives, and the way our family participates in the larger world.

Who ever has enough? Does anyone ever feel they have enough? Yet, I suspect that we have enough for our daily lives going forward. (You should verify this.) Our children are in private schools. John is thirteen and Tammy is twelve. I see so much of myself in both of them. There was a time when having money in the family seemed such a burden. I wondered if I could live up to it, or if I was worthy, or if others would think I was different or strange for having what they might not. I do not want to leave John and Tammy with that kind of legacy. I want them to realize what I have learned, that with wealth comes not only responsibility and privilege, but also the opportunity to do wonderful things for others and to find oneself in the process.

So, as you review and update the tax, legal, and financial plans for Richard and me, make sure that “all is well” from the standard financial perspective. But please give us your thoughts on whether or not we have the financial capacity to do more, now or later, for our community.

I have attached a list of our assets and our debts. I have also listed our main income items and an estimate of our annual expenses. I have also enclosed some of the worksheets from a book on legacy planning, *Inspired Philanthropy*, by Tracy Gary. I do so because the worksheets bear on our family values, and our giving aspirations. I thought I would pass them along to help us all get “on the same page.”

I look forward to meeting with you at your convenience to get your preliminary observations. Before undertaking a significant amount of work, let’s meet to discuss direction, timing, and cost.

Thank you.