

The Quick and Easy Guide
to
Starting a Mastermind
Group
in 30 Days or Less.



MASTERMIND

by Jim Harshaw

GAIN THE CONFIDENCE, CLARITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY YOU HAD AS AN ATHLETE BY CREATING A TEAM OF LIKE-MINDED PEOPLE TO HELP YOU ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS AND STAY FOCUSED ON YOUR PATH TO GREATNESS.

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Introduction

On my show (*Wrestling with Greatness Podcast*) I often talk about the incredible impact that my mastermind group has had on my life. As a result, I've been inundated with questions by listeners about how to start a mastermind of their own.

It's not surprising. We're all hungry for the feeling we had as athletes. We had confidence and clarity on what we needed to be doing on a daily basis to achieve our goals. And we had the accountability of a group of like-minded individuals keeping us on track. And failure, we know as former athletes, is a necessary step on the path to success but we lose track of that when we're not part of a team. But when you are part of a team you have others to pick you up, to put failure into perspective, to help you overcome obstacles and sticking points and ultimately drive you toward success.

You can have that same confidence, clarity, support and accountability in your life now.

With this ebook, I've created the ultimate guide for successfully starting your own mastermind quickly and easily in order to help you achieve your goals and stay focused on your path to greatness.

What is a mastermind?

A mastermind is a small group of like-minded people with whom you meet regularly to solicit feedback, advice and validation in order to achieve personal and professional goals.

Masterminds are used by the most successful people in the world and they come in various formats. Presidential cabinets are a form of mastermind as are various support groups that have helped people achieve the once-unthinkable like Alcoholics Anonymous. A Bible study is a mastermind. Steel magnate Andrew Carnegie credited a mastermind with his remarkable business success. In fact, you've been part of a mastermind of sorts before when you were on a team.

Why start a mastermind?

One of the members of my mastermind had been paying an action coach \$2,000/month. After just a few meetings of our group, he quit the coach saying that he was getting more value from our group than his coach. Masterminds are a tool used by presidents, top business leaders and people who want to achieve goals.

When you were an athlete you were on a team. You had others around you who were working toward similar goals. You could lean on them for support. They would hold you accountable. This helped keep you focused and on track toward achieving your goals. This is what a mastermind will do for you. I'm convinced that everyone needs a mastermind. Business leaders, entrepreneurs, politicians, stay-at-home mothers, teenagers... everyone.

In short, a mastermind will give you confidence and clarity on what you need to be doing to be successful.

Who do I invite?

"Where is the best place to start looking for like minded individuals?"

Gregory A.

First, think about your primary reason for starting a mastermind. What is the outcome that you most want to achieve? Do you want to grow a business? Improve your leadership skills? Start a non-profit? Mend your relationship with your spouse? Lose weight? A combination of more than one of these?

Next, think about the value that you can bring to a mastermind around that topic. What experience do you have? Training? Connections? Education?

Then, identify what you're lacking and find people who can fill those gaps *who would also value your experience, training, connections or education*. It's not just about you. How can you help others? Find the win-win.

It's worth noting here that no matter the outcome you're looking for, you will gain value in unexpected areas of your life. For example, you may start your mastermind with the goal of growing your business but you'll also get support in living a more balanced life, improving your relationship with your spouse and even health and fitness.

Once you're clear on what you want from your group, figuring out where to find them is easy. Look for members in your personal network. Scroll through your LinkedIn and Facebook contacts to get some ideas. If you're part of a private Facebook Group or LinkedIn Group that aligns with your goals, check there.

How do I invite them?

"How do you get others to buy in and commit the time?"

Jake H.

Now that you understand the value of a mastermind, how do you convince others to join you? This is easier than you might think. People are hungry for guidance, accountability and the focus that comes from being surrounded by others trying to achieve similar goals. I am batting 1,000 with my invites.

To get your mastermind off the ground, identify just one individual who might be a good fit for your mastermind. This may or may not be someone you already know. The first individual I invited I didn't know at all. I had come across his name in a professional group online and learned that he lived near me. After doing the obligatory Google search on him, I invited him to coffee. Nothing complex here. I just invited him to coffee in the same way you might do in any networking situation. It's best to first think about how you can bring value to that person. You could say something like, *"Hi Joe, I came across your name on LinkedIn. You and I are both in pharmaceutical sales and live in central Virginia. Like you, I used to sell XYZ drug and have learned a thing or two about selling to doctors in the area. I was wondering if we might be able to grab coffee and see if we can crack the code to making millions at this job!"*

If your first invite is a stranger, like mine, you definitely want to get to know them a bit first to make sure they're the type of person you want to interact

with on a regular basis. If they are the right fit, let them know what you're working on. Explain what a mastermind is and the value they bring. Share this ebook with them if you'd like.

Once you get one other person on-board, the two of you will decide on the third person. Then the three of you will decide on the fourth and so on. I recommend 5-7 total members. I also recommend a group with as much diversity as possible while maintaining the core characteristics of what you're looking for. For example, everyone in my mastermind is entrepreneurial at some level. There are four men and two women. One is a CEO of search marketing firm with 25 employees. Another is a solo-entrepreneur and peak performance business consultant. Another is a copywriting expert and another is a web developer. This type of diversity allows for different perspectives on the various issues we're all tackling.

How to run a meeting

"What is the overall structure and flow of a meeting?"

Charlie B.

Now that you have your members, how do you run a meeting? There are two formats. The "Hot Seat" and the "Round Table". I've found the round table to be most practical for reasons I'll explain below but both have merit.

Hotseat Mastermind:

1. First, each member starts out by sharing a win they've experienced since the last meeting.
2. Next, one member gets 30-40 minutes on the "hotseat." They are the focus of the meeting. They share specific obstacles, hurdles or issues they're having and the rest of the group offers advice, feedback and generally helps brainstorm solutions.
3. Finally, each member shares an action item on which they'll execute before the next meeting.

Pros: Deep dive when it's your turn. You can run a shorter meeting that's approximately 1 hour.

Cons: Only one member gets 90% of the benefit and you have to wait 5+ meetings to get on the hotseat. Also, I've noticed that with this format it's easy for members not to prioritize attendance so you'll have more absenteeism.

Round Table Mastermind:

1. Each member gets 15 minutes to share specific obstacles, hurdles or issues they're having and the rest of the group offers advice, feedback and generally helps brainstorm solutions. Limit your meeting time to 90 minutes, which allows for up to 6 participants. If there are no-shows, you may permit 20 minutes per person.
2. Each member is also encouraged to share a win and an action item before the end of the meeting..

Pros: Everyone gets the focus of the group on them each meeting.

Cons: You lack the benefit of the deep-dive that you'd get on the hotseat.

Again, I prefer the Round Table format because the value of getting the focus of the group on you at each meeting outweighs the benefit of the deep dive. If you arrive at your meeting prepared to concisely explain your issue and the specific solution you're looking for, you can get a lot done in your 15 minute allotment.

It's also worth noting here that if you have a six-member mastermind and two don't show up on a given week, each of the four can take more time (say 20 minutes instead of 15) allowing for more of a "Hot Seat" format and deeper dive.

Ground Rules

- Be on time. If you start late then it's hard to schedule around a meeting that doesn't have a hard start and stop time. Start the meeting on time even if some members are late. They'll get the hint.
- Stick to the time allotted for each member. We give a 5 minute warning so that we know when to start wrapping it up. We usually give a 1-2 minute buffer if we're deep into something and can't simply stop midstream. Sometimes others will concede their time for the benefit of others which allows for a deeper dive.

- Use the mute function on your phone. If a member is calling or conference calling in from, say, an airport where there's a lot of background noise, using the mute function is a must to minimize the distraction of the rest of the group. They can simply unmute when they want to talk.

How Often Should We Meet?

Masterminds vary from weekly to twice a year. In your case, you'll want to meet 1-2 times per month. I recommend starting with twice a month. If it seems like too much then move it back to once a month. If everyone wants more (and is getting enough value to justify taking the time out of their workday) try meeting weekly.

I find that twice/month is ideal in that it gives each member enough time to execute on action items and experience life outside the group long enough to have something pressing with which to come back to the next meeting.

In-person vs Phone/Skype?

If in-person you can meet at a coffee shop or, if available, a private meeting space. A private space is best so members feel more comfortable sharing as well as to minimize potential distractions.

Meeting via phone or Skype works just fine although the benefits of experiencing the nuances of body language and eye contact are lost. My mastermind is in-person though if someone cannot make it in-person we have a conference call line which works great. I've joined my mastermind meeting from my car, airports and my desk if I happened to be out of town or just too busy to make the drive across town.

What I would have done differently.

The main thing I would have done differently would have been to start sooner. I had read about masterminds for years and understood that they could be valuable. However, once I had my first member, the value I got from even just meeting with him was tremendous.

Another thing I would have done differently would have been to invite big hitters sooner. I had two people in mind who I wanted to invite but hesitated for several months in doing so simply because I felt they would have been too busy or that they felt they didn't need one.

I was wrong.

When I finally invited them, each accepted immediately and has become an invaluable part of the group. Interestingly, they've both benefitted as much or more than anyone else in the group. The lesson? Everyone needs a mastermind.

What people are saying.

Discover Your Path, my four-week program for gaining confidence and clarity on your path to greatness, is run as a guided-mastermind. That is, I guide the conversations in our mastermind calls with worksheets and specific questions designed to lead members to breakthroughs in their lives. Here's what they're saying:

"Taking some time to reflect and define an individual roadmap for life was well worth it. I'd recommend working with Jim through his program."

Mike DeRoehn
Head Wrestling Coach

"Discover Your Path helped me get clarity and knowledge on my life. It helped me develop a system for getting the right things done."

Jake Bloom, M.A., LPC, NCC
Counselor, AOD Program Specialist (alcohol and other drugs)
Wrestling coach

"It's about what you learn going through the process as much as the outcomes. In life you don't have coaches holding you accountable so the mastermind group was awesome. The process and questioning truly makes you put your thoughts in perspective in ways I have not even considered before. I know it sounds cliché but I really do think it helped me change my life."

Trevor Kittleson
Engineering Teacher

Football and Wrestling Coach

"Yesterday's mastermind call was really enjoyable and valuable. I didn't know what to expect, but it surpassed what I hoped to get from it."

Charlie Brenneman

UFC veteran, author, motivational speaker

About the Author

Jim Harshaw is former Division I All American wrestler and coach turned entrepreneur, speaker and consultant who helps former athletes use failure as their secret weapon for achieving greatness. As host of the Wrestling with Greatness Podcast, he shares the secrets of the most successful people on the planet who have used the lessons learned in sports to overcome failure and reach the top. He speaks on the topic of failure with his keynote titled *“Failure and the Blueprint for Greatness.”* He lives in Charlottesville, Va with his wife Ali and four children.

Learn more:

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