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SELF-HELP

Inspiration through sound advice

Authors aim to unlock your potential by sharing tips from other successful women

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SPECIAL TO THE STAR

The right piece of advice can inspire, encourage, embolden. It can bolster spirits and break ruts, provoke thought and action, open doors.

That's what authors and coauthors Patricia J. Moser-Stern and Barbara K. Moser hope to do with their new book, *I Piece of Advice*, a collection of advice from trailblazing women around the world.

The Markham duo, who both found success in male-dominated fields, were tired of hearing parents lament women's inability to "break through," they said. So they solicited advice from successful women for the next generation.

"We wanted to demonstrate that regardless of geography and career path, women have achieved a lot," said Moser-Stern, president of the corporate consulting firm of Advantage Inc.

"It was very important to us that we didn't limit [the scope of] the book, so everyone who read it could see themselves in it," added Moser, an engineer.

The *Toronto Star* talked with the authors about the ins and outs of giving — and taking — advice.

Q: What makes good advice?
Moser: A key aspect in this is the intent to which you can describe yourself from the situation. You can't give good advice if you make it about you. It's not about you, it's not about your emotional involve-

HERE ARE A FEW CHOICE PIECES OF ADVICE FROM OUR OWN HOMEGROWN TALENT:



6 My parents taught me through deed, not just word, perhaps the most important of life's lessons: Character trumps genius.
PAMELA WALLIN,
JOURNALIST/
DIRECTOR OF PROMET



6 Question everything around you and trust your inner instincts.
DEBORAH MORDAUNT,
FILM DIRECTOR AND
SCREENWRITER



6 Don't let doubts or naysayers stop you from reaching your dreams. The only difference between those who do, and those who don't is those who do — do!
HEATHER ROSS,
CEO AND FOUNDER
OF DIVERSITY CANADA



6 You don't need to change your style to emulate somebody else. Your own style is the most effective way to promote change.
CHERYL BURNS,
OF THE SAWWAGE
TRUST FUND



6 Life is short, try to savour every moment.
KAREN HALL,
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
NATIONAL BALLET
OF CANADA

Don't let obstacles stop you — take a side road

BY PAOLA LORIGGIO

ment. You need to provide that objective to the other person, too."

Moser-Stern: Advice should not be judgmental.
Q: What's the worst advice you've received?

Moser-Stern: I don't think I've gotten bad advice. There are always people giving you advice, but it's up to you to filter. We were both very lucky in having parents who never questioned that we could achieve greatness.

Moser: I distinctly remember high school friends being told (to become scientists). But my father was always one to say, if you're into law, be the lawyer, not the legal secretary.

Moser-Stern: Early in my career, a boss said to me, "Stop being a superstar, because this organization doesn't want superstars." But I thought, I wouldn't be a superstar if the rest of the company weren't stopped in their tracks!

Q: Have you ever given bad advice?
Moser-Stern: Of course not! (Giggling) One thing we've always



Authors Patricia Moser-Stern and Barbara Moser want you to unlock your potential.

been careful about when giving advice... you have to give it to people in understanding of their context. It has to be based enough.

Moser: It can't be absolute. It's more beneficial to point out the options.
Moser-Stern: It's giving advice versus giving solutions.
Q: Who is your most trusted ad-

vice and why?

Moser: Each other! Patricia and I really complement each other in how we approach things. It's really a case where the star is greater than the parts.

Moser-Stern: We've lived about five minutes away from each other for about 35 years. We have a similar sense of humor.

Q: What advice would you give your younger self?
Moser-Stern: One thing I always felt — it's actually in the book as my contribution — is "Dream big or achieve small." That's the possibility regardless of what happens to you.

Some people stop at side roads, but you shouldn't take a side road. If you say, "This dream is too big for me," you're always just more incrementally.

Moser: I got a lot of amazing advice through childhood from my father. I remember we were walking one day, and he said, "Failure isn't when you fail. It's when you quit trying." No one is perfect out of the gate.

Moser-Stern: One thing I used to

do was to get out of my zone about certain things, so I'd "let it go" in a matter of six months? If not, don't invest emotionally. Only focus on the things that truly matter.

Q: Are you ever in an advice-giver or taker?

Moser-Stern: It often depends where you are in life. When you're younger, you're often the taker — unless you're a teenager. A lot of people ask me for advice. For a coach and a mentor for people I worked with years ago, so at that point, I'm more of a giver, but that doesn't mean I don't get advice.

Moser: I've always been analytical, dissecting everything. People are always asking me what they should do.

Q: What is the most surprising piece of advice you've heard in this book?

Moser-Stern: It wasn't too much a surprise or a delight. For me, there are two that come out: Hazel McCallion — "Strive for significance, not success," and Pamela Wallin — "Character trumps genius." It was exciting that in so few words, they nailed it.

Moser: A lot of the times it's the advice that makes you think. Like Colleen Sechler writes: "Leverage your genius." It's not just about when you're under attack — even in adversity and when under attack.

Q: Why do people like giving advice so much?

Moser-Stern: I think it's part of the human condition.

Moser: We want other people to benefit from our own experience, because it makes it worthwhile, to some extent. Even if it's "Don't do what I do," so when other people to benefit from what we've lived through.

Moser-Stern: And people give advice because they're asked for advice. People do want to learn from others. They ask and you give, and you may ask others — like a mentor.

Moser: Most of advice available for \$24.95 at Amazon.com. Character is your life's compass.