



REFLECTIONS
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PARTNER. GROW. THRIVE.

Partnering is not for the fainthearted, the inflexible, or the risk-intolerant. Just look at the truth of what partnering entails. There's more potential synergy and less individual control. Established trust is the basis for investing resources and depending on each other to perform successfully. Team development and work are required - communication, coordination, decision-making, and co-development. Credit for success is shared. Challenging stuff!

Collaboration requires finding common ground across different values, priorities, goals, styles, commitments, and personal influences. Ready for powerful possibilities and personal and professional growth? Then, read on.

As we have formed our own partnership, surveyed the literature on the subject, and talked with others interested in collaborative work, we have come to a perspective well expressed in this quote from Riane Eisler, founder of the Center for Partnership Studies in Pacific Grove, California:

The shift to partnership systems is essential if we are to bring about the changes in organizations and society at large needed for the 21st century...Creating a partnership organization requires a deep re-organization of our beliefs about what it means to work together. Challenging assumptions is a key ingredient of the creative process, and the Partnership process is in fact a creative process, a creative challenge to draw on all our resources.

If you're considering partnerships, strategic alliances, or collaborative projects as a strategy for your work, you may have one of these commonly-asked questions:

- How will I be able to find a partner?
- What if they turn out to not be the right partner?
- What if I find out that partnering is not the right thing for me?

Your creative process starts with that third bullet point because the first step is to determine if you are ready to partner. First, write down a list of your reasons for wanting to partner. Then make some honest notes in answer to this question:

How comfortable are you with interdependence, change, trusting, self-disclosure, feedback, and focusing on win-win situations?

(Key attributes for partnering outlined in [Partnering Intelligence](#) by Stephen M. Dent)

After exploring your own motivation and ability to engage in collaborative work, it's time to reflect and create intentions about what you really want.

*What do you hope to achieve/gain through a partnership or strategic alliance?
What team or partnering efforts have you been part of?
What were the pros and cons of your collaborative experience?*

Even with a profile of potential partners, how will you find them? You will be most likely to find collaborative partners if you interact collaboratively with people in your work and life. "Like attracts like." Notice connections that come from collaborative engagement. Ask more questions in the beginning. Take time to find out what each person means when they talk about collaboration or other important words like "success". Take time to consciously work on the process, as well as to do the process, of partnering.

*[This is the first in a series of articles that address partnering with others at work. In future newsletters, we'll write about the phases of the **partnering development process** and relevant trends, issues, and approaches related to each phase. We have also created a new Partnership Development Program for those who are ready*

to explore and engage in partnering. For more information on our Partnering Development Program, write to us at info@thegreaterpossibility.com.]

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES WE RECOMMEND:

Center for Partnership Studies, www.partnershipway.org

Partnering Intelligence, Stephen M. Dent

The Partnership Charter: How to Start Out Right With Your New Business Partnership, David Gage, Basic Books, 2004.

Let's Go Into Business Together: 8 Secrets to Successful Business Partnering, Azriela Jaffe, Career Press, 2001.

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