



## **In the Space Between...Partners** **by Nika N. Quirk, M.B.A.**

Want to experience the power of partnership? Whether you're in a committed relationship, on a team, or collaborating on a project, two or more together can create something bigger than any one could do in isolation. But many of us shy away from getting others involved - it does take work to make it work! Here's some basics for negotiating a comfortable power relationship and creating the optimal Space Between Partners:

Reveal Your Self: Collaboration and creativity spring from sharing strengths, scars, and growing places. What's your biggest dream and intention for the partnership? How will you add value? What will you never want to do? Are you a leader or a happy follower?

Develop a Communication Foundation: A great partnership responds to the growth and change of the individuals. Communicate, communicate, communicate. Sparks can fly and light bulbs go on - this is fertile ground for the relationship and what it produces! When partners candidly express feelings about what's working and what's not, the air clears and breakdowns are prevented.

Establish Explicit Areas of Individual and Shared Control: Everyone needs to understand their role, clarify their areas of expertise, and know the perimeter of their decision making control. If this is established and updated as change occurs, partners have a sense of trust that makes things work smoothly.

Agree on Conflict Resolution Methods: Partners need an agreed upon forum for raising and hopefully resolving conflict. Pool your ideas and resources about what helps you work through conflict. When all else fails, call on personal and professional assistance to move the issue forward. Don't let conflict sink the partnership!



Identify the Partnership Support Group: Who you gonna call? We all get stuck sometimes and need help. Develop a list of trusted, effective and willing parties. Establish an agreement with them about what they're willing to do.

Declare the Partnership: Seal the commitment with whatever combination of verbal and written agreements you agree are appropriate. Make your declaration of partnership in front of witnesses by whom you would like to be held accountable.

Reach out - the rewards of partnership are yours to enjoy!

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