WHAT IS WONDERMENT?

Wonderment thrives from being with, working with, imagining with, making mischief with, problem-solving with, being loving with someone who makes you feel that you can change the world.

From being held in enduring trust, in the quiet of unshakable respect, in the togetherness of conjuring deep possibility.

From a place of humility, being generous with each other, and the world. Having empathy for each other’s paths, and daring enough to carve one together.

In shared entrepreneurship. Loving life partnership in artistry. In social impact. In friendship and familyhood.

PARTNERSHIPS change the world.

Who is your +WONDER? And what can we teach each other about what it means to flourish?
Inspiring partnerships for a better world and a better life.

Plus Wonder taps into the wise love—and sometimes confronting honesty—of some of the greatest partnerships of our lifetime: Friends. Business partners. Siblings. Romantic partners. Even partnerships with Mother Nature. What these relationships all have in common is that they show us how we can bring wonder into our lives—and the lives of many others through the partnerships we commit to, nurture, and shape. And it is through being together we can have a positive impact in, and on the world.

Imagine getting to sit with some of the world’s most wondrous duos—and getting to ask them anything. About what makes their relationship unique. And how they build, support, and sometimes untangle it. What ensued was hundreds of hours of searching to find the pattern, the threads of wisdom, the advice for building, support, and sometimes untangling small spaces.

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### Degrees of Connection

And here are the Six Degrees of Connection Plus Wonder started.

- Degrees of Connection Plus Wonder taps into the wise love—
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Each with his or her own purpose. And often a shared purpose.

Something bigger to believe in keeps the partnership energized, on track, above the muck of detail, and into a realm of deep connection. This belief fuels a desire for collective success, ultimately helping you weather the inevitable ups and downs. It’s about a legacy of change in the world and the ability to lever for greater change than you ever could on your own. This is not about empty beauty pageant purpose statements about “changing the world.” As Amory Lovins so eloquently put, “It is not just a theoretical hairy goal, it’s applied hope.”

“One plus one should not equal two, one plus one should equal four.”
Bertrand Piccard

“She said she would much rather I was happy on Robben Island than to be free and quiet outside and that was an incredible affirmation that stood me in good stead.”
Archbishop Desmond Tutu

“We eventually called it spreading the power of optimism. That’s our mission—and so the other stuff is just detail. The strategy of how the business flows, year to year, is to sculpt together. That mission will never change.”
John Jacobs
We Believe
It’s Bigger Than Us

1. Write the name of someone with whom you have a partnership that’s created something bigger than the two of you could have accomplished on your own:

   What is the quality of the partnership with this person that has allowed it to create an outsized impact in the world?

   What has this partnership made uniquely possible in the world that can only exist with you in partnership with this person?

Vividly imagine what this partnership might be like.

What’s the quality that would allow this partnership to become something bigger than the two of you alone? Describe it here.

Write down the next right thing you can do to form this partnership, and what you’ll say to get it going.

2. WRITE THE NAME of someone in your life that you would like to nurture into a wondrous relationship.

More inspiration

“A movement by myself, a force when we are together.”
Erika Boyd

“Something is creating and if it’s a big mission, it’s outside of reach and that can be your north star, that can help you in the tumultuous waters of highs and lows of a startup or just creating anything, so you don’t get sick, and so you don’t lose your path. So having a big mission that’s worthy of all of the energy and all the sacrifices that you need to do if you’re creating something in this world.”
Robbie Shingler

More inspiration

“An end purpose that was so wonderful that if we could make it become a reality, we were going to give it everything.”
Richard Branson

Lift your purpose through meaningful partnerships. Deepen your connection by becoming part of something bigger.

Reflect a bit on two kinds of relationships—one that has been wondrous, one that could be wondrous. See what inspires you...
"I think one bit of wisdom I’d like to pass on to my kids is you have to be willing to love before being loved, and you have to be willing to trust before being trusted."
Keith Yamashita

"Realize that you make the commitment in a real way, and it’ll set you free. So counter-intuitive, but it allows you to fly."
Jacqueline Novogratz

"Ben doesn’t put any limits with where he is going to go with something. He is a person with no boundaries. For God’s sake, if you are going to make it happen—I mean how do you think we made Ben and Jerry’s happen?—We were both all in. We were all in!"
Jerry Greenfield

It’s about a lifelong unconditional love. Commitment that gives you the freedom to fly. Your biggest supporter—and your biggest bearer of truth. Never being afraid to jump in and love first. No editing. 100% there for each other—holding back that little 10%. A companion who always has your back and gives you deep support. An insider and “grounding rod” who can give you “rough love” to ensure you push yourself to the best, authentic person you can possibly be. Willingness to ride the waves and put in the hard work it takes for a partnership to thrive.
EXERCISE

We Are All-In For Each Other

1. Think of a partnership that you've had in your life where your partner was able to provide you with a truth that was hard to hear, but made you deeply grow.

WRITE A THANK YOU NOTE to that person here. Describe how the courage to say that truth, and the space for you to hear it, unlocked a potential in you—and in the world—that would have otherwise lay dormant.

2. Think of a partnership that you've had in your life with unconditional support that allowed you to take risks to create something bigger than yourself in the world.

Write down how this unconditional support made you feel. How it changed your own beliefs about what's possible for yourself. And the impact you now know you can create in the world because of it.

3. Later today, when you have a quiet moment, pull out your cell phone, and call your partner to tell them everything you wrote down—thank them for making your life that much larger.

More Inspiration

“I think the one great thing is we challenge each other a lot, but we don’t challenge each other through aggression. We challenge each other in a wish for each other to grow and develop. I always trust the message.”

Jo Confino

“The most important thing is I know Scott supports me 100%, that he’s my best friend, that I can count on that. That’s an amazing thing. If you can count on your partner, you know no matter what is going on in his life or his world separate from me that I count the most.”

Pat Mitchell

Only you can define what ‘all-in’ means for you. And when you have it, cherish it. Take a moment to express your gratitude forward.
Stay aligned through a moral ecosystem, alive with the daily practice of essential virtues. Over time, they become reflexive responses, creating an environment of kindness, grace, and unconditional love that keep the partnership constantly connected—yet also allow it to ebb and flow, to grow, to ultimately bring out the very best in each of the partners. They unleash exponential energy. A bit like the 'roots' of the partnership—a moral compass, a cultural framework, a belief system, a way of being to keep the partnership centered and to guide decisions. Each partnership will shape their own ecosystem that energizes each other.
We Nurture Our Ecosystem of Virtues

Take a pause. Think about a relationship or a partnership that is wondrous for you. Now think about the ecosystem that holds it together? What virtues draw you closer within it? What weaves you together in the living of daily life, the making of mischief, the pursuit of something bigger than yourself? Do you see—as some of the world’s most gifted partners identified—magnetic threads of…

Enduring Trust
Unshakable Respect
United Belief
Shared Humility
Nurturing Generosity
Compassionate Empathy

If you’re interested in strengthening your partnership ecosystem, read on.
“Trust is the confidence that allows you to push yourself to the boundary—and then actually cross that boundary. Because you know that it’s okay. You know, win or lose, whatever it is, just do it.”
David Levin

“We had many experiences with each other of needing to do work side by side. More than anything, what builds trust is actually the relationships you develop in the work itself. Nothing works as well as actually doing day-to-day work—and learning lessons along the way.”
May Boeve

“Trust, to begin with. You can’t really have a relationship unless you have trust. And then admiration. Paul and I are huge fans of each other.”
Jim Cooper

A living trust that informs every action. Trust that is built over the years—it gives you the confidence and the safe space to take risks and the freedom to fly. You trust each other with your lives. It is the-first-phone-call type of trust.

Enduring Trust
EXERCISE
The Ecosystem
Virtue of
Enduring Trust

In each circle, name a partnership in your life.
Write down what trust looks like for each.
What makes that trust possible?
What actions, beliefs, or behaviors led to this trust in each type of partnership?
What builds trust over time?

Reflect:
What’s common across all these partnerships?
What have they taught you about you?
The absolute essence and foundation of a partnership. The honoring—and awe—of one another that grows stronger over time. The humility to realize you can learn from one another and the lack of ego to actually do it.

Tony Hawk

"I think that my best advice for a partnership would be to respect each other’s individuality. Don’t make it a co-dependent relationship. You know you want to each stand on your own—but also come together when it’s important. And realize each other’s strengths and weaknesses, and how you can help push those along. But realize that you’re stronger together, you know, above all else, that together, you’re going to make a bigger difference."

Gro Bruntland

“While still having a high level of independence—sharing a broad range of values and compassion. Open, trusting communication at all times and on all issues. Respect for individual priorities and a high level of independence, while cooperating as a pair”

John Jacobs

“And finding that balance is a great dance that will continue our whole lives. But I think, over time, we’ve developed respect, mutual respect, that in crunch time, I know Bert’s going to get it done, he knows I’m going to get it done.”

Rosalynn Carter

“The other thing is that very early on in our marriage we learned to respect each other. He learned to respect what I could do and I learned to respect what he could do. I think this made a huge difference as I was very insecure about what I was capable of and Jimmy believed that I could do anything.”

THE ECOSYSTEM VIRTUE OF

Unshakable Respect
**EXERCISE**

**The Ecosystem Virtue of Unshakable Respect**

1. What does respect mean to you?

2. How, in your best partnerships, is mutual respect expressed?

3. How, in your best partnerships, are you different from your partner in a way that engenders trust?

4. Why does this unshakable mutual respect work in these partnerships and not others that you have?

5. How might you change that to build unshakable mutual respect in all your partnerships? What would you have to believe about your partner? What would you have to give—and get in return?
Faith in one another that you can do anything. Your +wonder is your biggest fan, constantly pushing the boundaries. And being the positive ‘electric energy’ for you. Together, you balance the personal highs and lows by giving each other a boost, open arms, inspiration, and optimism.

“The ecosystem virtue of United Belief

Each time you’re starting something that is so painful, you’re sort of giving birth to these organizations and businesses. How many times I have said: ‘Can I quit now?’ I mean: Can I just give up? Stewart has always been there to say: ‘Absolutely don’t give up, you know you can do this.’”
Ryan Phelan

“There’s this centerpiece that I think is the DNA of our relationship—it is about that sense of possibility in the world.”
Todd Holcomb

“In a partnership that works really well, and you have a lot of respect for the other person, you leave a lot of room for potential. So you know what the other person is good at—but you are ready to support and cheer on that other potential.”
Cameron Russell
EXERCISE

The Ecosystem
Virtue of
United Belief

1. Write down a time in your life when someone believed in you more than you believed in yourself.

2. Pull out your phone and send them a text or email.
   Describe what possibility this deep belief in you made possible.
   Let them know what a deep difference they made in your life, and in the world.
   Tell them about a time when you, having learned from them, did the same for someone else.

3. In the following boxes, list some possibilities that were unleashed because of a deep belief in you by your wonder. List a way this possibility allowed you to grow and become something you wouldn’t have otherwise.

   An unleashed possibility:
   How I grew:

   An unleashed possibility:
   How I grew:

   An unleashed possibility:
   How I grew:

   An unleashed possibility:
   How I grew:

4. Describe a time when you’ve given the gift of deep belief in possibility to a partner.
   How did it feel?

   I commit to believe in __________ by...
   1.

   and by...
   2.

   Write down two commitments of where you plan to give this gift anew in a partnership, and know the reward you’ll reap.

   (Here’s some inspiration)

   Hello, __________, it’s __________.
   I was thinking of you just now.
   You may not have even realized you did something powerful for me when __________.
   But you did. You believed in me—even more than I believed in myself.
   I want you to know what a huge difference that made for me.
   It helped me see __________ which then made me __________.
   And it’s all because of you. It’s all because of that single time you believed in me.
   And you should know too that I’ve passed on the power of belief to someone else.
   I told __________ that I believed in them when __________ because I knew that’s what they needed.
   So, I’m calling to thank you for giving me the gift of belief, and of possibility—and mostly for teaching me the lesson of how I can pass the gift along. I can’t help but think that you’ve been passing it along to others for many years, and I’m proud to be following in your footsteps. Well, that’s it, for now. Signing off, with love.

   Name
Letting go of egos and remembering how little we actually know. The humility to focus on something bigger—and to realize that we are in service, not in control. ‘Equalizing yourself’ to others and never taking yourself too seriously. A belief in shared prosperity and the value of communal rather than merely individual gain.

“I think we don’t take ourselves too seriously, which I think is important. We take the issues very seriously, but we don’t take ourselves too seriously. We’ve had a lot of fun together over the years and we’ve had a lot to smile about.”

Richard Branson

“And at that moment we understood that without the other one, there would not be Solar Impulse. And I think that is the moment where the partnership became much stronger, where maybe a little bit of normal competition between each other had to fall away, had to vanish. And maybe the moment also where the friendship started to be strong.”

Bertrand Piccard

“I’d never thought that nature was experiencing me and I thought, what an arrogance that we go around in the world thinking we’re experiencing nature and not recognizing that nature has a consciousness that is experiencing us. And, I think that is a fundamental change away from a human-centric view to recognize that, actually, in nature, there are so many of the answers.”

Jo Confino
The Ecosystem
Virtue of
Shared Humility

Discover where you are. Put an ‘X’ on the continuum.

Partnership #1
Business partnership with ____________.
In Control ← In Service
Ego-driven ← Egoless
For Me ← For the Whole
Above It ← Humble
Competitive ← Equality

Partnership #2
Romantic partnership with ____________.
In Control ← In Service
Ego-driven ← Egoless
For Me ← For the Whole
Above It ← Humble
Competitive ← Equality

Partnership #3
Community partnership with ____________.
In Control ← In Service
Ego-driven ← Egoless
For Me ← For the Whole
Above It ← Humble
Competitive ← Equality

Partnership #4
My partnership with nature.
In Control ← In Service
Ego-driven ← Egoless
For Me ← For the Whole
Above It ← Humble
Competitive ← Equality
A mutual generosity based on the realization that you need one another to be successful. This inspires never taking your partner for granted. You build a life based on a deep intertwining of reciprocity and gratitude that allows you to constantly affirm one another. An understanding that you always get more than you can ever give.

THE ECOSYSTEM VIRTUE OF

Nurturing Generosity
The Ecosystem
Virtue of
Nurturing
Generosity

Generosity is about loving before being loved. Trusting before being trusted. Giving without demand—or even expectation—of return. And interestingly, when you live generously a lot more actually does come back to you in a powerfully affirming way.

Acts of generosity and affirmation that I have gifted in a partnership:

Acts of generosity and affirmation that I have received in a partnership:

Sit with the feeling that you are left with having recalled these memories.

What energy does it give you?
What happiness?
What sense of well-being?
How might you practice more generosity in every type of partnership you have?

Now close your eyes again. Think of the set of small—and large—affirmations you have received, in this partnership. Write about them here.

Close your eyes and call upon a memory where you felt your partner’s generosity of spirit, and of actions. Write about it here...

Close your eyes and call upon a memory where you felt your partner’s generosity of spirit, and of actions. Write about it here...
The ability to stand in one another’s shoes. To be vulnerable, open, and compassionate with one another. An understanding of each other that gets built over time through shared experiences. Ultimately a ‘shared heart.’

THE ECOSYSTEM VIRTUE OF

Compassionate Empathy

“"You always have to put yourself in the shoes of the other person. If you don’t understand where they are coming from, if you don’t have an appreciation for their arguments and how they are seeing things, it’s very, very challenging to put a meaningful partnership together.”

José María Figueres

“It’s people who have the courage to touch their pain and to do it in a way that opens everyone else’s heart and it’s literally like a tuning fork. You know, if you’re prepared to go and show your own vulnerability, what you do is you give permission to other people to be vulnerable.”

Jo Confino
## The Ecosystem Virtue of Compassionate Empathy

### 1. 
Think of a time when you’ve been in a partnership, but haven’t invested in seeing the world from your partner’s perspective.

- How did this lack of perspective limit your partner’s ability to contribute and grow?
- How did it limit your own ability to contribute and grow?

### 2. 
Let’s go even deeper. Take the same situation, and now evaluate it more specifically. Rate yourself on how deeply you were invested in compassionate empathy (scale of 1 to 10).

When you’ve completed the inventory, reflect on where you could have acted differently. What dimension of loving-empathy emerges as something you’d like to improve on in your future partnerships?

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Keep connected and strengthen your ecosystem through intentional practices, rituals, and traditions that keep curiosity and wonder alive, create space for honest communication, spark unlimited joy, and build a wider supportive community.

Illustration: Greg Kletsel

WE STAY IN FLOW WITH MAGNETIC MOMENTS
EXERCISE

We Stay in Flow with Magnetic Moments

There are many things that you can do to keep your partnership connected. Here are some particularly useful ones that came to the top.

Remember to value your community—they will help keep your partnership on track.

Remember to play. Nurture joy. Have fun.

Practice curiosity. Feed wonder.

Seek peace in yourself first.


Give space. Make space. Honor space.

Do your best to honor sacred time.

Tune into nature’s wisdom.

Design your life together.

Nurture spirituality.

Make your own rituals. (And live them.)

(And if none of the above capture your creativity, invent your own ways to stay in flow.)
“[Our purpose] allows us to disagree without being disagreeable. To argue loudly but persuade one another. And I think it’s those things, in my mind, that keep the partnership together. That sense of empathy. That sense of trust. That sense of we’re doing something for a higher purpose, fundamentally.”

Jim Roth

“What If the Other Person Is Right?”

Andre and Bertrand

“[We believe in] giving a little space for the person to shine in their area and not focusing on the one part that may bug you. Instead, how about the other ninety-nine things this person does great? Just let those thrive and not focus on the points of tension as much. It’s like our mother taught us, you know, tell me something good; let’s start the meeting with what’s working together right now.”

John Jacobs

“What If the Other Person Is Right?”

Andre and Bertrand

“Deal with things as they come, deal with them quickly, and move on, so that you can get back to enjoying life with one another.”

Erika Boyd

“We don’t always agree on everything, but we always agree to discuss, ...you can have debates and discuss and disagree, but never disrespect.”

Chris Redlitz
Take the heat out of conflict and turn it into a learning opportunity. Ignite sparks of creative combustion for shared solutions and greater connection, staying all-in and focused on something bigger.

Extend upon your Celebrate Friction practice to make peace with yourself and bring awareness to when they present themselves.

Make peace with yourself

It’s super hard to have a positive approach to friction if you don’t have peace with yourself. Our partners understand it is important to “take responsibility for your own buttons,” to focus on understanding yourself and the things that will trigger a negative reaction—to be aware of them and really work on them.

Which of these buttons can you take responsibility for now and commit to working on first?

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What are your buttons that trigger negative responses?
What 5 buttons that come to mind?

Keep up the practice...

Share your buttons with more Deep Connections. Ask them to share theirs and give each other permission to bring awareness to these triggers when they present themselves. Begin to Celebrate Friction through this level of shared awareness.
“We first must make peace with nature. We’ve no hope for making peace among humankind, our fellow humans . . . if we fail to take care of the systems of the natural world. It is the underpinning of everything.”

_Sylvia Earle_

“[What they would implement, and how, has been based on a circle of friends, an ever-growing circle of friends, that has worked tirelessly under conditions of personal trust.]

_Mostafa Tolba_

“The ten of us and our families, our wives and our extended families, we formed a partnership where we deeply respected each other, hid nothing . . . it was the primacy of what we called the central committee or the central team [focused on ending smallpox in India]. And it was magical, and it still is.”

_Larry Brilliant_

“We catalyze collective connections.”

_We Catalyze_ 

Illustration: Les Copland
Our Deep Connections give us the moral courage to stand up for something bigger than ourselves and unleash new possibilities.

By bringing our Deep Connections together, we have the power to make a positive impact, more than any one person could make alone.

Bring together a handful of Deep Connections to do something bigger in your community... or in the world.

What is Something Bigger we can do together in our community or in the world?

Keep up the practice... Get Inspired by checking out the Plus Wonder partnerships. Believe that your ideas, when rooted in serving the planet, in service of humanity, and others will bear fruit, and live on with a positive legacy of change forever!
Built on a deep well of love—often named as ‘unconditional love,’ Jacqueline Novogratz’s mom had a brilliant question that describes this: “Am I loving enough?” It’s about always looking out for the other person’s best interest—and putting your partnership as the highest priority in life. This kind of love becomes so deep with so many shared experiences that you almost become one person. It is unlimited love—no need to worry about running out as it is the ultimate renewable energy.
Who and what will you love into being?*

*our twist on a beautiful Mr. Roger’s quote – “Who has loved you into being?”

Plus Wonder started as an innocent adventure. I was working with a group called The Elders and realized that they were these wonderful people making a huge difference in the world – because of the partnerships they had nurtured. So I went in search of 60 of the most meaningful partnerships, recording hundreds of hours of conversations. These partners have collectively shared over 1,500+ years of wisdom.

We’d love for you to add wisdom of your own. This has truly been a collective effort—with huge gratitude to the core volunteer collective and the 60+ partnerships. A very special thanks to Keith Yamashita, Todd Holcomb, and the collaborators listed below who have given their love and creativity to help bring Plus Wonder alive in this newspaper.

If you want to explore more about nurturing Deep Connections who will help you be the very best version of yourself, we’ve captured the wisdom from these 60+ partnerships and collaborations in the book, Partnering. You can find it in most local bookstores or online. Enjoy!

- Jean Oelwang

Get involved at www.pluswonder.org
We would love to hear from you – contact us at: info@pluswonder.org.