

PLUS WONDER

# Explorer Curriculum



Based on the 65+ partnership stories and research within

## **Partnering:** Forge the Deep Connections That Make Great Things Happen

by Jean Oelwang

This Curriculum (as you would expect) was a collaborative effort led by educators; Nicholas Martino, Breanna Morsadi, Ashley Silver, and of course the wisdom from the 65+ partnerships who are part of Plus Wonder. We also want to thank Lindsay Clark for helping with coordination, Les Copland for his magical design touch, and to the whole Plus Wonder team. Thanks also go to Joann McPike, Keith Yamashita, Todd Holcomb for all their wisdom and support, as well as to Greg Kletsel who wove his magic into the original designs.

**Fair Go Policy:** We would love your feedback to help evolve these insights on Deep Connections. Please use this curriculum for your own use and to help reach as many people as possible. If you want to use them in a for-profit capacity, please check in with us at [info@pluswonder.org](mailto:info@pluswonder.org).

© 2023 Plus Wonder | All rights reserved



# **Plus Wonder** is an exploration of meaningful connections of all types.

## **Who are the people who make you, you?**

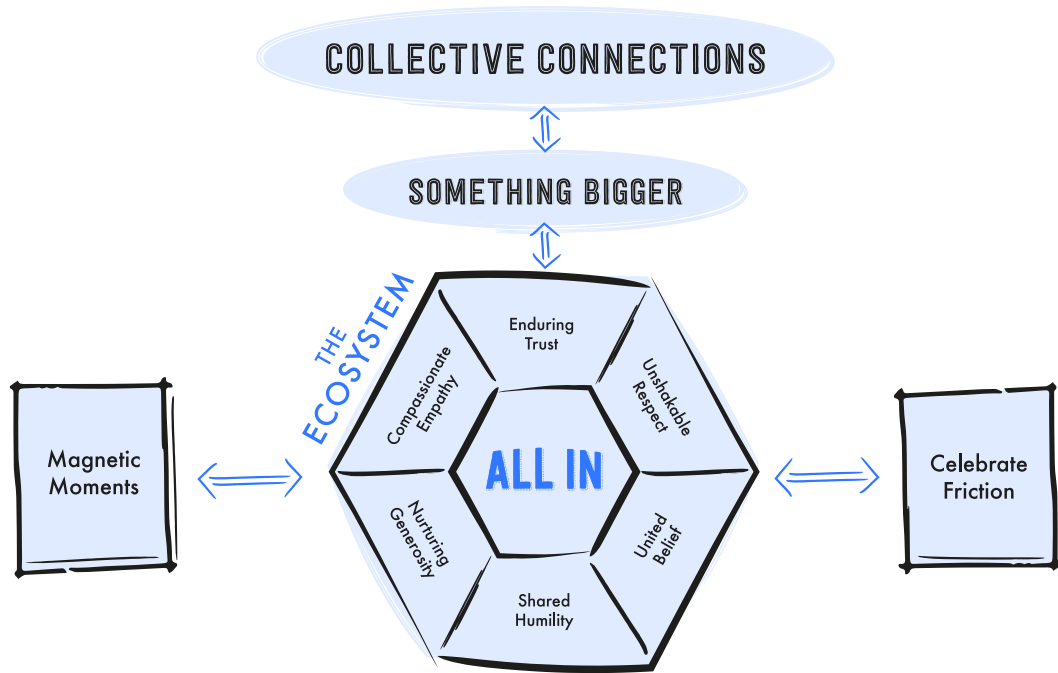
We've listened to and learned from over 65+ partnerships of purpose, and distilled their collective wisdom into a set of insights and tools to help you build depth and purpose in your relationships.

We've also explored some of the greatest collective human achievements, and the Deep Connections at their core, to help you scale collaborations and organizations that will make a difference.

## **Explore the Six Degrees of Connection**

We've spent the last 18 years listening to and learning from successful partnerships and collectives of all types. These unique relationships are special because they've helped each individual make a bigger difference in the world than they could on their own.

We found six essential elements across all sizes of partnerships—from dyads, to collectives, to movements—and across all types of partnerships—whether business, romantic, family, or friends.



## SIX DEGREES OF CONNECTION™ FRAMEWORK FOR DEEP CONNECTIONS

The Six Degrees of Connection is a powerful and unique framework designed to help you nurture meaningful relationships of purpose that lead to better lives, better organizations, and a better world.

Click on icons for videos



**Something Bigger**



**The Ecosystem**



**Celebrate Friction**



**All-in**



**Magnetic Moments**



**Collective Connections**

The secret to building and nurturing Deep Connections lies in a holistic approach. Download workbooks for each degree at [pluswonder.org/educators](https://pluswonder.org/educators), and become a Plus Wonder Explorer!



EXPLORE THE  
SIX DEGREES

# Let's get started

We have developed multiple workbooks that can be applied in middle school, high school, college, and beyond. The same workbooks can be used by parents, romantic partners, colleagues, businesses, friends, collaborations, basically anyone who wants to do something bigger in their life.

## The Explorer Curriculum helps you:

**Identify and recognize** how you can build Deep Connections in your own life.

**Explore partnering** through the wisdom of a diverse array of local and global partnerships, who have built successful relationships of purpose.

**Brainstorm actions** to nurture partnerships in your life and community.

Whether you're in a **professional community, a classroom, or at home with family**, you can delve into the Explorer Curriculum in many ways. We recommend you...

### Partner-up

Ask a partner to join you in introducing the Explorer Curriculum together. Share a partnership story of your own to set the tone. Ask your group to discuss the term "partnering," to define what it looks like in your community, and to share relevant examples.

### Create connection circles

Dive deeper by forming connection circles—informal gatherings where your learning community joins together to listen attentively and discuss thoughtful questions. Use our [connection circle guide](#) to facilitate questions and further explore the Six Degrees of Connection.

### Kick off with a quote

Initiate each session by sharing a different empowering quote from our [quote cards](#), which represent the extraordinary partnerships of Plus Wonder. Kick off each day discussing, learning, and growing from our 1,500+ years of partnership wisdom.

### Develop a signature ritual

Many of our partners develop rituals that are personal and allow their partnerships to grow. Develop your own partnership ritual by creating a special environment, setting an intention, or simply bringing presence and deep appreciation to your time together.

### Extend your reach

Consider how you can continue to partner outside of your learning community. Share the book [Partnering](#) with a friend, and use this workbook as a guide to foster Deep Connections. Review and share the Plus Wonder vision and resources at [pluswonder.org](https://pluswonder.org) under the [Educators page](#). Follow Plus Wonder on social media.



# SOMETHING BIGGER



Stone Circle. Martin Hill and Philippa Jones



**SOMETHING BIGGER**

# Lift your purpose through meaningful partnerships.



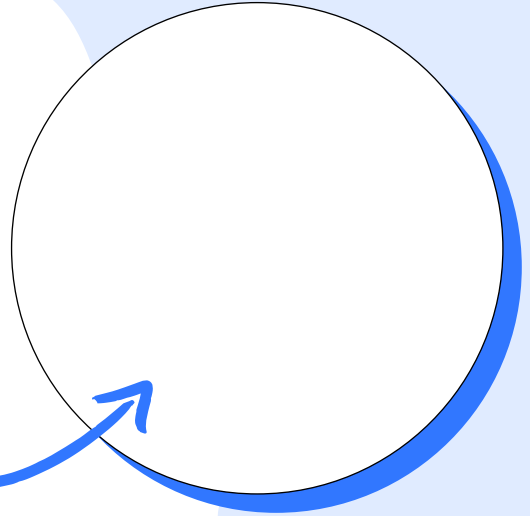
Purpose is often mistakenly thought about as a solo-endeavor—finding self fulfillment, becoming known for something, being the very best at something. Yet the most meaningful contributions to the world have been achieved by a combination of people coming together with a shared purpose, or supporting each other to achieve their individual purposes. Something Bigger explores the inextricable links between purpose and partnership—helping you identify, evolve, and scale the legacy of your impact in the world.



## 1ST DEGREE OF CONNECTION EXERCISE

# Nurture Something Bigger

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.



1. What **quality of this partnership** has allowed it to create an extraordinary impact?

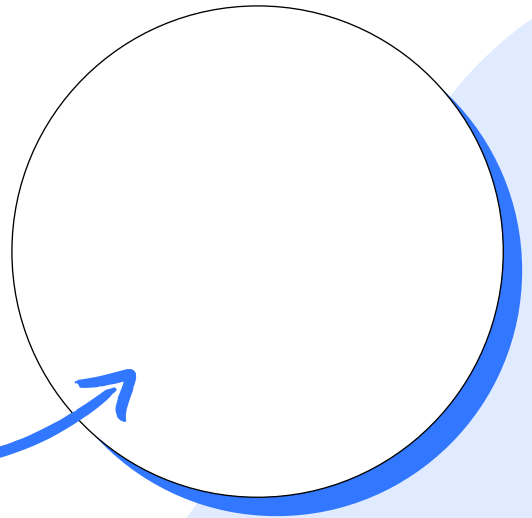
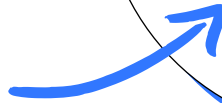
2. What has this partnership **made uniquely possible in this world** that can only exist with you in partnership with this person?



1ST DEGREE OF CONNECTION EXERCISE

# Wonderous Relationship

Write the name of someone in your life that you would like to nurture into a wondrous relationship.



**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 thing you can do** to form this partnership and what you'll say to get it going.





# Keep up the practice

Start *dreamscribing* with your Deep Connections. Write down 50 dreams in five minutes and see where Something Bigger can take you.

1

10

20

30

40

50

What is one dream worth pursuing with a Deep Connection? Share your wonderings on social using the hashtags [#PartneringTheBook](#) [#PlusWonder](#)



# ALL-IN



Snow Infinity: Martin Hill and Philippa Jones

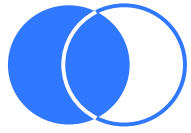


# Feel safe in the relationship and know you 100% have each other's back for the long run.



Our partnership wisdom shows that when you make a commitment in a real way, it will set you free. Being All-In with your partners and finding freedom through commitment is not easy work—in fact, it is counterintuitive as we often think we must sacrifice our freedom when we commit to another. Yet our partners continue to find their wings when given the deep support, strength, and space within their relationships to soar to the best version of themselves.

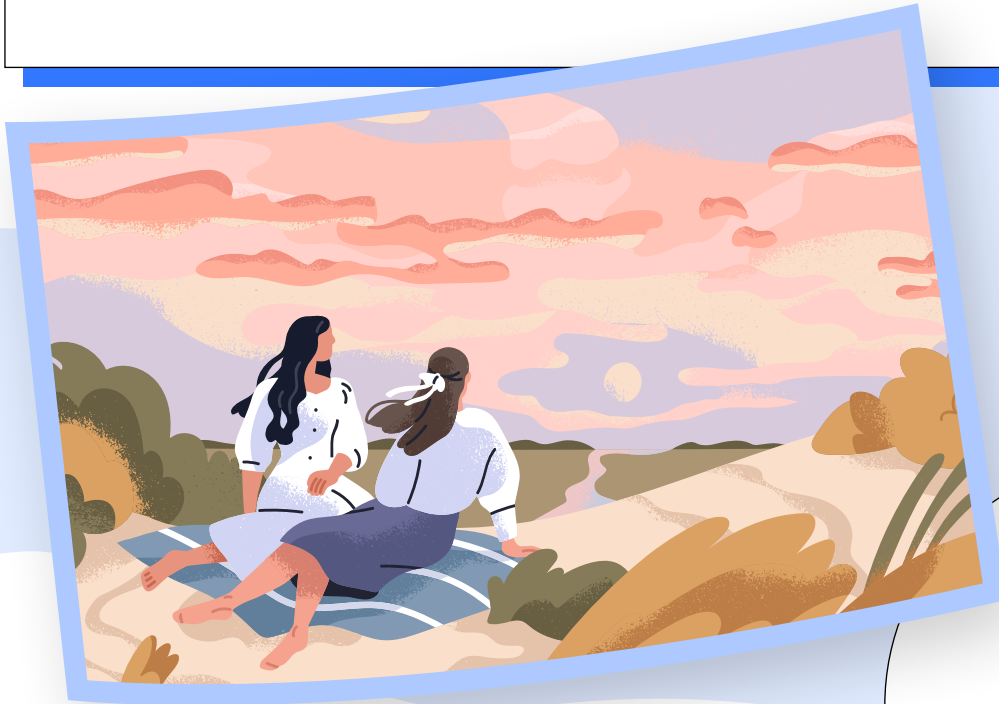
## 2ND DEGREE OF CONNECTION EXERCISE



# Unconditional Support

Find a picture on your camera roll that reminds you of a partner who provides you Unconditional Support.

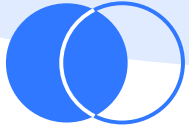
How does their support make you feel and **help you take risks** in the world?



Send the picture with a text to thank them for being All-In and making your life that much larger. That partner's name is



## 2ND DEGREE OF CONNECTION EXERCISE



# Am I loving enough?

Sometimes one simple question can create a profound mindset shift. Consciously ask yourself,



**"Am I loving enough to my Deep Connections?"**



and allow the truth to carry you toward positive action.

Consider how you define "loving enough." What actions demonstrate your **love towards others** and commitment to being All-In?



# Keep up the practice

Spark a **meaningful conversation** with one of your Deep Connections by asking one another, “Am I loving enough?” Explore more depth and candor by sharing what you’ve learned about one another.

Who did you speak with?

What did you learn about yourself?

Share an action that demonstrates your love toward others and your commitment to being All-In on social using the hashtags [#PartneringTheBook](#) [#PlusWonder](#)





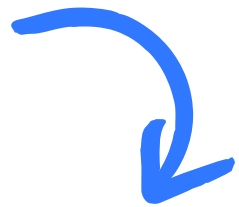
# THE ECOSYSTEM



Floating Stones. Martin Hill and Philippa Jones



# Stay All-In through a moral ecosystem, alive with the daily practice of six essential virtues



**Enduring Trust**

**Shared Humility**

**Unshakeable Mutual Respect**

**Nurturing Generosity**

**United Belief**

**Compassionate Empathy**

Over time, these virtues become reflexive responses, creating an environment of kindness, grace, and unconditional love.

These virtues don't just magically appear in a partnership. It takes hard work and curiosity to practice and build them until they become a part of everything you do. Of course, no one is perfect, living these virtues is a constant evolution, a constant growing and learning experience.





3RD DEGREE OF CONNECTION EXERCISE — VIRTUE 1

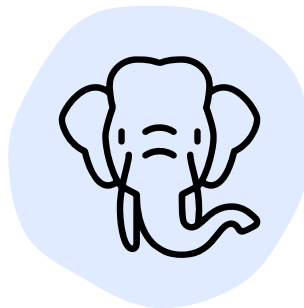
# Enduring Trust:



PLAY VIDEO

You trust each other with your lives. The first phone call type of trust. Grounded in trusting in good intentions, in Something Bigger and in yourself.

This level of trust takes time and can be fostered through intentional practice. The co-founders of AirBnB, Joe Gebbia, Brian Chesky and Nathan Blecharczyk, developed an authentic activity, creatively titled *Elephants*, *Dead Fish*, and *Vomit*, to cultivate Enduring Trust within the organization.



## Elephants

are the big things in the room that nobody is talking about.



## Dead Fish

are the things that happened a while ago that people can't get over.



## Vomit

represents the thoughts that people need to get off their mind with someone to just sit there and listen.

## Try it out for yourself now before playing with others!

Think of a partnership that already holds a level of trust where you assume good intentions. Consider the Elephants, Dead Fish, and Vomit and answer the following questions:



PLAY VIDEO

- 1.** What are the big topics that I avoid discussing?



- 2.** What lingering sentiments from my past experiences need to be resolved and released?



- 3.** What do I need to get off of my chest and into the open?



- 4.** What can I commit to sharing with this partner after answering these questions, and how can I give them the space to do the same?

Keep up the practice and see how you can cultivate trust in all your relationships by bringing the Elephant, Dead Fish, and Vomit questions into other partnerships and group settings.



# Unshakeable Mutual Respect:



PLAY VIDEO

A respect so deep it celebrates differences and can't be broken by inevitable human mistakes. An honoring and awe of one another that allows you to live your truth.

We've all had the experience of trying to communicate something important while the other person is somewhere else, not listening at all. We've also all been guilty of doing the same ourselves. Not only is it disrespectful, it undermines the connection, sapping the person's willingness to share and damaging their confidence.

And then there is that rare occurrence where someone listens deeply, with great attention and consideration. This is what Paul Bennett—Partner at IDEO and photographer Jim Cooper's spouse—meant when he said, "When your partner speaks, the world stops." Paul and Jim discuss how respect is as much about deep listening and being present as it is about praise and affirmation.

**The world stops when you speak...** Think of a Deep Connection that embodies this for you. Consider how they tune in and hold onto each word, make you feel seen and heard, show they remain fully present with you. Write down three ways in which this person deeply listens.

1.

2.

3.

## **The world stops when you listen...**

Now consider a moment when you truly paused and listened deeply to someone. What did that feel like? How can you make this a daily practice to be fully present?

**Share** the list with your Deep Connection, letting them know their gift of listening and Unshakeable Mutual Respect for you doesn't go unnoticed.



# United Belief:



PLAY VIDEO

A shared confidence in each other and faith that together you can make the impossible possible.

"He's given me huge confidence," Jane Tewson, founder of Igniting Change, said of her husband, Charles Lane. "He is an absolute rock. He tells it like it is, which is pretty hard sometimes." Great partners are constantly pushing the boundaries and helping us take on something much bigger. Encouraging United Belief helps individuals and organizations step into their highest potential.

## ASK YOURSELF:

Which Deep Connection in your life is your anchor of confidence? Who is your rock and believes you can do anything?



Send them a text in honor of being your anchor of confidence. Let this message remind them of your gratitude and United Belief in one another.

## PAY IT FORWARD:

What Deep Connection can you be an anchor of confidence for? Who would you like to support more often, to be their rock?



Having an anchor of confidence can give you the power to be an anchor of confidence for others. Gift them with a message of confidence and keep the chain of United Belief alive.



# Shared Humility:



PLAY VIDEO

The ability to keep your ego in check and constantly learn from and be in service to each other. An understanding of our own limitations and gratitude for what others bring to the relationship.

The sense of humility that emerged from all the partnerships was aided by their focus on a bold Something Bigger, which checks any egos that might get in the way of the larger vision. As Andy Kuper from LeapFrog Investments—which invests in companies that provide lower-income families financial services and healthcare—shared, “What about the next billion people that we could reach, and whose lives we could impact?” and the realization that we are in service to our partners and our mission—not in control of them.

## Practice Shared Humility by being in service to a Deep Connection without expecting anything in return.

1. What Deep Connection keeps your ego in check?

2. How can you thank them by performing an act of service that would help them thrive?

3. When will you perform this act of service?



**Put it in the calendar, set a reminder, tell someone, and hold yourself accountable. Once complete, remember to notice how it feels to give without attachment. Keep the humble sharing alive.**





3RD DEGREE OF CONNECTION EXERCISE  
— VIRTUE 5

# Nurturing Generosity:

Generosity is competing in how much we can give instead of how much we can take. It's grounded in the wisdom that you always receive more than you give. Generosity means getting joy from giving.

**Close your eyes** and think back to a time where you were generous and/or shared a loving affirmation with a Deep Connection. What energy does this memory give you? Memorialize the feeling by writing the act(s) of generosity and affirmation that you have gifted in a partnership:



**Look at this often and use it as a daily affirmation that serves to nurture generosity.**



PLAY VIDEO

**A giving mindset that competes only through acts of generosity**

**Close your eyes again** and call upon a memory where you felt the power of a partner's generosity. Memorialize the feeling by writing the act(s) of generosity and affirmation that you have received in this partnership:

## **Contemplate:**

How might you practice more generosity in every type of partnership you have?



3RD DEGREE OF CONNECTION EXERCISE — VIRTUE 6

# Compassionate Empathy:



PLAY VIDEO

An understanding of the “why” underneath your partner’s actions and reactions. The ability to be vulnerable and go beyond standing in one another’s shoes to loving action to help end your partner’s suffering.

Take a moment to look at your shoes and think about **all the life experiences** your feet have journeyed through. What would it be like for someone to walk in your shoes?

Next, bring to mind a Deep Connection. Think of their shoes (maybe even ask them to send you a picture of the shoes on their feet!) and play out the same dialogue with yourself.

What would it be like to walk in their shoes? How can you **step into understanding** their “why” and let them know you are there for them?

Compassionate Empathy can be seen as the ability to step into someone else’s shoes and not diminish them for their differences. This allows us to actively celebrate diverse dreams and alleviate suffering.

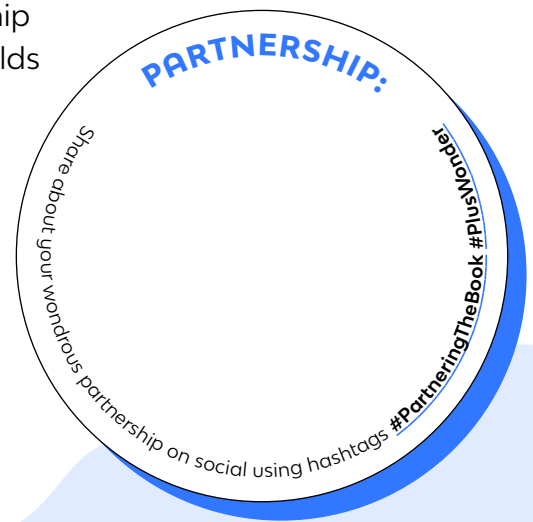


# Keep up the practice

## Ecosystem of Virtues Check-ins

Take a pause. Think about a relationship or a partnership that is wondrous for you. What ecosystem of virtues holds it together? What draws you closer to your partner or partners in it? What entangles you together in the living of daily life, the making of mischief, the pursuit of Something Bigger than yourself?

Use and reuse this ecosystem metric to evaluate/reflect upon your connections, whether business, friend, or romantic and discover how your ecosystem of virtues evolve over time.



Put an **X** on the continuum using the following scale.

**1 = low 10 = high**

1	WE TRUST IN EACH OTHER'S GOOD INTENTIONS.	10
1	OUR DEEP RESPECT FOR ONE ANOTHER CAN'T BE BROKEN BY MISTAKES AND DIFFERENCES.	10
1	WE BELIEVE THAT TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE THE IMPOSSIBLE POSSIBLE.	10
1	WE KEEP OUR EGOS AT BAY AND CONSTANTLY LEARN FROM EACH OTHER.	10
1	WE HAVE GIVING MINDSETS.	10
1	WE EMBRACE EMPATHY AND TAKE LOVING ACTION TO SUPPORT EACH OTHER'S SUFFERING.	10

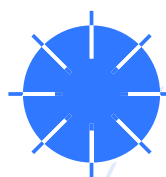




# MAGNETIC MOMENTS



2000 Circles. Martin Hill and Philippa Jones

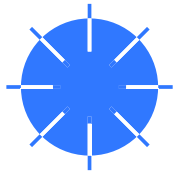


## MAGNETIC MOMENTS

# Keep connected and strengthen your ecosystem

through intentional moments that  
**keep curiosity and wonder alive,**  
create space for honest conversations,  
**spark unlimited joy,**  
and build a wider supportive community.

Magnetic Moments are intentional experiences that allow for people to simply be present together. Keep curiosity and wonder alive by listening to and learning from each other and the wider world. Get into flow where honest conversations and unlimited joy flourish. There will be moments when you are unsettled, as you work through something difficult together.



#### 4TH DEGREE OF CONNECTION EXERCISE

# Unlimited Resource of Joy

None of the partnerships we explored took themselves too seriously.

But they did take joy and laughter seriously and wove it into their daily practices. Partners Mick and Caskey Ebeling of The Not Impossible Foundation created their own ritual vocabulary, using phrases such as BLE or “Best Life Ever” to remind themselves to live in adventure and pause to remember their good fortune.

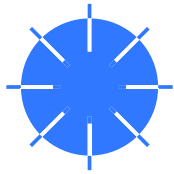
To ensure they are living BLE, they go on a date night every Thursday, a “touchdown” ritual that keeps them connected amid the chaos of work and raising three children.

Think about a moment when you had **great joy and laughter** with one of your Deep Connections. Write it down.

How can you **build that moment** into an ongoing ritual that will give you both unlimited joy?

Call your Deep Connection and tell them your ongoing ritual idea to keep that joy front and center.





4TH DEGREE OF CONNECTION EXERCISE

# Magnetic Moment Madlib

Complete and share this madlib with your Deep Connection to explore and honor your Magnetic Moment.

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. Our connection grew in this magnetic moment that brought us closer together.

It helped me see \_\_\_\_\_, which brought me joy, curiosity, and wonder. I mean, it was huge. And it's all because of you. It's all because of that single moment in time we shared.

So, I'm writing to thank you for giving me the gift of a magical moment in time—and mostly for keeping our connection strong no matter what comes our way.

Well, that's it, for now. Signing off, with love.

\_\_\_\_\_



# Keep up the practice

Magnetic Moments come in all kinds of forms. Partners Jo Confino and Paz Perlman are incredibly busy people who know that honest communication keeps a partnership strong. To stay present and vulnerable with each other, they've set up a ritual called **"Friday Talk"**, when they each share positive things that happened that week, voice any regrets, and raise any concerns... all with an open heart and no accusations.

Develop with a partner your own version of Friday Talk. Be sure to put deep listening at the heart of the ritual. Jot down those ideas here.



Share one of your favorite ideas on social media using the hashtags [#PartneringTheBook](#) [#PlusWonder](#)



# CELEBRATE FRICTION



Synergy. Martin Hill and Philippa Jones



**CELEBRATE FRICTION**

# Take the heat out of conflict and turn it into learning opportunities.



**Ignite sparks of creative combustion**

**for shared solutions and greater connection, staying All-In and focused on Something Bigger.**

Using our partnerships as safe spaces to learn how to disagree and how to turn friction into learning moments has never been more important. Celebrating Friction can help us navigate a society prone to conflict, anxiety, and fear.

We need to cultivate humility to realize that we don't have all the answers and that the people we surround ourselves with can be our best teachers and support systems.





## 5TH DEGREE OF CONNECTION EXERCISE

# The Other 99 Things

Don't sweat the small stuff. Remember the 99 things you love about someone when that one irritating thing happens. A sound perspective can always lift you above the petty rivalries and disagreements and allow you to turn friction into positive energy towards your mission.

Consider 99 things **that you love** about a Deep Connection. Write down the first thing that comes to mind.

99

How might you share with your Deep Connection that **thing you love about them**? Next time you see them, how do you plan to let that **sharing of love** turn friction into positive energy?







## 5TH DEGREE OF CONNECTION EXERCISE

# Make Peace with Yourself

It's very 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.

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

1

2

3

4

5

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





# 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.

How would you finish this sentence, thanks to this shared awareness you've gained?

"I love that in my partnership with \_\_\_\_\_  
we believe in calling attention to \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

in order to turn friction into a deeper connection."

Consider sharing this sentence on social media using the hashtags [#PartneringTheBook](#) [#PlusWonder](#)



# COLLECTIVE CONNECTIONS



Stone Circle. Martin Hill and Philippa Jones



## COLLECTIVE CONNECTIONS

# A framework of design principles to scale collaborations

## with Deep Connections

at the center as role models, hubs of momentum, and connective tissue.

Building Collective Connections of people and keeping up the momentum as they drive toward shared goals is not an easy process.

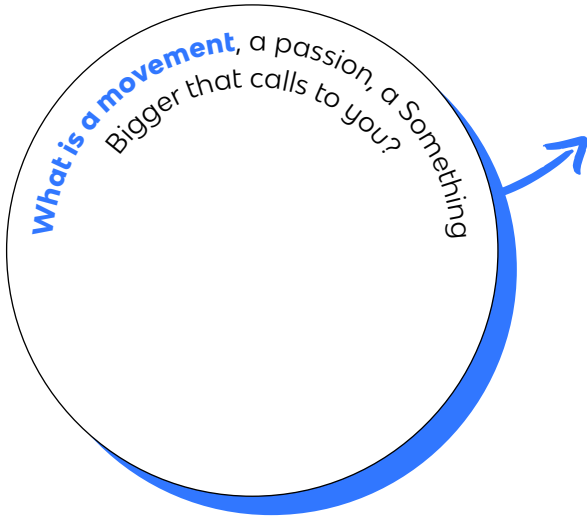
It takes hard work and a commitment to be All-In. Fortunately, the Plus Wonder partnerships continually show us that this is not only possible, but essential for our survival.

We have much to learn from how these partnerships built their own Deep Connections, which they then expanded to wider collectives, and, in many cases, nurtured movements that have lasted for decades.



## 6TH DEGREE OF CONNECTION EXERCISE

# Building Collective Connections



List the projects/organizations that **inspire you** and align with your Something Bigger.

Imagine gathering a group of your closest Deep Connections and sharing your passion for these projects.

Who would you **invite** and why?

What would be an **ideal outcome**?

How can you **make this a reality**?

Decide on 1-2 commitments you can make right now to start creating and building your Collective Connections.

1

2

**Now go do the thing!**



# Keep up the practice

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.

Pick one or more of the prompts below to spark your thinking and share on social media using the hashtags [#PartneringTheBook](#) [#PlusWonder](#).

- » Bring together a handful of **Deep Connections to do Something Bigger in your community**... or in the world. What's your Something Bigger? Tag those Deep Connections with whom you'd like to make an impact.
- » Pose the question, "What is Something Bigger **we can do together in our community or in the world?**" Engage with those community members who reply.
- » Host a Collective Connections meetup (virtually or face to face) with your Deep Connections to **drive positive impact**. Set a time and place, share it out, and make it fun!
- » Get inspired by checking out the Plus Wonder partnerships. Share the **partnership you connect with the most** and tag those partners!

Believe that your ideas—**when rooted in serving the planet, humanity, and others**—will bear fruit and live on with a positive legacy of change forever!

When you complete the Explorer curriculum, join us at [\*\*pluswonder.org/architect\*\*](https://pluswonder.org/architect) to learn about becoming a Plus Wonder Architect!

