



# THE ECOSYSTEM



Floating Stones. Martin Hill and Philippa Jones



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

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

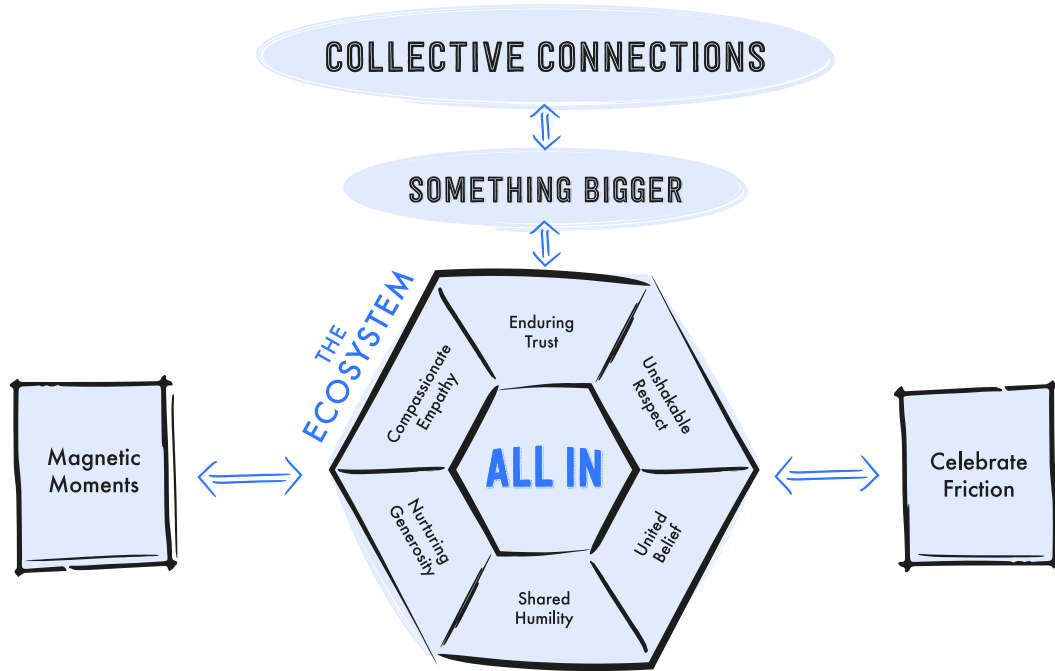
We've listened to and learned from over 65+ partnerships of purpose, and distilled their collective wisdom into a set of insights and tools to help you build depth and purpose in your relationships.

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.

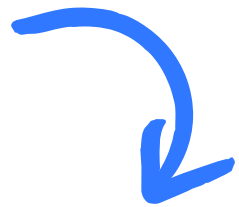
### Extend your reach

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.





# 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

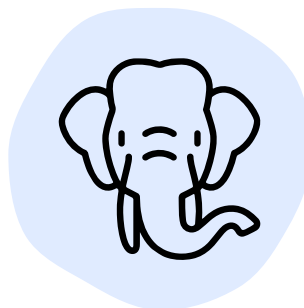
# Enduring Trust:



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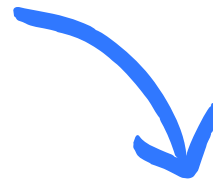
You trust each other with your lives. The first phone call type of trust. Grounded in trusting in good intentions, in Something Bigger and in yourself.

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.

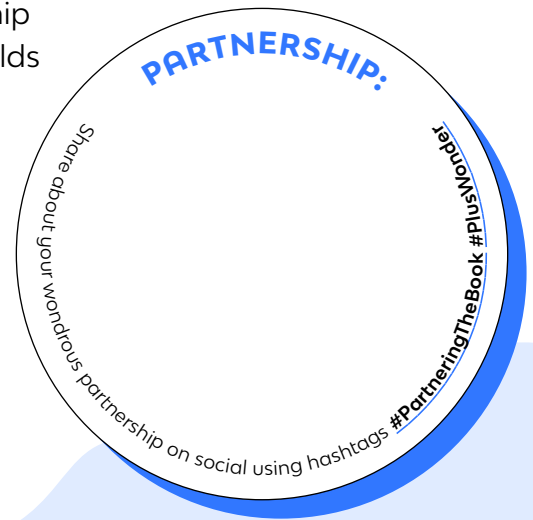


# Keep up the practice

## 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