

The Art of Partnering

~ Dane E. Rose ~

The Art of Partnering

A Science of Conscious Connecting

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Dedication:

*To all those big and
brave enough
to be small.*

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*The bigger the ecology we choose to partner with,
the smaller our role. The smaller the ecology we partner
with, the bigger our role in co-creating it.*

A Parable of Value

You are getting on in years and realize it's about time to start shopping for a suitable afterlife, in which to spend eternity. As you count your money it's not adding up to as much as you would like. Still, perhaps you can find something decent on Sale.

Walking around in the Mall you see the dealership for heaven. Beautiful images, sounds, scents and thoughts waft out the door and you find yourself drawn in. But you are too smart to pay full price for anything and are determined not to let your emotions get the better of you. Sure, heaven feels great, but never take the first offer, right?

Politely you enquire how much heaven costs. So much? Could there be any room to negotiate? Considering what rotten luck you have had in life, might the dealership extend a discount? No?

Well, you'll be damned if you are going to spend all your hard-earned cash on one thing! It would be wonderful, but you have a principle against paying full-price for anything!

Then you see the dealership for hell across the hall. Disturbing nightmares of confusion, mixed messages, betrayed hopes and unclear agreements ooze out of the smoky room, decked out in hazy lights. It's not that

appealing, to be sure. But then you see a sign: Today Only: "95% off standard prices!"

Surely you are seeing things! 95% off? That's unheard of. Why, you would not need to spend most of your money. Besides, there is something about the way Satan is dancing – something a bit sexy about that tail. He's probably been unfairly blamed and is not as bad as all that. You decide to give hell a chance. If you are wrong you can always change your mind and come back to heaven if you don't like it...

Milton Friedman said it best when he stated: "There is no such thing as a free lunch." There are plenty of relationships out there with no questions asked. There are doorways that welcome everyone in, no matter how ready, skilled or willing we are to create success. It's just that they are not doorways leading to high resonant states.

This is not a book about low prices, easy fixes, or short-cuts to bliss that don't cost anything. Rather, for those of us who embrace relationship as the most direct and intense path to well-being, it offers insight on how to insure that the considerable amount of time, skill, money, effort and vulnerability we invest yields a value so high it's worth paying. The universe is sustainable. The more we give, the more we receive. The more skill and understanding we have, the more we receive what we desire.

Good luck on your path to relationship abundance!

~ Dane E. Rose ~

Part One:

Partnering Paradigms

What Stands in the Way of Partnering?

Partnering, as I outline it here, is a very rare experience. This is not an accident. Specific concepts and values, such as privacy and independence, block partnership based on the ways they are interpreted. When these culturally sanctioned values hold more weight than partnering, they block us from the experience.

Privacy:

Privacy is a deeply held value, stemming from the fact that secrecy has been one of the methods that has allowed people who are weaker to escape domination and exploitation from those who are stronger.

It's important to understand that the origin of privacy is an outlook that says the following: "I am not safe if I am revealed as I am. Others are not safe from me if they are revealed as they are." There is no reason to spend energy concealing anything if there is no possibility of pain or threat resulting from being seen.

Threat can come in the form of judgment, violence, theft, or coercion to mind, heart, and/or body. The attachment to privacy stems from an expectation of this threat.

It takes energy to hide, conceal and avoid being seen. Physical and emotional doors need to be locked. Veils need to be maintained. Feelings concealed. This energy expenditure makes sense when we expect to be violated in some way, because it may require even more energy to recover from our wounds. However, it does not make sense when we expect to be loved, supported, understood and cared about. Why spend energy to make it harder for others to love and see us? It is important to be aware that we are technically unlovable to the degree that we choose to hide: love is not real when it exists around an illusion. When someone loves us who does not know who “us” is because we have kept secrets, they are not loving “us” at all, but the image we have projected into the relationship space through selective concealment.

Privacy and secrecy are road-blocks to love. Road blocks only make sense when we don't believe we will be loved if we are seen. When privacy is maintained it is part of belief that the people around us do not have the skill and/or intention to love, support, and respect us as we are. This belief, accurate or inaccurate, precludes the deepest form of partnership: to love and be loved.

Two things are essential before partnering is possible: To see others clearly enough to know who has the skill and desire to support our well-being and who does not. And to help others to see us.

Without the skill to discern enemy from ally, we will not risk true transparency. As long as privacy remains, partnering must be limited. It's important to remember that secrecy and privacy is a neutral force. It makes it harder for people who want to hurt us to do so. And equally hard for those who want to love us to do so.

Independence:

"I must be independent, above all else." The American mythos is the solitary loner who does whatever "he" wants and does not listen to anyone. One form American independence takes is from the tradition. The other is from everyone else. John Wayne was his own man, waited for no-one, and wasn't afraid to go it alone. H was no ones' pussy! (A nod to the many forms of chauvinism, which honor men and women who don't "need," and who ignore human feelings to do whatever they want.

Much of the free-market economy is based on the mythology of one man, working harder and smarter than anyone else, and getting rich. Winning in America is the mythology of "the one" outsmarting the many.

The cost of this kind of independence: Precluding partnership. When we define ourselves as having no ties upon which we depend, we define ourselves in isolation, or in relationships that we dominate, but are not dominated

by. Many western men, getting the message that to need is “weak,” feel safest in relationships with women who need them and demonstrate the need, so that they can avoid expressing their own needs, and feel like “a real man who provides.”

It is culturally favorable to be a boss instead of an employee. The boss is independent. The employee is dependent. Neither are partners.

Historically, men have been more independent than women in relationship, stemming from an age in which physical brawn was the primary currency of power. The man takes. The woman gives. The man doesn't care. The woman needs.

Rebelling against this stereotype, the modern woman seeks independence, emotionally, sexually and financially. Independence feels better than a subservient dependence. However, neither dependence or independence has room for partnership. Unbalanced dependency leads to domination. Independence leads to protection from domination. Neither lead to partnership.

Independence is closer to partnership in the sense that when one is free one can choose to enter a relationship of partnership in which both people willingly depend on one another to co-create something that is bigger than either one of them. This choice does not make sense, however, within the paradigm that “independence is good” for its

own sake. Independence, and freedom, is only valuable to the extent that they allow us to choose the purpose to which we commit ourselves. Spending a lifetime at the crossroad of all possibility, while choosing no path, is not a life at all. Freedom is precious because of the roads it allows us to commit to, not for it's own sake.

Distance/Detachment/Sophistication:

We admire people who are cool, witty, in command, and politely kind to the emotional “fools” who can't hold themselves together. Someone who can always come up with a great come-back is never surprised, and who out-thinks everyone else. We want to be like that person. And we curse our reactive, emotional and stunned simplicity when one of these people run rip-shod over our emotions, without batting an eye.

There's just one problem. Suave and witty sophistication has no room for partnership. Partnership is about connecting and co-creating, not verbal battles, wit, and detached irony. While some are turned on by being diminished and worshipping another's superiority, people are also turned on by being whipped, humiliated and shamed in various ways. Except where this is carefully co-created for mutual well-being, this is not partnership. How can one emotionally partner on the foundation of belittling one's own and other's emotions?

Partnership includes equality. Two cold, witty and detached people cannot co-create love. They may create lust, and an infatuation with the perfectness of each other's independent facades, but this is a partnering to look good to others and each other and the world, not a partnering to create connection, empathy, and shared experience.

Cultural Memes:

Every culture protects its values by making icons of the people who most embody its ideals. Because everyone wants to be looked on favorably, we emulate our cultural icons. Each culture is located at a point on many continuums. America is among the cultures least oriented towards partnering. This is neither good nor bad, but it means that if we want to truly partner with another, we need to step outside the cultural memes that define the "attractive, appropriate, sophisticated, and desirable person."

Movies of sexy, sophisticated people make it even easier to notice culturally sanctioned habits. We are all well-trained in these trendy societal memes:

"I think I should go."

"Please excuse my show of emotion. I'm not normally like this and feel embarrassed."

“Forgive me for reacting strongly.”

“I don’t think I would make very good company right now.”

“I’d rather not talk about it.”

Changing the subject rather than having feelings.

Talking about surface issues and material objects.

Saying one thing to a person’s face and another behind their back.

Judging the person who believed a lie as stupid for being taken in, and the liar as “sophisticated” for pulling one over on someone naive.

“Sorry, got to go! Busy day!” (Showing superiority over the person who has time to talk about something as unimportant as feelings, when “real things need to be done!”)

Each of these American memes shows us what a successful, desirable American looks like. Mrs. Success is too busy to go into detail about their feelings and experience, feigning aloofness. They are too important to cry over mere trifles. They “pull themselves together.” They are smart, witty, reserved, judgmental behind the veil, and don’t want to be seen with “those kind of people.”

In short, the golden rule is that everything that can be done to block slow, transparent, emotional intimacy is done. Between people darting off without warning, texting feverishly to people who are not there, avoiding people any time feelings are present, to changing the subject, and saying "I'm fine," without expressing any actual feeling the rule of "action and thought is more valuable than presence and emotion" is competitively sustained.

For good measure, emotions get a good whipping in most stand-up comedy. Dating dialog in movies consist of an endless apology on both sides for being human and having feelings.

"I'm sorry; you probably think I'm an idiot (for having feelings)."

"No! I'm the idiot. I also have feelings."

"Gosh, look at me, trying to look cool. How lame."

"Yes, you are lame, but you are cute."

"Thanks for overlooking my lame emotions."

"That's fine. I want to have sex with you, so I'll put up with your feelings. We all know your body and sex is the only thing worth engaging with, so we will put up with your kooky ideas and feelings."

As for the people who haven't got the message - who answer with their actual feelings when people ask how

they are doing? “What tedious idiots!” We shame and humiliate these people into saying “fine,” like they are supposed to.

We are a culture of emotional invisibility, emotional apology, and emotional shame. The secrecy and privacy needed to maintain such a culture precludes the partnership that is only possible with intimacy and transparency. This leads directly to loneliness.

One of the reasons we are such a material culture is that, while it’s not OK to talk about them, or partner to co-create them, everyone has feelings. Feelings are the only real motivator we have – the only real reason we have to do anything. Because we can’t partner to co-create being praised for no other reason than that it feels good, we have to buy cool things that are culturally sanctioned to get the praise we want. And because “new” is the only thing noteworthy, we have to keep buying more and more things as an indirect means for feeling good and being praised. This round-about way of alluding to feelings without mentioning them (“your sneakers look cool!”) is our substitute for partnering to co-create the feelings we all want to share.

Instinctive paradigms of safety:

It takes skill and conscious perception to develop a conscious strategy for creating and maintaining safety. When we don’t develop our own carefully developed

patterns, we fall back on instinct. If something feels familiar, we feel safe, even if what is familiar is destructive.

A child returns home to the familiar beating, when plenty of nicer adults are all around them. A child does not have the ability in most cases to evaluate and develop a conscious safety pattern.

In part because our culture shames emotion, and shame is a trauma, many of us become arrested emotionally at the ages we are traumatized and remain frozen as emotional children. Afraid of being traumatized again, we follow the cultural herd. And because less than 1% of the population around us is partnering in any meaningful way, it does not feel comfortable or safe for us to partner. When a partnering opportunity comes along, all we notice is that it's not "normal." We take steps to block it, relying on one of the cultural back doors out of intimacy:

"I really should be going.

"Got to go! Big day tomorrow!

"I'd rather not talk about it.

"Great! Catch you later." (meaning we will never get together about that)

One of the biggest blocks to intimacy is the idea that the typical person we don't know is so likely to be dangerous in some way that we are better off not knowing them.

“Don’t talk to strangers,” leads to everyone we don’t already know remaining strangers. It becomes a catch 22:

“I don’t even know you.”

“No you don’t know me; how about a conversation.”

“I don’t talk to strangers.”

“And I will always be a stranger unless we spend time together!”

“Are you crazy? You are a stranger.”

The only way in to this crazy-making loop of isolation is to “bump into each other many times while appearing not to care, then saying a few things (just to be polite) without wanting to and finally, just discover one day that one is not a stranger and can therefore have a direct conversation without talking to strangers.

Seeing and being seen (intimacy) is the foundation of partnering. It is also predicated on a belief that people are basically good and that the more someone sees and understands you, the more successful they will be at respecting you, caring for you, and finding win/win.

By shutting down the flow of emotion and transparency between 99% of all people, who are initially strangers, on the basis that the world is a dangerous place, we insure that real partnership is impossible between most people, and that the world becomes more scary and shocking as a

result. When most people – even our neighbors – are strangers, precisely because we don't tell them who we are and what we are feeling and vice versa, then most of the people around us don't know with any clarity how to be respectful of the feelings we are hiding. When they accidentally bump into our feelings, we use the pain we feel to affirm our strategy of not talking to strangers (or anyone, for that matter.). In fact, had we talked openly to all the people around us, many of them might have adjusted their behavior based on what they understood.

Entitlement:

“You have more so you should give some to me because I have less. You have something I want and so you should give it to me just because I want it. You are strong and I am weak, so you should take care of me. I exist, so the world, God and you, should make sure that I am safe.”

When the bully takes from someone smaller it is an imbalance that says: “You can't physically stop me so what is right, balanced, or fair doesn't matter.” When the “weak” take from the strong from a position of entitlement it is saying: “I will never be as strong as you. There is an inherent difference in who we are. So you should compensate by giving me what I cannot provide for myself.” Entitlement flourishes in an environment of beliefs that people and situations are fundamentally

imbalanced, and “should” be balanced in a way that benefits “me.”

Beneath the inclination to partner is the idea, carried out into action, that: “I have gifts. You have gifts. We both have a lot to contribute. Perhaps you have more to give in one area, and I have a lot to give in another. Let’s find a way to be equals and each bring what we can bring.” If that is not possible in a particular dynamic (for example, if one person is a beginner tennis player and the other is a great tennis player and so playing will weaken the master’s game), then the person shifts to find a better match where the partnership can be as equals.

The inclination to partner begins with the idea that we all have something valuable to give. That at a very base level, we are all equal. And if one person wants to devote themselves to learning about making lots of money and another wants to devote themselves to hippy festivals and dancing, each will grow skills in the areas they invest their time and attention.

Entitlement is often one-way in the area of money. We don’t find rich workaholics demanding that their partner’s share at least three of their friends, made in the course of cultivating a hippy lifestyle. But a hippy may say “give us a few bucks to go to the next festival.” You have lots.

We each have the same amount of time to make with our lives what we will make out of them. And while the

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playing field is not level, we have the freedom to learn how to turn our disadvantages into advantages. And while the culture may sanction workaholics and harass hippies, there is no intrinsic difference in the value of our lives. We can each choose our own values and do our best to embody those values. Entitlement always involves taking something, rather than partnering to create something as equals. It is the enemy of partnering for this reason.

Reasons to Partner

Part of shifting from deeply ingrained habits of forming indirect connections in lieu of deep partnerships, is to understand both the specific things that stand in the way of partnering, and the powerful role partnership plays in supporting many of our culturally stated values.

Loving:

Without partnering, it is impossible to be loving. The feelings of love and lust that we associate with being loving become associated with projection, stereotypes and manipulation when we connect without transparently revealing our feelings in all the areas affected by the relationship, and working directly and consciously to insure mutual well-being. Most of the cynicism, bitterness, hurt, confusion and betrayal which is associated with the word "love," has nothing to do with love at all. These painful feelings are the direct result of pursuing desire in some form in the absence of the intimacy needed to attune desires together, and the and skill to partner consciously create shared desires.

Success:

Great success is always the result of many people working together to create something bigger than any one person can create alone. Fortunately, we allow some degree of

both partnership, and lots of cooperation and domination to insure a relatively “successful” business sector.

Success is often elevated to such a high level on the supposition that success = happiness. And since intimacy and emotional partnership is neglected in favor of accomplishment “on the job.” The idyllic life is often described for us as “power, money, fame, and cool work.” But this has little to do with many people’s optimal path to happiness. Some people would be happier with more time. Some would be happier with less pressure and less fame. Some would be happier with less money. And in almost all cases, the work experience cannot be collaboratively organized to optimize well-being, because that would mean being intimate, which is culturally taboo. The reality is that everyone is far more fulfilled and often productive when their personal feelings are an important part of their relationships at work.

As effective as top-down commands and leadership are at creating money and producing material goods, the ratio of hours worked to levels of happiness (the supposed goal of success) is appalling. And since success is ultimately defined by happiness, and individual feelings are banished in any depth, this is hardly surprising.

For the equation to be true that the more you work, the happier you are, intimacy around personal feelings, and a dynamic of partnership to create a life that really matters to

each individual will need to be implemented. As the equation stands, it's a roll of the dice. The more some people work, the more miserable they are. Others don't get happier as they work. And others get happier as they work. But rolling the dice like this can't be called success. Success is responding to YOU personally, not some statistic. And that requires both intimacy and partnership.

Integrity:

Integrity begins with integrating our many faces of self: Thoughts, feelings, actions, personally and collectively, need to be in balance. This is a constant process, requiring up-to-date information about our thoughts, feelings, actions, and their impact. In a culture where everyone is competing to be less emotional than the next, how can you integrate emotion into the mix?

We often complain that politicians don't have integrity. Of course they don't. Why should they, alone, be more integrated in their thoughts, feelings and actions than the typical person who votes for them? When a politician can only be elected by lying, anyone who tells the truth will not be heard about. If we want integrity in ourselves and in our legal and political world, we must embrace the art of conscious partnering, beginning with the choice to respect our own thoughts and feelings, even as we seek to integrate these with our actions, and the thoughts and feelings of others. This is what partnering is all about.

Fun:

How fun is it to project information on other people, try to guess what they do and don't want, think they are crazy, and put up with it? How fun is it to be wrong most of the time? How fun is it to begin yet another relationship in a long list of mistakes, and not know how or when the other shoe will drop?

It's not fun to project, guess, and be ignorant of the data needed to win. It's not fun to fail. Yet that is exactly what we will continue to do as long as we play out the script of cool, independent people who connect but are too sophisticated to clearly spell out what we need, want, don't want, and where we are flexible.

Real partnership is fun because it's fun to succeed. Like a car-manufacturer trying to make a working car when none of the team is sharing their plans and progress, it's almost impossible. And pouring your energy into an almost impossible endeavor that has high odds of failing is about as much fun.

Ease:

One of the greatest delusions we suffer from is that it is easier not to talk about or listen to anyone's feelings. "I don't have time for that." "I want someone without any emotional baggage." It sounds like if we could only be

robots that made witty remarks, our lives would be wonderful. Except if we were robots, we wouldn't care that it was "wonderful" because wonder is a feeling.

It is absurd to aspire to take a third of who we are and what makes us unique on the planet and wish it was not there. Particularly, when not talking about feelings does not make them go away.

Remembering that we are ultimately seeking to create and share happiness with those we love, it makes sense to acknowledge that seeing and being seen in our emotions is essential to going about this the easy way.

Going back to the car analogy, if something is broken would you like to work on an invisible car, or a visible car? Would you like 1/3rd of the bolts and parts to be visible, or 100%? Imagine how tiresome it would be to be a mechanic and have people arrive at the shop with cars that were 80% invisible. As you try to find out what's wrong they say: "I don't discuss that kind of information with strangers." Thankfully, we only behave in this strange way when it comes to our feelings. As a result, our cars are quickly and easily repaired, and our hearts remain broken for decades.

The Crux of the Matter

To understand the importance of partnering, we need to understand what it means to be loving to another human being. If you ask yourself what being loving looks like to someone specific in your life, how would you define it?

Perhaps your answer includes things, such as “being nice.” If it does, what form does that take? In any exchange between two people the exchange may start with an idea, intention or feeling. The end result is a specific form.

If you pick someone specific in your life to be loving towards and define love as “being nice,” or “being attracted sexually,” what form does that take? What are the specific choices you do and don’t make to embody your idea of “being nice,” or being attracted?

Think about how you take the idea of love into something specific with a person in your life before reading more...

Take a conversation in which something awkward comes up. Perhaps you see that the person you are thinking about has been crying. Are you a person who defines “nice” by pretending not to see anything uncomfortable (perhaps with the thought that feelings are embarrassing and that if you pretend not to see this person’s feelings they will be less embarrassed)? Or do you look beneath the surface when someone is not yet crying and ask them what is

troubling them (perhaps with the thought that genuine interest in feelings is thoughtful and the personal experience that crying with someone interested nearby makes you feel good)?

Whether it is being nice, respectful, loving, lustful, kind, fun – or any other concept – there are endless ideas, and ways to express it. Switching the focus to yourself, one person who likes you begins your meetings by slapping you on the back and smiling at you – while calling you an endearing insult: “How ya doing, my old fool!” Someone else who likes you begins your interactions with a light touch on the shoulder and a silent smile.

Let’s take these two examples of two people expressing affection towards you in your own way. Is it possible that you feel annoyed and startled each time your friend slaps you on the back? Is it also possible that you always feel irritated by being called “an old fool?”

Is it also possible that you relax and open up with the slap on the back, and laugh each time your friend calls you “an old fool?”

Now let’s look at the silent shoulder touch and smile: Is it possible that it makes you uncomfortable because you like slapping your friends on the back and you don’t feel able to be yourself with this person? Or is it possible that you do in fact feel deeply cared about with a silent smile, while feeling violated by the back slaps?

Now imagine that you decide to be loving to someone in your life, following your own ideas of what love looks like. Perhaps you get these ideas from the culture, or by doing to them what you would like others to do to you. Let's say you do this series of loving actions. Can you consistency and reliably predict that the other person will feel loved by your behavior?

In short, is it possible for you to intend to be loving, while actually annoying, hurting or confusing someone who does not want or understand what you think they will want?

One of the big blind spots we have as human beings is confusing our feeling of love, lust, good-will and kindness with the actions that will help another feel these feelings. We don't understand that the very words that we intend to make someone feel good very often make some people feel bad. We don't understand how the gifts we give to bring joy can be experienced as a burden. And we don't understand that our efforts to be nice can ruin someone's day.

It is a form of profound self-centeredness to assume, unconsciously or consciously, that if our favorite food in the world is apple pie, that others might not prefer fresh lettuce, or a steak. We are even more confused when it comes to matters of love and friendship. The kind white-lie in one person's world is the cruel betrayal in another

person's world. The off-hand gift you pick up for someone that means nothing to you can mean the world to them.

A succinct way of saying this is that we all have our own emotional language. The form of one person's ecstasy is another person's boredom or fear, and vice versa.

What do you learn from this observation? What will you do differently because you learned it?

It means that we can't consistently and reliably induce positive feelings, including love, in others, without first partnering to understand them. Not by projecting our preferences on to them, but by taking the time to ask the questions and listen to the answers that will help us to see them the way they see themselves, and then partnering to connect in the specific ways that induce their positive emotions.

Think of finding the form that brings well-being to another or yourself like a code in a code book. In your language love means a pat on the back and a compliment on your toughness. In a friend's language love means a silent gaze and a touch of light pressure that moves less than one inch per second. Faster than that and the feeling of "love" morphs into feeling "annoyed." If you want to love someone you need to learn their code for "love."

For the most part, you can only do this if they cooperate. Similarly, they can only love you if you cooperate to help

them understand your code book. If you force a smile when they tell you long stories about their lives, while secretly wishing that they will get to the point, they will continue to tell you long stories. They may appreciate it – and you – because listening to their long stories may bring them well-being.

What does it mean to partner?

Partnering means more than simply doing our own thing for personal reasons in close proximity with another or others. It begins by seeing and being seen. It is impossible to partner with someone before you see who they are, what they want, and how they want to go about creating that. This is, in a sense, their pattern of values, thoughts and strategy for expressing them. Because partnering involves a synergistic collaboration, you cannot join with them in a partnership before you see what and who you are partnering with.

This leads to something even more basic. You cannot partner with someone else until you see yourself. Who are you? What do you value? Where are you going and what is your strategy for going there? Only when you see yourself in these areas are you in a position to assess: “Would this potential partner contribute to the path I have chosen?”

For a partnership to live up to its name two people need to see themselves, see each other, and freely choose to collaborate in a way both people believe will contribute

more to the shared path/goal/partnership than they will take away from it.

Needless to say, most relationships are not partnerships. If you take pity on a friend and step aside from your goal to “help” them in some way, that is not a partnership. If you happen to find yourself on the same road with another driver for a few miles of your journey, that’s not a partnership. “Hey. I seem to be seeing you around at a lot of events,” is not a partnership. It is random chance, or suggests logistical overlap, but not a conscious collaboration to bring each other value.

Perhaps the most important thing to emphasize, because of the confusion in language, is that most romantic “partners” are not in a partnership. Being lovers does not automatically trigger the state or experience of partnering. One can partner to have sex, without partnering to create happiness. One can have sex without partnering to co-create a deeply mutual experience of satisfying sex, or even knowing what one’s “partner’s” experience of the sex is.

Before you can partner on a journey of any kind, you must know where you want to end up, or at least the parameters for making daily decisions. If you don’t know where you want to end up, but want to know, it can be as simple as deciding that your destination is clarity about your direction. Since there are lots of people who are confused about and seeking clarity, finding someone who is also

looking for clarity can be easy. However, if you are successful the relationship may also be short-lived. Once you both find the clarity you want, it's unlikely that you will both clarify that you want the same thing. Or that if you do, you want to go about creating it in the same way.

True partnership is rare. It's not hard, but it's rare because it requires both people to have the skills necessary to partner. In a culture that does not formally teach partnering very few have these skills. This book will not teach you how to partner. But it will give you a mental framework to start practicing, which is the basis for embodied learning. It will give you the ability to measure the quality and level of partnership in your relationships, and to use that information to improve or end these relationships.

What is Partnering?

One reason that partnering is rare is that we don't have a specific word for it. Looking up the dictionary definition of partnering we find all of the following lumped into this one word:

A person who shares or is associated with another in some action or endeavor; sharer; associate.

A person associated with another or others as a principal or a contributor of capital in a business or a joint venture, usually sharing its risks and profits.

Silent partner.

A spouse; a husband or a wife...

The person with whom one cohabits in a romantic relationship:

Either of two people who dance together:

A player on the same side or team as another:

The part of these definitions of "partnering" that comes closest to the definition in this book is "dancing together." In order to dance well together, figuratively and metaphorically, there must be a level of awareness and cooperation that comes close to partnering. The definition that I use is: "To function as one, while maintaining distinct individual boundaries." If you are one with no boundaries,

then there is no one else there to partner with. If you are a distinct individual functioning out of sync with another it is not partnering, just two people doing their own thing that happens to dove-tail for a period of time. I will reference this definition whenever I use the term “partner” or “partnering.”

A good example of partnering in the physical dimension is the Blue Angels team of pilots. The pilots have a shared goal, a shared strategy and a shared skill that allows them to function as one, while maintaining their distinct identity. I say “in some areas” because while they partner to perform, they do not partner in other areas. The pilots do not decide where they will fly and when. They don’t decide the budget for the performance. They don’t partner to spend their personal salaries. They come together for a specific function and execute that function as distinct individuals, functioning as one.

Part Two:
Arenas of Partnership

Arenas of Partnership

In each area of our life, mentally, emotionally and physically, we decide how much to partner, and how much to unilaterally design our life, or follow instinct.

Arenas available to partner include:

- The culture of each relationship: The habits, agreements, values and style of each relationship.
- What we eat, when and where.
- Our daily routine.
- The way we sleep.
- The frequency, way and time and duration of our sexuality.
- How much we know another and share about ourselves.
- The pace, direction and process of deciding to go for a walk.
- The way we make and spend money.
- Whether to have a child and how to raise them?
- How to express shared and differing values.

When do you decide to partner, and when do you dance unilaterally? Perhaps most important of all, when do you partner on what to partner about, and when do you leave partnering, in some form or other, to happen by instinct – or not at all.

Human Needs

Abraham Maslow popularized what he called the hierarchy of needs. Later research questions whether or not the hierarchy is universal, or affected by culture. But none question that each of us, in one sequence or another, pursue these human needs:

- 1) Survival: Physical, emotional and mental.
- 2) Security: Certainty of our survival on all levels.
- 3) Belonging: The need to feel connected to someone, something or a group outside ourselves.
- 4) Pleasure: Physical, emotional and mental joy.
- 5) Esteem: To feel good about ourselves and respected by others.
- 6) To Create and give birth to something new and beautiful.
- 7) A sense of meaning, purpose – a reason to live.
- 8) To actualize our full potential.

Each of these needs provide an arena for partnership or unilateral strategy and action. Example: "I will make my own way in the world. If my boss fires me, I'll look in the paper, apply online, and consider a business of my own to start. If that doesn't work, I'll look at other places to live.

One way or another, I will survive and be secure.” This is, of course, unilaterally meeting our need. To partner might look like this: “Would you like to partner to co-create our security and survival? If so, let me understand what you need to survive in detail? Let me understand what you need to feel secure in your survival? Here is what I need to survive and to feel secure in that. How can I help? Here is how you can help me? This is my strategy. Is there any way you think it could be improved? Let me here your strategy? Here is how I can help. Let us discuss how we want to take the actions that will insure each of our survival.”

The same conversation, unilateral or partnering, can be had with each of the other needs. It can be had with one other, or with a group.

How much do you partner with a group or another person to meet each of your needs? How much do you partner to meet another’s needs?

Note that the free-market economy is a chaotic form of cooperation without rising to the level of partnering, in most cases. “I want to sell my car to get some money to buy food and survive. If someone else thinks they can meet their needs by buying my car, that’s up to them. I’ll sell it to whoever wants it the most, but not worry about whether they know how to drive and might hurt themselves or will use it to be happy. I’m focused on me.”

Defining and Achieving Goals

When you define your goals and priorities, how much do you include another, or others, in your consideration? There are several ways we can partner:

- Pick our own goals and then see who is interested in partnering to co-create those goals.
- Partner to co-create shared goals and then do our parts independently.
- Partner to create goals together and then partner to manifest those goals.
- Become goal allies: spend time helping one another achieve goals.

There are also different types of goals. We might partner a little with one list, fully with another, and not at all with yet another list. Here are some of the goals we can partner to create:

- Things to do before we die.
- Work related goals.
- Health goals.
- Freedom or lifestyle goals.
- Personal goals.

~ The Art of Partnering ~

- Contribution Goals.
- Family Goals.
- Spiritual goals.

Creating A Home

As with each arena of partnering, there are many levels we can bring to creating a home. It can be as deep as talking about the emotional code we each have around the word “home.” For example one person’s code may place a big emphasis on a fireplace. Another’s focuses on sharing relaxed meals together. If there is no partnership around the code, and particularly in a default culture in which compromise is considered weak, there may be disappointment or conflict as the goal of a shared home is acted on without partnering to create shared values.

A home can also be a non-emotional partnership: a business arrangement in which there are varying degrees of partnering to co-create the framework of a partnership designed to give all involved a chance to live separate lives under one roof. This partnership could be a landlord offering a take-it-or-leave-it lease. It could be two people agreeing to share a house and going out to find a place they both like, before drawing up an agreement that reflects their needs and expectations. Or it could be an unconscious default, in which neither person knows what will happen until it happens.

- Pick our own goals and then see who is interested in partnering to co-create those goals.

- Partner to co-create shared goals and then do our parts independently.
- Partner to create goals together and then partner to manifest those goals.
- Become goal allies: spend time helping one another achieve goals.

American values suggest that the individual is more important than the family or group. A woman is more “modern” and sophisticated in America for leaving a man to “pursue her dreams” than she is for adapting her dreams to pursue a partnership. A real man doesn’t listen to anyone else. He defines himself, alone, and pushes against insurmountable odds, to create what he wants in the face of all opposition.

This is not the way it is in many relational, oriented cultures, such as Thai cultures. However, in the chauvinism that devalues the feminine, it is usually the woman who adapts to the man, creating what can be an unbalanced relationship. Responding to a “fuck you, I do what I want to do and you should adapt to me” in a man, it does create balance in the dynamic for a woman to adopt the same relationship/attitude towards the specific man who will not be a partner, but offers dictatorship instead. However, neither of these stances has anything to do with partnership. Partnership comes from working together as equals, and begins by finding another person who shares

~ Dane E. Rose ~

our values and chooses to work together to create shared goals and strategies for realizing them.

Creating Community

One thing that is key to realize: A group of people who do not know how to partner, and do not choose to engage in partnering, is not a partnering community. It is a group of people, each with their own agendas, who are spending time together. In that context, if the group is fortunate, most people will cooperate to meet their agendas in some way.

In most situations a group forms when many people have hope that their agendas will be met. They spend time trying to meet their agenda. They leave the group when it is clear that their agenda will not be met. They then isolate, stay on the fringes of the group as a destructive influence, or go to a new group and do the process all over again.

There is no way to jump from individualist in a domination paradigm to partner in community. When we are successful at creating deep partnership with ourselves and another human being, we are then in a position to recognize when another individual shares the skills and values of partnering. Given how rare it is to find an individual who can partner successfully and sustainably on a deep level with us, the odds of finding a whole community of people who can and do choose to partner, are much lower. When combined with the fact that creating a community is 20 to 100 times more complex than creating

a one-on-one partnership, the odds of co-creating a true community on the basis of partnering are almost zero in western culture.

Of all the communities I have heard of and/or visited, The Findhorn community in Scotland comes the closest to a community based on partnering. They use a different technology than I discuss here and I have experienced the success of their approach first-hand as a visitor in my teens.

There will come a time when enough people practice the art of partnering to make forming communities much easier. When that time comes, it will be far easier to learn and practice partnering as a community rather than as isolated individuals. This is because group memes have an underlying code to them, based on assumed group values. It is always easiest to go along with the group, which is one reason that forming partnerships in the present culture of individual autocracy is as difficult as it is.

Creating a Spiritual Practice

One of the biggest misunderstandings is that our spirituality is anything other than a relationship with our personal values and ideals. Imagine the stereotypical geek who loves power, speed and gadgetry. Efficiency and power are her gods. These are the things that excite him to dream, buy, imagine and take action on a daily basis. In short, buying the latest gadget is her form of prayer.

This misunderstanding is why people “forget” to meditate, pray, or go to church. We don’t forget to worship our gods. Be those gods speed, coolness, power, money, we are always praying. We don’t meditate because there is no attraction to slow down for someone who worships the high of speed. If we worshiped serenity, balance, understanding, detachment and peace, we would be doing yoga and meditating all the time.

Steve Jobs was a well-known visitor at a Buddhist temple. But according to some sources he did not go there purely for peace and balance. Instead, he discovered that his visits helped Apple lead the marketplace. Meditation, in short, was an effective path to superior business design. In this motivational hierarchy peace was the servant of power, rather than power being the servant to peace.

This is where most spiritual texts lose their relevancy in our lives. We do not value obedience as an ideal paradigm to

live by, so the ten commandments become an un-useful path to pursuing our true god: “personal freedom and self-expression.”

Few things can bring a couple or friends as close together as the devotional worship of the same values in partnership. Bill Gates and Steve Balmer were disciples of corporate dominance. They were closer than Paul Allen and Bill Gates, because Paul worshiped different values than Bill.

If you have no sense of what your spirituality is, look at your daily habits, passions and attachments. Are you more upset when someone criticizes your tie than disses some part of your default religious or spiritual text? That’s a clue: “I worship looking good and/or being liked more than my traditions (or something like that).” If this is the case you will have a far stronger partnership consciously partnering to be a cool couple with someone that everyone remarks about and praises, than you will trying to find something in common with the bible or Koran. Why? Because neither of these texts place much emphasis on looking good, which is far more important to you.

Similarly, if you care passionately about the earth and make it into a real religion (which you do simply by aligning your actions to what benefits the earth to the best of your knowledge), then you will have deep alignment

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with someone else who shares your passions and works with you to develop a shared strategy.

Financial Well-Being

Whenever two people partner dramatically to create a specific goal it can be powerful. Imagine how amazing it would be to have a financial buddy with the sole purpose of one goal: No matter what both of you would make \$100,000 per year, be debt free, and be able to generate \$50,000. in passive income within ten years.

What if you set aside an hour a week every week with total clarity and passion that this goal was going to be achieved no matter what? Is there any doubt that such aligned people would do so?

Partnering is possible around all aspects of career and finances. We can partner with lovers, spouses, business mentors, friends, colleagues and more. We can focus on job happiness, income, productivity and many other areas.

Money is one of the easiest things to create in American culture, because it is a god shared by almost everyone. Unlike love, joy, or saving the planet which can take teeth-pulling to get anyone to do the most basic things to honor, the typical American will rush out of bed and do things they hate if there is a chance to get more money. Whether this is a good or bad thing, it makes creating money one of the easiest things to create in America. All you need to do is show people how they can make more money helping

you do something or other and you will have lots of help in no time.

Unfortunately, research suggests that after we have around \$75k per year as a single person in the US having more money does not noticeably affect our happiness. But precisely because it is so tangible, flexible, and universally worshiped, it makes a great playground in which to learn the art of partnering.

There is just one problem. Learning partnering in the context of money can only go so far. Why? Prostitution.

Prostitution is the act of doing something different than we want for ourselves so as to induce others to give us something we want. Sex, Money and Power are all strong magnates that lead all of us into varying degrees of prostitution. Writing this book in the way I am doing it is a form of prostitution (not total, since I make a hundred times more money contracting than I do writing, but I am picturing a certain reader as I write, rather than following my own voice to the extreme in which I could not connect with almost anyone). Doing what our boss says so we don't get fired is another. And if you give a group the choice of whether to make more money or do what their soul calls out to do, most will go for the money, figuring that they can use the money to buy what their soul wants later.

Creating a Daily Routine

Our daily routine, including social memes, affects each of our relationships. Whether you work two hours a day or twelve hours a day affects your energy, availability, spontaneity and income, which affects our relationships.

Whether you walk once a day or once a week. Whether you carpool or drive alone. Whether you do yoga in the morning, or arrive with tension at work. Whether you eat sugar or eggs for breakfast. These are the patterns that play a role in who we, and our lives, become.

When we partner with another to shape our routine it is a very vulnerable choice. When we allow someone to influence our daily choices we are allowing them to influence the person we are and the person we become.

A great conversation for a partner begins with the question: If I could design your and my life in twenty minute increments for a weekly routine, what would I design?

Comparing notes on the answer to this question will reveal opportunity and differences. It is a first step in partnering to co-create an ideal routine for your relationship, life and well-being.

This brings up the fact that there is a huge difference between doing this exercise from the position of being maxed out, in debt, and working a ten hour day as an

employee, and doing it as someone who is financially independent and creates a life in which they can freely spend their time as they wish.

This is where respecting the influence that money has on partnering comes in. Since the daily/weekly routine of a relationship can make the difference between incompatibility and compatibility, between struggling and thriving, deep happiness or surviving, it is a gift to a relationship to prepare by creating financial and time freedom. This means respecting money and time enough to learn how to create abundance in each of these areas.

Like many things there is a paradox around money. It can be used as a strong ally and a necessary ingredient in creating an extraordinary relationship in a culture that ties all values back to money. Or it can be ignored and pull down many relationships that require the resources money can buy to survive. Or both people can respect money enough to learn how to create lots of it for the sole purpose of creating more freedom around time.

Time = depth, complexity, intimacy and potential. Money in America = time. We can make more money to hire more people to do things for us to free up our time. Or we can make less money by reducing our working hours and have more time to show up for relationship.

Sex

The first step of partnering around sex is transparency around each of the core areas that affect sex:

- The boundaries around sex. Is it monogamous, open, or somewhere in between?
- The gender focus: Is it gay, bisexual or heterosexual?
- The nature and length of foreplay.
- The environment: Setting, temperature, degree of privacy, lighting, scents and sounds.
- The frequency and duration of sexual touch.
- Safe sex practices and agreements.
- Initiating rituals: who does what when.
- Levels of attraction and agenda.

All of this can be discussed openly ahead of time, during, or after. To the degree that it is discussed ahead of time and during, it is a partnership. To the degree that it is discussed after the fact it is a history of two individuals with different needs and agendas discovering what was going on for the other person.

Given that sex is a powerful amplifying energy of emotion it is inherently neutral. It can powerfully destroy

relationships as easily as it can powerfully build relationships. What determines it's constructive or destructive impact is primarily the level of partnership.

One key area of partnering is to partner on deciding how much to partner: "I'm looking for someone who wants co-creation through consciously mapping things out and looking for overlapping values and strategies. Is that what you want? If so, what would partnering look like to you? Would you like to begin a partnering relationship with me and see how strong our compatibilities are?"

Aligning Values

What does it mean to be aligned with our values? Just as our car needs to be aligned in order to run, we need to be aligned with our values in order to function optimally. How do we do that?

Aligning our values is one focus we can partner to co-create. Conversation can help boost self-awareness. Hearing another's view can help us refine the values we want to live by.

Values are paths that ideally take us where we want to go. Are our values creating the experiences and world we want to live in? What can we do differently to better create our ideals in the nuts and bolts of daily life?

Something that can add clarity to this process is realizing that everyone has the same values: they just prioritize their values differently. One person values honesty but values a really hot sexual experience more than they value honesty. Another person also values a really hot sexual experience but values the look on their partner's face when they find out they were betrayed even more. It's not black or white. One person valued the sex in that moment 65% and the look on their partner's face 35%, whereas another person had these percentages reversed. We all act based on the loudest voices inside of us, which reflect our loudest values. The question is not "I thought you loved me?" The

question is “I thought you loved me more than you loved the thrill of that hot sexual experience.” Sometimes it is a 49% 51% vote. The internal majority always wins, and honesty, which precludes partnering, begins with communicating not “I love you,” but “I don't love you enough to put you first in this and this situation, but I do love you enough to put you first in this situation.” Now there is a possibility of partnering.

Partnering can take many forms:

- Setting an intention with another, or a group, along with a set amount of time in which to focus on aligning values: Where are our majority votes aligned and what would it take to bring these further into alignment?
- Co-creating a process that will create success: Shall we divide our relationship into blocks of time and take time leading? Shall we negotiate until we each feel equally excited about everything? Shall we flip a coin?

Travel and Adventure

As always, self-awareness is key to partnering. Going on some trips alone and keeping a diary, as well as going on some trips with others, can give you the awareness needed to partner in a win/win adventure:

- How much alone space do you need?
- What are the best parts of the trip when you are alone?
- What are the best parts of the trip when you are together?
- What are the worst parts of a trip when you are alone?
- What are the worst parts of a trip when you are together?
- What are you particular about on a trip?
 - Sleep hours or duration
 - Noise levels
 - Being touched while sleeping
 - Eating certain types of food
 - Conversation style and/or topic

- Types of music
- Spontaneity or plans
- Seeing certain things
- Being specific places at certain times

When you know who you are, you are in a position to partner. That is, with someone else who knows who they are and can communicate it.

Statistically speaking, one of the worst things we can do is set off in a confined or dependent dynamic with someone we do not know well, without clear expectations. It can be fine to do this if both of you have unlimited funds and you can use your money to easily separate any time your needs differ. But that is not really partnering, but having a back-up plan.

When you take the time to see and be seen by another, you can begin to partner with a reasonable goal of minimizing the low-points of being alone, while retaining some of the high points. You can also focus on the areas adventuring together is great for both of you, and avoiding scenarios that one or both of you dislike.

Because this takes time, there is a trade of between quality and quantity. When two people know themselves, spending time sharing ideal pictures and things to avoid can be fun and will usually increase the quality of the trip.

Just as helpful, this process can also reveal incompatibility. In that case, choosing to go alone or with someone else will increase the quality of the trip.

As always there are many levels of partnership available:

- Partnering around whether to take a trip or not.
- Partnering on the primary goal of the trip (if these are different for each person, a partnering trip may not be possible).
- Partnering on where to go.
- Partnering on when to go, and for how long.
- Partnering to create trip agreements and make a plan.
- Partnering to create a trip culture and check in daily to see how well the trip is meeting the goal.
- Partnering to resolve conflicts and pain when they arise (they will arise much less after a thorough partnering process in the preceding areas).
- Partnering to create a win/win separation/ending of the partner relationship plan, should differences emerge. For example, you can have a plan that: "Whoever does not like the shared room dynamic is free to buy another room, leaving the uncooperative occupant of the existing room to be responsible for

that bill.” Of you can have an ending that says: “If we separate we will flip a coin to see who is responsible for returning the rental car.”

One of the most important reasons to partner is to eliminate states of betrayal, abandonment, unfairness and resentment. And it’s the details that help us see if we are in a mine-field that is predisposed to these feelings, or not.

If so, no one needs to go. If not, it’s hard to feel abandoned if there is an agreement that if either person is bothered by snoring, the person snoring will need to find another room. If this is understood before the trip, then this is just one of a variety of practical solutions that may be the best scenario two people can negotiate. Ear plugs could be another. And this is an example of why detailed partnering is so important. It may be the conversation about snoring that prompts both people to bring ear plugs, thus avoiding what might be a lose/lose scenario.

Growing Relationship

For a relationship to be alive it must grow. Unless you are satisfied with a dead relationship or want your relationship to end, partnering to grow the relationship is one of the most important responsibilities for each of us in a relationship.

What does growth look like? This comes back to vision. If our vision of relationship is a big party, then growing the relationship may be buying an endless number of things. One month a red convertible. The next a wine bar and new BBQ. The third, a balloon maker. If our vision of the relationship is a spiritual practice, growing it may be reading certain books together, doing a daily meditation practice, and seeing a weekly therapist to amplify awareness and perspective. This is why partnering on the vision of the relationship is so valuable. These two visions could easily clash, leading to a dynamic of one person's growth being another person's definition of failure. All growth and failure is relative to our vision.

When you partner to form a shared vision, there is still the very big process of partnering to create the daily, weekly and monthly habits, or processes to fulfill your shared vision. If you are both agreed on the vision of a big party, what is the monthly budget for the growing party? Does it include drugs? Do you take turns to spend that budget or

do you fight about every item? Is your agreement to only buy what both of you really like?

Whenever these things are left to chance: "Let's see what happens. It will all work out." it simply means that the more dominant, faster, more decisive person in the couple or group will define the growth of the relationship. Whoever spends the money first has the most say. Whoever speaks first dominates the conversation. This is one reason that partnering to create agreements and an intentional culture supports balance. When you agree to take turns picking the vacation spot, everyone gets an equal space at the table. When you leave it to an unconscious alga rhythm of who talks the loudest, it means that the loud people will always dominate and that they talk even louder, loudness being the foundation of their dominance, as determined by the group.

Creating Flow

Partnering to create value on an individual level is important. However, relationships take place in a context that is much bigger than any two individuals. And in that larger context there are certain principles that we can thrive by accepting and partnering with.

One of these principles is “flow.” It is a core principle of life. The more we are in a state of flow, the more alive we are, the more energy we have, and the more powerful we are to create what we want.

What is flow? Think of a river. Because all water obeys the laws of gravity, the entire body of water is aligned to flow in one direction. Even the little back-eddies that result from turbulence are quickly swept on towards the Ocean.

A relationship must have flow. That’s what chemistry is. When we are alive, excited, present, committed and focused we are in a state of flow.

By contrast, when we are resentful, scared, controlling, determined to win at the other’s expense, or finding ways to block the other’s energy we are in a state of resistance. We are blocking the flow of energy. In the process we are partnering to create death, stagnation, and failure.

Flow creates life. Resistance creates death. However, that’s a bit too simple. Every river is flowing in a different

direction. One river may flow northward to the sea and another flows to the south. If you believe that your well-being lies to the north, don't fight the southward river. Your job is to leave the river – to end the relationship – so that your partner can continue flowing south as you seek a new river that is heading in the direction you have chosen: to the North.

Finding a new river may take time. You may have to walk over a mountain to a new valley. You may have to do a little research. Do it. To do nothing is stagnation that leads to death. Find the river – the partner that has life to travel where you want to go. And jump in. The river will flow to the right and to the left. It will go over rocks and sometimes become rapids. You might need to get out of the river for a break, or put on some safety gear. But keep flowing. Negotiate the twists and turns as long as the river is heading to the north, flow is the speed, quality and dimension of the journey.

That's what this book is really all about: Creating life by partnering to create flow. That partnership begins when both people understand that flow is the underlying principle.

- When do you separate and go your own way?
- When do you make your partner your number one priority?

- When do you go to therapy to integrate and understand divergent energies in the relationship?
- When do you do laughter yoga?
- When do you take a break and regain your energy?
- When do you stay up all night untying a knot that threatens to capsize the relationship?
- When do you go on a diet?
- When do you eat whatever your heart desires?
- When do you take psychedelic drugs?
- When do you focus on building the SEO of your website to create the money to fund your growth?
- When do you open your relationship to other people?
- When do you strengthen your relationship and clarify expectations?

The answer is simple. When you believe that doing so will enhance sustainable flow compared with the alternative. And not just any flow. Flow towards what matters most to you. That is your direction – in this case your compass taking you to the north.

Ultimately, this is the true test of your skill, your level of sustainability as both an individual and as a partner. If

your choices bog you down into the mud and you stay there for too long you will be consumed by the universe in which life, flow and change ultimately consume all that is dead, dying and lacking vitality.

Many of us fear cancer. We should, given the statistics. But the real enemy is not cancer. It is a lifestyle in which our bodies, hearts, and minds are not flowing as fast as the cells in any disease. Cancer has a passion for life and consumes anything that has more resilience than it does. If we want to consume cancer before cancer consumes us we must live a life that has a higher quality of flow than cancer. That is hard to do when we have chosen a partner that triggers our fear of betrayal, food that triggers physical numbness, a job we shut-down to tolerate, and a family we dread contact with, but insist on scheduling a future with.

Creating flow both requires and creates skill. Use your brain, your heart, your body and history to guide you. Life is a terrain and we are the water. We can fly above the mountain side and see that flowing quickly down this side leads to a dead end, while picking away at a few mud-banks with shovels and some passion would create a new river bed that can take us all the way to the ocean.

Partnering to create flow, like everything else, begins by seeing and being seen. What makes you alive? What brings joy to your partner's eyes. When you understand that you can see where the flow is probable. Perhaps one loves

reading, another likes video games, and you are both passionate about Arthurian Myths. Is there a video game of Camelot you could both laugh, open, focus and feel joy as you play it?

Flow begins with us as individuals. Where is your bottle neck? Does everything flow except for the fact that there is no money to pay for your enthusiastic dreams? Are you willing to step into the flow of creating money in a way that excites you? That river will not be waiting at your feet to ease into. You may have to dig the path for your water to flow in. You might have to travel, looking for the river that is flowing in your direction. You might need to partner to create it. If you do, and if you succeed in stepping into your money flow, now the bottle neck is opened up and your creativity and dreams can begin to flow as well.

Flow is not guaranteed. Many of us go through a large percentage of our lives with very little flow. A life of quiet desperation is not a life of flow. It's a life of holding on to something – our fears, our past glories, our dreads of the future - in stagnation. In order to partner in the creation of flow, we must first create flow for ourselves. Once you know how, and are thus able to spot someone else who knows how, you can partner to create even more flow together.

In my life I have succeeded and failed to create flow many times. When I found myself mentally, physically and

emotionally resisting traditional education, I asked myself what skills I thought would be most useful for humanity over the next hundred years. Making more money than I spent, I proceeded to be paid to learn many of those skills through practical experience.

The times when I have created peak flow, growth, synergy and win/win with other humans on many levels have been highlights in my life. Often these streaks have run dry because of resources, including time, money and skill. I can create these for myself but I cannot give them to a partner without creating an imbalance of power that tends to erode true partnership.

In the beginning it was easy because almost every partner could teach me something – even if it was only how to be a better teacher. Now it is more challenging to create flows that are stronger, deeper and fresher than those in the past.

I often feel frustrated, depressed, disappointed and helpless as I find so many people who are content with instinct, lust and tired social memes to create a relatively small amount of valuable flow. I feel like I'm trying to improve my tennis game with someone who is excited just to be hitting the ball. I am amazed that social skills are not taught, and that so much of what passes as "social skills" consists of various performances to conform to social norms that are hostile to our humanity.

This has created a new challenge. How can I create flow for myself in the arenas that are not dependent on other people? Most recently, I've gone deep into business again to learn the art of creating value online. I've also pursued travel, writing and taking a whole year to do everything on my bucket list.

It's also in alignment with my deeper values to become the partner I want to meet. There are no guarantees. There never have been. But in each decade I have invested in myself in ways that have benefitted my partners and relationships. With luck, skill and effort, the next ten years will bring a whole new wave of resources.

How can you create more flow in your current relationships? Would a conscious ending free up more energy for both people than the dissonance of mismatched needs? If you are blocked in one area, what is another area that you can truly get excited about?

Conscious Healthy Endings

There are three parts to every relationship: The birth, growth, and the death. We in America are a culture of births. We love the new, the expansion and the birth of whatever we consider good. Not so much the death and dying. We leave our elderly to rot in “old people's homes.”

Our bias in the life-cycle mirrors our bias in our national diet. If it's sweet or salty we love it. Maybe even a little hot. But we don't like sour or bitter. Particularly bitter!

Diet. Relationships. Religion. Culture. We are not a Buddhist culture and place a high value on judging things as good and bad. Sweet is good, bitter is bad. So we eat hamburgers and ice cream. The Thais eat sweet and sour soup, embrace the acceptance of Buddhist philosophy, and are less focused on black and white arguments. The children take care of the old and dying.

Unfortunately, our bias is out of sync with life. And no matter how secretly we attempt to drift away – like the romantic films that fade to another scene rather than deal with the awkwardness of following a scene to its end, we like to stop calling people so they will get the message “this is the time when we just “drift apart” for no particular reason and say “I wonder what happened to so and so.”

What happens when an entire culture dumps relationships in the name of “moving on and not looking back.” For one thing, we have layer and layer of unfinished karma. A lack of closure consumes a vast amount of energy on one or both sides. More importantly, an opportunity to truly live, learn and grow is lost.

Many of the most beautiful moments in my relationships have been in the last twenty hours of a kind, conscious and co-created closure.

What does it mean to partner around closure? To begin with it means acknowledging death as a healthy fire that is welcome at whatever point a relationship stops growing and serving both people’s flow. I leave it to you to define that. For one person a relationship becomes a dead-weight as soon as it offers nothing to their career path. For another, they find the joy and deep inner flow leaving their job to experience caring for a sick lover. Only you can tell what feeds your soul, stirs your heart, and is valuable through your eyes.

Most relationships do end. 99% of the people you have met in your life are not actively growing with you in any way. Death is not a failure. People who die are not bad. Ending is not a failure. Ending is not a symbol of no-love. Ending can be the most loving thing two people do. And sometimes it takes a lot of love to end something that pulls

us away from agendas of lust, power and protecting ourselves from our deepest wounds, without healing them.

In the life cycle, death is the beginning of new life. When a body is too tired and loses its vitality it may get “sick.” What this really means is that one of the millions of life-forms we host in our body will start to grow, consuming our body and turning it into something new, much like a rose consumes manure. Scared as we are of death, we demonize disease. In fact, by definition, every disease that leads to our body’s death is more alive than we are. It’s as if nature is saying “Life is important. Whoever has the most dynamic desire to live will win!” And while we judge the winner, preferring ourselves, nature does not. It simply insures that it is alive!

If we want to win and live, we need to create growth, flow and dynamic states inside and out. If we want our partner to live, we need to challenge the same in them. And that’s why ending can often be a gift when the dynamism of growth and change runs its course and we lack the skill and/or willingness to re-create the relationship in a new way.

How do you partner around ending?

I suggest having a conversation early on in the relationship. The reason for an early conversation is two-fold:

- 1) Endings are often very emotional. You wouldn't try and teach someone how to cook while moving house, so why teach someone how to end a relationship healthily with you in the middle of a painful ending. Timing is important, and the best time is when the conversation is objective.

- 2) Some people end in incompatible ways. Let's say that you place a huge value on being friends after a good ending. That's great, and you can find many people who have the same preference. But what if your partner finds endings so difficult that she needs to have a clean break? She will love you in the sense of wishing you well, but prefers not even to say "hello" if you meet in public after the ending. How will that be for you? If in your language this means "you think I'm so horrible you won't even say hello," this might be a deal-breaker. If it is, you have no business beginning a relationship that has a statistically high chance of ending traumatically for one or both people.

I make it a rule not to begin relationships with people I would not enjoy ending with, and vice versa. Knowing the odds, I don't want to add salt to wound of someone I love by ending in a way that will cause them months or years of suffering. Yet that's the risk we all take when we enter a relationship with no conscious partnering around ending.

It's like playing roulette with the odds of one or both people feeling pain being very high.

One great way to create awareness is to have a conversation about ideal endings. Note that in a romantic relationship having this conversation after sex may already be too late. It is naturally upsetting to become attached to someone you are attracted to only to find that you want to end with them because their preferred style of ending mirrors several very painful relationship endings in your past.

One safety-net you can create together is an ending agreement. It's as simple as this: After you both share your ideal way for a relationship to end, ask yourself if you would be willing to end in the way that would make your partner feel loved and supportive?

If your partner will feel unloved and blame you for an ending for any reason then you are being set up for a 99% probability of failure. And it's unlikely that they will be part of the 1% of relationships that end because of death. The person who cannot accept an ending for any reason is often someone who is harder to be in a relationship with to begin with. And they will be a very difficult person to partner with around an ending.

Endings are important! Both of you can learn more in a loving and conscious ending than you do in the beginning. It's all about valuing sour and bitter as much as sweet and

salty. Endings can be times of profound honesty. This is because when the agenda of staying together is laid aside, feelings and differences become clearer. And when this is not taken personally, it can be truly beautiful to see each other clearly for the first time.

There are many arenas available to partner in an ending:

- How and when to initiate the ending process.
- What are the details that would make the ending healthy and kind for both people?
- What are the things to avoid saying/doing to minimize unnecessary pain?
- How long will the ending process last?
- Will you take a break for 30 days after the ending to give yourselves time to find each-other again?
- How will you separate any logistical ties cleanly?
- Who will move out, if sharing accommodations?
- Will you end with a mediator or therapist present to insure maximum growth?
- How will you handle things with mutual friends?

There are pros and cons to each approach and way of handling these things. What is the best way for you? What is the best way for your partner?

One of the benefits of ending a relationship kindly, in integrity, and consistent with an ending agreement, is that it leaves a clean foundation to connect again in the future. I have had several relationships that reached a point of stagnation or unresolvable friction, ended well, and then began again months or years later once one of us had learned something that allowed the growth to continue. I have never wanted to reconnect with someone who broke their ending agreement. It tells me that they only have integrity and care when there is a hope of an agenda being met. This type of person is not as safe as someone who keeps agreements regardless of how convenient they are and whether it “gets them something” to do so.

Creating Agreements

Think of an agreement as “a clear statement of mutual intention that creates conscious flow.” When you don’t have agreements flow is left to chance. It may or may not occur on an instinctive basis. Chance and instinct are often capricious, which means is that it will occur infrequently and be short-lived.

A great example of how agreements create flow is the design of our highways. What do you think makes it safe for you to drive past thousands of cars at 130mph who are driving in the opposite direction within a few feet of you?

The answer is a mutual agreement: “We all agree to drive to the right of the center=line.” This one simple agreement allows us to simultaneously drive faster and be safer.

Imagine the chaos and anxiety we would experience if every time we got on the road to go somewhere everyone drove at their own speed, in any direction, and all over the road, on the medium, and in and out of the surrounding landscapes. On the surface it might seem like this was closer to “freedom. No one is going to tell me what to do. I will do whatever I want, moment by moment! What freedom!”

This is in fact a recipe for fear, gridlock. Most of us would slow down to about 5mph as the only coping strategy that would avoid an accident every five minutes.

This is the difference between freedom in the abstract and freedom to do something in particular. On roads without rules you have freedom to do anything you want except drive swiftly and predictably to where you want to go.

Somehow we miss this when it comes to relationships. No boundaries, no agreements and freedom to each “follow our heart wherever it goes,” really means the freedom to go slowly, spend countless hours in daily negotiation, and not go deeply or swiftly into our deepest loves, tenderness and hurts because we have to stay light or prepare ourselves for the ever-imminent shock of someone who affects us deeply doing something painful or destructive to our values. That’s not freedom. It’s a waste of energy, as most couples pursuing this ideal of spontaneous freedom without boundaries quickly discover. They are not a couple very long.

The process of forming clear agreements that facilitate shared values is the process of creating deep and powerful flow, which leads to value. The creation of strong mutual value in turn leads to sustainability.

What are some of the areas that agreements create and support a relationship:

- Communication:
 - Style of communication. “We can both interrupt each other and that’s fine,” is one style of communicating. “We will wait until the other finishes talking and make sure we understand what was said before responding” is another.
 - Timing in communication. Will you respond when you feel like it or is there an understanding that we can expect a response within the day as soon as a communication is received?
 - What format does your communication take? If one of you loves to text and the other only feels close on the phone, how do you resolve that? Or, since communication is such a fundamental building block of each relationship is that grounds not to engage in a relationship?
 - Do you want to set up pre-established protocols, such as “when I raise my pinky at a party it means I want to leave as soon as possible without having a debate in front of others?”

- Sex:

- Safe-sex agreements together.
 - Agreements to practice certain safe-sex with others.
 - Agreements about how to have sex with others so it will benefit our relationship.
 - Agreements about emotional/physical boundaries. For example, my definition of monogamy is “I will not participate in genital contact with the intent to arouse or be aroused. Kissing or cuddling is OK in the context of being clear that I am in a relationship and am not available for more.”
- Money:
 - Who will pay for what when?
 - Are gifts given in the expectation of reciprocity or are they fine to be one-sided indefinitely?
 - What is a relationship budget that both people feel comfortable contributing to?
 - If our partner says “Come to the movies with me” does that mean that the inviter is expected to pay or that if the person says “yes” they are expecting to pay half of any expenses incurred on the outing?

- Will money be split equally?
- Will bank-accounts and/or assets be shared?
- In the event of an ending, what is our plan to divide up assets?
- Honesty:
 - How transparent do you want to be as a couple?
 - Is omission considered a betrayal or an important aspect of discretion?
 - Are secrets OK in the relationship, providing they do not hurt anyone?
 - Is it polite to say “yes you do look fat” because that is the kind of candor we want to cultivate, or is it polite to say “what I think the other wants to hear.”
- Children:
 - Do you form agreements prior to birth or attempt to negotiate them after birth?
 - Is it your agreement that both people must be a clear “yes” to having children or their will be an abortion? Or is it that the woman can

decide because it is “her body” if there is an unintended pregnancy?

- What are the expectations around child-support in the event of a separation?

One of the best things about consciously building agreements is that in most cases it will become clear that our values with a potential partner are different. In short, while we might each like to be in a relationship with a potential partner “providing we relate in this way” we don’t want to relate with them in the way that they insist on relating. And since they do insist on relating in a way that is not aligned with our preference and values, they cannot partner with us to create the kind of relationship that will satisfy both people.

When this friction becomes conscious we have two choices: We can separate. Or we can both decide that the benefits of relating outweigh the downside of the friction. Just remember that lust is short-lived when values are too divergent. As a result, it’s not wise to have a child, for example, with someone who we are not deeply aligned with. After the lust has subsided it leaves two people being very clear that the partnership is not taking either person where they want to go. The child becomes the enemy that forces the relationship to continue in some way. That’s not fair to anyone – particularly the child, who deserved

~ Dane E. Rose ~

parents that considered things with a twenty year vision,
not a three month fantasy.

Refining The Relationship

When a real relationship takes off it is much like a jet rocketing down the runway to reach the critical speed for flight. Once in the air, it gets oriented and finds direction. From that point on there are endless forces that take it off course.

This is where partnering to refine and correct course come in:

- What is the most wasteful use of energy in our current patterns? How can we re-shape our patterns to avoid that waste?
- How much value is the relationship currently generating for each partner on a 1-10 scale? What could be changed to increase that score by 10-30%?
- What is the most painful/stressful aspect of the relationship? How could we cooperate to minimize that pain/stress?
- If we could both re-design the relationship from scratch to make it even more ideal, what would that look like? Is there any overlap between our two visions that we can work on?

These are all great areas to partner in order to maximize a relationship's potential.

~ Dane E. Rose ~

Part Three:

The Art of Partnering

The Mindset of a Partner

A partnering mindset begins with the clear awareness of the desirable things that are only possible in a true partnership. Among these are giving birth to something new, as in the case of a child, a shared home, or a new experience of oneself. In the same way that it takes two people to create a child, it takes two or more people to give birth to a completely new energy of any kind. Sometimes this can be done internally by partnering with other consciousness within and without ourselves. However, this can happen more consciously and in a more embodied form, with another human being.

Another benefit of partnering is the ease of raising the temperature. On a cold night cuddling is great because both people become warmer together than they would be alone. Our bodies create a mirroring dynamic in which heat that would otherwise escape, bounces back and forth, getting hotter and hotter. While this may seem a bit abstract, in order to transform anything it requires a certain degree of heat. Think of ice. It does not need a very high temperature to turn it into water, in which form it can easily be transformed into any shape. Steel, on the other hand, requires more than 4,000 degrees before it becomes as liquid as ice does at 33 degrees Fahrenheit. If you think of thought patterns, beliefs, cultural stereotypes, and feelings as having the same properties, each has a different

temperature they must reach before they become liquid. And it is only in their liquid state that they can be changed.

One of the reasons passionate and integrated love is so powerful is that it creates a hot temperature. Things that might otherwise never change in a lifetime start to enter a liquid state in which change, for better or for worse, can occur.

Instinctively, we know this. And for this reason, particularly those of us in the west, take numerous conscious and unconscious steps to avoid entering this hot liquid state. We like the stability that comes from seeing ourselves in a certain way and this stability disappears when we enter a liquid state. Rather than seeing ourselves as a constant, we must acknowledge the fact that at certain temperatures almost everything about us can rapidly change.

I remember a time when my sense of great tasting food changed over a ten day period. I had never liked Thai food growing up. The busyness of complex flavors, such as sweet and sour in one dish, disgusted me. Nor did I have a problem with this. I was quite happy to avoid Thai restaurants, and all Thai food permanently.

Then I fell in love with a woman who loved Thai food. I often invent new dishes for people in my life, since I love to cook. And these dishes are shaped by my sense of who that person is and what I feel they will enjoy eating the most. As

I cooked for my love I found myself inventing Thai – style recipes for the first time in my life. They were beautiful to me because the criteria of beautiful was whatever brought the most joy to my partner. Then I started eating my own food through the lens of imagining what it tasted like to my partner. Within a week I fell in love with Thai food as an extension of being in love with my partner. Then the temperature cooled down. I left the liquid state. However, my taste in food has been forever changed. Until I enter a liquid state in which I have a strong motivation to hate Thai food again, I will forever love Thai food.

I've had similar experiences around music. Songs I normally would not like, became some of my favorite songs due to listening to them through my partner's eyes in a state of very high temperature.

It's important to be aware that a liquid state is neutral. One person will become addicted to methamphetamines while in a liquid state, whereas another may fall in love with Beethoven's symphonies. That's because while change is easy in a liquid state, the change that takes place has a lot to do with the nature of the influences around us when we enter a liquid state. With that in mind, I consciously embrace a liquid state when I am in love with someone who I respect/admire and want to embrace as part of my identity. When I believe that my well-being will deteriorate as a result of changing to become more like another, I keep

my temperature cool by not opening to partnering in the same way.

Every child comes into the world in a liquid state, and has the culture of their birth-place pushed deep into their energetic, emotional, physical and mental templates. This is profoundly visible when you interview identical twins raised in opposite cultures. I met a Thai woman raised in Australia from age two and she bore no resemblance culturally to a Thai woman. Culture is based on strong cult laws that reward each child intensely for fitting in and punish them severely for straying outside the culture. In a formative time, children rarely fight the process of shutting down emotionally if they are a man, or embracing “personal freedom” if they are an American. But this is not “personal freedom,” as much as a cult meme. The main difference between a “culture” and a “cult” is its size. Take a bunch of women and say “you have to wear these clothes” and it is a brain-washing cult. Take a few million people established over time and do the same thing and we call it “culture.” We are all profoundly vulnerable to human influence.

What if you could become deeply compassionate in a matter of weeks, simply by opening up fully to the influence of a partner who embodies these qualities? Doesn't that sound more exciting than spending thirty years in a Buddhist monastery to get the same result? That's why partnering, consciously engaged in, is the

fastest path to growth available to us. For those of us who are committed to becoming all we can be, this makes partnering the single most valuable skill and activity we can engage in. It is only natural to organize our lives around the most important things in them. When you are clear on this, experientially, conceptually and emotionally, doing whatever it takes to show up as a healthy, conscious and equal partner is the only intelligent thing to do. We do it because it is the easiest way to go where we want to go.

Most of us have no sense of what's possible in partnering because we have never experienced it. Without the awareness of what's possible in partnership it seems absurd to put in the effort, energy, time and preparation needed to realize most of a partnership's potential. As a result, 99% of the population runs the other way from what seems like the path of most resistance rather than the river of least resistance.

Creating Enthusiasm

Joy, excitement, anticipation and enthusiasm all exist on a continuum. Many people come into a first meeting with a cool temperature. “Why should I be excited to meet or spend time with you?” The problem arises when this question is not taken seriously or answered.

The answer is not waiting for us. However, one clue comes from the question “do I expect a high pay-check before I finish the job I've been hired for?” On the one hand if you and I do nothing to create intense value there is really nothing exciting about our meeting. Your and my life will not dramatically change just because we introduced ourselves. Left to its own culturally defined default, the interaction will have almost no value, and is therefore nothing to get excited about. At the same time, any two people can, with focused intention, time and effort create value that is so high that it will make meeting among the most important events in our lives.

Do you want peak value enough to consciously build it? Because if you do, it's going to take heat: the kind of heat that is naturally generated with enthusiasm. Are you with someone who is willing to join you in that goal with equal passion?

One of the most exciting beginnings of a relationship is to see how easy it can be to create extraordinary value. It does

not matter who the people are. When two people sit down with the goal of creating as much mutual value as possible they will often succeed in creating a lot.

This brings me to the next obstacle that stops most of us from having the experience of creating extraordinary value: Being cheap. “Yes I could help you find a job but what if it takes a whole month and what you give me in return is not all that valuable? I could take ten hours to really understand you, and help you understand me. But that seems like an awful lot of work. Wouldn’t it be easier to just watch TV? I could take the time to listen to ten of your top goals and imagine all the ways I could help you. But what could you do for me in return?”

A personal story reminds me how anyone can create extraordinary value. My teacher in this regard is my virtual assistant, who I have never met in person. I had two candidates: One was vivacious, articulate, and had both credentials and a team. I wanted to hire her except for her policy: All payment was up front and she would stop work in mid-task if she ran out of prepaid hours. In short, the relationship she invited me to enter was one in which the balance of power was completely in her favor and in which there was more loyalty to the cash than to getting work done. As I quizzed her on what would happen if a time-sensitive job took more hours than anticipated when I was out of cell-phone range, my misgivings were confirmed: “It would not get done. I stop work when the prepaid hours run out.”

The other candidate was awkward on the phone. He had no team and charged the same amount per hour. He was anything but my picture of an engaging assistant. But I decided to see if there was any hidden value in the relationship. "Devang, I'm not sure if or why I should hire you. I think other potential employers will have the same questions that I have running through my mind, so I'm not going to give you a paid job. However, if you will make me a website about yourself showing me how and why I should hire you, I will take a look. Will you build me this website? If I don't hire you, it will be useful to show your next employer." "Yes." "And will you include a video of you explaining why someone should hire you that shows your video editing skills?" "Yes." "When will it be done." "In 48 hours." "Great. Send me the link as soon as it is done."

I did not anticipate success.

Devang sent me the link in 46 hours. I was immediately excited. Here was a man who did what he said he would, got work done on time, and was interested in collaborating to be hired. I said to myself: "Maybe this is not ideal. But I see this as a step in the right direction. Let me start hiring him for anything he can do and see what happens."

Over the next month Devang demonstrated extraordinary resourcefulness, generosity, and integrity. He offered to learn anything I wanted him to do off the clock and then bill me only when he was competent to do the task efficiently. This was more effort than I had ever experienced by any employee or contractor I

had hired in my entire career. I recognized how rare he was in his willingness to invest in our partnership's potential. So I have stepped up to the plate to give him extraordinary value:

- *I bought him books to read.*
- *I talked with him about his goals.*
- *I offered to hire his wife, under his management.*
- *I gave him research projects that built his skills.*
- *I trained him on how to succeed with me in detail.*
- *I gave him jobs he couldn't do and then coached him through how to do them until he succeeded.*
- *I praised him often.*
- *I gave him raises when his skills improved.*
- *I gave him more work.*

After three years I wanted to hire him full-time. He didn't want to leave his current employer since he values stability and his main job is a big company. So I gave him a few thousand dollars in advance that he can keep as his last month's pay – a bit like last month's rent. In that way he has more security. I also gave him an immediate 25% raise and a sign-on bonus. And I would not take "no" for an answer until we had a win/win arrangement that included the chance of him inheriting the company when I die.

The relationship is not one-sided. Both of us have worked harder to build this relationship than we have any other work relationship. It started as almost nothing. Except in truth it started with everything: The mutual willingness to invest extraordinary effort into creating the most valuable win/win that we could imagine. As a result, this one relationship with a low-level virtual assistant in India who I have never met has become among the most significant relationships of my life. Indeed, it has brought me more value than many "best friends," romantic partners, family members and more. What Devang brought to the table was the commitment to partner to create as much value for me as possible, with total commitment to the relationship being a win for me.

I'm painfully aware that very few Americans would be willing to show up in this way. I've never met one. What worries me is that Americans who do not show up with this kind of effort use "self-interest" as the basis for withholding effort, commitment, time, interest in service, and education. "What am I going to get out of it? Not enough to justify all this. Forget about it. Who needs this job?" As a result I don't buy them books, give them raises, spend time talking about their goals, giving them as many hours as they want, pay their bills within hours of them being presented, dream and build companies together. And I would not feel good about willing my company to any of them. With that attitude the company would go downhill. I know that the same thing that allows Devang to succeed with me will allow him to succeed at pleasing almost all our customers. In short, who better to run the

company? I feel so passionate about our relationship that if he becomes obsolete in his current role at some point I will invent a company/role that is designed around his strengths just for the pleasure of being around his level of excellence and integrity.

Let's go back to our meeting. What is the most amazing way we could touch one another's lives? How much upside can you imagine as a result of our meeting? The more you can imagine and take responsibility for creating, the more intelligent it becomes to invest the energy, time, money and emotion needed to realize it.

This brings up the potency that comes from being willing to learn. "How could I create the most value for you? What do you need? What do you want? What would improve your life?" When this question is explored mutually it is the fastest way to growth, value, excitement and vitality. Imagine a partner, regardless of age, sex, education, or type of relationship, who is 100% committed to helping you improve your health, lose weight, get a raise, start your company, and do everything on your bucket-list. Would it be worth redesigning your life to make room for that relationship? Give up some TV time for? Move dead-beat "friends" out of your life to show up for this quality of loyalty and love?

The quality of our enthusiasm, clarity, joy, excitement and anticipation is equivalent to the voltage in a battery. When enthusiasm is low your battery can still drive you to easy

places very slowly. But you can't rapidly climb the steep hills that are part of most worthwhile journeys. To build your enthusiasm, find people who will join you in the question: What is the most amazing way we could touch one another's lives if we were both 100% committed to bringing value to each other?

Just that information is often enough to get excited about. Turn that excitement into a framework for building the relationship. Build it rapidly, being honest about any boundaries, limitations and logistics that will help or make it harder for you to succeed. Just remember that there is a pot of something more valuable than gold on the other side of this rainbow – and it is always bigger than either of you can initially imagine. The key to accessing it is to be willing to pay whatever price is necessary to create it. These prices often have their own inherent value. I'm not talking about being willing to die to create peak value. How would dying help you further a partnership? Rather, you might need to take a course in active listening that takes time and money. You might need to do some therapy to get the venom out of your system so you don't poison your partner when they open their heart to you. Each of these prices is actually very good for you. They will benefit every area of your life as well as your partnership.

The same is true of letting go of dead-weights in your life, be these things, draining assets, "friends" or family members. If all that is needed for your balloon to lift off the

ground is to let go of your inner critic, then do so. If it is to let go of your “friend” who always explains why you can’t and should not go for your dreams, then let them go as well. Do all of these things with enthusiasm, courage, commitment and integrity to the amazing life that is beckoning you to join it! Now you are ready to be an amazing partner with just about anyone willing to join you in the endeavor.

Partnering: The Mechanics

You meet someone and you have a feeling of warmth, interest and attraction. You imagine a picture of doing something you would enjoy with this person. Perhaps it's flying a radio control plane. Or imagining a vacation. Or making love.

You like the feeling and the picture. Both bring you pleasure. You want to take this feeling and picture from a possibility to a probability. How do you partner to create it?

There are several approaches you might take:

"I have just imagined a beautiful picture of spending time with you. Are you interested in hearing what my picture is and seeing if it overlaps with anything you might be interested in."

"No thank you. That sounds strange and unfamiliar to me."

"Ok. But I want to partner, not play games. So I'll disengage."

You have just partnered to explore an opportunity and then disengage because you have not been met.

You might try another approach:

“I have a nice feeling around you. Are you open to getting to know one another?”

“Sure.”

“When would be a good time to talk in more depth?”

“Well, now that I think about it I don’t really have time.”

“Ok, thanks for being clear. I’ll disengage and wish you well.”

Or let’s say they are interested:

“How about right now? What did you have in mind?”

“Well, I want to get to know what is important to each of us so that we can both participate in creating a win/win. How about we talk about the habits, values and qualities we want in new relationships.”

“Ok, though I don’t have everything on the tip of my tongue.”

“Great. The point of this conversation is to see if we would be good partners in some way. So let’s focus on being seen in the areas that really matter. If we are incompatible that’s great to find out and we can go our separate ways. If we seem to want similar things, we can explore those in more detail later.”

“Ok. I’d like to start with what my deal-breakers are. Then you can tell me if you do any of these things. Let’s take turns and I’ll tell you if I do any of your deal-breakers.”

At this stage in the exploration there is a strong partnering process with a shared goal of discovering if there is a good fit or not. Even though there is a high probability that at least one of you will do something that is close to a deal-breaker for the other, this is a very strong partnership up to this point.

Let’s say that your partner in this process says: “Lying of any kind is a deal-breaker for me.

You reply. “Thanks for telling me. I have lied a few times in recent years. So I may not be a good fit for you. Would you like to hear more or shall we disengage at this point?”

“Thanks for helping me see what to expect. I’d like to hear. And I’d also like to hear why you did it, since you seem like a very conscientious person.”

“I lied about my truck mileage to the IRS. I got audited and this lie saved me \$1,500. at a time I didn’t have a lot of money. I also didn’t agree with IRS law around some important deductions that they did not allow but which benefited my business. I also believe that I will spend my money in better ways for my own and other’s well-being than the IRS will. I’m still not philosophically in favor of

this lie, but I did lie. I'm not sure if I would lie again in similar circumstances."

"I see. Have you ever lied to a friend or lover?"

"No. This would be destructive to my values of transparency. If I feel I need to lie I'd rather end the relationship since the relationship is not that valuable to me if it requires lies to sustain it."

"OK. I'm not that concerned with this track-record of honesty. Let's continue."

Let's step back and look at what is going on in this dynamic with a bit of perspective. How are you feeling as you imagine being a part of this conversation?

This conversation will probably seem uncomfortable and strange. Most relationships have very little to do with direct, conscious partnering, and more to do with instinctual attraction and the comfort that comes with familiarity.

So what should you do? Should you reject the whole idea of conscious partnering because it is strange and uncomfortable? The majority, having never experienced the clarity, ease, kindness and respect that comes from this way of interacting will continue to do so. In the short run it is both easier, and more comfortable to reject anything new.

However, instinct and initial comfort have stood in the way of scientific progress, social change and the evolution of ideas throughout our history. At some point, be it in the area of medicine, flight, diet, biblical mythology, traveling to space and every other major advance, the change has occurred when a few people decide to think rather than follow gut instinct and initial comfort levels.

So let's look at some of the data around this shift towards partnering. Sadly, we would rather waste time as a country filling out company survey's than doing in-depth relational surveys so we are flying blind here. In informal personal studies I meet a number of American's over fifty years old who tell me I am the only person in their life who has asked them very basic questions about partnering. I can also say, having spent forty years internationally and in the U.S. in both conventional and high-growth settings, there are several basic questions that not a single human being has ever asked me. This suggests to me that direct, conscious partnering for social purposes (it is more common in business) represents less than 2% of what goes on, and for certain kinds of partnering it may be much lower.

The very lack of partnering makes it particularly medicinal:

Growth: Since almost no one has had a conversation based on true direct partnership, it is a new experience. New experiences lead to new perspectives that can benefit us not

only in the area of the experience, but in other areas of our lives. If we have never been in a plane, the experience of taking off can help us not only learn to travel faster, but to learn about how we experience being out of control. Since planes are safer but feel more vulnerable, they can also reveal the tension between our instincts and scientific facts.

Boredom and loneliness: As our nation's media thrives on the attention garnered from fear and shock, it has become popular to enjoy the adrenaline rush of fearing strangers. It has become prudent to be independent, separate, and to say "no" to unfamiliar opportunities. "Be safe. Stay isolated. Don't be tempted to talk with strangers."

Statistically, the world has been getting safer per capita in terms of physical violence, even as the media's technology allows it to amplify the remaining pockets of violence and fear with more and more effectiveness. Kidnapping is a great example. Only about 50 children a year are kidnapped in the U.S. in a way that fits the stereotype of a media sensation. These fifty cases are dramatized, along with scary statistics about the tens of thousands of kidnappings that go on each year. But while the fifty kidnappings are horrific kidnappings by strangers, most kidnappings are for less than 24 hours, in which the child is not harmed, and are initiated by family members in marital conflicts. If anything, the message should be: "Don't trust your family. They will hurt and kidnap you ten times more than strangers."

But that fact would not stimulate any fear. “Don’t trust your family? How absurd is that? They are family – familiar.”

When the safety of flying was questioned after September 11th, more people drove their cars in the subsequent 12 months. During that 12 month period an additional 1,500 hundred people died from auto accidents. The bubble of additional accidents showed up as more people were on the road. So while the media replayed September 11th to full effect, the real danger lay in buying in to the fear and losing the protection of the superior safety record we benefit from as a result of traveling by plane.

Back to boredom and loneliness. If saying “no,” disengaging, not initiating, avoiding strangers and being independent is shrewd, Americans are becoming increasingly shrewd. There is just one problem. The health, personal growth and emotional costs of being bored, isolated and lonely are ten times more deadly (leading to shorter life and disease) than the discomfort we experience occasionally as a result of risking emotionally to engage. So while the media drones on about the latest victim, it is the people glued to their TV and too frightened to make new friends or grow their relationship skills who are truly suffering by the millions.

One of the dangers that comes with simplistic thinking reveals itself here. Safety functions on many levels. When

we reduce it to mean “don’t talk to strangers,” we may appear “safe” when we confirm that we have successfully isolated ourselves from unfamiliar social interaction. Yet in doing so we may be taking years off of our natural life, decreasing our feelings of belonging, minimizing personal growth, and becoming obese, as we first isolate ourselves and then mask the pain of isolation with food. Might it not be more appropriate to define “safe” as having the skills to engage, grow, connect, explore and deepen relationships with each new person we meet (all strangers!).

Back to the conversation: Because partnering is so new and unfamiliar to most people it triggers survival anxiety. This anxiety is triggered whenever something new is experienced. In the process it weeds out most people who function solely from gut-reaction. In other words, when you invite partnering most people will get a feeling in their gut that says: “danger! This is unfamiliar!” Without questioning this feeling, most people will do a U-turn and run, (flight) or argue about why partnering is bad for some reason or other (fight). Since this does not make a very good argument, most people will subtly run.

What this means is that those who stick around are a mixture of desperate people (who are so miserable that this discomfort seems minor) and highly intelligent pro-active people. Together these people comprise about 1% of the population. When someone joins you in a conversation about conscious partnering they are part of that 1%. This in

itself is significant, because it is very hard to create above-average relationships in a paradigm of reaction. Gut instinct and reactions are not adequate to generate a significant improvement in relationships.

Sustainability: Partnering is new for almost all of us. But even if partnering is familiar, doing it with this particular person is not. This usually means that our adrenals will get a run for their money over this 1-4 hour period in the conversation so far. And that's hard on the body.

I find it helpful to pivot within four hours to something playful, energizing, relaxing and fun. If you imagine the relationship as an account, you don't want to start it off with too much stress (withdrawal) before making a healthy deposit. Within two hours you may want to have one of the following conversations:

- What is something you would love to do together?
- What is a peak experience you would be excited to share together?
- What level of touch feels comfortable, respectful, and nourishing?

When you bring these conversations up, are they welcome? Some people are fine pouring out energy in a philosophical or uncomfortably stressful direction, but resist anything that is intimate and pleasurable. This will be a problem from a sustainability point of view. Unless you are the

same, you will not want to keep investing in more discomfort with no pleasure on the horizon. You will burn out or not find it valuable enough to make the effort.

To dive into these topics also takes moving beyond gut reaction to conscious choice. The gut responds with “I don’t know you.” The conscious mind responds: “Exactly. I don’t know you and I will never know you if I don’t get close enough to see you. Do you want to be seen?”

The gut response is: “This is weird.” The conscious mind responds: “Isn’t it a pity that we live in a culture where “going and having a drink” is not weird, but discussing how we could create a peak experience is weird? How bizarre to say, in effect: “I’m happy to get drunk with you and lose my capacity to think, but you are too dangerous to think and brainstorm with.” Presumably, if you are unsafe to talk to, you are more unsafe to drink with.” The gut replies: “I don’t care. I’m not doing it, and that’s it.” The conscious mind looks for someone else who is not driven solely by gut instinct.

Replenishing the well: When you meet someone who embraces the topic of co-creating a peak experience, nourishing touch, and what would make the relationship better for both of you, you have a very high odds of success.

I encourage you to pick a topic and take turns sharing one very specific actionable fact or invitation on that topic. For

example, in the conversation on peak experiences, you might say:

“I would love it if you picked me up this Thursday at 8pm and took me to dinner at Galicos, my favorite Greek Restaurant. I’d love you to bring me flowers, split the bill with me equally, and look me in the eye at dinner. I want to surprise you with my outfit and would like you to wear a black suit. Compliment me, enjoy comfortable silence, possibly play footsie with me, and then escort me home. Call me at 11:45pm and wish me a good night. That would be an 8 out of 10 for me.”

Your partner in the conversation might reply: “That would be a 6 out of 10 for me. I would love it if you called me up Friday night and said “Let’s go camping.” We would meet on Sat morning at 11am and you would help me get my tent cleaned up for the trip while we listened to CarTalk. I’d work on the tent on a stool in the garage and you would massage my neck in an affectionate way...”

You get the idea. If you are both honest and go for things you really want, just talking about them will be energizing. There is no effort or agenda made to get the other person to want what you want. Rather, you are getting to know each other through the lens of peak experiences. By definition, a peak experience touches on both peoples’ top values. That’s what makes them so fun.

In most cases, if you each share three possible peak experiences, there will be at least one experience, often cobbled together from the six ideas mentioned, that will be great for both people. You can stop there. Or you can continue and each share ten possible ways you might connect. If you do continue there will probably be two or three items that are ideal for both people without any compromise needed. If not, this probably means that your values are not in sync, and might suggest a dissolution of the partnership. This supports both people in finding partners with overlapping values.

Do some fun things! Partner to build new energy reserves in some way so that you are ready to make more withdrawals without running dry.

Building a culture: We all grow up in a culture, or cult. But often it does not support us in being the person we want to be. If we are in a culture of flakes, where 80% of the people in our lives are late, hurried, or are more focused on looking good than in being sincere, how easy will it be for us to be vulnerable, reliable and generous? Not very. That's because sustainability is based on balance. In a culture of generosity and reliability, everyone ends up with more. But in a culture of unreliability and taking, the generous person is quickly drained, upset, and kept waiting. This gets tiring so they will soon join the cult by refusing to give as much.

That's why building a conscious culture in a relationship is so important. You can create a micro-climate that sustainably breaks away from the herd-mentality of the culture around you. Partnering in the creation of that culture is essential. And it's one of the greatest opportunities that a conscious relationship of partnering can bring.

What do you want as your relationship culture? Who do you want to be, and what agreements, intentions, habits and energies will best support you in being that person? This is the culture that you want to build.

If you find someone who shares your values, creating a conscious culture will be the greatest gift you give them. If you don't share their values, this is another chance to see that and disengage. Remember, disengaging is a form of partnership when you first partner to see that you want to create different things, and then partner to separate so as to better support each other in creating those with a better match. I'll talk more about creating a culture in the next chapter.

Preparing to Partner

Before you can partner to co-create anything, be it an emotional state, or a tangible object, you must first clarify what you want. Stepping back a moment: If you are simply attracted to someone and want to have sex with them, it's not a partnering situation. If your sexual goal is pursued consciously, and is shared, it could be an arena in which to partner: "Let's co-create the most amazing sexual experience we can imagine. Are you interested in joining me in that goal?" This is the rare exception. Unconscious seductions that involve orchestrating the other person's perceptions and manipulating them into sex is not partnering. You don't need to prepare yourself for that. To be successful at manipulating, you may need to do some research on what trigger points will create the best results, but that research is about what they like, not about your own values.

The best preparation for partnering is to be clear about your personal ideal – what you would most value experiencing/creating if there was no one else involved. This will help you see yourself clearly. It's also a form of relationship with God/Goddess. God/Goddess is different for each person, whether or not they share a similar practice or philosophy. There is often a gap between the mental God/Goddess and the living God/Goddess. The mental God of a Christian, for example, may be a stern and

punishing figure. Someone a Christian relates to out of fear/duty. But what may stir the most passion/wonder/enthusiasm/joy/gratitude for that same person might be to talk about an adventure with a famous person, to sexually touch a specific person, or to own some gadget that looks cool. This is the gap between the actual god and the living god. The living god may be about looking cool, being accepted, feeling pleasure, dreaming of something amazing, and feeling closer to an experience of conquering fear. The mental god may be about doing what you are told, even if it means abandoning all of these “unholy” pursuits.

The living god is more important than the mental god. It has juice, energy, dreams and secret devotion. What’s more, it brings happiness, joy, energy and gratitude. Even when, as in the case of certain sexual fantasies, it might be shunned by the conscious mind, it brings more dedication than the list of “shoulds” that, for many people, make up their socially accepted version of god.

The living god/goddess is best discovered and nurtured through the lens of aliveness. What brings you to a peak state of mental, emotional and physical aliveness? The answer to this question may take you initially towards pain and fear: these easy-to-stimulate intense emotions do, after all, create a lot more aliveness than the mediocrity of numbness many live their lives in.

However, peak aliveness is always in a positive domain. Intense panic is never experienced at the same depth/bandwidth as deep love that integrates heart/mind/body. Joy is always more exquisite than the awareness that comes from being tortured, though torture is a close second, be that in conscious BDSM rituals or the unconscious vindictive rituals of causing another pain. Intimacy is required in order for both exquisite joy and exquisite pain to be consciously created. Pain becomes a second-best stop on the way to peak aliveness – normally when we either do not feel we deserve or feel too vulnerable to open to true joy. For this reason many couples will have destructive fights over nothing in order to derail an imminent state of peak joy/beauty. It's a rare person who will collaborate to create peak joy.

To truly co-create anything worthwhile as an equal partner we must be willing to be that rare person. Here is an exercise to embrace this path:

You are a film director of a film that stars you in it. The script calls for bringing the leading character to a state of peak aliveness that is so rich the audience can taste it. Your job as a director is to write/direct a script in such a way that the audience (you) lives through everything you feel and is able to taste the leading actors experience. How do you do it?

One of your frustrations as a director is that you can feel that there is a reservoir of emotion that is being missed by the script. The lines are perfectly plausible but you are bored with the lack of inner light in your leading actor as you watch them read the lines. You want something more.

You take your actor out to dinner and try your normal conversations. Everything is just too polite and perfect. Finally, you lose patience. Pulling a gun from your pocket you hold it to the actors head. "Yes, it's loaded," you mention when the actor searches your face with a questioning look. "You have three seconds to tell me the one thing you will most regret not doing if I let you live?"

"Hug my dog," the actor blurts out. Now you have something real. Why is the dog more important than all the people that are elevated by social niceties to be "what life is all about." You have an honest god, not a piece of scripture.

Be aware that you have plenty of room to be a bullshit artist around this preparation. If you pull a gun to your own head you may not fear the shock to shake you out of familiar patterns and get to what is burningly important to you. Then again, you just might. The act of getting the gun could be a way of setting the stage so that you get off your mental but and start committing to a life that is worth living, rather than the tired script you and everyone else expects of you.

The point is that when you have a clear film in your mind's eye that touches you to direct, inspires you as an audience, and engages your complete and full attention and emotional bandwidth as an actor, you have a film that, were you to find a partner to play opposite you in the script and co-direct, would be one of the most important projects of your life. You would have an idea of what ideal partnership looks like to you. Not the only ideal. There might be other movies you could write/direct/star in that would be equally potent. But you would have at least one.

A great partner is someone who sees and is equally touched by the value of your script. In some ways it does not matter if they are old, young, have a degree or not, are rich or poor. If they can play the role in the script that activates your peak awareness, they may be the most amazing partner!

If you are unable to find your peak script through your imagination you have two choices: Give up on a life that is as rich as it could be, or make yourself uncomfortable in another way. The inability to imagine with conviction is a form of protection. "Maybe I would and maybe I wouldn't like this," is a form of sitting on the fence by avoiding intimacy with your feelings. That's fine. You still have another choice to go for intimacy with yourself through direct experience.

- 1) Make a list of 100 things that might or might not create peak aliveness. If you are vague about this, start with pain. Go to a BDSM citadel and get whipped, dripped with hot wax and whatever else is on the menu until you are willing to be honest. Pain will help you step beyond feigned ignorance into the truth of what you really want and don't want.
- 2) Do your list. If you don't have the money to do the things on your list, ask for help and at the same time work like hell to create the money. If you can't make the money needed to do these things in your current job, quit and work on a career that will help you make that money.
- 3) Take psychedelics in a therapeutic setting. If you are one of the many numb people who is content to sit in your mental fortress and judge life, take LSD, mushrooms, DMT and Ayahuasca in a therapeutic context and then integrate it into your life. And before you do that, study and avoid the pitfalls which you can do on my video blog:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCH4yk8PbBPzTMFTw_a2xzOg

Doing these things is allowing you to give a potential partner the greatest gift you can give any true

friend/partner/lover: clarity about the role you want to play and the willingness to show up for that role with complete integrity. You want to show up with the kind of passion that gets a top athlete out of bed every day. It's not about being extroverted. It may be that your peak state is writing a book for an hour a day and reviewing the ideas with a partner – in short, partnering to create a book in a state of peak aliveness.

Here is a short check-list of things to answer confidently and clearly:

- 1) I know what I want and can communicate it clearly.
- 2) I am willing to pay the price needed to show up fully and create what I want. I know what those prices are.
- 3) I know what brings out the best in me to such an extent that I can direct another actor/actress in bringing it out in me.
- 4) I am willing to be successful and in a peak state of aliveness even when doing so leads others to judge, reject, misunderstand and punish me.
- 5) I see the value in a partner who can beautifully play a certain role, even if on an instinctual level, I don't really like them.

~ Dane E. Rose ~

- 6) I'm working my but off to create my dreams and am open to getting there faster with the support/love of a partner in a win/win relationship.
- 7) I know what my true god is. I know what brings me profound joy and say YES to it.

Levels of Partnership

Imagine that your spouse invites you to join them washing the dishes. You are reading the paper after dinner and they throw you a washing towel, asking you to dry as they wash. You agree by standing up to receive the next wet plate. Is this partnership?

If it is, what is the quality and degree of the partnership? On what level is the partnership occurring or not occurring? Is partnership tacit acceptance of an invitation by responding? Does it matter whether or not the response is motivated by fear, guilt, joy or passion? In other words if you stand up, not because you want to help with the dishes by drying them at this particular time, but because you lack the energy for a stare down, you don't want to risk indigestion with an argument and you know from experience that standing up will avert a two-day ordeal of passive/aggressive behavior on the part of your partner, is that partnering? Is it partnering for a slave to do what she is told because she knows she will get beaten and go hungry otherwise?

There is a huge difference between cooperation out of fear/guilt/shame/need and partnering to create shared ideals and values in a synergistic way. And while cooperation has a role to play in partnering, partnering takes cooperation to a whole new level.

Partnering, in its fullest form, is extremely rare. I don't think I've ever seen a relationship that came close to the ideal of a multi-level, multi-dimensional partnership. I'm sure they are out there, but just not very common. I aspire to be present in and to witness such a relationship.

Perhaps I should have called this exploration "virgin frontiers of partnership" to reflect this fact. It's also exquisitely rewarding. Sex, at its best, is a partnership of co-creating exquisite physical/emotional/mental pleasure through touch, words and interaction. When you add in the dimensions of money, daily routine, goals, philosophy and shared activities, partnership can be so much more satisfying than sex. In a sense it is sex at an entirely different level. True partnering takes the synergies and flow of sex and extends them as far and wide and deep as two people are able and willing to take them.

Ingredients in Partnership

The quality of the ingredients in our partnership determine the quality and dimension of the partnerships we create and experience with others.

Freedom:

What is the dimension and level of freedom within the relationship? How much of what you do is motivated by ideals instead of fear?

A slave may cooperate with a master to get things done. A slave might even become loyal to a master, turning in other slaves plotting escape out of that loyalty, with little thought of personal reward. However, the entire interaction is happening within the paradigm of slavery: a relationship that uses fear and force to manipulate one person into doing what is best for another.

To get a sense of the ratio of freedom to slavery in your present relationships consider the following:

- 1) If you could be doing anything and being anyone you wanted, what would you be doing and who would you be being right now? How big is the gap between your ideal “you” and your present you? To the extent that this gap comes from fear, the “partnership” is diminished, regardless of whether your fear is based on the fact that you would/do get

punished for being you or if you imagine that you will.

- 2) In your close relationships how much of your behavior is motivated by fear vs. joy, love and spontaneous creativity? As you accept and decline invitations, hide or reveal yourself, hurry or slow down, act or avoid, how much of your behavior is driven to manipulate yourself or others into meeting your needs for survival, acceptance, approval based on what you know will elicit that experience from others – and how much is coming from your own true impulses from the inside?

Another level to evaluate freedom is how much you are defining the choices available to you rather than letting others define them for you. For example, you go into a supermarket and have 10 choices of vinegar. Is choosing between 10 vinegars the choice you want to be making right then? Or is the choice you want to be making entering a store with one vinegar, no line, no florescent lights, and Beethoven's 4th Symphony in the background instead of indistinguishable pop music?

Do you want to be choosing between a job with more pay and fewer hours with a boss you don't like or someone you like but who has a different set of career values that are incompatible with your own? So many of our choices are between two different things that are each out of sync with

even the general region of our ideals. We can partner to make the best of it in these situations, which is a start. It's also not the same as a deep commitment to dancing towards shared values with a jointly-developed strategy.

Integrity:

Imagine integrity as an amazing fabric that strongly links everything with everything else. Total integrity (or total integration) is when all elements in focus are powerfully connected to all other elements in focus.

Integrity begins with self. If your mind says "I want to be alone" but your heart says "please don't leave me I feel lonely!" there is a low level of self-integration. 50% of us is fighting the other 50% of us. The net result is zero. If someone connects with us in this state, regardless of whether they leave us alone and listen to our words, or refuse to leave us alone and listen to our heart, they will lose. They will find a person who spends 50% of their energy resisting them and has no energy to support the relationship as a result.

Thus the first ingredient of partnership is creating a strong majority vote within ourselves for a specific goal and plan of action. This lays the groundwork to connect with someone else in a shared journey in which we can be a strong participant.

This process of weaving inner integrity is a political process that is very similar to the process in a healthy democracy. Let's look at the example in which your mind thinks you should be alone and your heart feels afraid of abandonment and wants to hang on to everyone around you. In this state all of your energy is spent in internal conflict. The question becomes how to prepare for win/win connection with another by resolving this internal conflict in a way that creates a strong and positive majority.

How do you do this in your own life? When you have two parts of you in conflict, do you have a process of resolving the conflict in a way that is good for all of your inner voices? Or do you have a consistent majority vote that dominates and ignores the minority dissenting voice?

Some people, for example, have a very strong heart and always follow it, even when their mind strongly disagrees. Let's imagine that you fall in love with someone and you are someone who always follows your feelings even when your mind says "this is not a good match for you at all for these important reasons." You may spend some energy suppressing your dissenting mind and still be able to show up for romance, even if it ends disastrously because you ignored the information given you by your mind, which could see problems on the horizon. Or let's say that you do the opposite: You don't love someone but your mind tells you it is a great fit so you connect anyways and spend your energy rationalizing why you should be feeling joyful

rather than depressed. Is this really the best solution for you, your heart, your mind or your romantic interest? How do you handle these types of situations when you make big decisions with natural pros and cons to every choice?

The quality of partnering is relevant on all levels: Our partnership with ourselves, our friends, our spouse, our boss or clients, and our community.

In a political process there is often compromise, though not always partnership. One faction may want to raise taxes and spend it on education while another faction wants to lower taxes to encourage overseas business to invest and create more jobs.

What happens? Perhaps great effort is spent to do absolutely nothing, with neither faction having enough energy to get anything done. But another possibility is that a skilled leader forges a compromise as follows:

- A company who makes a binding contract to hire more than 500 people paying \$30./hr. or more will get a tax break that makes the area attractive.
- The additional employees being taxed are calculated to raise enough money to fund several specific educational reforms without actually raising the percentage of taxes taken from anyone's wages.
- A business program is introduced for 12-18 year old high school students that gives students a chance to

work together to start a company and become profitable. 50% of this money goes to fund the schools, which in turn allows those schools to hire better teachers. This in turn attracts the best students, who make excellent business owners.

- The graduating classes of local students with business experience make the area highly attractive to growing businesses, which in turn results in more jobs and the ability to have a lower tax rate while still having more money to fund education.
- As this is explained to the constituents of the area 90% of the population is able to get behind the plan. As it works out, this number raises to 95%. Now the area has 95% of its citizens working together in a common strategy to boost shared values. As this occurs the integrity within the community increases, making this community a powerful partner capable of forming alliances or partnerships with other communities and businesses.

This same process of creating integrity between our different wishes and values needs to occur as a prerequisite to co-creating a high degree of partnership with another human being. The question is: Do you value the beautiful and rich experiences that are possible with true partnership enough to do the time-consuming and never-ending work of weaving and reweaving the infinite strands of thought,

feeling, action and vision into a life that is aligned with your values and ideals? Only then are you ready to create a high level of partnership with another.

Dimension:

How do you measure the length, width and breadth of partnership? If you were to consider the relationships in your life, which one has the greatest volume of partnership in your intuitive evaluation?

Now let's look at how you made that evaluation. Perhaps you have focused on the attitude and level of respect people in your life show you for your feelings? Or perhaps you have looked at who in your life you collaborate the most with? Is there more partnership in a business relationship that involves eight hours a day of your time or in a ten minute interaction that feels profoundly respectful?

These questions hint at how many dimensions can be used to measure partnerships:

- Physical partnership:
 - Touch
 - Money
 - Activities
 - Voice

- Scent
- Sight
- Smell
- Taste
- Rhythm
- Duration
- Mental partnership:
 - Strategy
 - Belief
 - Values
 - Conversation
- Emotional partnership:
 - Shared feelings
 - Shared intensity
 - Shared intention
 - Shared rhythm

While these dimensions give some idea of all the ways we can partner, they are so abstract that they probably won't reveal just how much partnership is possible between two

people. Consider for a moment what you consider to be your peak partnership experience in your life? Was it in the military? Was it in business? Was it making love? Or creating and raising a child with someone? Bring a specific event into focus. How and where did you partner to create that? How and where didn't you partner? How would you rank the interaction on a 1-10 scale, with 10 being total partnership and 0 being no partnership?

Consciousness:

When you partner, how conscious are you of both the creation and maintenance of the partnership? Consciousness has a number of expressions:

- Do both people share a conscious intention to partner, or is it something that just happens due to adapting to circumstance?
- Is the intention jointly co-created or does one person set it and the other comply out of convenience or fear?
- How clear is the intention? Does it involve strategy or simply an objective?
- Is the intention taken to the level of agreement or are each of your roles left to assumption?
- How much of the partnership is clearly written down and/or spoken.

Perhaps at this point it would be helpful to go back to the example of washing dishes. When the rag gets thrown on your lap and you find that in order to avoid the hassle of divorce or the two days of covert hostility you must get up faster than you want to, shift focus from what you want to be reading, and wash dishes when you would prefer to hire a maid and feel you could be contributing more value to the relationship in some other areas. What could partnership look like instead?

First of all, let's look at how this situation got to this point. Perhaps your partner said "let's buy a house," and you agreed. Maybe they said they liked this house and you didn't like others enough to want to argue. When you purchased the house they spent so much money on things that were not important to you that there was not much money for the things that you really wanted, such as hiring a maid. And you discovered that your partner would punish you if you did not help out equally and that they wanted to clean up immediately after eating. You discovered all this after the fact and now here you are.

Many would say: "That's just life! Deal with it." It is hard to argue with this. It is many people's lives. And if it is your life you have to deal with it in one way or another. It's also true that if this is your life it will continue to be your life unless you decide that it is unacceptable to live that way and realize that if you want another life you will have to make some different choices along the way.

This is where the art of partnering comes in! Because by far the most important choice in enhancing the quality and value of a partnership is picking a partner who shares your passion for partnership enough to make the uncommon effort to break from the status quo. Picking someone you are attracted to and then trying to manipulate them into doing personal growth and relationships more consciously than they want to is not partnership. It is not love. It is doing another version of the dish rag. If your partner is attracted to you enough to hang in there they may be tired of resisting and play along with your partnership ideas. But the partnership will be weak and not go very far in the same way that a charged battery combines with a dead battery to make a weak current that won't take you very far.

When picking a partner with a core value of maximizing a conscious, multi-dimensional partnership, the first step is to talk about how you want to partner and to what extent.?

One of the problems that comes up when partnering to find a partner is the simplicity of our language around partnership. I meet women all the time who say they want to have a conscious healthy relationship of partnering. Very few of them have any idea what that means in terms of daily life with another human being. If I ask them to describe their ideal week with a partner, they draw a blank. "How about listing the many ways you enjoy being loved?" They don't know. "What's your ideal way to relate

around money?" They don't want to commit to anything up front. In short, they want to slide into something on instinct, and save hard conversations until after attachments have formed. Then the power-play starts as both people try and push the other into being their ideal, rather than learning and accepting that their partner probably is not what they wanted – or say the want.

Others describe the ideal life they want their “partner” to fit into. In other words they want a person to do, say and think what they want them to on their rhythm and are calling that a partner. It's not that they want to engage in a process that brings awareness to a recipe for conscious partnering. They want the person they choose to magically become their ideal. And since they know that it's unlikely they will settle for manipulating their man as much as they can into changing without pushing him so far that he will leave them. And while they will complain about the man in their life, they have no complaint with their choice to engage in a dynamic of semi-conscious manipulation rather than co-creating conscious partnership.

Partnering has a very different core-value in which the win/win synergy of the partnership is more important than you getting what you want at the expense of the other. It's a framework of conscious win/win or no deal, in the awareness that the world is filled with an abundance of people – and that at any given moment the right person exists somewhere who can partner with us. But it is also a

mindset that says that there is usually an idea that will help both people achieve their core values harmoniously and simultaneously.

Deep Partnering:

What if you wanted to go way beyond the norms of relationship that are typically called partnering? Imagine if your goal was to push the limit as far as you could go into conscious, multidimensional partnering. How far could you go?

Think about all the things you don't know about many of the people in your life – perhaps even the most intimate person you have ever known. If this is hard for you, realize how many things you may think you know by projecting your own feelings onto others. I've taken to using a 1-10 scale to measure intensity in the people I'm with simply because it's so easy to project, for example, that when I and someone else are both annoyed about being late that we are both annoyed for the same reasons and to the same degree, when in fact there may be very different values at play and a wide range of emotional intensity. Understanding that some people feel a 10 out of 10 annoyance about being late and some feel a 2 out of 10 is important in making sense of the very different ways people react under similar circumstances. Understanding that one person's ten when someone keeps them waiting comes from feeling disrespected, and another person's 10 comes from the

humiliation they feel when they are seen waiting for someone else is key to partnering and creating win/win.

Take the time to learn. I've found it takes about 12 hours to reveal and discuss many of the basics that are necessary to co-create conscious partnership. These include understanding and revealing:

- What makes you feel loved?
- What causes your pain?
- What is your value hierarchy?
- What environment brings out the best in you?
- What are your dreams and passions in life?
- What are some examples of a peak experience?
- What cultural agreements and practices reflect your preferences?
- What does ideal friendship look like to you?
- What are the logistics in your life that affect our relationship?
 - How much money can you comfortably spend each month on our relationship expenses?

~ *The Art of Partnering* ~

- What times during each day and week are you most available?
- When do you have relationship energy?
- What does courtesy look like?
- What do you like about yourself and who do you want to become?
- Who do you respect the most in the world and why?
- What patterns do you want to avoid repeating and what patterns do you want to cultivate?
- What does ideal sexuality look like to your heart, mind and body?

Talking about these topics for an hour each can dramatically increase the transparency and intimacy in the relationship. This in turn leads to the possibility to partner, be that partnering in the choice to disengage out of respect for differences, or partnering to engage in the areas our intentions, values and strategies overlap.

Inefficient Simplistic Thinking

Imagine that you are eating a sandwich. You are hungry and it feels good. Then you keep eating more sandwiches. You start to feel sick. What do you decide and learn from this experience?

Imagine that your paradigm is simple: Are sandwiches good for you? Since this is a simple paradigm the answer is either “yes” or “no.” What do you decide?

Let’s say that you decide that, because you got sick, sandwiches are bad for your health. And you take it a step further. You commit to never eat a sandwich again.

Later you are hungry and you see a sandwich. You remind yourself that you have taken a vow never to eat a sandwich again. But you are so hungry that you reach for it and take a bite. It feels so good. And this time there is only half a sandwich to eat. You finish it and you feel great.

But you feel guilty. “I broke my vow! I said I would never eat a sandwich and I just ate one! What’s wrong with me.” You are also confused. Why did eating a sandwich make you sick the first time but make you healthy the second time. “Maybe I was wrong. Maybe sandwiches are good and I made a mistake.”

Looking at this situation the problem is obvious to us. Why? Because we know that the situation is more complex

than whether sandwiches are good or bad. We know that whether a sandwich is good for us or bad for us depends on many factors:

- How hungry we are?
- What are the ingredients in the sandwich?
- Is it organic?
- How big is the sandwich and how much we eat?

Most of us are not simplistic when it comes to the question of whether sandwiches are good or bad. In fact if we take the complexity a step further we even understand that the physical dimension is not the only important thing that is important to consider in the equation.

Let's look at three different contexts in which the choice to eat the sandwich is made. In each case you are hungry, but the situation is very different.

In the first situation you come across the sandwich and you are about to go on a very bumpy ride in which you need your wits about you. A false move and you could drive over a cliff. But you have an injured child in the car and you want to make good time. Knowing that you get car sick, would you eat the sandwich before the drive, even though you are hungry? Or would you take the sandwich but avoid both nausea and delay by waiting until later to eat the sandwich?

In the second case you are arriving at a base camp. You have twelve hours before you have a climb to safety from a deep ravine. Once you begin the climb you will not be able to stop for a break for at least six hours. Would you eat the sandwich? Would you eat all of it? Or just a little?

In the third scenario you are hungry and are about to take a test for math skills in 45 minutes that will determine if you get into the college of your choice. Do you eat some or all of the sandwich? How does eating affect your clarity of thought?

What is obvious upon reflection is that trying to reduce sandwiches to good or bad is inefficient. Imagine the climber deciding not to eat the sandwich even though it was the only available food. He decides to honor the integrity of his vow and half way up the climb his body does not have the energy to continue. He falls to the ground and dies.

One of the things we learn is that the timing of when to eat, how much to eat, and the context in which eating takes place all determines whether or not the act of eating brings us overall well-being or destroys an important ingredient in our ideal future.

So why do we love simplicity so much? Why do people cling to the idea that a sandwich, or anything else, is inherently good or bad, regardless of all the other variables?

One reason is that it avoids the need to think and be responsible for our thoughts. It might kill us, cost us our preferred college, lead to being overweight, or make us sick but it just feels easier to say “sandwiches are good so I’ll eat them.” Or “sandwiches are bad, so I won’t ever eat them.”

Remember that all of this is just about a sandwich – something pretty basic. How much more complicated do you think you are, compared to a sandwich? Do you think you are five times more complicated? One hundred times more complicated?

Let’s assume that you think you are one hundred times more complicated than a sandwich. And let’s assume that the question someone is asking themselves is not should they eat you, but should they form a relationship with you?

What do you think? Should they do it? Why? What variables are you considering? And what about the reverse question: Should you form a relationship with them?

If you are 100 times more complex than a sandwich and so is another human being, this means that the variables in the decision is 10,000 times more complex. Perhaps because of this very complexity – intimidating for many – it’s tempting to make this decision based on even less complexity than the choice of whether or not to eat a sandwich.

The simplest way of all is to reduce the decision to an instinctive feeling: "I have a bad feeling about you so I will not relate." Or the opposite: "I have a good feeling about you so I want to relate."

The problem with this approach is partially revealed by the fact that at least half the time one person wants to relate to you because they have a good feeling and you don't want to relate to them because you have a bad feeling? What does that mean?

Continuing to think simplistically, perhaps you now want to decide: "Feelings are bad. They are obviously unreliable so don't pay any attention to them." Certainly there is a history of past relationships leading to pain that both people had a good feeling about. Yet both people did not want that pain and thought that their good feeling would continue. There are other rational work-arounds that maintain the validity of feelings. "This was the right relationship but she didn't do what she was supposed to do. I gave her a chance and it would have been wonderful. But she blew it. My feelings are not to blame. She is to blame."

The root problem is simple thinking. Feelings can reveal certain things, while senses can reveal other things. That's why we drive with our eyes, rather than our feelings. Any of us could shut our eyes and drive down the highway trusting our feelings to tell us where the other cars were.

Chances are, we would be dead very quickly – and take a few other drivers with us. We could also trust our eyes to tell us what we are thinking with equally dismal results. Imagine saying to someone: “You just moved your index finger. That means you are an atheist and were just having a thought about not liking god.” How absurd. We rely on written words or our ears to understand another's thoughts based on what they say .

I'm writing this chapter because when it comes to romantic relationship many of us think the simplest of all. Namely: “Is this the one? Is it meant to be?”

To answer this question we look to signs of the Zodiac, the fact that he is called the name of your dead dog and is no doubt come back from the ethers to be with you again. Regardless of whether or not that is true, this does not mean that your ex-dog has a job. It does not mean that it is meant to be forever. It does not mean that you will vote the same, or want to raise a child in the same way.

The response in this situation is often more simplicity. “You need to just trust and let go.” That's great. But what are you trusting? What are you letting go of? Going back to the driving example, would the same person tell you to let go of the steering wheel and trust your car to steer itself on the highway? What is the difference? Does god take over and make relationships work out when people trust and let go, while killing the same people who do this on the

highway? Or is trusting and letting go another form of simple thinking?

In the case of trust, it is always simpler to trust or not trust blindly. Let's say a woman lies to you and is unfaithful. It's simple to assume that she cannot be trusted. But does this mean that she cannot have a key to your house? Does it mean that if she lies about sex that she is forgetful and will not lock the door? By contrast, does it mean that someone who forgets to lock the door and causes an expensive theft of your possessions is less faithful sexually than the person who remembers to lock your door?

Blanket trust does not work with humans any more than it works with tables. You don't trust your table to do your homework just because it reliably stands on four legs without tipping over. You don't trust a dog to say "I love you" just because it wags its tail. If your perception is aligned with what is going on in your world, you probably expect things to continue doing what they are doing. You expect the floor to keep holding your body unless there is an earthquake. You expect that your secretary will keep calling in sick when she meets a handsome new guy. You expect your boyfriend will require three reminders to take out the garbage, like he always does.

Imagine how simple it would be if we just trusted our dog to talk and the universe responded by making the dog live up to our trust. Imagine how simple it would be if the

feeling “meant to be” resulted in a girlfriend liking the food we like, praising us for what we wanted to be praised for, and loving all the sexual fantasies that we indulge in.

When we cling to simple thinking we can twist it in all kinds of ways. “This is the woman I’m meant to be with.” When confronted with the fact that she does not want to be sexual “maybe that means that I’m not supposed to have sex. The universe wants me to be celibate.” When confronted with the fact that she hates your job and thinks it’s bad for the environment, “maybe that means that I’m being guided to think of more important things.” And when you get sick after renting an apartment that has mold in it because you quit your job, “maybe I needed to learn how poor people felt.”

This is the spiral we can go down when we are attached to simplistic thinking. What if, instead of diving down this rabbit hole, you simply asked the woman: “I’m attracted to you. I like having sex 3-10 times a week. I’d love to be your sexual partner and I’m wanting to know if you are attracted to me and if that sounds like ideal sexual frequency?”

What if you ask this and the woman in question doesn’t want to think about this question or consider what peak sexuality looks like for her. What if she wants a sign that you are the one? Will that make it too difficult to partner with her on a conscious basis? Will this blind her to who

you really are and the incompatibilities that are present? Or maybe she needs a sign but will give you the information you ask for and you decide that you would like to see if you can bring more joy than pain to one another.

Or perhaps you decide to explore further by having the conversations I mention in deep intimacy. Perhaps it reveals the following situation:

- You want to have sex twice as much as he does.
- You love her conversational topics but need to stop when she is just getting warmed up. You agree that she should talk with friends in these situations.
- She is very jealous, but you in enjoy that because it makes you feel important. So it's not an issue to stop flirting, or flirt sometimes and enjoy her jealousy.
- You like to go camping and do last minute adventures. She wants to come but does not like surprise. Neither of you will compromise so you fight every time this comes up.

After weighing 100 other dynamics you decide to explore and build relationship. It's not perfect but it does bring you both joy for a time. Or perhaps one of you is open and the other is not. One want's to compromise and the other wants to keep looking for a better natural fit that will not need as much compromise.

Whether you connect or not, it is a partnership if you both share the value of win/win or no deal. This value leads naturally to partnership because if someone else is not happy with you, the relationship is not a win for them. And if you require your relationships to be win/win or no deal, then it's not a win for you either to be in a relationship with a reluctant partner.

You can of course partner to be unconscious. If you get drunk, take drugs, hang around metaphysical seminars or gurus, you will probably meet someone who says "you are the one." Assuming you feel the same, you can agree to dive in and discover all the areas you are and are not compatible. Given that there is a high statistical probability that this will lead to some rude awakenings and pain, this usually transforms into a relationship in which you or your partner is blamed for that pain.

I wrote this chapter after having a long conversation with a very intelligent and lovely woman. After being in a long marriage she was now clear that men were bad for her. Out of this clarity, her primary goal was to avoid being attached or letting anyone in. What was missing from her thought process was clarity about where she wanted to go and who she wanted to be.

My experience is that everyone I relate to changes me. I become more one way or another with each person. If I know who I want to be, I can then choose to spend time

with the people who support that. I can say: "I want to laugh, and I laugh seven times more with this woman than I do with any other woman." So I'll spend time with her. But I may also say: "I want to be honest, and the woman who makes me laugh is dishonest 1/3rd of the time. Being honest is more important to me than laughing so I'll respectfully disengage.

Remember the sandwich? Even an unhealthy sandwich can be a lifesaver at certain moments, while adding to weight and health concerns on a regular basis. The timing is important, as are the ingredients. But equally important is the dose. Half a sandwich might be perfect. A whole sandwich is ok but slows you down. Five sandwiches make you sick. It's not the sandwich, but the dose that shifts things from perfect to sick. In relationships this translates to the mental/physical/emotional intensity of the relationship and if/whether there is space within it for both people to digest and integrate.

My book: *Co-Creating Conscious Chemistry* goes into this in more detail.

Co-Creating a Relationship Culture

The most important thing you can do to prepare for a strong partnership is getting clear about what relationship culture brings out the best in you. Once you know that, you will want to learn how to share that with others and partner with someone who benefits equally from that same culture.

When relationships are engaged primarily on an emotional level, things often get mixed up. On a rational level, being loving is about wanting the best for someone we care about, even when that is not ideal for us personally. What could be better than wishing that someone we love has a relationship culture that brings out the best in them? If someone is loving towards us, they will wish us the same: a relationship culture that brings out the best in us, even if that means separating in cases where our ideal cultures are mutually exclusive. However, on an emotional level, with the added toxin of simplistic thinking, saying good bye to someone who will be better off in a different relationship may bring up a pained response: “You don’t love me and that’s why you are throwing me away. If you loved me you would tough it out – do whatever it takes to care for me, even if that means living a life that does not bring out the best in you.”

We are a very head-based culture in most areas. We spend time on tiresome commutes “to be more efficient.” We pay money for faster gadgets to “manage our time.” We attend schools we don’t enjoy to “prepare for the marketplace.” In short, much of our lives are dictated by our head, which is hand-fed dictates from the cult of our culture. However, when it comes to thinking about what is more effective, loving and successful in the one area of our lives that is clearly emotional, we often turn our heads off and behave self-destructively. We refuse to partner with our hearts, often leaving emotional instinct to make all our decisions and be blamed for the tailspin this typically throws us into.

Knowing what works best for us does often come from experience. If you have not experienced a wide variety of relationships, this may be the place to start. Since you cannot partner with someone if you have not yet learned who you are, the trick is to make your experiences count – and to be candid with the people you interact with. “I don’t know myself well enough to know what I want. Are you open to sharing experiences so I can discover what brings out the best in me?” Stating this clearly will introduce an element of potential partnering, since this gives the people around you the chance to say “yes” or “no” to that agenda.

Use your analytical mind to pay attention to who you become with different people. And in different circumstances:

"I laugh twice as much with this person.

"I'm more truthful with this person.

"I'm always scared with this person.

"I'm cruel and sarcastic with this person.

"I get mean when I drink.

"I become insightful when I take LSD.

"I am more comfortable in groups of 5-30 people. Fewer than that I feel exposed. More than that I feel lost."

Make your experiences count by asking yourself questions:

"What about this situation is making me feel the way I do?"

"If I imagine changing this situation, how would I change it? Why? How would the change affect me?"

"Of all these different people I become, which "me" to I want to be? Is that really what I want or is that who I think I "should" be?"

Many people spend decades in a vague unknown, thinking perhaps that there is something cool about "not knowing." However, if you want to partner with someone this is a waste of your time. Go out and get the experiences that help you understand who you are and who you want to be.

It can be intimidating for some of us to take the responsibility for these decisions:

“I am more honest with Bill, but I laugh more with Sally. Who do I want to be? Honest or funny?”

The truth is that no one will or can make that decision. You will make it with your actions. If you spend more time with Sally you will become more funny and less honest than you would have become if you spent more time with Bill. You are voting for humor over honesty. Having made that choice, you will experience the world you create out of that choice. It's not black or white. You will laugh more, but may trust and be trusted less. Is that good? Are you happy with that? You are the only one who can decide.

As you make your choice, some people will be drawn to you because you are funny. Others will avoid you in favor of people like Bill, who they trust more. Everyone will move closer to their own values by voting with their actions. This will typically be a reactive/instinctive choice. But it could also be a choice that is carefully thought out. If you want to consciously partner, you will need to carefully think out your choices so that you are conscious of them when it comes to co-create a relationship culture with another.

Remember, that every relationship does have a culture. However, most people follow an instinctive path to a culture – usually one that feels safe in its familiarity. A

woman who had a submissive posture in her past will often end up with a partner who dominates the conversation. This is what happens when instincts are followed. Her instinct and his instinct are to look for what is familiar. He will spot her as someone who can easily and comfortably assume a submissive posture in conversations. She will prove him right by not asserting herself in their first conversation. They will both be comfortable.

The relationship can last a lifetime. But it's not a conscious partnership. For it to be a conscious partnership they would talk about wanting to be comfortable and not talk about their culture. They would tell each other that they want a relationship that mirrors their parent's relationships, in which the woman was silent and was uncomfortable speaking up. If they both agreed that this was the culture they would like to partner in, then this would be a real partnership.

The BDSM community has a lot more partnership than most other relationship communities. It is a partnership around co-creating specific kinds of power-play. "I really like clothes pegs placed on my nipples. Is there anyone out there who gets off on doing that kind of thing? Oh! Good! Let's do it." This is a form of partnership that is more conscious than making love with someone without any negotiations – and both people living in their own projections and having their own agendas around those projections.

When you build a culture consciously with another it can start by exploring these questions together:

- What feelings do we want our culture to amplify?
- What kind of interactions do we want to have in detail?
- What rituals or habits do we want to include on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis?
- What agreements, boundaries and expectations do we want to create together?
- What logistics do we want to create together?
- How do we deal with money?
- How do we deal with conflict?
- What do we do in a group when one of us wants to leave and the other is having a good time?
- How do we want to build our partnership?
- How do we want to end our partnership, should our values diverge?

Don't underestimate the power of logistics when determining your relationship culture. If you want to cultivate empathy together, and eliminate irritability, it may mean leaving the job that winds you up and desensitizes you to feelings on a daily basis. If you want to

relax and enjoy spacious time for feelings, it may mean cutting back your hours at work so you have the time and energy to listen to each other for hours at a time.

Cultural Memes: In America one of the sacred cows of the culture is “productivity, power, prestige, independence and money.” It is therefore out of the question to put a relationship ahead of work, right? In fact, we have been so brainwashed by the culture that most people would consider the request to leave a high-profile job to join a partnership to be “suspicious – and a definite red flag!” The kind of person friends will warn against. Instead, it is a simple fact that if you want to reach a certain level of intimacy with any human being, it will require a certain amount of time. That time may be less with some and more with others, but with any given person, a high level of intimacy will take a certain number of hours to first create and then sustain. If you don’t have that level of intimacy with someone you know, it’s at least in part because of a lack of time. That means that you may need to decide: “Is an extra \$30k a year more important to me than an extra 40% of intimacy with my partner?”

There will be more freedom around this decision if the difference is between making \$330k or \$300k vs. \$15k or \$45k. Given that this difference may make it unfeasible to choose partnership, part of preparing for the level of intimacy you want may include respecting money and logistics enough to increase your net worth per hour, so

that you can live your desired quality of life and still have plenty of time to be the partner you want to be.

In my own case, I find that working 4 hours a day is the ideal amount of time to support me in being the partner I want to be. By intentionally making a number of decisions that doubled my hourly rate and freed up my time, I work four hours a day or less for six months of the year. Simply “trying harder” to be the person I want to be while working 12 hour days would be like a rose trying harder to grow in the dark. It is critical to understand the logistics that support us in being the partners we want to be and then create those logistics with the same discipline we might naturally give to learning to drive. Logistics can be more important than the person. When a long-distance relationship falls apart it is often because the value in the relationship was released through physical presence, which is lacking.

It is taboo to consider making less money, taking a lower skilled-job, or working part time. It is even more taboo to suggest this. But if you want a culture of deep listening, and recognize that you are in sensory overload, what choices do you have? Shallow relationship, or changes at work? Which do you prefer?

In general, a conscious relationship of partnering will take at least twice as much time as a relationship without conscious partnering. It doesn't have to. You can meet

someone once a week for four hours and spend the time partnering to decide what to cook for dinner, how to make love and what to talk about. But that will be a fairly narrow partnership. No time for three month cruises, week-long camping trips, writing a book together, or creating the kind of intimacy that leads to a silence that is even more intimate than talking because all the conversations have been said already.

What About Silent Energy?

A lot of what we have been exploring in this work is about verbal, conscious integration. “I want this. You want that. What do we do with this information in a framework of win/win, or no deal?”

But what about sacred mystical experiences? What about those ineffable moments in which you get some new wonderful truth and you look across and your partner nods excitedly? Isn’t that important in relationship? Isn’t that where the magic lies?

First, I have some great news. It is precisely by getting in sync with your partner around logistics, values, intention and strategy that deep intimacy is formed. As a result, you will have many more spontaneous moments of deep energy and connection in a relationship based on conscious partnering than you will by “winging it” and crashing half the time.

One reason for this is that partnering unlocks the potential for synergy: that experience in which the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. For synergy to be possible, you must be in tune with your partner through conscious partnering.

Think of an orchestra. Each performance is different and each person plays slightly differently each time. But do you

think that it would move you to listen to 30 random people arriving on stage with different visions for the music, no practice, different volumes and playing different scores? This supposed “freedom to be spontaneous” would produce painful noise, not the synergy of a well-trained orchestra. Yet that is often how people try and create magic and flow. “Hey, let’s do this.” “Nah, I want to do this.” “OK, be that way. I’m going off on my own.” “Or, OK, we’ll do it your way and I don’t really like it.”

The silent energy that is on the other side of deep partnering is vastly different from the confused energy of non-verbal connecting prior to partnering. Even in the cases of beautiful love-making that does happen spontaneously with strangers from time to time (there are plenty of times when it is simply a mess), you can’t easily bridge the gap from love-making to a life together in the same silent instinctual way that you can respond to each other’s bodies when you luck out and are well-matched.

Potent Paradigms

Prince charming went hunting in the forest. There he saw a beautiful maiden. He fell in love and begged her to marry him. She said yes, because he was so strong and handsome. And they loved each other for the rest of their days.

Is this your paradigm? Or have you become cynical: "That's just a fairy tale. That doesn't happen. Life's a bitch and then you die. Enjoy any fun that comes along in between if you're lucky!"

Paradigms are potent because they underlie all that we do. In the paradigm of the story above the only thing to do is for the woman to be beautiful and to wait to be found. As she gets older this becomes more puzzling, since her body no longer fulfills the promise of being the discovered beauty. And the hunter may have already begged several women to marry him. But they have not lived happily ever after. What to do?

But what if the story was a different one? A man goes out into the world and discovers that there are thousands of gods and goddesses. Which ones should he worship? He realizes that it all comes down to his values. He chooses joy, power and kindness as his gods, and starts to build a life that will support these energies. In time he wants to share this life with a partner. Everyone he meets he asks: What are your gods? What do you value most?

One day he finds a partner who answers “joy, power and kindness.” He is excited. They begin a conversation about what their lives might look like if they were to live together. And they set to work to build a life, step by step.

They start with the foundation: The most difficult topics, agreements and boundaries they want to build their relationship upon. On these they place walls of trust and integrity. By sharing many hours together and noting the congruency of words and actions, they grow comfortable. Finally, they paint the walls of their new relationship with fun colors and pleasant companionship. They have built their home and now they can enjoy it. It will protect them from stormy weather.

The power in this paradigm is not its appeal or romantic simplicity. Rather, it is the insight it offers in what to do now. Rather than waiting around, this paradigm offers opportunity for personal growth, clarity, home-building and a focus for conversation with possible partners. Once the relationship is discovered, it offers direction and suggestion that can build a solid container.

In my book “Co-Creating Conscious Chemistry” I outline more than twenty paradigms that may be unconsciously shaping your daily behavior. Knowing what your paradigm is will allow you to measure both its strengths and limitations. Knowing a potential partner’s paradigm

~ Dane E. Rose ~

will help you predict their behavior, and see whether it is conducive to your well-being.

To Partner or Not?

Most people have never deeply and consciously partnered with another human being. Many have not partnered deeply with themselves: Talked things through with oneself, listened to all the voices present, sought synergy and win/win and then taken integrated action.

Partnering is strange to most people. It may not be easy to find a partner who wants to partner in the way that you do. And it may initially be uncomfortable, as all skills are when they are first learned.

Out of this most people I have met resist the idea. And they do it in an interesting way: "This all sounds so formal. Where's the fun, spontaneity and just taking life as it comes?"

This is the equivalent of a painter who has never painted with yellow. Her painting has blues and reds, but no yellow. When another artist suggests that she give yellow a try, she replies: "I like blues and reds. Where is the blue and red in yellow?"

One might just as easily ask where is the yellow in blue and red? Are there times when yellow will add something unique to the painting that blues and reds cannot? It's hard to contrast blue with more of the same blue. But you could bring both yellow and blue to life by combining them.

Going back to partnering, a simplistic objection is that partnering is not the same as non-partnering, and there are important benefits to the average ways most people interact. "I think having a drink and having sex can be fun sometimes – particularly when you don't have to spend time the next day. What's wrong with that." Or "I think that slowly and subtly getting to know someone on instinct is nice. I like several of my friends and we have never talked about any of this stuff. We have a good time, accept each other's flaws, and don't do any of this partnering stuff. And we are not about to ruin it now!"

The implication is that if there is any yellow there can't be any blue. It's simplistic. This simplistic thinking has nothing to do with partnering, and everything to do with a culture that has not yet learned to embody conscious partnering.

A more relevant question is this: Among all your relationships at any point in your life (maybe 20-500) do you want to include any form of conscious partnering? Either to try it and have at least one experience of deep partnering, or to enhance some of those relationships where it would be a win/win to do so. For example, if you love one-night stands, could there be times when they could be even more fun if you partnered consciously to create them? Would it enhance the experience to say to someone: "I'd love to get drunk, fuck you, and never see

you again. And I'd like to have a great time doing it! How about you?" Could that be fun upon occasion?

Or might there be one friend among all your friends that you want to intentionally go deeper with in a conscious manner. Could partnering be a tool for that specific relationship?

Most people will die without ever painting with yellow – without ever creating one relationship of conscious deep partnering along the lines outlined in this book. The question is not should all your relationships and interactions be deep and conscious partnerships. That question is irrelevant because 99% of people will not partner with you to form a deep conscious partnership. The real question is what do you want to do with the 1% who can and might? Would such a relationship add dimension, growth, value and beauty in your life in some way? Do you value that opportunity enough to do the work to create a deep partnership?

In the U.S. we work more than almost every western country. This question will easily be resolved in the default rejection of partnership for most simply by "getting on with my busy life." There is no time for substantive questions when it's time to go to work and get through another day. But what about when you retire? Or are you one of the few people who want to know what partnering is like so much that you will break the cultural taboo and

~ Dane E. Rose ~

become downwardly mobile: creating a job with fewer hours and less stress specifically so that you can show up with spacious time and a full and present heart to listen, learn and be a great partner?

A Personal Story

When I met Sarah she came up to me at a seminar on Conscious Relationship. “You made me very uncomfortable in your share with the group and I’d like to explore that by inviting you to lunch.” Perceiving the value she placed on growth and awareness, I said “yes.”

We talked for a few hours. She was almost twice my age but that did not matter. “All my life I’ve wanted to have a conversation like this. Now I have. Thank you.”

I invited her to explore a conscious relationship. She said “yes.”

We met almost every day for 3-6 hours. When we didn’t meet we talked on the phone. For three months we spent at least one of those hours negotiating and exploring our flow and friction points, developing a conscious framework for relating, and strategies for smoothing out our friction points.

By spending 1-2 hours a day on heavy topics and 2-5 hours a day on fun and lighter activities, the relationship gave both of us more energy and value than it took from day one. It also got better every day.

I had a difficult client at the beginning of the relationship that was stressing me out. Realizing that I would not have the energy to show up for my partner and fight with this

client, I fired the client and refunded them \$30k so they could find another contractor and feel happy about being fired. I purchased the time and energy to show up at the most critical stage in a partnership: the building process.

After three months our container was fully constructed. We knew everything we needed to know to create a strong win/win for one another, including how we would end the relationship, should either of us decide it was no longer serving us.

The relationship lasted five years. We both changed a little, and updated our relationship structure. While we were together we were often complimented as the ideal couple, despite our age differences. People could see the ease, flow and grace we had with one another. It was not “natural.” It became natural through the discipline of repetition and caring enough to learn and remember. We had no fights and we brought each other enormous joy. We had laid a good foundation in those first three months and this supported us in a relationship of ease, minimal surprise and beautiful companionship.

An Abundant Resource!

Did you know that in the days of Napoleon Aluminum was more valuable than gold? To signify this, and bestow an honor on his guest, Napoleon served the King of Siam with an Aluminum plate, while he ate on a gold plate, and his courtiers ate on silver. Although aluminum composes 8% of the earth's raw material by weight, you can't find lumps of aluminum in the same way you can find gold or silver lumps. It was not until electrical extraction was invented that it went from being more precious than gold (the Washington Monument has an aluminum tip instead of a gold tip because it came from that era) to something all of us have in great abundance.

Today peak joy is as precious as aluminum was in the time of Napoleon. It can be created between any two individuals within a few minutes, yet the technology has not been created to extract this freely available state.

When is the last time you experienced a state of peak joy with another human being? A good percentage of the population goes years without experiencing peak joy with another human being. Why?

Partnering – and learning other relationship skills – is one of the quickest ways to access the deep reservoirs of peak joy we all have inside of us. Given how unfamiliar it is, most people are actually afraid of peak joy coming upon

them unbidden with someone they don't know well. Yet there is nothing preventing all of us from experiencing peak joy for at least an hour a day with one or more human beings.

Joy, fun and emotions in general are discounted in America. It's part of chauvinism to devalue the feminine in both men and women. Peak joy is perhaps the single most valuable resource we have. It brings health, meaning, pleasure, clarity, insight, energy and the most powerful reason to grow. It also leads to empathy, caring and an abundance mentality.

Few things could change the world as dramatically as all of us experiencing an hour a day of peak joy. Which makes understanding the blocks between us and that lifestyle a key priority. It is more precious than gold and yet is available to any two human beings who will practice the discipline of conscious partnering with that intention.

How about you? Are you willing to create peak joy consciously and fully with another human being, man or woman, sexual or platonic? What's your plan? These tools have increased my peak joy tenfold and that is the tip of the iceberg. Women have it 90% easier than men, because many men will respond appreciatively and immediately to an invitation by a woman to consciously partner to create peak joy, and many women will respond to an invitation by another woman. Men will rarely accept invitations from other men and women are often too suspicious to honor such an invitation from a man. As a result the few women I have

coached have had men lining up, and the best I can do for even the most sensitive and amazing man is tell them to play the numbers game: Invite 100 women and one may say “yes.” It works but is exhausting. The woman I'm lying next to is Filipino. She says “YES” 95% of the time and I've felt joy at the quality of our flow and kindness almost every day since I met her. I do not know a single American that I can experience the same quality with. This has nothing to do with the women, and everything to do with a culture that shames women for being vulnerable, feminine, joyful and being “easy.” Every population reflects cult laws, and people in America a punished for being needy, trusting, being simple, bonding deeply, putting relationships ahead of work and innocence ahead of wit and sophistication. As a result our epidemic of loneliness, shame and shallowness is growing violently into states of depression and addiction.

At least 5% of men are ready in America, if a woman knows how to partner and invites it directly. 2% of women are ready, but the fear of “doing it wrong” or “being taken advantage of” are high barriers. These statistics reflect the culture, not the people, and mean you will need to consciously beat these odds or date outside the culture. The last time around I could not stomach the level of apathy and rejection so I found someone in the Philippines who from day one was a “yes” to growing, learning and showing up for deep healing work. Watching her grow more than 3000% in a year has been the greatest honor of my life. I'm so grateful for the chance to make someone very happy. We created a business for her that allows her to put us first, as I have done with my own business. It's not hard, but it does take two people to be clear they want to design a life around a peak relationship in partnership.

Summary

Partnering is a high art, rarely practiced to the fullest. Less than 1% of American's practice it even close to fully. This rarity, offers a wealth of probable growth, suggesting insights we may not know we don't know.

Who are you partnering with right now? What percentage of the relationship is based on partnership and what percentage is based on defaults, expediency, or unilateral co-existence and manipulation.

- 1) Do you know the most important goal of the relationship for you?
- 2) Do you know their most important goal of the relationship?
- 3) Do you know the top value underlying that goal for you? How about for your partner?
- 4) Have you agreed on a great way to begin, grow and end, should the time come?
- 5) Would they consider themselves in partnership with you?
- 6) Have you asked them how they see the relationship?
- 7) What could you do to partner more – in more dimensions of the relationship?

About the Author



Dane Rose lives in San Rafael, California. His interests include landscape design, sculpture, snorkeling, life-design, poetry and vegetarian cooking. So far he has lived in New York, England, Findhorn Scotland, Cypress, Canada and Whidbey Island Washington.

Share an appreciation, an inspiration or some way this
book touched your life?

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