



The DNA of Collaboration

Unlocking Insight & Intention
in the 21st Century

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The DNA of Collaboration



- In today's fast-paced world, we often lack the focus, intention and time needed to come together to collaborate
 - Under the best of conditions, it's a difficult prospect
 - And it has become a critical gap ... continued progress across social, commercial and public venues depends on our ability to work together
- Collaboration is a choice, one that many tend not to make
 - We've all seen it work at one time or another ... collaboration is possible
 - Yet our teams so often perform below their full potential and we're at a loss to explain why
 - There's a disconnect: why are smart people in public places now collaborating easily using social technologies, while people in most organizations struggle?
- This book sets out to unpack and solve these challenges, developing a new blueprint for the modern learning organization

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Unlocking the Challenges



Our research has surfaced many barriers & enablers that influence collaboration, the aspect of group dynamics that we define as *solving problems in teams*. We'll unpack these elements as follows:

- Part1: Concept Framing
- Part2: Messaging
- Part3: Relationships
- Part4: Flow
- Part5: Possibilities

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Concept Framing [Part 1]



- Collaboration is needed in a wide variety of scenarios across teams, organizations and social ecosystems, including:
 - team building, solution design, strategy development and change
- Unpacking the DNA of collaboration brings focus to the core building blocks of team learning, the skills needed to communicate and refine our ideas:
 - mastering **context**, dealing with **abstraction** and a grappling with a variety of organizational and team dynamics, including **messaging, relationships** and **flow**
- Four primary outcomes are possible:
 - **insight** - raw material of new thinking
 - **ideas** - insights evaluated in a variety of contexts
 - **solution models & paradigms** - generalized design frameworks to address multiple problems in different contexts
 - **solutions** - specific ways to address a problem

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Messaging [Part 2]



- Many lack **intention**, the basic motivation that grounds our priorities, behaviors and ability to collaborate
- Words matter deeply, because our **language** constrains what we can know; too often we talk past each other, failing to communicate our ideas
- Using **metaphor** helps us understand and connect abstract subjects in concrete ways, creating new common ground that helps us understand both problems and solutions
- A **story** can communicate our broadest, most complex ideas, weaving component thoughts and concepts into a fabric of understanding, helping our listeners relate to our ideas often at deep, emotional levels

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Relationships [Part 3]



- Active **listening** is a critical starting point, allowing group stakeholders to be present and open to input.
- Instincts and emotional triggers are driven by mental **heuristics**, impacting our ability to think clearly when we most need it
- The complex forces of organizational **culture** can pose a dilemma, as conflicting forces of creative learning and hierarchical control often confuse stakeholders; what is acceptable behavior?
- We must understand the **barriers** of ego, power and control that often serve to block collaborative efforts
- The **trusting organization** is grounded in integrity, respect and ultimately focused on working together to achieve results

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Flow [Part 4]

- The **space** for collaboration acts like a canvas for the exchange of ideas; collaboration requires a productive time and place
- Collaboration is done in teams, demanding the orchestrated interplay of many **roles** that play to both the strengths and untapped potential of everyone involved
- Leaders must be expert in orchestrating these team dynamics, with a **balance** of **affinity** and **diversity**, adopting flexible, **adaptive** governance to guide change amid complex interpersonal dynamics
- We must nurture **common ground** that allows a space for suspended differences, affording time for strong relationships to grow
- Intentional collaboration requires a designed **process** where the **synthesis** of **takeaways** is a critical, often neglected step

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Possibilities [Part 5]



- Seeking and **measuring** improvement in our learning capabilities is a fundamental to long-term, sustainable success
- The practice of **knowledge management** must evolve from past efforts to capture static knowledge to fostering the flow of insights
- Collaborators must explore and understand the **frameworks** for learning that can lead us to **critical thinking**
- Beyond cause-and-effect thinking, organizational learning and culture change requires that we embrace a **complexity** view

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- Balancing rigor with accessibility, the book combines how-to guidance with research
 - **synthesis** and/or **takeaway** steps at the end of most chapters
 - over 30 charts, tables and process maps, many framed as **reference models**
 - list of **metaphors** used
 - includes extensive **references, citations, a glossary** and an **index**
- With a collaborative design, the content will be extended using social media
 - **Amazon** - see “Look Inside” feature at <http://amzn.to/cdnaK>
 - **Facebook page** (*coming soon*)
 - **Linked-in group** (*coming soon*)
 - **WordPress** – all links available via “linkography” at <http://bit.ly/cdnaL>
 - **Twitter** - follow and engage with author [@sourcepov](#), book updates [@collabdna](#) and the on-going conversation at hashtag [#cdna](#)

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A Reader's Guide [help with navigation]



Reader groups:	can unpack:	Prolog	Pt.1	Pt.2	Pt.3	Pt.4	Pt.5
Corporate employees, project managers & knowledge workers	Organization culture, relationship & process	●	●	●	●	●	
Executives	Complex organizational dynamics & ways to drive change	●			●	●	●
Small businesses, non-profit organizations & community leaders	Getting people working together	●			●	●	
Change agents, HR/OD specialists	Achieving the learning organization	●	●	●	●	●	●
CIOs & IT staff	Integrating collaboration processes and tools	●	●			●	●

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