

Collaboration Begins with You

Be a Silo Buster

Ken
Blanchard,

Jane Ripley

Eunice Parisi-
& Carew



You are reading an excerpt from
Berrett-Koehler Publishers

Our books challenge conventional thinking,
introduce new ideas, and foster positive change.
If you sign up for an account on our website,
you may purchase our books at a discount.

www.bkconnection.com

Collaboration
Begins
with You

This page intentionally left blank

Collaboration Begins with You

Be a Silo Buster

Ken Blanchard
Jane Ripley
Eunice Parisi-Carew



Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.
a BK Business book

Collaboration Begins with You

Copyright © 2015 by Polvera Publishing, Jane Ripley and Eunice Parisi-Carew

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law. For permission requests, write to the publisher, addressed "Attention: Permissions Coordinator," at the address below.



Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.

1333 Broadway, Suite 1000

Oakland, CA 94612-1921

Tel: (510) 817-2277, Fax: (510) 817-2278

www.bkconnection.com

BK

Ordering information for print editions

Quantity sales. Special discounts are available on quantity purchases by corporations, associations, and others. For details, contact the "Special Sales Department" at the Berrett-Koehler address above.

Individual sales. Berrett-Koehler publications are available through most bookstores. They can also be ordered directly from Berrett-Koehler: Tel: (800) 929-2929; Fax: (802) 864-7626; www.bkconnection.com

Orders for college textbook/course adoption use. Please contact Berrett-Koehler: Tel: (800) 929-2929; Fax: (802) 864-7626.

Orders by U.S. trade bookstores and wholesalers. Please contact Ingram Publisher Services, Tel: (800) 509-4887; Fax: (800) 838-1149; E-mail: customer.service@ingrampublisherservices.com; or visit www.ingrampublisherservices.com/Ordering for details about electronic ordering.

Berrett-Koehler and the BK logo are registered trademarks of Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.

First Edition

Hardcover print edition ISBN 978-1-62656-617-0

PDF e-book ISBN 978-1-62656-618-7

IDPF e-book ISBN 978-1-62656-619-4

2015-1

Production Management: Michael Bass Associates

Cover Design: Irene Morris Design

Ken Blanchard

To my father and mother, Ted and Dorothy Blanchard, who came from completely different backgrounds but modeled collaboration in over fifty years of marriage.

Jane Ripley

To my late father, Bill (William) Anderson, who always taught me it is better to collaborate than to just cooperate. To my mother, Betty, who provided the support for my research and the confidence to write it up as a story.
You are my inspiration.

Eunice Parisi-Carew

I would like to dedicate this book not to a person, but to a community of people who make up the faculty of NTL Institute. NTL is an organization committed to democratizing organizations and social justice. These values are deeply instilled in its members, and it continues to be a guiding force in my life.

This page intentionally left blank

Contents

PART I

A Journey to Collaboration

1	A Troubling Conversation	3
2	A Well Timed Visitor	7
3	A Sensible Start	13
4	Utilize Differences	23
5	Nurture Safety and Trust	31
6	Involve Others in Crafting a Clear Purpose, Values, and Goals	45
7	A Step Backward	61
8	Talk Openly	71
9	A Bit of a Breakthrough	79
10	Empower Yourself and Others	89

11	Collaboration at Work: A Real World Example	95
12	Getting Things Done	105
13	A Turnaround—and a Plan	117
14	Six Months Later	123
	Epilogue	131

PART II

Tools and Resources to Create Collaboration

Self Assessment: How Collaborative Do You Think You Are?	137
Collaboration: Best Practices	143
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	149
<i>About the Authors</i>	151
<i>Services Available</i>	155

PART I



A Journey to Collaboration

This page intentionally left blank



A Troubling Conversation

“It was the worst shareholder meeting I’ve endured in years. The worst! Everybody could see the numbers plain and clear: the Primo project produced no profit. No profit! Zero. Zip. None!” Jim Camilleri, CEO of Cobalt, Inc., punctuated the point by slamming his fist on his desk.

Dave Oakman, the division head in charge of the Primo project, had never seen his boss this angry before. It was making him nervous. He kept his mouth shut to give Jim time to blow off more steam.

“The whole point of this project was to put some distance between Cobalt and our competition. The idea, in case you missed it, was to generate some revenue for capital investments and to reward shareholders. The fundamentals were great. There was absolutely no reason we couldn’t have made money on this thing—other than lousy

project management.” Jim leaned forward and looked Dave in the eye. “Can you give me a better reason? What happened here?”

“It’s a long story, Jim.”

“Let’s hear it.”

“We had departments operating in silos. A lot of people were trying to protect their own interests rather than make the project a success.”

“Why don’t you break that down for me, Dave. What are you talking about?” Jim’s mouth was a straight, grim line.

Dave hesitated. Should he tell the truth, or should he bend it? He knew exactly what the problem was. What he didn’t know was whether it was safe to divulge. Considering Jim’s current mood, telling the whole truth could get him fired.

Dave decided he should fudge it, or at least try to. It was what he usually did—and it usually worked.

“Primo had some great moments.” Dave began with an air of confidence—but he knew he was flying by the seat of his pants.

“Great moments? Not from where I’m sitting,” Jim said.

“As you said, the fundamentals of the Primo project were solid. We just encountered some hiccups.”

“Bleeding money is not a case of hiccups. Quit trivializing this! I want some straight answers.” Jim’s eyes were steely.

Dave recognized that fudging was not going to work this time. He had to come clean.

“The truth is, Jim, the group didn’t really work as a cohesive unit. Rival departments undermined the project.

As long as they got their job done on schedule and their department made a profit, they didn't care what happened to Primo." A bead of sweat on Dave's forehead betrayed his uneasiness.

"Can you be specific?" Jim asked.

"For example, I asked for a few of our newer associates to join the project. They had great energy and ideas, but they kept getting sidelined by the department heads who wanted all the glory. Some of our best people were kept off this project by their own leaders." Dave could hear the desperation in his own voice.

"Any leaders in particular?" Jim asked.

Dave thought about Wayne Lundgren, the veteran manager of the research and development department. Just last week Dave had witnessed Wayne brushing off a helpful suggestion made by Sarah McKenzie, a young engineer in his department.

"I'd rather not name names," Dave said at last. "Besides, it's not the people who are the problem. It's the whole culture around here." The words were out of his mouth before he had weighed them. Now he wondered if he'd said too much.

"Names don't matter, anyway," said Jim impatiently. "*You* were in charge of Primo. *You* should have fixed it!"

"It's not that simple, Jim. Certain department heads around here have a lot of power, and they don't hesitate to use it to their advantage. You know Cobalt is riddled with politics."

Jim shook his head. "Politics is a way of life. It's part of the environment we live in. I expect my top managers

to know how to navigate through the obstacles. And that includes *you*.”

He's not getting it, thought Dave. Doing his best to keep the defensiveness out of his voice, he said, “Jim, I’m telling you about a problem that’s beyond my scope to manage. This is about Cobalt. The company is made up of all kinds of self-serving silos. We offer no incentives that encourage people to work together toward organizational goals. Managers get promotions and bonuses based on their own individual success and the success of their siloed groups—regardless of the success of the projects they work on or the company as a whole.”

There, he’d said it. He caught his breath, feeling relief and fear at the same time.

Jim got up from his desk and began to pace. “I need time to think about what you’re saying here. In the meantime, remember that as the division vice president, you’re expected to fix these issues you’re complaining about. You should be coming to me with solutions, not problems.” He shook his head. “How many times do I have to—” He left the sentence unfinished.

Dave held his breath. *Is Jim going to fire me?*

A long silence followed. Finally, Jim walked to the door and opened it, making it clear the meeting was over.

As Dave walked out, Jim said quietly, “I want a full report about what went wrong with Primo, along with your recommendations, on my desk in two weeks.” He paused. “I’ll just leave it at that. I need to do some thinking, too.”



A Well Timed Visitor

Back in his office, Dave stared at his computer screen. A calendar reminder popped up with a *ding*. His eyes locked on the little window but the information didn't register. His mind was replaying his meeting with Jim—particularly Jim's last words: *I want a full report on my desk in two weeks. . . . I need to do some thinking, too*. Dave wondered if his job was on the line. Was firing Dave what Jim needed to think about? He was demanding, but he usually didn't make threats.

Ding. The reminder popped up again, urging Dave to take notice. When the information finally sank in, he grabbed his phone, stuffed his laptop into his briefcase, and hurried out of the building. Saying "Call home" to his phone as he ran through the parking lot, Dave then cursed under his breath. *Damn, I'm late again*.

Dee picked up on the fourth ring. "Hello?"

“Honey, I’m just now leaving the office. I’m sorry, but I’m going to be late.”

Dee sighed. “I’m pouring wine now. We’ll save a glass for you.”

Twenty minutes later, Dave pulled into the driveway. He walked around the side of the house and entered through the back door. He slipped into the bathroom, cleaned up, took a deep breath, and prepared to greet his sister-in-law from the UK. This would be the first time he’d seen her in several years.

She spied him as soon as he entered the living room. “Hello, Dave! How are you?”

The years had been kind to Beattie Anderson. Dave thought she looked like a wiser, more dignified version of the blonde, twenty-something maid of honor at his wedding. She stood eye to eye with him, offering a handshake and a warm smile. He leaned in for a quick embrace.

“Great to see you, Beattie. I’m doing well, thanks.” *Was he?* Now that he thought about it, Dave felt stressed out. He gestured to the glass in her hand. “I see you have some wine. Don’t mind if I do.” He poured some wine from a decanter into a glass and promptly took a drink.

Dee came in from the kitchen. “Dinner is served.”

Beattie and Dave made their way to the dining room, where the table had been set for three with the good china and silver.

“Wow,” said Dave as they took their seats. “This is quite a spread.”

“Of course it is,” Dee replied. “It’s not every day I get to cook for my sister.”

Dee tapped her fork against her wine glass and a clear note rang out. “Before we start our appetizers—or as they say across the pond, *starters*—I’d like to make a toast.” Dee turned to their guest. “To my dear sister, Beattie, and her recent success!”

“Hear, hear,” said Dave, smiling and raising his glass.

“I couldn’t think of a better way to celebrate the sale of my company than to get over to the States for a good visit,” said Beattie. They all clinked glasses and began to eat.

“So, Beattie, I hear you made a killing on the London Stock Exchange,” said Dave.

“Yes, yes, I did,” Beattie admitted. “Now I have the time and the money to come and see you in sunny San Diego. You have no idea how much I could do with some sunshine right now.”

“So it’s raining in London?”

“God, yes. It’s been the wettest April since records began—and that’s saying a *lot*,” Beattie said with a laugh.

Still reeling from his meeting with Jim, Dave found it difficult to engage in polite conversation. After all, there was only so much they could discuss about the sun in San Diego and the rain in London.

Beattie took the initiative. “Dave, what’s happening at work these days? Dee told me you recently headed up a big project—*Primo* was the name, I believe?”

“Yes, Primo. I found out today that it was a failure—and it looks like I’ll take the hit.” *Did I really just say that in front of Dee’s sister?* Dave thought. He was immediately embarrassed at his lack of discretion in the presence of such a successful woman.

“Oh, Dave,” said Dee, “that’s awful.”

Beattie was sympathetic. “Gosh, I’m so sorry. If you don’t mind me asking, what do you think the problem was?”

“Problems *plural*,” he corrected. “It was one of those projects where if something could go wrong, it went wrong.”

“Sod’s Law!”

“Excuse me?”

“Oh, nothing—it’s a British saying for things that go wrong.”

“Ah—here we call it Murphy’s Law,” said Dave with a nod. “Anyway, I had three departments working on this project, and each of the department managers wanted to lead the whole thing. When the managers weren’t fighting, the team members started acting out, claiming they needed to take care of their bosses’ interests.”

Having heard Dave’s stories about Primo as the project had evolved, and being an experienced HR executive herself, Dee joined in. “That’s what silos are all about—everyone protecting their own interests. Talk about egos!”

Beattie nodded thoughtfully. “Sounds tough. I had similar issues at Blenheim when we really started to grow—self-serving managers and siloed departments. I hadn’t realized that moving from a startup to a midsize company would cause so many growing pains. My executive team and I had to really think about the most efficient method of operation—something that would ensure excellent results *and* human satisfaction. In the end, we realized we would never achieve our goals without genuine collaboration.”

“What kind of collaboration? What do you mean?” Dave asked.

“I mean we had to focus on everything from our vision and values to how individuals at every level could feel they were making a real contribution. It was a huge culture change for everyone. Managers had to give up their silos and their perceptions of power and start focusing on the collective good rather than on their own gain.”

Dave let out a laugh. “Ha! There’s an impossible dream—getting department heads to give up their fiefdoms. How on earth did you manage *that*?”

“Dave, please,” said Dee quietly.

“It’s all right,” said Beattie. She smiled at Dave. “I don’t blame you for scoffing—it took quite a bit of time for us all to become what we called ‘silo busters’ and to make the shift to a collaborative culture. But we did it—with fantastic results. I’d be happy to chat it through with you if you think it would help.”

“Silo busters, huh?” said Dave, unconvinced. “Thanks—I’ll think about it.”

This page intentionally left blank



A Sensible Start

That night Dave hardly slept a wink. His restlessness kept Dee awake, too. She finally gave up trying to sleep and switched on the bedside lamp.

“What is it, honey?” she asked.

Dave sighed heavily. “It’s the Primo project. The end product wasn’t bad—but it was a financial bomb for the company.”

“Yes, you mentioned that. How bad of a bomb are you talking about?”

“A *zero profit* bomb.”

A long silence followed. From Dee’s experience, she understood there might be implications for her husband.

“Do you think you’re going to survive this?”

“I don’t know. In a couple of weeks I have to give Jim a full report about what went wrong and how to keep it from happening again. It’s not going to be easy. I know Beattie said she would give me a few pointers, but it’s going

to take more than a pep talk for me to figure out how to get through to the department managers. I'm dealing with some very arrogant personalities."

"You know, Dave," said Dee thoughtfully, "sometimes the best way to get other people to give up their egos is for you to give up yours first."

Taken aback, Dave propped himself up on his elbows and glared at his wife. "What the heck is *that* supposed to mean?

"What it means is that maybe, in the grand scheme of things, there's a reason Beattie just happens to be visiting us right now. She's been where you are and has come through it with great success. Why don't you get your ego out of the way and ask her for some help?" Dee switched off the light and turned away from Dave.

Frowning, Dave lay down again. Dee was his biggest cheerleader when things were going well. But he could also count on her to challenge him—and to be brutally honest, if necessary, when she had a point to make.

Dave suddenly tossed off the blanket and got out of bed.

"Dave, it's four in the morning! Get back here!" Dee called in a loud whisper.

"Nah—I'm just keeping you up." He put on his robe, closed the bedroom door, and headed downstairs. He figured he might as well have a snack as long as he was wide awake.

As Dave approached the kitchen, he swore he could smell toast. He soon realized he wasn't the only insomniac in the house.

“Hi. I couldn’t sleep—it’s that awful eight-hour time difference,” Beattie said, shaking her head. “I hope you don’t mind, but I helped myself to tea and toast. I see my dear sister thoughtfully bought English toasting bread.” She laughed. “I don’t know why they call it that. It’s nothing like our toast.”

Dave poured himself a glass of milk and put a piece of bread in the toaster. “And your chips are nothing like ours!” He sat down wearily. “I couldn’t sleep, either.”

“Is the Primo project keeping you awake?”

“Yeah.” Dave took a deep breath. “Beattie, I’d like to take you up on your offer to help me figure out how to get all of our people to work together. Maybe what helped your company succeed can help our company, too.”

“Brilliant!” exclaimed Beattie, toasting Dave with her tea cup.

“I think we’d better get started right away if I’m going to try to singlehandedly change our entire company culture,” said Dave, only half joking.

Not missing a beat, Beattie began. “All right, then. Well, as I mentioned at dinner, collaboration is the key to a high performing organization.”

Dave shook his head. “I’ve been thinking about that since you mentioned it—but we already have teams. In fact, we’re pretty smooth when it comes to running individual teams.”

“Dave, collaboration is a whole order of magnitude beyond teams. It’s in the DNA of the company culture. It’s the mindset of every member of the organization—the air the company breathes. It’s an environment that promotes

communication, learning, maximum contribution, and innovation—which, of course, all lead to healthy profits.”

“Hold on a minute,” said Dave. He went into his study and returned with a notepad and pen. He began to write as Beattie spoke.

“First, let me give you our guiding principle of collaboration: *Collaboration begins with YOU.*”

“You sound just like my boss,” said Dave as he wrote. “No matter what reasons I gave him about why Primo failed, he said, ‘I don’t care about any of that. *You* were in charge and it was *your* job to make it work.’”

“In one sense, he’s a wise man,” said Beattie, “but in another sense, he isn’t—because he put all of the accountability in your court. He never acknowledged *his* duty as CEO to create a collaborative culture throughout the organization. When we say ‘Collaboration begins with you,’ we’re talking about *every person in the company* taking responsibility, from the CEO to the people at entry level. Let me see if I can explain this better. Give me the pen.”

On Dave’s pad, Beattie wrote:



Heart → Head → Hands

“I’m going to teach you a simple way to understand how a collaborative culture works. Each word—Heart,

Head, and Hands—represents a different domain of collaboration.”

“I’ve heard of that model before, but isn’t it Head first, and then Heart and Hands?”

“Not in this case. At Blenheim, we refer to collaboration as an *inside-out mindset*. It has to start on the inside, with the Heart. If you don’t get the Heart part right, you’ll never be effective as a collaborative leader, because the Heart is really *who you are* as a collaborator—your character and intentions. Then it moves to the Head, which is about *what you know*—your beliefs and attitudes about collaboration. And finally, the Hands are all about *what you do*—your actions and behavior during collaboration.”

Pen in hand again and writing quickly, Dave said, “This is interesting, Beattie, but I owe Jim a do-or-die report in two weeks. Where do I start?”

“Why don’t we start with the Heart domain and see where that takes you today?”

Dave nodded his head in agreement.

“The focus here is for you to answer this question: As a leader at Cobalt, do you think all the brains are in your office, or are there bright people around you? If you think you’re the one with all the answers, I guarantee collaboration won’t occur if you are involved.”

Beattie’s statement caught Dave off guard. *First there was Dee’s remark about my ego, and now this! I’d been thinking Wayne and the other managers were the major obstacle to our progress with Primo, and now Beattie is implying that I’m part of the problem!*

“When your heart is right,” continued Beattie, “you want to bring out the best in others. Tap into the wealth of knowledge all around you. Utilize different opinions and perspectives. A few people at my company came up with a phrase that beautifully captures the essence of this concept: ‘None of us is as smart as all of us.’ As a leader, it’s your job to get everyone to share what they know. Let people bring their brains to work! And this is important: the more diverse the perspectives in the room, the better.”

“But if you put a lot of people together with different opinions on how things should be done, won’t they all end up arguing?” Dave asked.

Beattie took the last bite of her toast and said, “Maybe. But when everyone has a collaborative mindset, conflict can be constructive. There’s an old saying: ‘If two people always agree, one of them is unnecessary.’”

Dave smiled. “Yeah, I know that saying. But it seems to me that conflict would be the opposite of collaboration.”

“Not at all—conflict can be very healthy within a collaborative group, as long as everyone sticks to the issues and things don’t get personal. It can lead to breakthrough learnings and innovation.”

Beattie yawned. “At last, I feel tired. Time for a nap, I think. Can we continue this later?”

“Sure—and thanks,” said Dave as he scribbled *Utilize differences* on his pad. *If conflict is healthy, Cobalt managers are Olympic athletes*, he thought. He’d have to ask Beattie to explain that concept in more detail.

Thank You For Reading

Did you like this excerpt? Tell us your thoughts:
bkcommunity@bkpub.com

Berrett-Koehler Publishers

Copyright © 2014, All Rights Reserved.