

Collaborating with the Enemy

HOW TO WORK WITH PEOPLE
YOU DON'T AGREE WITH
OR LIKE OR TRUST

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**It's me
Hi!
I'm the
Problem
It's me**



Foreword by Peter Block
Bestselling Author of *Community and Stewardship*

Collaborating *with the* Enemy



How to Work with People
You Don't Agree with
or Like or Trust

Adam Kahane
Bestselling author of *Solving Tough Problems* and *Power and Love*

"Faced with overwhelming problems, we have two options: a practical option and miraculous option.

The practical option is for all of us to get down on our knees and pray for a band of angels to come down from heaven and solve our problems for us.

The miraculous option is that we work things through together."

- negotiations to end apartheid in South Africa.



Collaboration isn't a requirement, it's a choice.

When we think we can't work with them, then we will try to work without them, or against them, to avoid them or defeat them.

Why is Collaboration so Personal?


Collaborating can be defined as:



To work jointly
with others

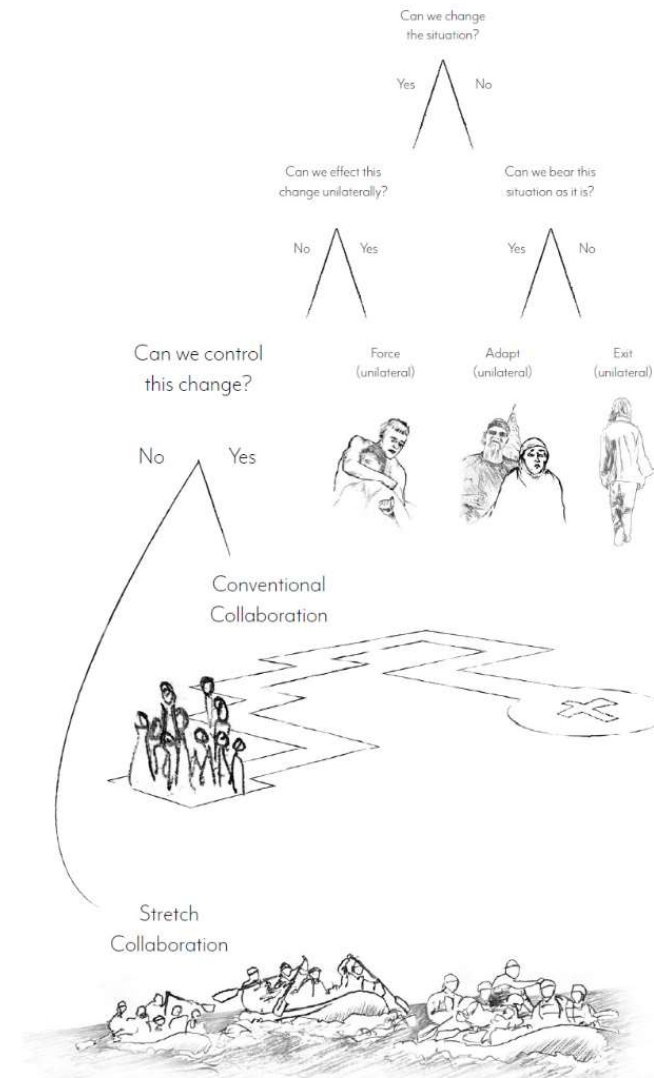
To cooperate
traitorously with
the enemy

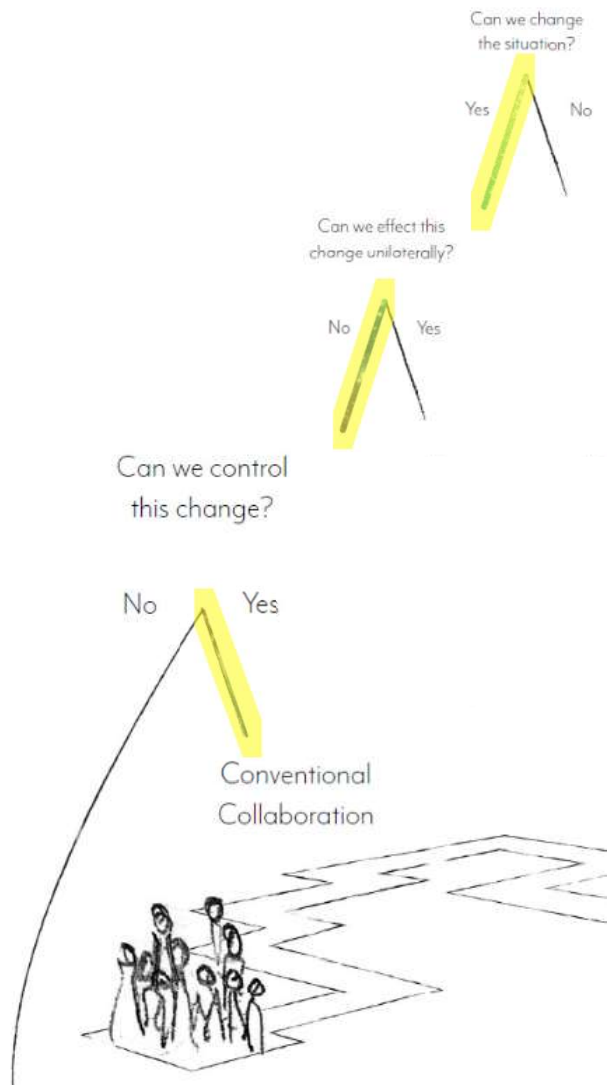
If you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem actually misses a more important point, which is that if you are not part of the problem, then you cannot be part of the solution.



5 Ways to Deal with Problematic Situations

- 1 Force
- 2 Adapt
- 3 Exit
- 4 Conventional Collaboration
- 5 Stretch Collaboration





Simple Collaboration

- A bird in hand is worth two in the bush

Simple Collaboration

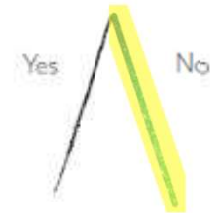
- Understand the situation
- Develop a solution
- Implement the solution

3 Mistakes with Simple Collaboration

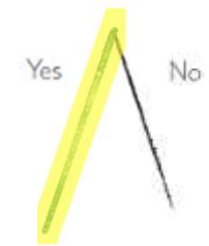
1. We disregard that individuals have radically different perspectives and that sometimes collaboration produces winners and losers.
2. We push a single problem statement, solution and plan.
3. Change means getting other people, to change their values, thinking and actions.

Adapt - When the sun rises, we'll see

Can we change
the situation?



Can we bear this
situation as it is?



Adapt
(unilateral)



Can we change
the situation?

Yes No

Can we effect this
change unilaterally?

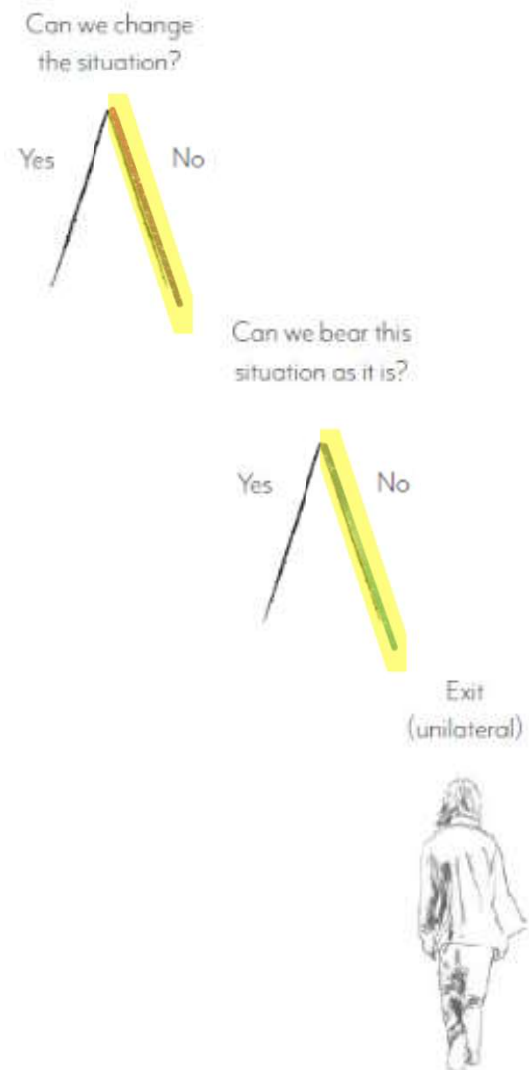
No Yes

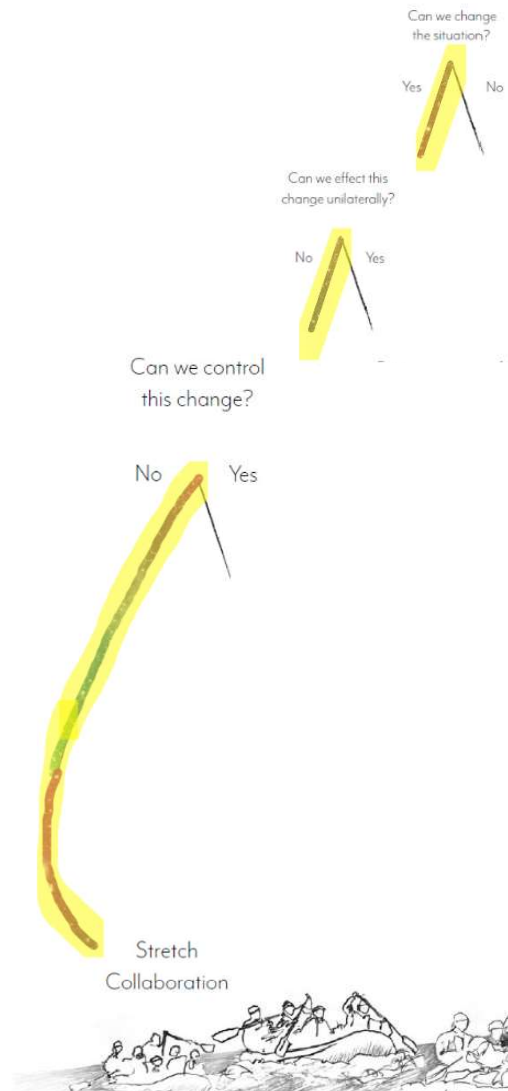
Force
(unilateral)



Force - Forward march!

Exit



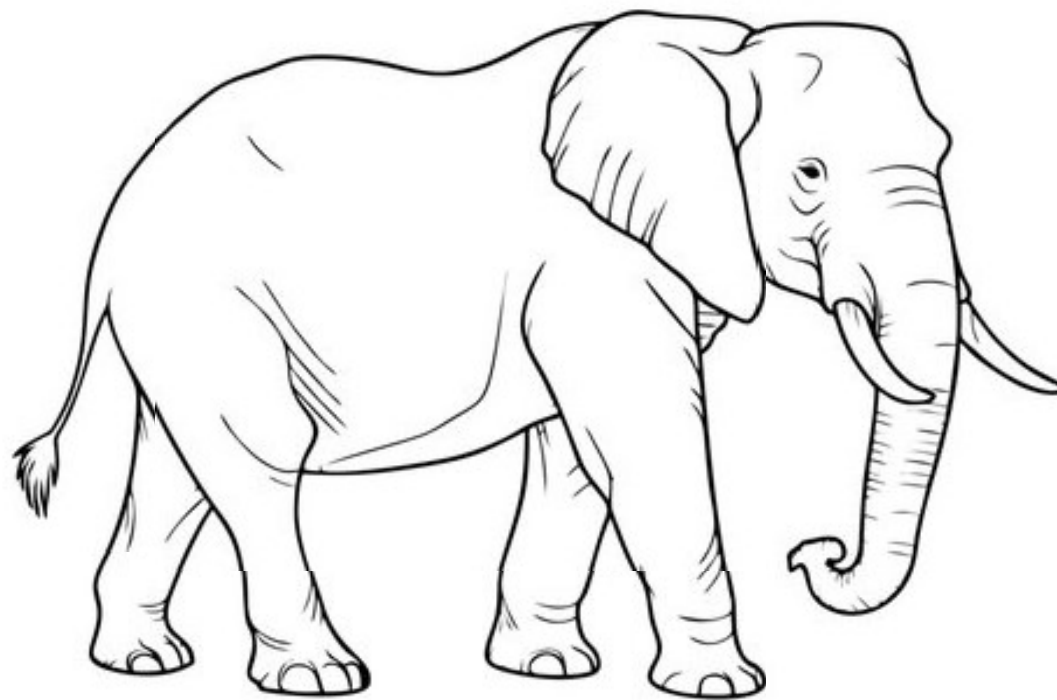


Stretch - In unity lies strength

The Truth

Everyone will have their own truth about what is going on
and why
and who needs to do what about it

The Blind Men and the Elephant



The Possibilities

One communist party city Councillor, spotting a paramilitary warlord across the room asked, "Do you really expect me to sit down with this man, who has tried to have me killed five times?"

And the reply was "it is precisely so that he does not do so a sixth time, that I am inviting you to sit down."

- Destino Colombia - ending a civil war in Colombia

3 basic shifts

1. Embracing conflict and connection
2. Experimentation and dialogue
3. Stepping into the game

1. Embracing conflict and connection

Power without love is reckless and abusive,
and love without power is sentimental and anemic.

– MLK Jr

2. Experiment Towards Purpose

Like gardening, we can create conditions for a collective effort to flourish, but we can't direct it to do so.

No gardener tries to convince a plant to want to grow, if the seed does not have the potential to grow, there's nothing anyone can do to make a difference.

Listen for Possibilities

- Downloading – "the truth is"
- Debating – "In my opinion"
- Dialoguing – "In my experience"
- Presencing – "what I'm noticing here and now is"

3. Stepping into the game

In a ham omelet, the chicken is involved but the pig is committed.

In stretch collaboration, we're required to be pigs, rather than chickens.

Finding the Right Focus

The work is yours, but not the fruits thereof.

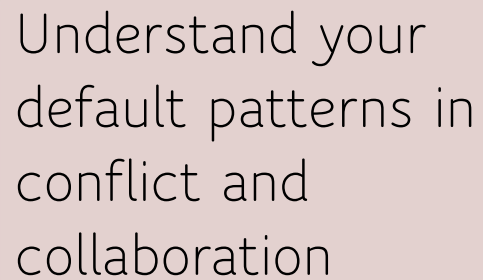
- Bhagavad Gita

Mindset Shift


In the beginner's mind, there are many possibilities,
but in the expert's mind there are few.

~ Shunryu Suzuki

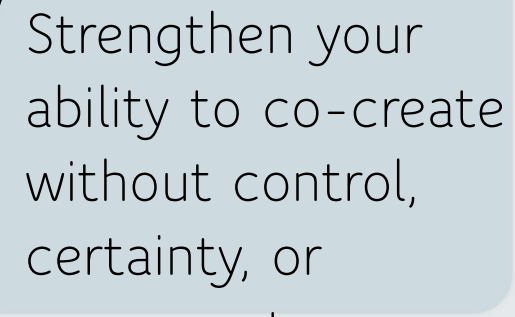
How to Start



Understand your default patterns in conflict and collaboration



Explore new ways of listening, engaging, and experimenting



Strengthen your ability to co-create without control, certainty, or agreement

Week 1 - Notice

Establish a baseline for your use of power and love.

- Estimate how much time (at home, work, and in your community) is spent using power and asserting over love and engaging, and the reverse?
- What feels more comfortable, power or love?
- What percentage would you say spent in each?
- Observe your actions as you work with others and write down your observations and reflections.
- At the end of the week, compare your observations with your initial assessments. Write down your insights.

Week 2 - Acknowledge

Balance your use of power and love, not by weakening your stronger drive but by strengthening your weaker one.

- List the actions you took during Week 1 that expressed your weaker side (the one that felt less comfortable).
- Choose 3 actions to practice during the week to strengthen your weaker side and not overuse your stronger one.

Week 3 - Experiment

Establish a baseline for how you are talking and listening.
Estimate how much of this time you spend employing each

- Notice which of these ways feels most comfortable and least comfortable?
- Do different settings (home, work, and in your community) affect your use of these?
- Try one small action outside your comfort zone.
- Speak up when you'd normally stay silent or listen when you'd normally push.
- Focus on learning, not winning.

Week 4 - Connect

Shift your talking and listening away from downloading and debating toward dialoguing and presencing.

- For one week, employ only dialoguing and presencing. When you notice yourself downloading or debating, shift to dialoguing (“In my experience . . .”) or presencing (“What I am noticing here and now is . . .”).
- Take time each day to write down your observations and reflections.
- Engage with someone you find difficult, without trying to fix or convince them.
- Aim to understand their perspective – not agree, just understand.

Week 5 - Reflect

Integration is more powerful than intensity.

- *Think of a collaborative project or initiative that you are involved in and that seems stuck.*
- Write out descriptions of what is going on in this project from two perspectives:
 - as an observer and director of the situation. Describe what others are doing now and what they should do differently to move the situation forward.
 - as a participant and cocreator. Describe what you're doing now and what you could do differently to move the situation forward.
- List all the actions, that you're currently taking related to this project and note if these actions are as an observer or director or as a participant and cocreator.

Week 6 - Commit

Step from the sidelines into the game.

- Choose two actions from your list as an observer or director and decide, if you will abandon it or adapt it, in order to strengthen your role as a cocreator.
- Choose another action from your list as a cocreator and decide how you can strengthen it.
- Implement these three changes to your actions. Take time each day to write down your observations and reflections.

The Progress Bar

- You don't have to agree, to work together, just agree that a condition needs to change
- cocreate new options, create space for emergence
- Shift from certainty to curiosity and being open

Thank you!



Sandy Liu, CSM

A remover of obstacles, facilitator of
discussions & herder of cats



Questions?