



Designing the Alliance—Empower All of Your Relationships

Have experienced this ...?

- Zoe is happy that Suki sends business her way, but it annoys her when Suki waits until the last minute to give her the work, causing Zoe to have to scramble to get it done in less time than has been promised.
- Tom and Sarah have recently begun living together. Sarah wishes Tom would just “get it” that she doesn’t like to talk in the morning, or at least not until she has had her coffee.
- And Brian bemoans the fact that his boss practically watches over his shoulder while he’s working. Can’t he just give him space and trust that Brian knows what he’s doing?

All of these people—in fact, just about anybody in any kind of relationship—can benefit by learning to “design the alliance” with the person with whom they’re in relationship.

The concept of *designed alliance* is often used in coaching to set the stage for a relationship that empowers clients to be the most successful as they make changes in their work and personal lives. For example, a client might explore the most effective ways for his coach to support him when s/he’s feeling scared, resistant or stuck. Once the alliance has been designed, it’s important to update it as individual needs and desires change.

This concept is highly applicable to all kinds of relationships—romantic or business partnerships, friends, parent-child, and more. Imagine a world where all relationships begin with a consciously designed alliance ... *the purpose of which is to create a mutually successful experience!*

How might things be different in the scenarios above if alliances had been designed from the start?

- ◆ Perhaps Sarah and Tom could have taken time before they began living together to talk about what kinds of support they would want from each other. They could have saved themselves quite a bit of discomfort by designing it so that Sarah could have her quiet time in the morning without Tom feeling rejected. Likewise, Tom could make his own requests. Together they could bring greater clarity and ease to their relationship.
- ◆ Imagine what life at work would be like if Brian and his boss had designed an alliance at the beginning of Brian’s employment. Brian might have let his boss know that he is most effective when given space to carry out assignments independently. The boss might have asked for a trial run at this way of working together. Although this communication didn’t happen when Brian was first hired, there’s no reason it can’t happen now.
- ◆ And what if Zoe designed it with Suki that, unless she has proper turn-around time, Suki will have to do the work herself. That might actually inspire Suki to keep to her original schedule, or perhaps even get the work done early! In either case, clear boundaries will make for a much happier working relationship.

Bringing conscious communication and the willingness to listen to and meet each other’s needs is a wonderful way to empower the relationship to serve each person. *The notion of creating an “alliance” instills the understanding that “we are in this together,” working to consciously design a successful experience for both individuals.*



What could be better than that?

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