

The

7 Habits

of

Highly Collaborative People



E-Book

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About the Author

Lynne Cazaly is a speaker, author and mentor. She is the author of two books:

- *Visual Mojo: How to capture thinking, convey information and collaborate using visuals* and
- *Create Change: How to apply innovation in an era of uncertainty.*

She works with leaders and teams on major change and transformation projects. She helps people distil their thinking, apply ideas and innovation and boost the engagement and collaboration effectiveness of teams. Lynne assists organizations with creative and engaging facilitated workshops, skills development in creative and innovative thinking and she works with people to help them unlock the 'entrepreneur inside'.

Lynne is a global speaker, facilitator and trainer and is a mentor on the Thought Leaders Business School faculty.

You can find out more about Lynne Cazaly at www.lynnecazaly.com email her at info@lynnecazaly.com or find her on Twitter at [@lynnecazaly](https://twitter.com/lynnecazaly)

‘No matter what
accomplishments you make,
somebody helped you.’

- Althea Gibson

It's pretty tough to be able to get through a day, a project, a piece of work or even exist in any type of team environment without working with others. Collaborators have both a strong and positive history – of being people who work together to get something done – as well as a treacherous past of being disloyal and double-crossing.

With the collaborative economy in full swing, doing stuff with others is a part of a daily norm for many teams. We've got to stay on the positive side of collaboration for we rely on others to help us; they rely on us to help them; we truly have to 'go co' and collaborate.

Emerging business models are designed around the power of collaboration and growing businesses are growing because of their choice to collaborate with others.

There are plenty of things you can do to collaborate, but I believe there are **seven habits of the best collaborators ... those who are highly collaborative people.**

It's these collaborators who are able to leverage their time, leverage the time of others and leverage the resources available to get important work done.

That means collaboration comes swiftly, it's efficient and productive. Highly collaborative people get past the challenges and barriers to collaboration and they get on with the collaboration itself. Hurrah! They're action takers, change makers and indeed, change shapers.

Become a highly collaborative person – you'll be a sought-after contributor, a grateful participant and leave a legacy that will live on.

The 7 Habits of Highly Collaborative People



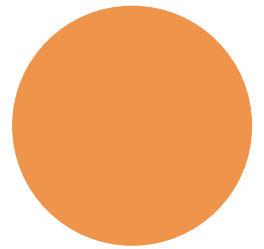
It's easy to say 'hey you, go collaborate with some folks out there. You know, team up, partner, share stuff, do some ummm you know, collaboration.'

So do you send a couple of emails, reach out to people, set up a meeting to talk about ideas?

Collaboration opportunities present themselves in the everyday, in fact several times everyday! I think there are **7 Habits of Highly Collaborative People** – and these are habits because these are the things that highly collaborative people do, repeatedly, day in and day out. Several times everyday. It's just part of what they do.

This eBook unpacks my thinking on those 7 Habits. The first four are active and observable behaviours; the next three are more like habit philosophies; philosophies that have further behaviours embedded in them.

Habit 1: Facilitate



Be willing to step in to your expertise and enable, or facilitate.

To enable others to participate and collaborate is the greatest contribution a highly collaborative person can make.

Facilitators know their role is to serve others, to assist a group or team and to provide a model or process that will help a team do good work.

Highly collaborative people are able to step into the role of a facilitator at a moment's notice and bring their abilities and capabilities to bear on the team, situation, environment and challenge at hand.

Facilitators create, stimulate and get the most from collaborative environments. So when you're collaborating, step up and facilitate the spaces so that others may collaborate.

Pay it forward. Do for others.

A popular model for facilitating is the diverge/converge approach. Be sure to

diverge and allow a group, team or meeting to open up their thinking, ideas, conversations and contributions. Then at some point you'll need to converge, to bring it all together, to bring it to a conclusion.

Guide the team or group towards an ending, an achievement and to tick things off their 'to do' list.

When you have the skills to help in a situation, bring it, do it. It's about putting your expertise to work.

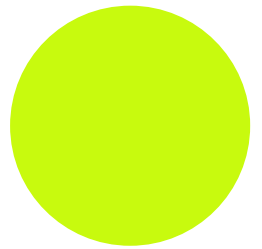
On a recent international flight across the vast Pacific Ocean, a flight attendant made a public announcement asking if there was a medical doctor or practitioner on board.

How would we know? They're not pacing up and down the aisles in white coats with stethoscopes hanging around their neck, or carrying framed qualifications. While flight crew may know from a passenger manifest, other passengers don't know.

But yes, there was a medical practitioner on board. Several. And once they were needed, they put their expertise to work; they stepped in and did what needed to be done and did whatever could be done. A passenger needed medical care as a diversion to the nearest airport was planned.

It's a similar type of contribution as a collaborator – stepping in, giving of your expertise and enabling others to carry on with their roles.

Habit 2: Marinate



Let contributions from people... settle.

Wait before speaking and contributing. Extend your 'exchange time'.

When a team or group is together, talking, contributing, collaborating, they often talk over each other.

It's not always a bad thing; interruptions can be a great sign of interest, excitement and energy.

But it seems the faster the world is spinning, the less waiting we're willing to do!

Great leaders – and highly collaborative ones – are however, generous with their 'exchange time'.

In her book 'Making Questions Work', process expert Dorothy Strachan explains exchange time as the time between two people speaking.

When you're creating, leading or facilitating a collaborative environment, you've got to be respectful of allowing some time between someone finishing what they've got to say, and you launching in with your response about what's on your mind.

In social conversations you'll notice exchange times seem only to exist when we eat or drink. And even then some people try to speak *and* eat *and* drink at the same time!

Being a highly collaborative person means allowing some marinating time; some time for things to sit, to settle, and to soak in before heading off on another topic or tangent.

Wait. Let it marinate.

Too often we don't truly hear what people say. We're getting ready for our turn.

Great ideas and contributions and high levels of engagement are lost when people talk over each other or jump in too quickly.

Wait.

Let it marinate. There is no rush.

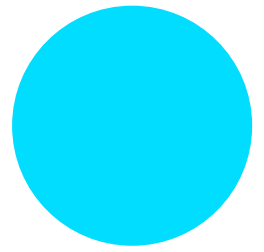
Highly collaborative people are cool enough to just let it sit, to see what happens next.

Sure, they're energetic and keen and enthusiastic, but you can be all those things and you can let people have their say or let what's been said... marinate.

Wait. Pause.

Extend exchange time so that greatness is captured and that people are respected for what they've said and contributed; it will encourage them to keep collaborating and contributing.

Habit 3: Validate



Maintain collaborative momentum by listening and validating contributions.

It's not about whether you agree or not.

Just affirm that this is their view, their idea or their opinion.

Highly collaborative people aren't afraid, or fearful that they won't be heard.

They don't stress about whether their idea will be the 'winner'.

Highly collaborative people are calm yet energetic.

They're positive yet pragmatic.

They're giving yet balanced.

As humans we're encouraged to develop and offer empathy; where we are encouraged to walk a mile in someone else's shoes.

But more powerful in collaboration than empathy is...validation.

The Groupwork Institute of Australia in their facilitation skills programs ensure leaders, managers and those working in any type of collaborative environment learn the capability to validate.

No matter the situation or environment, there is a seemingly magical effect when we validate someone.

As fragile human beings we mostly just want to know that we're OK.

It's so great to be listened to. To be respected. It's so encouraging to have someone truly understand us. It's an important element of collaboration to be able to validate another is a habit of the highly collaborative person.

And it's a habit. It's not a once off or a twice a week thing, or saved just for performance conversations.

Highly collaborative people don't shoot down ideas or contributions. They don't shut people down. They don't stifle creative environments or situations.

They work to draw others out, to encourage the collaborative environment and to get this team or group of people doing the best they can with what they've got.

Let people know they're OK.

Validate.

Habit 4: Ideate

Add to the conversation, collaboration or creation by adding your ideas and contributions.

The ‘co’ part of collaboration means ‘together’. You too must bring to the table of collaboration. What will you add? What will you bring?

When collaborators collaborate, they are doing things together. Both parties contribute, participate and give.

Highly collaborative people give their best. They work to generate great ideas and give those contributions to the collaborative effort.

It’s not all about you – nor is it all about them – it’s collaborative.

Working with the CEO of a logistics and transport business, I was delighted to bring a creative and collaborative approach to the senior team’s quarterly leadership forums.

The CEO always wants ideas from the senior leadership team... and everyone across the organization for that matter!

He wants to hear what people think, what they suggest and what they advise for the challenges and changes this industry faces.

Every one of these leadership forum events is just that – a forum. The leadership team listens to an update on the environment and industry... and then they give. They contribute their ideas, they do the best they can to ideate, create, generate and deliver. They bring it.

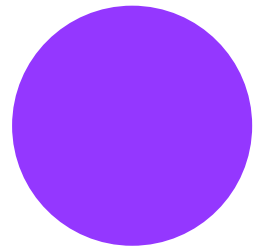
Ken Hudson – in his books ‘The Idea Generator’ and ‘The Idea Accelerator’ – suggests plenty of different techniques to get the best ideas from you, your team and the organization. Add your ideas to what already exists. What’s missing? What can you bring?

Here’s ideation from a tasty viewpoint:

A group of my friends gets together at the end of each year to reflect, celebrate and share. We all bring a plate of tasty food to put on the table to share and enjoy. We work out who’s bringing what, and where the gaps are. If you’re bringing salmon and quiches, I’ll bring strawberries and cream. If you’re bringing fresh orange juice, I’ll bring a bottle of champagne. It’s a truly collaborative time and it involves us coming up with some crafty ideas to respond to food preferences, what’s available, in season and if there’s a ‘theme’.

Three cheers to a community collaboration of ideas – no matter where that team is.

Habit 5: Build On



First accept what others contribute.

Then collaborate by adding to, building on and enhancing.

This keeps driving the collaboration project or program of work forward.

I've watched a three-storey apartment complex be constructed across the road from my office over the past year.

At first I couldn't see much happening; the foundations just going in and that was about all.

But then things really began to change. The walls, the roof and then so much more.

I've watched an elevator company add in their expertise to take residents between their three stories. I've seen the roller door company install a triple door monster. There are water tanks on the roof. And then the solar panels and solar heating units were added. Then came the satellite or cable TV dish, some plantings and trees. A sailcloth company did their thing to provide

some outdoor protection from the harsh elements.

All manner of tradespeople coming and going, adding to the construction, adding and building on what has come before.

The sailcloth guy doesn't comment on the water tanks. He just comes in and adds to the construction and does his best with his expertise.

And the landscape gardener and patio designer don't have a lot to contribute to the pourers of the foundation concrete.

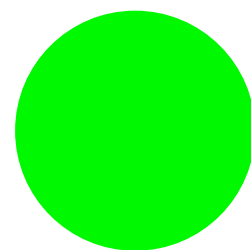
They may well have associated or relevant knowledge, and certainly the elements and areas must interact and work together – so it's important for them to know something about each other.

It's a brilliant lesson for the essence of collaboration and what highly collaborative people do. They add to; they build on; they contribute to what is there. They don't throw it out and rework. That's a time waster and a collaboration killer. That stalls progress.

Improvisers on stage know that accepting what is there – accepting the 'offer' provided by a fellow improviser – is a foundational element of creating a great show, a wonderful experience and a successful collaboration.

Keep building. It's a collaboration. Add to what others bring.

Habit 6: Shift Status



Give in, let go and step down from the high horse, the pedestal or the platform.

Highly collaborative people know how to play lower status roles to help others 'step up'.

It's a sweet thing to see leaders give credit to individuals in the teams they lead.

I cringe at the generic line: "thanks to everyone who contributed" or the weak excuse that "there's too many to mention".

Leaders are in a position of power – by their title, role, salary and decision making authority. They have status and it's undeniable.

Author and Improvisation expert Keith Johnstone in his book 'Impro' says we are pecking order animals. This affects so many of the tiniest details of our behaviour.

The theatre – home of improvisation – is born from status. A protagonist or central character travels through a character arc; their status changes as the story and narrative develops.

Similarly a great leader – and a highly collaborative one – is able to shift their status as the story, project or collaboration evolves.

We can't erase or remove our status or position permanently (unless we commit some vile crime or leave or do something else fairly dramatic).

But we can shift it.

You may have physically changed your own status as you squatted down to get lower and speak to a child or to someone who was sitting down.

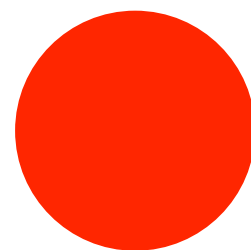
Keith Johnstone says we are too often one-status players. When we don't flex or adapt our status, we're not truly able to be agile or responsive to situations.

That's a dangerous position to be in when our daily work can require us to work and collaborate well, and to respond in increasingly competitive environments and dynamic and changing situations.

So try shifting your status beyond the physical; play lower, play at the same or play equal status... as well as your natural 'go to' place of higher status because of your role or positional power.

Let go. Play a lower role. See what happens. Shift your status and help boost collaborative efforts around the table, the room, the meeting and the workplace.

Habit 7: Stay Agile



Be responsive and willing to adapt to whatever the situation needs.

Step in, step back, step forward.

**Push or pull.
Guide or support.
Tell or Ask.
Bend and Flex.**

In the volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) world we now operate in, being able to respond or adapt to what crops up is critical.

It's just a way of life; change isn't slowing down and complexity isn't clearing up anytime soon.

So to have a mindset that is able to bend and flex, to learn and improve is a philosophy and habit of highly collaborative people.

They're able to work with what happens and stay focused on collaborating to find solutions and smart answers to challenges.

Agile mindset authors and speakers like Carol Dweck and Linda Rising are taking the agility message to all industries – it

doesn't matter what you do, what you make, who you service or what you deliver. If you're working with others, you're collaborating, and having an agile mindset is a way of living and thinking that will put you in the best position.

How do you respond to uncertainty? What do you do? Do you get rattled when you have to change the way you're approaching something?

Highly collaborative people are agile in thinking and doing.

They are willing to take on differing views and are keen to find 'hacks' or less elegant solutions to problems.

Highly collaborative people are used to working with different types of people. They're open to how others are seeing situations and challenges and know that if they keep an agile mindset, things will flow smoother, work will be more creative, the whole experience will be more productive.

This isn't about being walked over or steamrolled. It's being flexible.

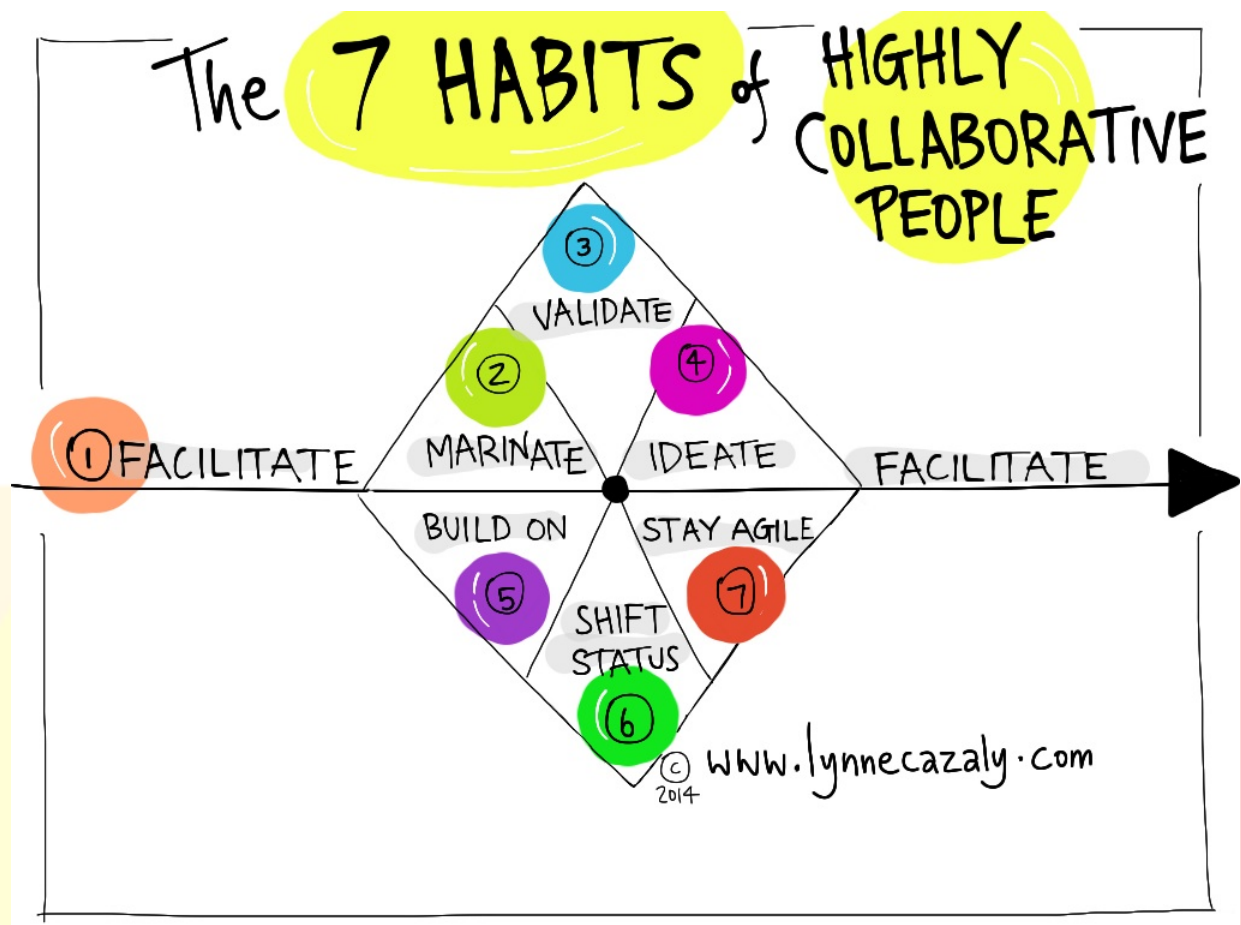
Saying 'yes and' rather than 'yes but', says 'I'm listening to what you're saying and I want to build on that.'

It's asking: 'What can we do with that?'

Wonder what might be possible.

Together.

Put the Habits to Work at Work



The first four habits: **Facilitate, Marinate, Validate, and Ideate** – are observable behaviours. I can see your facilitation skills, I can hear in your language when you've been thinking about something and letting it marinate, I can observe your skills validating other in a collaborative setting, and I can watch you with your team as you're ideating.

The next three habits are deeper philosophies and ways of working that have many behaviours embedded in them. **Build On, Shift Status** and **Stay Agile**, are philosophies and ways of working that can echo throughout every working day, every conversation, meeting, question, statement, summary or collaboration across your team and organisation.

Leaders are leaders of culture. And collaboration is a cultural thing.

I believe these are the 7 Habits of the contemporary or 'new' collaborator. The collaborator that helps others, that gets important work done, the collaborator that takes responsibility and doesn't mind the status – whatever it is.

Build these habits and strengthen the collaboration culture in your team and organization. ■

Lynne Cazaly's Books



Create Change: How to apply innovation in an era of uncertainty

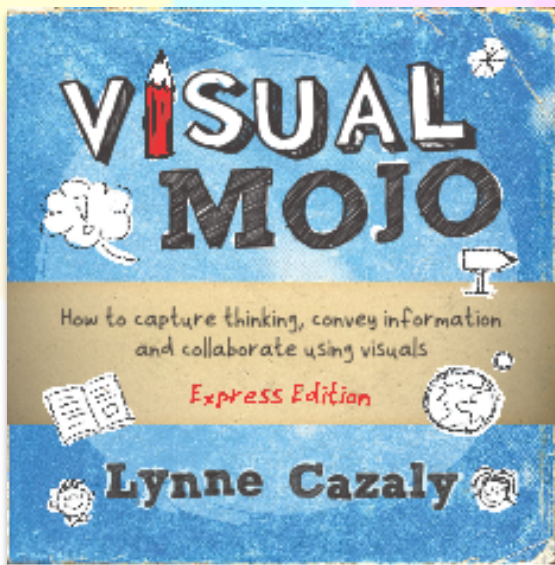
To boost competitive advantage, career success and team performance, it's all about how well you can create change.

Create Change is about:

- having a spirit of spontaneity
- experimenting
- co-creating
- and having an intrepid curiosity.

Together the capabilities, techniques and approaches outlined in 'Create Change' will help you lead through change, leverage it and ... even like it. Lynne Cazaly

gives you the capabilities and thinking to strengthen your ability to respond, adapt and lead teams through change and transformation.



Visual Mojo: How to capture thinking, convey information and collaborate using visuals

This is not a book you sit down and read. This is a book I want you to write and draw in!

Yes you can learn the powerful techniques of sketching, scribing and visualizing to boost your communication and collaboration skills, even if you think your drawing or visual thinking skills aren't the best! We all have the capability – it's time to bring it back to life.

This book is a workshop in your hands, an opportunity for you to better use your brain and get your Visual Mojo back.

This book will enable you to:

- use visuals in your brainstorming and ideation
- capture key points from workshops, meetings and discussions
- map out conversations and thinking
- boost your confidence and get over the 'I can't draw' syndrome
- build your visual dictionary of icons, symbols and visuals.



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