



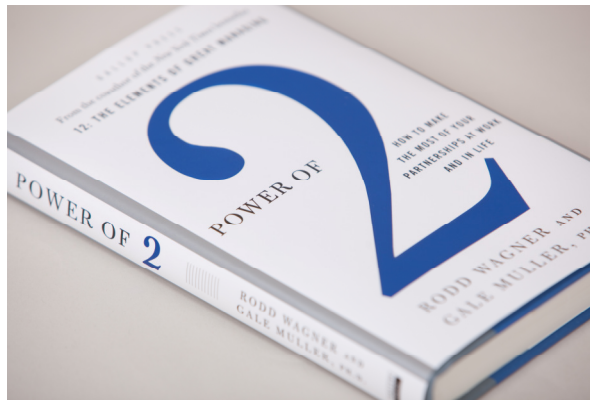
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## **Power of 2: How to Make the Most of Your Partnerships at Work and in Life**

**by *New York Times* bestselling author Rodd Wagner  
and  
Gallup World Poll leader Gale Muller, Ph.D.**

Life is full of partnerships, both professional and personal. Some thrive, leading to breakthrough work and fulfilling relationships. Others fail to accomplish their mission or even become hostile. Gallup research shows that those who have one or more strong partnerships at work generate better customer scores, safety, retention, creativity, productivity, and profitability for their companies. They are also happier. Having just one solid partnership markedly increases a person's well-being over those who have none.

Five years of in-depth Gallup research into collaboration has culminated in **Power of 2: How to Make the Most of Your Partnerships at Work and in Life** (Gallup Press; hardcover; November 10, 2009). *New York Times* bestselling author Rodd Wagner and Gallup World Poll leader Gale Muller draw on their own research as well as studies of monkeys, computer gaming, revenge, and self-sacrifice to uncover the blueprint for creating successful partnerships.

“Great partnerships don’t just happen,” write Wagner and Muller. “Whether your joint mission is to build a successful company, coach a team, improve the government, do something spectacular for a charity, or any other worthy goal, all successful partnerships share the same crucial ingredients.”

**Power of 2** examines the eight crucial elements of a successful partnership: complementary strengths, a common mission, fairness, trust, acceptance, forgiveness, communicating, and unselfishness.

- **Complementary Strengths:** One of the most powerful reasons for teaming up is working with someone who is strong where you are weak, and vice versa. A successful partnership requires two people who can recognize their own exceptional abilities, as well as their weaknesses, and can team up with someone whose strengths complement their own.
- **A Common Mission:** No partnership can survive without a shared goal, a common mission to work toward. While the partners’ motives may vary, the desired end goal must be mutual.
- **Fairness:** From the early stages of childhood, we understand and have a need for fairness. Just as fairness mattered when deciding who got to ride in the front seat or who got first pick of the kickball team, our intrinsic need for fairness cannot be ignored when working in a partnership.
- **Trust:** Working with someone means taking risks. If the partnership lacks trust, one partner is left constantly second-guessing the other, making the team highly inefficient and ultimately unsuccessful.

- **Acceptance:** Whenever two disparate personalities come together, there is bound to be a certain friction from their differences. Partners must learn how to focus on each other's strengths, accept each other's weaknesses, and understand when the other partner makes a mistake.
- **Forgiveness:** People make mistakes. Without forgiveness, acceptance turns to ridicule, attempts at fairness are replaced with feelings of entitlement, and the relationship becomes riddled with mistrust and thoughts of revenge.
- **Communicating:** This component of a partnership is critical, both on a functional level and in the sense that open communication implies a level of trust between partners. Candid communication and willingness to share your half-baked ideas lets your partner know that you trust him and are fully on board with the partnership.
- **Unselfishness:** While most people enter into partnerships for selfish reasons, a truly powerful partnership becomes wholly unselfish. In the best relationships, partners are equally as satisfied seeing their partner succeed as they would be with their own success, willing to take a significant risk for their partner, and able to view their partner as a brother or sister.

Wagner and Muller illustrate the power of collaboration with examples of some of history's most compelling partnerships — how Bill Hewlett and Dave Packard used the flip of a coin to decide whose name would come first in the company logo; how the constant communication between Francis Crick and James D. Watson cracked the code of DNA; and how Karl Malone and John Stockton became one of the most successful pairs in NBA history through the combination of their complementary strengths.

**Power of 2** is a fascinating look at partnership at its best and worst as well as a primer for unleashing the power of collaboration in any type of organization.

## **About the Authors**

**Rodd Wagner** is a principal of Gallup and coauthor of the *New York Times* bestseller *12: The Elements of Great Managing*. Wagner advises senior executives across several industries on the best ways to strengthen their partnerships, increase employee engagement, and improve profitability. Before joining Gallup 11 years ago, Wagner served as the research director for the *Portland Press Herald* and as a reporter and news editor for *The Salt Lake Tribune*. Wagner received a master's degree in business administration from the University of Utah Graduate School of Business.

**Gale Muller, Ph.D.** is vice chairman and general manager of the Gallup World Poll. As the project leader for the World Poll, Muller oversees a global team of researchers who study and report on the voices of citizens in more than 150 countries and areas. This endeavor represents one of the largest research programs in the world and includes topics such as well-being, Muslim-West relations, poverty, and economic development. During his 35-plus years at Gallup, Muller has run a network of more than 300 consultants and researchers located in more than 40 cities throughout the world and has worked on many of Gallup's key client accounts in the automotive, entertainment, telecommunications, healthcare, and broadcast industries. Muller received his bachelor's degree in mathematics and his master's and doctoral degrees in educational psychology and measurements from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

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## **Key Findings From POWER OF 2**

- There are eight elements of a powerful partnership: complementary strengths, a common mission, fairness, trust, acceptance, forgiveness, communicating, and unselfishness.
- The more good partnerships you have in your life (both professional and personal), the more likely you are to say that you experienced the feeling of enjoyment much of the day yesterday. Even having one strong partnership markedly increases your well-being over those who have none.
- Gallup's research reveals that the median number of work partnerships for an American employee is just four.
- The highest levels of happiness and employee engagement kick in when a person has 5 to 10 good alliances.
- In the workplace, employees with just one collaborative relationship are 29 percent more likely to say they will stay with their company for the next year and 42 percent more likely to intend to remain with their current employer for their entire career.
- Sixteen percent of the population report that they have *no* partnerships in the workplace. When asked if they have *ever* had a great partnership at work, nearly one-quarter of employees say no.
- One of the most powerful reasons for teaming up is working with someone who is strong where you are weak, and vice versa. Specialization allows both people to spend more time doing what each does best and allows the two to tackle together challenges neither could alone.
- By harnessing the power of partnerships, you can lighten your load, take advantage of your strengths, and achieve unprecedented success by being one of two people pursuing a shared mission.

**Adapted from *Power of 2* by Rodd Wagner and Gale Muller, Ph.D., Gallup Press, 2009**

**An interview with Rodd Wagner and Gale Muller**  
**coauthors of**  
*Power of 2*

**Q: What attracted you to the study of powerful partnerships? Were your studies influenced by any remarkable partnerships in your own lives?**

**A:** When observing clients and client engagements within Gallup, it was apparent that some two-person teams were clearly more effective than others. A deep curiosity about what made some partnerships succeed and others fail was the primary motivation behind the research and the book.

Throughout our careers, we've had the good fortune of having mentors and supervisors who were more like partners than bosses. When reflecting on the most rewarding accomplishments, almost all of them were collaborative. *Power of 2* was itself the result of a great partnership between the two of us, and what we've been able to accomplish together could have never been done working separately.

**Q: Is there a way for people to engineer good collaboration? Can they create it with their colleagues, friends, and spouses? Or is it innate?**

**A:** Psychologically, we are made for collaboration. Our brains are exceptionally powerful at tracking reputations, coordinating movements with someone else, empathizing, and communicating. But we also have natural handicaps, such as our propensity to believe we are fairly good at everything instead of great at some things and terrible at others. Although we are the only species that can really imagine what the world is like for someone else, unless we work at that ability, we see the world too much from our own perspective. We overestimate, for example, how much of the work we are doing compared to our counterparts. So can we engineer good collaboration? Absolutely, if we consciously use the abilities we have and recognize the natural pitfalls along the way.

**Q: Of the eight elements of powerful partnerships, are any of them more important than others? Are all eight elements necessary?**

**A:** To have a powerful partnership, collaborators will need at least six of the eight components. Which are most important depends on the partnership. For some collaborators, the common mission is in place, but the two partners are so similar that they share the same blind spots and weaknesses. In other cases, the two people have complementary strengths but insufficiently common goals. And in many cases, the two people have yet to develop the reciprocity and trust that is essential to a partnership.

Two of the elements apply to special circumstances. We wrote the forgiveness chapter to help collaborators understand that there are some powerful negative emotions that kick in if one of the partners feels the other has failed him. This only happens 18 percent of the time in good

partnerships, so that chapter is something like a fire extinguisher on the wall; it's there in case you need it.

Many partnerships can also reach their goal without developing unselfishness to the degree we describe it. That's really the icing on the cake — wonderful when it fully develops, but not strictly necessary for both people to say the partnership was more productive than working separately. The other six elements are essential; let any one of them slide and the partnership will almost certainly fall short.

**Q: You speak a bit in the book about the relationship between employees and their supervisors. Can you discuss a few steps a manager can take to position himself more like a partner than a boss, thereby allowing for a more powerful partnership?**

**A:** Essentially, we ask managers to think of the word “partner” and to consider how well it fits their style. Partners don't order each other around. They don't abuse their position. They have a high degree of camaraderie with each other. They share the same goals. They communicate well and often. They divide work responsibilities and rewards fairly. These are high standards for a manager to live up to, but they create a highly productive environment.

More specifically, it starts with the supervisor wanting a partnership and recognizing the value of such a partnership relationship. Does the manager take the time to establish the common mission/good of their work? Does the manager truly need the employee to do a job/set of tasks because the employee is better at it than he is? Is the supervisor willing to put in the extra time to build reciprocity and trust — time to make sure the relationship is fair, to communicate enough, to actively show respect and appreciation for his colleague?

**Q: You suggest in the book that today's “wired” society — where we e-mail, text, Twitter, and Facebook — creates the *feeling* of connection, which is not truly collaboration. Can you elaborate?**

**A:** Partnerships need more “face time” than Facebook. All the research points to the highest levels of collaboration happening in person and not through e-mails or texting. Some of the most troubling studies suggest that television tricks the deepest parts of our brains into feeling as though we are interacting when we, of course, are just sitting and watching actors on a screen. It makes sense given that our species has been collaborating in person for thousands of years and using electronic tools only for a generation or two. One example from the book is how Nobel Prize laureate Daniel Kahneman found that he and his longtime collaborator Amos Tversky could not accomplish as much when they moved to separate universities.

**Q: Gallup research shows that companies will benefit by having collaborative partnerships in their organizations. But are they doing enough to encourage collaboration?**

**A:** The unfortunate reality is that in most cases, companies discourage partnerships. They may pay lip service to collaboration, but the incentives — pay, promotions, recognition — are almost universally individual. Jobs are filled individually, not in tandem, and rarely with much thought to the partnerships that a new hire could have. Project managers typically think in terms of who

is the right person for a task, not what is the right partnership to take it on. We have a culture of individual achievement, and it's reflected in business as much as anywhere else.

**Q: People polled said that they would remain longer with their current company, perhaps even for an entire career, if they had a strong partnership. Is that universally true?**

**A:** We would not claim that partnerships are a universal cure-all for a company retaining its best talent. At the same time, one should not underestimate how professionally and personally meaningful great partnerships can be. Those who have more partnerships report higher levels of happiness and engagement on the job. All the evidence indicates they are healthier as well. Those are fairly substantial reasons not only to stay with a company, but to have more impressive accomplishments along the way.

**Q: What surprised you most when you began digging in to the nature of powerful partnerships?**

**A:** First, we were stunned someone else hadn't beaten us to market. How could such an important topic have been so neglected? As one person told us after he read the manuscript: "I've started seeing 'twos' all over the place."

Second, we were really intrigued by all the strange places, in addition to our Gallup research, where we found the answers. Want to understand why your CFO is quitting? The way capuchin monkeys react when one gets a grape and one gets a cucumber slice is part of the answer. Want to know why communicating is so important? We found the transcript of a cockpit voice recorder that unambiguously makes the point. What is trust? Ask a police officer who has had to rely on his partner during a bad traffic stop.

The third thing that struck us was the relative rarity of solid partnerships. Most people have far fewer meaningful collaborations than they could have, than they should have, or than they would like to have.

**Q: If readers were to take away a single idea from the book, what do you hope it would be?**

**A:** We hope our readers realize the untapped potential each of them has for better partnerships. Near the end of the book, we quote Nobel Prize laureate Daniel Kahneman, who had an incredible partnership with fellow researcher Amos Tversky. He talks about the deep fulfillment that comes from that experience. "If you have not had it," he wrote, "you don't know how marvelous collaboration can be." Our greatest hope for this book is that those who read it can understand firsthand what Dr. Kahneman meant.