

# The CHOICE Connection

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**CHOICES**  
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January 2011 "Building Connections, Partnerships and Alliances"  
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CHOOSE TO...

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## Quotable Quotes

*"I've always had something to shoot for each year: to jump one inch further." ~ Jackie Joyner-Kersey, Olympic gold medalist*

*"People, even more than things, have to be restored, renewed, revived, reclaimed and redeemed; never throw out anyone." ~ Audrey Hepburn*

*"The most effective way to achieve right relationships is to look for the best in every person, and then help that best into its fullest expression." ~ Allen J. Boone*

Dear Jean,

## CONNECTIONS, ALLIANCES and PARTNERSHIPS

*Happy New Year, Everyone!*

As I write this, I am sitting in northern Indiana during a holiday visit and truly experiencing a white and cold start to 2011. And while it was warm when we left New Mexico on the 27th, there is a promise of snow and cold as we return home on New Year's Day.

If you have read my newsletters for a few years, then you may remember my previous writings of this topic - Connections and Partnerships. And this year, I would like to add a few words on alliances. First, a reconnection to my thoughts from previous newsletters and what I still hold to be true.

### Connections

I have never been a fan of the word, "networking." Yes, to me it does sound like work...being in a room with a handful of people. Most of who you don't know. It is even more difficult for me to stand in front of a room of strangers when launching into a 3 hour workshop. Now, give me a room full of people I know and you might not get me to stop talking and moving around while I greet

## BUILDING ALLIANCES - The Top 5

~ from Radical Collaboration ~ James Tamm & Ronald J. Luyet 2004  
Ten Strategies for Building Collaboration

1. Go first.
2. Be open and direct about your intent to collaborate.
3. Pay attention to responses.
4. Keep talking.
5. Forgive quickly (respond positively when others cooperate).

*\* for the rest of the list, check in next month...\**

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everyone. For me, this is the key - find a way to connect early. The connection begins with a handshake, a smile and introduction before starting into the work. If you watch me do this, you might think it is the most natural thing I do. It is not! It IS, however, sincere and metaphorically speaking uses the handshake to create the first visual connection - me to you and you to me.

What becomes more interesting in our professional worlds is how some areas of our lives at first may appear unconnected and yet over time there appear threads that are connected. Each chain of connected links, when one really examines them, can and do relate to other connections. You might know how amazing the feeling is to suddenly realize a connection between two links and the strength or power you can receive from strengthening the connections of two or more links.

#### Partnerships

Partnerships, a party of two are the smallest of teams. For most, partnerships initiate a more formal arrangement for work and business. I am passionate about individuals in any collaborative effort knowing their strengths and sharing these along with definitions to clarify exactly what their strengths mean and what expectations are on the table for the partnership. It is imperative that the two partners communicate their strengths and consider how these strengths will compliment the others'. There is no one right way to do this - only that they be shared with respect. I have experienced multiple instances of work as a partner and if I have learned one thing after a few failed partnering, it is the clarity of strengths and expectations that put your team of 2 onto the road to success.

#### Alliances

Alliances are defined as coalitions, groupings, associations or unions with an intention to work with an agreement or pact. Alliances may in fact consist of multiple partnerships and/or links. The alliances I have been involved with in recent years have been more formal associations with multiple persons or organizations. The purpose of these alliances has been to solidify connections among a group of people and organizations to reach a common goal - whether to share joint resources, strengthen and foster professional connections, teach skills, etc.

What is most surprising is a resistance to the concept of alliances and how some appear to fear a loss of identity, when the opportunities, in fact, encourage an opportunity to strengthen the individuality of an organization to a broader audience. And yet, I have also been pleasantly surprised at the strengthened connections among people and associations, where many have stepped into building partnerships that might never have reached fruition.

It is my wish for you in 2011, that you seek or renew a connection, alliance or engage in a partnership to strengthen

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Jean



### **CHOOSE to...**

... Connect...strengthen first your connecting links...identify the strongest link...connect your strongest to another chain or links present in your life...live your responsibilities...throw paint on your canvas...add a link...be present...smile...reach out and touch another heart or hand...connect.

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## Administrivia

My Constructive Choices Audience...

- \* Professionals wanting to be at choice in their career and daily work,
- \* New Managers (and aspiring leaders) transitioning to establish a leadership role in their communities,
- \* Individuals wanting to sort through the choices, build a more fulfilling life, lift their voices, and...
- \* Coaches who choose to step out, show up, and say - *YES, it IS all about YOU!*

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