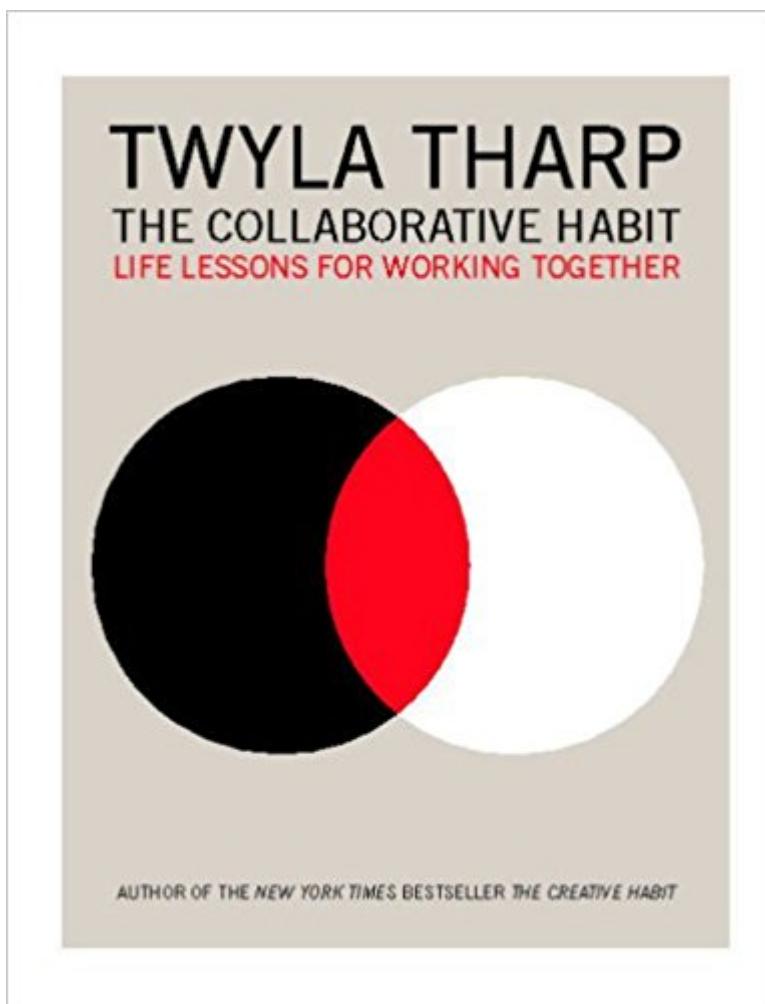


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# The Collaborative Habit: Life Lessons For Working Together



## Synopsis

- An important and useful skill: In education, collaborative classroom learning is replacing head-to-head competition. In business, the best leaders are team-builders who can inspire great group efforts. Tharp uses her decades of experience to explain why teamwork is a superior way of working for some of us and inevitable for almost all of us. - The essential lessons of group effort: Tharp takes readers through the most common varieties of collaborations, including working with a partner, with institutions and middlemen, outside your expertise, in a virtual partnership, with a friend, with someone who outranks you, plus how to deal with toxic collaborators, and much more. - Examples from one of America's greatest collaborators: Twyla Tharp shows how she built successful collaborations with Jerome Robbins, Mikhail Baryshnikov, Frank Sinatra, Billy Joel, Elvis Costello, David Byrne, Milos Forman, and four generations of great dancers..

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Face it, "team" has become an overused, overdone, even overwhelming business word "formalized in sports and extended to the predominantly male corporate world. Yet running as undertones throughout this latest contribution from world-famed choreographer and author Tharp (Push Comes to Shove 1993 and The Creative Habit 2006), is the sense that it's more than time for a kinder, gentler, and wiser take on working together. In 2009 and beyond, that word is "collaboration"; writing primarily from the arts perspective, she weaves stories in and out of her points, as in collaboration should be a challenge and change, vis-à-vis her partnership with Mikhail Baryshnikov; or underscoring how to collaborate with a community is her tale of creating two ballets

for the Pacific. Every chapter also features a collaborator or two, highlighting lessons to learn and listen to, from Dukeâ™s longtime basketball coach Mike Kryzyzewski to scientists Marie and Pierre Curie. If collaboration, as Tharp claims, is truly the buzzword of the millennium, then consider her as standard-bearer, motivator, and philosopher. --Barbara Jacobs --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Twyla Tharp, one of America's greatest choreographers, began her career in 1965, and has created more than 130 dances for her company as well as for the Joffrey Ballet, The New York City Ballet, Paris Opera Ballet, London's Royal Ballet, and American Ballet Theatre. She has won two Emmy awards for television's Baryshnikov by Tharp, and a Tony Award for the Broadway musical *Movin' Out*. The recipient of a MacArthur Fellowship, she was inducted into the American Academy of Arts & Sciences in 1993 and was made an honorary member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1997. She lives and works in New York City.

As is my custom when a new year begins, I recently re-read this book and *The Creative Habit* while preparing questions for interviews of thought leaders. The insights that Twyla Tharp shares in them are, if anything, more valuable now than when the books were first published. It would be a mistake to ignore the reference to "habit" in their titles because almost three decades of research conducted by K. Anders Ericsson and his associates at Florida State University clearly indicate that, on average, at least 10,000 hours of must be invested in "deliberate," iterative practice under strict and expert supervision to achieve peak performance, be it playing a game such as chess or a musical instrument such as the violin. Natural talent is important, of course, as is luck. However, with rare exception, it takes about ten years of sustained, focused, supervised, and (yes) habitual practice to master the skills that peak performance requires. Tharp is both a dancer and a choreographer and thus brings two authoritative, indeed enlightened perspectives to her discussion of the life lessons for working together. Many of the same requirements for effective collaboration on classic Disney animated films such as *Snow White* and *Pinocchio* must also be accommodated when members of an orchestra and of a ballet company collaborate on a performance of Stravinsky's *The Firebird*. Tharp characterizes herself as a "career collaborator" who identifies problems, organizes them, and solves them by working with others. Many of the stories she shares in this book "involve the world of dance, but you don't have to know anything about dance to get the point. Work is work." Her book, she suggests, "is a field guide to a lit of issues that surface when you are working in a collaborative environment." She proceeds to explain why collaboration is important to her - "and, I'll

bet, to you." Her narrative is enriched by dozens of memorable anecdotes from her career as dancer/choreographer but almost any reader can identify with her experiences, especially with her struggles. She addresses subjects and related issues that includeo What collaboration is and why it matters (also what it isn't)How and why collaborations challenge and change us (for better or worse)How to work effectively with a "remote" collaboratorNote: Given the latest communication technologies (e.g. Cisco's TelePresence), "remote" does not mean "distant" but physical separation makes mutual respect and trust even more important to those involved.How to collaborate with an institution by overcoming problems with infrastructure, intermediaries, and a "deeply en grained" cultureHow to collaborate with a community (e.g. an audience)How to collaborate with friends (there's both "good news" and "bad news")In the final chapter, "Flight School: Before Your Next Collaboration," Tharp stresses the importance of involving others in our efforts. "By standing in our way and confronting us, talking with us as friends [who care enough to tell us what we may not want to hear] or by collaborating with us, other people can help us grind our flaws to more manageable size. For example, my lifelong collaboration with Frank Sinatra." I'll say no more about that. Read the book to learn more. As is also true of The Creative Habit, this is a book to re-read at least once a year, if not more frequently. Beyond its immense entertainment value, it offers rock-solid advice on collaboration, a human relationship that is more important now than ever before in every area of our society. Thank you, Twyla Tharp, for so much...including the fact that you are Twyla Tharp and share so much of yourself in your books and even more in the art you continue to create. Bravo!\* \*

\*Twyla Tharp, one of America's greatest choreographers, began her career in 1965, and has created more than 130 dances for her company as well as for the Joffrey Ballet, The New York City Ballet, Paris Opera Ballet, London's Royal Ballet, and American Ballet Theatre. She has won two Emmy awards for television's Baryshnikov by Tharp program, and a Tony Award for the Broadway musical Movin' Out. The recipient of a MacArthur Fellowship, she was inducted into the American Academy of Arts & Sciences in 1993 and was made an honorary member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1997. She lives and works in New York City. Her books include Push Comes to Shove: An Autobiography (1992) as well as The Creative Habit and, more recently, The Collaborative Habit: Life Lessons for Working Together, also published by Simon & Schuster (2009). The last two are available in a paperbound edition.

Almost as fantastic as the author - Twyla Tharp is an American icon with a sharp eye and ability to articulate the unspoken realities of what it takes to create and maintain productive collaborations . Everyone can learn vital life, work, relationship lessons from this book.

While much of the content consists of anecdotes from Tharp's career, helpful nuggets are there for the attentive reader. It's not a how-to manual, rather a collection of personal learnings which can be transferred to many settings.

Personal stories with past collaborators and what she learned in the process.

fantastic book amazing writer

A good book to read.

This book has been interesting to read, but I haven't come across the kind of details and particulars that would help me develop and refine my own collaborative habit.

Every dancer needs this book. It helps you translation through works in progress. I often reread chapters two or three times because it was that good!

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