



THE NEW ELLIS GROUP

Monday Monday

Connecting the Dots with Karen Kaplowitz



*Helping you create and reinforce the habits of successful career building,
gleaned from my work as a business development strategist, trainer and coach*

Volume 11, Issue 9

May 1, 2017

The Power of Partnering with Others. “If I am relatively good at everything, then I won’t need to rely on anyone.” Does this sound like you or one of the lawyers with whom you work? Darien Fleming, a career coach who is an expert on promoting collaboration, offers guidance on finding good collaborators. Doing it all yourself often seems easier, but research shows that the results tend to be lower quality and people working alone feel less engaged (see [Gallup Research Stats](#)). There is real power in partnering with others, particularly with people who are different than you. In law firms, there is often resistance to difference - we think of it as a problem to be solved. But when leveraged appropriately, difference can be a real advantage. When we team up with people with different natural abilities and strengths than ours, we complement each other. Our partner cancels out our own weakness and vice versa. We accomplish together what we could not accomplish alone. Here are some questions to consider:

- What are your natural abilities – your strengths? What are your weaknesses?
- With whom do you partner? If no one, who is a candidate?
- When you do partner, what strengths are you looking for from others?
- Who seeks to partner with you? What strengths of yours do they rely on?
- When you have partnered with others successfully, what were you able to accomplish that would not have been possible otherwise?

If you’re at a loss in answering these questions, you’re not alone. When Gallup asked people how many strong alliances they have at work, the most common answer was ZERO. If you cannot identify your strengths, consider taking the [Clifton StrengthsFinder Assessment](#). Getting a clear picture of your strengths and weaknesses is an essential first step in partnering with others. With this awareness, you can build partnerships that help make up for your less developed talents.

Example: A bankruptcy partner wants to pitch an old colleague and friend who is a major creditor in a Chapter 11 case to represent the creditors’ committee. The partner is high in strategic thinking talents. She generates creative ideas for sticky restructurings, regularly getting creditors more money on the dollar than expected. But it is hard to understand her thinking and she does not build rapport easily with others. To be successful, the partner needs to team up with someone who is both high in influencing and relationship building talents. She decides to include a finance partner because he is people-oriented, inspirational and easy to talk with. He has a sixth sense about what others are feeling and modifies his approach when dealing with different personalities. Together they will be able to share strategies and connect with the creditors in an effective way. The bankruptcy partner will have to rely on her partner to warm up the room, keep them engaged and maybe even flesh out the strategy she is putting forward, but together, they will be able to present a pitch that’s well thought out, innovative, easy to follow and trustworthy.

Have you faced obstacles in building your practice that might be overcome by collaborating with someone with a different skill set than yours? Do you have the self-awareness to know when you need help?

[Darien Fleming](#) is a former attorney who is now a certified ICF, CTI and Gallup Strengths executive and career coach and trainer.