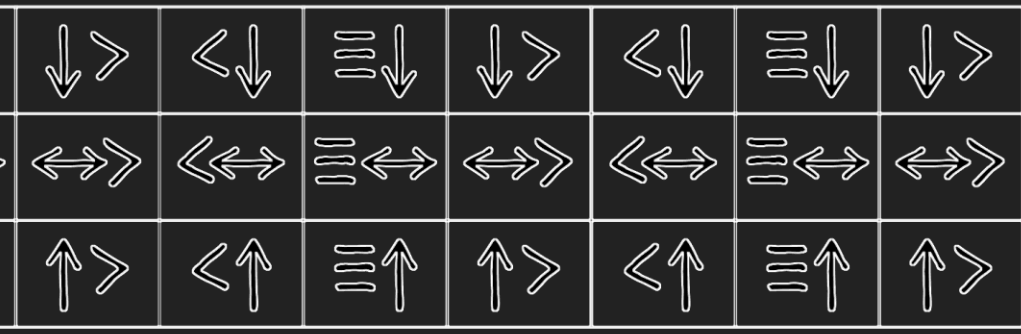
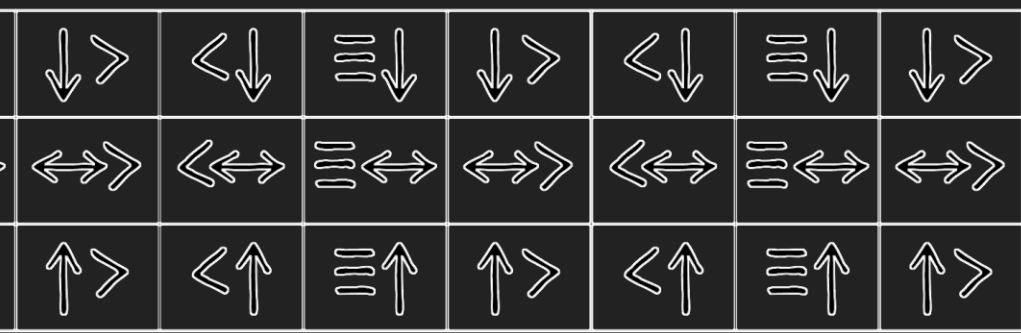


Timo Järvensivu

Collaboration with a Pulse

Coordinating and Facilitating across Boundaries



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Timo Järvensivu

Translated by Helena Lehti

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Cover design: Timo Järvensivu
Translated by: Helena Lehti
Publisher: BoD · Books on Demand,
Mannerheimintie 12 B, 00100 Helsinki, Finland, bod@bod.fi
Printer: Libri Plureos GmbH, Friedensallee 273,
22763 Hamburg, Germany

ISBN: 978-952-80-7593-6

For my mother and my father

~

We continue to learn together

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Introduction

In the introduction to my previous book[1], I explained how I made two central mistakes which inspired me to write that book. This book also has its foundations in mistakes. But not in two, but in *nine*. You could say that there is an abundance of inspiration in this book compared to my previous work[2].

I will provide some background first and then I will return to my nine mistakes.

In this book, I discuss collaboration and its development, especially in networks. Network collaboration means the intertwining of thoughts, decisions and actions.

Collaboration brings together the goals, needs, resources, perspectives and ideas of those involved. Success in collaboration offers many opportunities for learning, development and progress.

Success in network collaboration does not come out of nowhere. Shared actions and impact can be strengthened in many ways. Impactful collaboration in networks is possible when the

1 *Managing (in) Networks: Learning, Working and Leading Together*. Järvensivu (2020)

2 Thomas Edison is claimed to have said that genius is one percent inspiration and 99 percent perspiration. The learning required for writing this book has produced inspiration as well as perspiration, especially on my forehead.

network has enough good quality encounters where shared work can be done productively and where different resources and tasks can be brought together in a way that meets the network's needs.

In my previous book, I discussed central questions relating to managing networks: which factors build good, everyday network collaboration and which strategic steps and practices are needed for managing networks. In practice, network management is a collection of tools to develop the actions and impacts of networks.

In the introduction to my previous book, I explained how the central inspiration for my writing was two mistakes I made. I knew that, according to research, networking is done *together* and that the basis of this collaboration is *trust*.

Can you guess what my two mistakes were related to?

The first was that I did mental work and decisions *on behalf* of the network instead of doing these *together*. I thought I was serving the network and using resources efficiently, but instead I was taking ownership away from the network and did not make use of their skills. This annoyed the people in the network, decreased their commitment and made me want to learn more.

My second mistake was my gut reaction based on my own trust (or, more accurately, my *mis*trust). I *did not trust* that there were sensible reasons for the annoyance and lack of commitment of those in the network. Instead I thought that *they* are not trustworthy. This turned into a negative cycle: my mistrust increased their mistrust, which increased my mistrust which again...

This happened even though I knew that based on research, strengthening trust is largely rooted in the potential for a *positive* cycle. Trust can increase trust, which can increase trust, which can again increase trust, and so forth. Someone needs to trust first so that others can trust back, and so forth.

Whose job is it to start this positive cycle of trust? A good place to start is the mirror. I took a look in the mirror and started to learn how to trust in practice.

By examining these mistakes and others I had made, I started to learn how we can succeed in networking in trust and working together. Collaboration is fostered by doing together and trust is strengthened through trust. It is not as simple as it sounds, but it is possible.

Making mistakes and learning from them has been so beneficial to my career that I have continued on the same path. If something has changed, it is that I have become even more bold in my mistakes.

Of course, not all mistakes are smart. For learning, it is beneficial to make *justified* mistakes. A good basis for learning through experimenting is to apply theory to practice and returning what has been learned in practice back to theory[3].

***

A central object of the experiments and examination in this book is everyday network collaboration. The many encounters of agents, resources and tasks have an important role in this. The theory which I am developing has to do with these encounters (events, workshops, meetings, discussions and so forth) and the continuously changing flow which these encounters form in the network. Based on this inspection, I offer my comprehensive view of how coordinated and facilitated encounters generate and maintain the pulse of the network.

---

3 The doctrines and theories in this book are of course not only mine. There is a lot of knowledge and experience from the work, research and experiments of many researchers, agents and networks. My role has "merely" been to bring these thoughts together, try them in practice, and to sum them up in this book.

The central thesis of this book can be summarised as follows:

Encounters form the pulse of network collaboration.[4]

Coordination and facilitation form the heart of networking.

***

I have sped up the development of this thesis through *nine* mistakes. These nine mist... sources of learning can be summarised in the following 3x3 matrix which contains two dimensions closely connected to coordination and facilitation.

Firstly, in a good encounter, the participants work together through opening (<), processing (=) and closing (>) the objects of the work. Opening means opening new perspectives through listening to others. Processing means analysis, understanding, and negotiating conflicts. Closing can mean making decisions and defining responsibilities.

---

4 Metaphors sometimes work well, sometimes less so. In this book, I emphasise the human character of networking by using words connected to the human body and the lives of communities. For example, Heart *noun* (ORGAN)*;* the organ in your chest that sends the blood around your body. *noun* (EMOTIONS); used to refer to a person's character, or the place within a person where feelings or emotions are considered to come from. Pulse *noun* (REGULAR BEAT); the regular beating of the heart. *noun;* have/keep your finger on the pulse (of sth), to be or remain completely aware of what is happening in a situation. It would also be possible to think of these words the other way around: perhaps encounters are the heart of collaboration and coordination and facilitation are the pulse of networking.
Source: https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/heart & https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/pulse, retrieved 3.9.2025

Collaboration *with a Pulse*

Network encounters — meetings, discussions, workshops — create a pulse. There are different types of pulses: quick, slow and varying. A fitting pulse can be found through coordination and facilitation.

D.Sc. (Econ.) Timo Järvensivu has studied, trained and consulted network collaboration across three decades.

In this book, Järvensivu illuminates the core of coordination and facilitation in collaboration:
What is a productive encounter?
What does a good encounter require?
What types of methods and tools are needed?