The Bond Handbook is a guide through these challenging times, a handbook for a new way of living. In gifting this toolkit to you and many groups around the world, I intend to help you develop into a pioneer for a new world.

Life isn’t working the way it once did — and we know it. As we witness the seemingly endless crises besetting us in modern times — the financial crises at home and abroad, the terrorist threats, the serious issues surrounding energy and climate change, the gridlock in government, the foreclosures and collapse of entire neighborhoods — all of us sense that we have reached the end of something. The old way of doing things no longer serves.

When considering all the crises we now face on so many fronts, the sheer enormity of the problems now before us in every sector of our lives, we feel both frustrated by the inability of our leaders to solve them and unable to fix anything ourselves. Most of us throw up our hands and cry, “What can I do? What can any one person do to change anything?”

This fear grows out of the mistaken notion that the crises in our midst can only be addressed from the top down. But the change that is necessary — the one that will truly solve most problems in our individual lives, our society and indeed our world — is not just a change of policy, a new law, a new president or a tighter regulation, but a fundamental change of heart.

The change required now must come from the bottom up — from ordinary individuals making individual changes that ultimately cause a contagion of change in their neighborhoods and workplaces.

This change starts with you and me, in the fundamental way that we engage with the world.

Change of story
Our current scientific story is more than 300 years old, largely based on the discoveries of Isaac Newton, who described a universe in which all matter was separate and operated according to fixed laws in time and space. The Newtonian vision described a reliable place inhabited by well-behaved and self-contained things. The worldview arising from these discoveries was bolstered by the philosophical implications of Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, with its suggestion that survival is available only to the robustly individual. These, in essence, are stories that idealize a competitive type of separateness. From the moment we are born, we are told that for every winner there must be a loser. From that constricted vision we have fashioned our world.

Although we perceive science as an ultimate truth, science is finally just a story, told in installments. New chapters refine — and often supplant — the chapters that have come before. Because of the scientific discoveries that I have highlighted in my latest three books — The Field, The Intention Experiment and The Bond — it is now clear that the story we’ve been told is about to be replaced by a drastically revised version.

A new understanding is emerging from the laboratories of the most cutting-edge physicists, biologists, and psychologists that challenges the very way we conceive of ourselves. The latest chapter suggests that at our essence, we exist as a unity, a relationship — utterly interdependent, the parts affecting the whole at every moment. Frontier biologists, psychologists, and sociologists have all found evidence that individuals are far less individual than we thought they were.

Between the smallest particles of our being, between our body and our environment, between ourselves and all of the
people with whom we are in contact, between every member of every societal cluster, there is a Bond — a connection so integral and profound that there is no longer a clear demarcation between the end of one thing and the beginning of another. The world essentially operates, not through the activity of individual things, but in the relationship between them — in a sense, in the space between things.

These new discoveries in physics and biology demonstrate that all living things succeed and prosper only when they see themselves as part of a greater whole. Rather than a will to compete and dominate, the essential impulse of all of life is a will to connect.

The implications of this new story on our understanding of life and the design of our society are extraordinary. They require that we rethink our definitions of ourselves and what exactly it is to be human. If nature has designed us for wholeness, we can no longer think in terms of “winning” and “losing.” We need to redefine what we designate as “me” and “not-me.” We have to reconsider how we interact with other human beings, choose and carry out our work, structure our communities and bring up our children. We have to imagine another way to live, an entirely new way to “be.” As I wrote in *The Field*, in a sense we have to blow up all of our societal creations and begin again, building over scorched ground.

**True evolution**

There has been a lot of facile thinking about evolution, as though in December 2012 a portal to a new world suddenly appeared and each of us automatically got equipped with a brand new and more evolved consciousness. But making an evolutionary leap — particularly for all of us in the West — is going to require a good deal of conscious, hard work. Evolving — and by that I mean recovering the life that nature intended us to lead — is going to require a very different set of rules from the ones we currently live by. It is not about fixing what is now broken. It’s going to require an ability to envision new ideas for everything, from how we are rewarded for services to each other to how we relate at every moment. In order to do so, we require nothing less than a major change of story about who we are. Most important of all is to reframe the Darwinian idea — deeply embedded in our psyches and in every aspect of our lives — that in order for me to win you have to lose.

Most of us still operate according to the model first proposed by 18th century economist Adam Smith: We do best for society by looking out for number 1. This notion underpins our economic system, our educational model, and even our individual and collective relationships.

In order to foster our deep-seated impulses toward cooperation and community, in my book *The Bond*, I recommend replacing the Adam Smith model with “the Nash Equilibrium,” developed by economist John Nash, which argues that our own best response in any situation is to choose what is best not only for ourselves but also for the rest of the group.

Specifically, I suggest that we must evolve in four major areas. We need to:

- perceive the world more holistically
- change the very way we relate to people
- organize ourselves differently — in our friendships and neighborhoods, our towns and cities — by enlarging our experience of “community” and learning to come together for common goals
- change our fundamental purpose on earth to something more than one based on struggle and domination.

Each of us needs to become daily change-agents for generosity and cooperation. As I demonstrate in *The Bond* with a variety of practices, focusing on these four areas will help people to see the world from a more holistic perspective, enjoy more cooperative relationships — even across the deepest divides — develop more united social groups, and become highly infectious spiritual activists in their workplaces and communities.

We have to do nothing less, in other words, than to wipe clean the entire hard drive of our competitive mindset. For several centuries we believed in the necessity of survival of the fittest. It has taken a series of crises for us to understand the error in that thinking and to realize that the tool for our rebirth lies in reframing the idea that winning is all about winning over someone else.

It is possible for each one of us to become a “spiritual citizen” and transform our own life’s purpose from “me and mine alone” to “ours.” Simple everyday acts alone and in your group will enable you to become a powerhouse of change,
permanently shifting the culture of greed and materialism around you, creating trust and setting off a contagion of generosity, cooperation and entirely evolved behavior.

Around the world those prospering in these troubled times have discovered new ways to communicate, live together, work and resolve differences. And every one of these success stories shares one thing in common: an ability to harness the fundamental human need to connect, or Bond, and to move past “every man for himself” to “we’re all in this together.” They evidence a deep understanding that at the very heart of our humanity is a close and interconnected group.

In *The Bond Handbook*, I offer a step-by-step, week-by-week guide to help you evolve personally and as a group. This study guide aims to empower you with the skills necessary to enable individual groups to become powerful change agents for local and global unity. It focuses on the essential bond that unites us all as a means of strengthening our connection with other individuals.

I also offer discussion points, weekly exercises and challenges for the group that will help to rebuild fragmented neighborhoods. In this way, individual groups, or “pods,” as I like to call them, can act as ambassadors of connection and renewal for an entire community.

Throughout this *Handbook*, I’m using the term “group” to mean any collection of individuals besides yourself and your immediate nuclear family: your neighbors, your closest friends, your work colleagues, an existing group such as your church congregation or even members of your larger community. In fact, the best way to change the world around you is to target your own community. You can gather together thoughtful committed citizens — whether friends, neighbors, community members or work colleagues — who share your ideals by organizing such a group and meeting regularly to improve the neighborhood, workplace or your local town or city.

After you begin practicing these exercises and have formed your “pod,” you will see that you can help to fix the problems we now face. By a simple change of perspective, and with these individual and collective practices, each of us can transform our culture and move out of crisis, individually and collectively.

Once your Bond pod is firmly established, you can begin to invite different organizations — educators, the police force, politicians — to explore the implications of these new discoveries on the structure of society.

**Step 1: Form your pod**

It was Margaret Mead who penned the now-famous quote: “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it’s the only thing that ever does.”

The first step is to find a group of people who share your commitment to change and have it meet regularly. It needn’t be a large group and it doesn’t have to operate according to a set agenda, but you may wish to lay down some start-up rules to govern its creation and operation so that you can all look forward to the same agenda.

Your group could borrow some ideas from the French salons of the 18th century, which were regular gatherings of like-minded people who looked to the salon to educate and entertain them. Gertrude Stein and Sylvia Beach were just two of the many women in 20th-century Paris whose salons were famous for encouraging art and the exchange of ideas.

In your neighborhood, for instance, you could hold a regular social gathering that also explores how to improve the way your neighborhood works, so that it is closer, happier, safer, supportive, self-sustaining and interdependent.

**Here’s how to get started:**

- Write and print copies of a flyer and circulate it around your neighborhood, office or community. The flyer should explain that you’d like to create a closer, safer community at home (or work) in which everyone supports everyone else and explores more connected ways of interacting. Stress that this will be a social gathering as well as a time for all of you to help each other out. Push this flyer under the door of every house or apartment in your neighborhood, or on every desk in your office, or post it at your church bulletin board. Make sure to extend an invitation to everyone of your neighbors or coworkers, even the most unfriendly. Remember: don’t leave anybody out. Including people with different beliefs than yours is the entire point of the exercise.

- If you’re planning to meet with people in your community but outside your neighborhood, post a similar notice at a local church, any churches of New Thought (Unity or Centers for Spiritual Living), yoga or meditation groups, Whole Food stores or other similar types of organizations.
• Explain in the notice that the purpose of the group is to share resources and learn to create a closer, more supportive community.

• Ask people to contact you via email. Don’t hand out your home address unless you know each other. Once you’ve gathered at least five to six people, plan to meet.

• If you really don’t know your neighbors, select a public place for your initial meetings until you really get to know the other members. Some initial possibilities are a cheap hall (where everyone contributes to the rental cost), a local coffee house, a community or church hall, or even an inexpensive but quiet restaurant. Otherwise, take turns hosting at your homes.

• Plan to meet regularly — say, once a month or even weekly, if family commitments permit. Most of the famous Paris salons met weekly and even named themselves after the day of the week on which they gathered. Natalie Barney, who hosted many famous writers in early-20th-century Paris, set up her “Fridays”. A regularly scheduled meeting encourages people to note it on their calendars and attend regularly.

• Start off generally. Give voice to your desire to foster a spirit of unity and citizen participation to improve aspects of your immediate group and, eventually, various aspects of your larger community, including education, industry, housing and government.

• Create a structured agenda, so people know what to expect and can come ready to contribute.

• Be democratic. When there is a major decision to be made, give everyone a chance to have his or her say. Any decision should be a true consensus reflecting all of the opinions that have been expressed, and individual opinions should be balanced against the views of the group. When you decide on specific areas to work on, set your collective intention to improve those areas with highly specific goals.

• Get hold of recommended reading and suggest further resources. Because of the ideas to be discussed and the daily exercises to be practiced, each member of the pod will need to have a copy of the US paperback version of my book *The Bond*. In the course of this program, you may also wish to refer to my earlier books *The Field* and *The Intention Experiment*. In time you may also wish to discuss or share other books, videos or resources.

• Take breaks. Be sure to make time for cake and coffee. These meetings should be fun, as well as community-building.

• Consider having entertainment. In time you might wish to include some music, poetry readings or storytelling, or even a lecture by speaker in the field who is in town. Many groups have now developed to the point where they are large-enough “salons” to attract well-known speakers.

• Keep numbers manageable. In *The Tipping Point*, Malcolm Gladwell offers evidence that human beings were designed to work optimally in groups of 150 or less. If your group gets larger, form subgroups under 150.

• Connect with other pods on the Lynne McTaggart’s Bond website (www.thebond.net). Use the site to announce that you are starting a pod in your area, then compare notes with other pods. The Bond website will provide you with full information about how to do so.

• Sign up your group to the Bond website (www.thebond.net). It has the capacity for groups to speak together to exchange ideas and information and will develop a worldwide virtual community of people who share your ideals. You’ll also be able to connect during the free Bond teleseminars and webinars I will be periodically offering to Bond pods; make sure to join my community and also sign up for my free newsletter on www.thebond.net in order to receive weekly announcements from me about dates of the free teleseminars and other bonuses for your groups.

**Group Goals**

• Begin with a model of community unity — a society in which all members are working toward collective and unified good. Once you truly understand that you are all one, the decisions you have to make must always be for the good of all, and not simply for the people in charge, or those you like, or even those who think the way that you do.

• Try to frame every decision in terms of its impact on your community and environment as a whole. Will a new
community project benefit everyone in the community? Does your work enhance or detract from your community? Are you educating your children to give back or just to take?

- Create a list of each your group’s resources and needs. What talents, supplies or general resources do each of you have available to the community? What specific needs does your community have? Can you see which talents and resources could prove most useful? Which abilities or resources can be bartered for work done by other members so that no money changes hands?

- Vow as a group to avoid individual ostentation. Take a leaf from the success of Roseto, Pennsylvania, which had one of the lowest heart attack rates in America. Such was the sense of solidarity that ostentation was strictly discouraged and jealousy consequently minimized. Although rich and poor lived together, side by side, the rich did not flaunt it. Roseto was flushed with a clear sense of common purpose.

- Vow to avoid competition with people in your community (unless on the sports field or at the bowling alley). Does it really matter if someone makes more money than you do? Chances are, you both still face similar challenges. Also refuse to engage in Schadenfreude—taking delight in someone else’s misfortune—and replace it with the Buddhist idea of mudita, or happiness in someone's good fortune.

**Step 2: Join The Bond Community website as a group**

Joining the Bond website as a group will enable you and members of your group to:

- Communicate with each other on a private platform
- Communicate with other Bond Pods around the world
- Communicate directly with Lynne McTaggart
- Receive private emails from her inviting you to periodic free webinars and teleseminars that will assist your group in achieving its goals

Here’s the best way to sign up. Assign one member of your group the task of being the Bond Pod web leader. He or she should:

1. Sign up for an account at: http://community.thebond.net

2. Edit his/her personal profile with at least basic information and upload a profile picture. This is important so your Bond Pod members can find you.

3. To set up a new Bond Pod, click on “Pages” in the top menu
4). Next select “Create a Page” option on the right side of the screen

5). Select “Group or Community” and then use the drop-down menu to indicate the category “Bond Pod”

Then type in a unique name for your Bond Pod which your or the group leader will provide to your members. This will allow them to search for and join your Bond Pod.

6). Click the links to update information about your Bond Pod, upload a picture (optional, but recommended), add fellow administrators and invite members who have already joined the Bond Community site. If you would like to restrict membership, Select ‘Permissions’ and under ‘Page Registration Method,’ select ‘Approval’ or ‘Invite.’ For all other categories select ‘Members only.’
7). Click “View Page” on the right hand side and you will be taken to your new page. From there, you will be able to add messages, start discussions, upload photos, invite other members and engage with your Bond Pod members.

8). Ask all other members of your group to join the Bond Community (http://community.thebond.net). Have them either join your group or ‘invite’ them to do so.

9). Have all members of the group also join the group called LYNNE’S BOND POD HQ.’ That’s our ‘super-group,’ with members of all Bond Pods around the world. That will enable you to contact other groups, communicate directly with me and receive my announcements about free group teleseminars and the like.

**Week 1: Setting Your Group Intention**

Now that you’ve assembled your group, at the first meeting decide on a group intention statement. Be specific and concrete. The scientific evidence shows that intention works best when the intended outcome is highly specific. If you want “peace,” don’t intend for “world peace”; choose a target place and request that it be 25 per cent more peaceful, for example.

Visualize yourselves as a single entity (say, within a giant bubble or any other unifying image) and write the intention statement together. Meditate together for a minute, then “Power Up,” by focusing on and visualizing the outcome in detail. Once you are all in a collective meditative state, have each member mentally think the same statement. Remember to send out the intention through your heart.

Consult my book *The Intention Experiment* for further details about the best techniques for carrying out intention.

Here are a few sample community targets for collective intentions:

- reducing violent crime by 5 per cent
- reducing pollution by 5 per cent
- reducing litter on a particular street in your neighborhood
- getting your mail delivered on time
- achieving some form of community activism (such as preventing a cell-phone tower from being built in your area)
Week 1 Homework: read the book

During this first week and week 2, begin reading The Bond. The US paperback version is the best source because it contains an entire section on practice exercises that will be necessary for this 16-week program.

Week 2: The Power of Eight

I run ongoing Intention Experiments to test the power of group thought in well-run, controlled scientific experiments and also informally in workshops and my “Intention” community. Besides the big experiments, I have been experimenting with what I call the “Power of Eight.” During weekend workshops, I divide the audience of attendees into small groups of eight, and ask groups of complete strangers to send loving thoughts to each other.

During many dozens of workshops, I have witnessed powerful stories of emotional or physical healing among both the senders and receivers.

Marsha, for instance, had developed an opacity in one cornea, largely blocking the vision of one eye. The following day, after her group’s healing intention, she claimed that her sight in that eye had been almost fully restored. Many of the members of her group who had sent the intention were plagued with lifelong migraines or back problems, but they also reported feeling better. In a recent workshop, a woman with MS who’d walked into the course with crutches and only with extreme difficulty arrived the day after having her healing group intention without any walking aids.

Even more significant than these remarkable healing effects, to my mind, is the powerful effect of community. During these workshops, strangers begin resonating together as one; for instance, in the Netherlands at a recent workshop, I discovered that many of the groups reported having the exact same visualizations during their group intentions.

In one group, which concentrated on sending intention to a woman with a bad back, she and a variety of members of the group all imagined the same inner vision: her spine being lifted out of her body and infused with light.

The feeling of oneness reported by the members of the workshops and the Intention Experiment community is an example of the Bond — the resonance effect of pure connection. The simple act of belonging and spontaneously giving within a small group of strangers is so powerful and so satisfies our deepest longing that it heals both the healer and the recipient. I recommend it as a simple means of creating instant closeness and interdependence.

A step-by-step guide to your own healing intention circle

• Divide your pod into groups of between 6 and 12 people who are open to the possibility of healing and intention.

• Ask if any one of the members of the group with a healing challenge of some sort (emotional or physical) would like to be the target of the healing intention. Allow the person nominated as the recipient to describe his or her problem in detail.

• Spend a few moments talking over and designing the intention statement that you will all hold together.

• Gather around in a circle. Either join hands or place the nominated subject in the middle of the circle, as all the rest of the group place one hand on him, like the spokes of a wheel.

• Begin by having each member of the group close his eyes and concentrate on inhaling and exhaling. Each should clear his mind of any distractions, then hold the intention statement in his mind while imagining, with all five senses, the intention recipient as healthy and well in every way. All members should then send out the intention through their hearts. The intention recipient should remain open to receive. (You can learn more techniques about “Powering Up” — the best way to carry out intention — in my book The Intention Experiment (for more information, see my website: www.theintentionexperiment.com).
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- At the end of 10 minutes, each member may come back into the room and begin to share experiences. First ask the intention recipient to describe how he or she feels, and if he has experienced any changes, positive or negative. All the other members may then take turns sharing experiences. Take note of any feelings of palpable oneness and also any improvement in the condition of both senders and receivers.

Week 3: The Superorganism: Changing Our Story

You are now ready to begin your discussion topics and group and individual exercises, which will carry on for the next seven weeks before you begin your outreach to the community.

New Thought ministers can download “The Bond New Thought Sermon Topics” given to them by my organization directly or via www.thebond.net and use them as notes for sermons that can be timed to be delivered during the relevant weeks of group discussion and practice.

Reading Preparation: Prologue, introduction, and chapters 1 through 4 of The Bond

This weekly topic introduces the basic principles of the Bond: that nature’s most basic drive is for global cooperation and unity, not competition. The Bond discloses that things in the universe are not “individual” in any sense of the term. In every area of our lives, from the smallest particles of our being to our relationships and communities, there is a Bond—a connection so integral and profound that there is no longer a clear demarcation between the end of one thing and the beginning of another.

Nature has designed us as a vast interconnected superorganism and hardwired us to share, care, and be fair, and not to compete. Everything, from subatomic particles to single-cell organisms to the most distant stars in the galaxy, all are part of this indivisible Bond.

This week we will explore the basic principles of The Bond:

- How all of life has been designed for connection, not competition
- Why it’s not the “thing,” but the space between, that matters

Weekly Goal: To change our story: to understand how all of life has been designed for connection, not competition, and to explore how a new story of who we are changes how we should relate to others, in our relationships and communities.

Discussion Topics:

- Discuss the implications of new discoveries in physics showing that there is no such thing as an individual, but only relationships.

Challenge: Discuss how it would change your view of the world to think of everything in the world as one interconnected whole.

- Explore the idea that we are created “from the outside in”: that our bodies are created by so many complex interactions with the environment that they cannot be considered to exist independently.

Challenge: How has your Bond with your environment changed aspects of your body and your health, compared with those of your parents?

- Discuss the idea that we are part of an “intergalactic superorganism” and that our health, our mental stability, and possibly even much of what we consider our uniquely individual behavior or motivation are partly at the whim of solar activity.

Challenge: How does this change our views of human motivation and current notions of individualism?

- We now realize that we understand the actions of others by simulating the entire experience in our brains via mirror neurons, as though it were happening to us.
**Challenge:** How does this knowledge affect our understanding of our thoughts as a wholly individual process?

- How have ideas about individualism and competition in nature affected our societal structures? How have Darwinian theories permeated our everyday lives? In what areas of your life do you feel competition most acutely?

**Challenge:** How would you change societal structures to be more cooperative?

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**Week 3 Personal Practice: Seeing the Whole**

If we are to prosper, individually and collectively, each of us must wipe clean our mental hard drives of the sense of scarcity, lack, competition and extreme individualism with which we are now programmed. To do this we have to challenge the very assumptions and thought processes on which those concepts and assumptions are based.

This week we also begin some simple practices that will help you to become more conscious of the essential Bond that unites us all and learn to make use of it in one-on-one and group relationships. These tools focus on the four areas highlighted in *The Bond*:

- Seeing the whole
- Changing the way we relate to people
- Enlarging our experience of community and learning to come together for common goals
- Becoming a spiritual change agent through daily acts of generosity and cooperation.

You are welcome to practice these first activities alone or as part of your group. By working through these exercises every day, you will quickly learn to identify when you are operating according to the old paradigm of exclusion, fear, lack and competition. They will enable you to embrace more inclusive ways of being.

**Suggested reading:** chapter 13 of *The Bond* US paperback.

For this and many of the other exercises in this chapter you and your group will need to keep a journal in which to write down exercises and keep track of progress.

The purpose of these first three weeks of practices is to help you to develop “aerial vision” in your relations with other people. This includes fine-tuning your ability to notice details about others, particularly people who are different from you. Over time you will learn to question your automatic assumptions, hold opposing ideas in your head without being judgmental, detach from your own prejudices, and refrain from the kind of thinking that traps you into an “Us versus Them” mind-set. Practicing these exercises every day will also sensitize you to the emotional undercurrents of relationships and increase your capacity for empathy.

The first step in the art of seeing holistically is simply learning to notice more.

This week, please practice *Step 1 Noticing More Detail* and *Step 2: Study Your Own Thinking Processes* (pp 223-25 of *The Bond* US paperback) for at least one-half hour every day.

**Week 3 Group Exercise: Noticing More**

Share what you have individually discovered about how these exercises affect your ability to notice the world around you and make you more mindful of your own habitual thought patterns.

**Week 4: Born to Belong**

**Reading Preparation:** Chapters 5, 6, and 7 of *The Bond*

Humanity is profoundly tribal; we feel most at home as a part of a small clustered whole. The need to move beyond the boundaries of ourselves as individuals and to bond with a group is so primordial and necessary to a human being that it remains the key determinant of whether we remain healthy or get ill, even whether we live or die.
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Weekly Goal: To examine why sharing and caring is essential to our good health and to explore new ways that we can flourish individually only when we move beyond speaking, seeing, and relating for just ourselves.

Discussion Topics:

- Why is the lone-wolf, all-American hero a perfect candidate for a heart attack?

Challenge: Not all heroes in popular culture represent the striving for an individualistic goal. A number demonstrate the power of emphasizing the fundamental connection between all people. One example is George Bailey in It’s a Wonderful Life, played by James Stewart. Can you think of others?

- Why is belonging so important to people and “excessive individuation” so dangerous?

Challenge: Remember a time when you felt left out or excluded, or a member of your group was excluded. Why did it happen? How did it affect you, emotionally and physically? What could you have done differently to promote greater unity within the group?

- How do the bad and good moods of others affect us at home or at work?

Challenge: This week observe what happens to your mood and body language when you are in the presence of someone in a bad mood. Write it down and discuss it with the group next week.

- What are some examples of how community is the best medicine that we have, even during hard times?

Challenge: What new groups can you join this month, or strengthen by becoming more involved with groups to which you already belong?

- We are told that human beings are innately selfish. What new evidence shows the reverse: that we are hardwired to share, care, and be fair?

Challenge: Do something kind or altruistic for someone this week. Monitor what is happening to you, physically and emotionally, when you do.

Group Activity: Decide on three measures each one of you can take to strengthen the closeness of this group.

Week 4: Personal Practice: Seeing the unseen

To see the whole, you need to become exquisitely sensitive to your feelings and sensations and the information you are receiving without your conscious knowledge. This includes picking up information beyond the senses, becoming sensitive to your own feelings and trusting your intuition. Practicing Step 3: Seeing the Unseen and Step 4: Strengthening Your Gut Hunches (pp 225-227 of The Bond US paperback) will help. Continue with your Step 1 and Step 2 exercises as well.

Group Practice: Seeing the Unseen

Discuss any “unseen” information you have picked up intuitively this week and how that may provide you with a more complete understanding of people who are different from you.

Week 5: The Unifying Effect of Fairness

Reading Preparation: Chapter 8 of The Bond, plus The 10 Fairness Principles from page 242-3 of The Bond US paperback.

Fairness burns deep within the hearts of each and every one of us; neuroscientists have even discovered an “it’s not fair” spot in the human brain. Consequently, ideas about fairness appear to be universal. People in most societies and citizens of all political persuasions have ideas about fairness that are surprisingly identical. By “fair,” most of us mean receiving a just reward for our effort and offering an equal chance for everyone. In our hearts we know what is fair.

Our survival depends upon our ability to create a situation of “just desert,” meaning that we are commensurately rewarded for our efforts (or punished for our wrongdoing) and that each of us is given a turn. The extent to which any local or national community begins to fray relates to a deterioration of a sense of fairness and basic reciprocity within it.
As noted in chapter 8 of *The Bond*, fairness is a practice that promotes unity in any community and can be easily restored. Scientific studies show that in any society, if a culture of turn-taking falls apart with too many taking too much, all it requires is a small group of individuals committed to strong reciprocity to reestablish fairness and create a unified and highly cohesive community.

**Weekly Goal:** To explore how to reestablish fairness in your life, your community, your workplace and your country.

**Discussion Topics:**

- What is fairness, and how is it different from across-the-board sameness or socialism?

  **Challenge:** Based on your definition of fairness, identify which current local and national practices are fair and which are unfair. What would you like to change?

- Why is fairness so essential in every community, and why does it unite people?

  **Challenge:** Can you see any association between some of the challenges and problems in your community and fairness or unfairness?

- What happens to the social fabric in nations where there is a large sense of unfairness?

  **Challenge:** How have certain unfair practices in your country hurt wealthy and poor alike?

- What do you consider unfair in your own life?

  **Challenge:** What are some ways that you can become a game-changer to encourage fairness and fair practices in your workplace or community?

**Weekly Practice:** Learn the Ten Principles of Fairness and come up with a list of ways to apply them at home, in your neighborhood and on the job as a means of strengthening community.

**Week 5 Personal Practice: Seeing the Whole Truth**

To stay focused you need to heighten your sense of being “present.” The science shows that you can do that by working on brain areas that heighten curiosity. Begin practicing the exercises in *Step 5: Seek Out the New* on pp 227-8 of *The Bond* US paperback. And now that you have begun to practice noticing more details in your life, you can also begin to apply these new skills to your perception of other people, particularly those who are not like you. Now start practicing the exercises from *Step 6: Seeing the Whole Truth* (pp 229-30 of *The Bond* US paperback) and write down what you discover about yourself this week. Make sure to keep alert for “Us vs Them” thinking. Continue your earlier exercises as well.

**Week 5 Group Practice: Create Your Own Web of Connection**

Examine the various people in any group to which you belong (including work). Select a contentious issue, such as abortion, gun control, taxes, or a local issue at home or work. Draw a mind map of all the different opinions or views on the subject. Then identify the connections between those positions. What interests or values do some of the different positions share? Draw a line between positions that share a common value. Notice how your map forms an interconnected whole.

**Week 6: From “Me” to “We”**

**Reading Preparation:** Chapters 9 and 10 of *The Bond*

We like people who are just like us — who share our values, our attitudes, our personalities and even our emotional dispositions — and we tend to conflict most with people who are not like us. This tendency to cluster with people who are most like us only serves to divide us from others by reinforcing our individuality, our sense that our way is the best.

Once we view ourselves as part of a larger whole, we begin to act differently toward each other. When we can learn to change our perspective and offer ourselves as a vehicle of service to the connection, we can easily find the deeper Bond always present and embrace difference within that larger definition of connection.
This week you’ll learn some relating skills that will enable you to offer yourself as a vehicle of service to the pure experience of connection without judgment or prejudice shaped by your thoughts.

**Weekly Goal:** To explore techniques of relating that allow you to make deep connections with anyone, even those who disagree with everything you stand for. Also, to practice the power of deep truth and candid disclosure in order to promote closeness and unity. During this type of deep sharing, the pull of wholeness builds trust and loosens attachment to entrenched positions.

**Discussion Topics:**

- How does our Western way of promoting the individual block us from seeing another version of reality? What can survivors of the 2004 tsunami teach us about taking a more holistic view of our actions?

**Challenge:** Think of some of your actions and how they impact your community.

- Discuss the art of Sawubona and what it means to say to someone else, “We see you.”

**Challenge:** Divide into pairs and say, “We see you” and reply with “We see you too.” At that moment, vow to do whatever you can to allow your partner to thrive. How does that change your view of the relationship?

- What is “aerial vision”?

**Challenge:** Think of a time when you and another person vehemently disagreed on something. What was her version of reality and your version, and where is the truth of both sides?

- Discuss the practice of dialogue, how it differs from ordinary discussion and how it overcame polarization among the pro-life and pro-choice activists in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

**Challenge:** Discuss some of the assumptions you make about your version of what’s “real.” How much of it is based on cultural conditioning and belief?

- Why is deep sharing so powerful in relationships? How does it help us forgive and reestablish connection, as it did with a former member of the Hitler youth movement and the daughter of a Holocaust survivor, as mentioned in chapter 10?

**Challenge:** Divide into pairs and practice sharing deeply about things you really care about. What do you notice about how you feel about the other person?

**Weekly Practice:** In your group, practice having a dialogue about a contentious subject (abortion, the Tea Party, gun control, etc.). Remember the rules:

- Don’t reach a decision or have a debate.
- Take turns speaking.
- Be alert to your own reactions when something is said that you don’t agree with.
- Be fully present.
- Don’t judge.

**Week 6 Personal Practice: Relating in Wholeness**

Currently most relationships are forged from the erroneous idea that we have to be the same to get along and that differences between us are to be avoided at all costs. In fact, conflict is considered so antithetical to the human experience that when others disagree with us, we conclude that they must be stupid or ill informed. To justify this position, we find it necessary to debate them, demonize them and announce their ignorance to the world. In our minds, conflict can be resolved only with I win, you lose.

The key to a more holistic relationship with anyone is to conceive of the relationship as a “thing in itself” and to focus on the “space in between” — the glue that holds it together — especially when you do not agree with each other. Look upon conflict or differences of opinion as an opportunity to create something new together that you would never generate if you both agreed with each other. It’s also an opportunity to forge a new relationship.

This week, we’ll start practicing the exercises in *Step 1: Change Your Perspective about Relationships* (pp 231-2 of *The Bond Handbook*).
**Week 6 Group Practice: Learn “We” Affirmations**

Begin working on “We” affirmations, rather than “I affirmations,” and then share how this affects your individual lives. See pp 233-4 of *The Bond* US paperback.

**Week 7: People Who Fire Together Wire Together**

**Reading preparation:** Chapter 11 of *The Bond*

This week we’ll use the Robber’s Cave experiment to examine the power of a larger, communal (superordinate) goal and how it can transform the atmosphere in your neighborhood or office from “me against them” to “all of us pulling together.” It may also touch upon the power of the larger goal to revitalize any social situation, in your office or neighborhood, and create a close-knit and cooperative community. Shared activity also creates a ramped-up endorphin release, raising our pain threshold, improving our individual efforts, and ultimately raising our game. You may also wish to explore specific practices to turn your community into a communal savings bank to ease individual worries during hard times.

**Discussion Topics:**

- What are the lessons of the Robber’s Cave experiment for today?

  **Challenge:** Think of a superordinate goal that your group could pursue in your community in order to unite people who are presently polarized.

- Why does a superordinate goal unite people so well?

  **Challenge:** What practices might you suggest to transform the atmosphere in your office from “me against them” to “all of us pulling together”?

- What tips can you gain from South Africa’s rugby team and Oxford’s rowing team, the Chilean miners, the Tailholt experience with their community water pipeline, and Nour Hakki, the Syrian translator, about creating a more united community?

  **Challenge:** Can you think of three communal practices to establish in your neighborhood as a way of making your neighborhood safer and more vibrant and your neighbors feel closer?

**Weekly Practice:** As a group, decide on a specific project in your community about which people of all religious beliefs, cultural backgrounds and political persuasions feel equally passionate. Set up a committee to begin working on getting the project under way. Once you have the basics of the project, organize another committee whose job is to invite people of differing beliefs or cultures to join. Take note of whether working together for a common goal brings you closer together.

**Week 7 Personal practice: Going deeper**

In the following practices you will explore techniques of relating that allow you to make deep connections with anyone, even those who disagree with everything you stand for, and engage conflict in creative ways in order to produce greater shared understanding and possibility. You’ll also learn how to promote closeness through the power of deep truth and candid disclosure rather than the strength of your arguments. During this type of deep sharing, the pull of wholeness builds trust and loosens attachment to fixed positions.

Please pair off with a partner (the best is to find someone who disagrees with you on something) and practice Step 4: *Cultivate the Art of Bonded Conversation* on page 234 of *The Bond* US paperback.

**Week 7 Group Practice: Overcoming Conversational Divides**

In your group, practice *Ten Steps to Overcoming Deep Conversational Divides* on page 234 of *The Bond* US paperback.

Create a safe environment. Get the other party (or parties) to agree about what subjects are comfortable to discuss and what conditions make it comfortable. Then lay down ground rules enforcing these conditions. This is a practice and
learning session for times when you will be interacting with people who disagree deeply with you.
Most important is that you listen with a view to understanding, stay absolutely present and explore the other person’s
core values — and their back story — and also why they believe what they believe. When it’s your turn to speak, speak
candidly and honestly from the heart. Tell your own story of why you believe what you believe. Deep sharing loosens
entrenched position and leads to strong connections, no matter how much you disagree with each other.

Week 8: Generosity and Fairness: The Global Game-Changer

Reading Preparation: Chapter 12 of The Bond US paperback

This week explores ways that each of you within your group can become “spiritual citizens” and transform your own
life’s purpose from “me and mine alone” to “ours.” The session should examine how each of us can become a powerful
change agent through tiny “do something” actions and investigate the extraordinary and infectious power of generosity to
transform a business or neighborhood. Simple everyday acts of generosity enable you to become a powerhouse of change,
permanently shifting the culture of greed and materialism around you.

Weekly Goal: To explore the extraordinary and infectious power of generosity to create inherent trust in your
community or workplace.

Discussion Topics:

- What are the most important lessons to be learned from the experiences of Nipun Mehta, who transformed
  from a classic Silicon Valley turk on a six-figure salary to a global game-changer running the international
  CharityFocus?
  
  Challenge: Which are the most important ways you could become a change agent in your daily life?

  - How can each one of us set off a contagion of giving and cooperative behavior in our neighborhood or office?

  Challenge: Think of several ways that you can use generosity as an extraordinary and infectious power to create
  inherent trust in your neighborhood or community.

  - Describe why one tiny act of kindness — leaving a bit of change in a Coke machine — caused a wave of
generosity throughout a vast corporation and affected an entire community. What happens to a culture of selfishness
  in the face of a few change agents who reestablish generosity and reciprocity?

  Challenge: Design several acts you can do that might set off a contagion of change.

  - How can partnerships (like the John Lewis Partnership as mentioned in chapter 12 of The Bond) be used in
  businesses or utility companies to unite communities?

  Challenge: Can you reorganize a project you are currently working on as a partnership with no one in charge?

Weekly Practice: Design three specific pay-it-forward actions in your neighborhood or workplace that will set
off a contagion of giving and cooperative behavior. Report back to the group on the results (and see the section on Pay it
Forward later in this document).

Weekly Practice: Design three specific pay-it-forward actions in your neighborhood or workplace that will set

Week 8 Personal Practice: Positive contagion

As noted in chapter 10 of The Bond, your thoughts and emotions are highly contagious, and even your attitude to life
has a profound effect on the people around you, affecting not only their emotions, but also their bodies and their ability
to function. Arguments or minor conflicts profoundly affect our immune system, the number of our natural killer cells,
cortisol rhythms and even the function of the hypothalamus-pituitary-adrenal gland axis — all regulators of the body’s
ability to fight off disease.

To become a spiritual activist, you must first become a positive influence on those around you. Create a “relationship
diary” within your journal to track your effect on your partner, parents, children, friends and coworkers, and become more
mindful of your emotional contagion. Writing down the particulars of your interactions with others will enable you to track
how contagious your actions are and help you to become a force for good. Follow some of the practices on pages 240 and
241 of The Bond US paperback.
Week 8 Group Practice: Dialogue, not Debate

You are now ready to apply the principles of *The Bond* to groups at work and in your community. These exercises and the suggested activities that follow will reveal the power of a larger, communal (“superordinate”) goal to transform the atmosphere in your neighborhood or office from “me against them” to “all of us pulling together.” As many experts in conflict resolution recognize, working on a shared problem helps to unite people who are in opposition on other issues. For instance, the Search for Common Ground project managed to connect two sworn enemies, the Macedonian Slavs and Albanians, by encouraging them to work together on a project to clean up their local environment.

The best place to start is to lay down a new means of group communication. In dialogue, as opposed to discussion, a group explores feelings and ideas in an unstructured way to create greater understanding, deeper connection and a new synergy of ideas.

When attempting to talk together about subjects that matter most to us, we usually speak from our own version of the truth and invariably end up disagreeing with anyone whose version differs from ours. Dialogue is a method of discourse that slows down the process of conversation so that your own prejudices get revealed and new possibilities can unfold.

When you are working with a group, especially when discussing any change with people of differing opinions, observe the practices noted on pages 234-5 of *The Bond* US paperback.

Week 9: From Local to Global

Reading Preparation: Chapters 8, 11, and 12 of *The Bond*

This week we’ll examine ways to move from the old zero-sum paradigm (“I win, you lose”) to the six principles of the Bond (“I win and we all win”) globally. We’ll also explore the power of designing superordinate goals to connect with and evolve with other groups around the world. This lesson also focuses on the Nash Equilibrium (what’s best for me and the group) to design goals that promote unity with others from different cultures or belief systems.

This can be illustrated by the story of the mathematician John Nash, as portrayed in the movie ‘A Beautiful Mind’ (detailed in chapter 8 of *The Bond*), when Nash realizes that Adam Smith’s model of “every man for himself” is wrong. The best result comes, he says, when everyone in the group does what’s best for himself and the group.

Weekly Goal: To explore how moving from a paradigm of exclusion (“I win, you lose,” “Us versus Them”) to inclusion (“I win and we all win,” “Us plus Them”) offers a powerful tool for connection within the group and the wider community.

The Current “I Win, You Lose” Paradigm

- Life is a zero-sum game (I win only if you lose).
- What’s in it for me?
- I must win, dominate, or be first in order to feel good about myself.
- I take care of my own. Otherwise, it’s every man and woman for himself or herself.
- It’s Us versus Them.
- I do best for society by looking after Number One.

The New Bond Paradigm

- I win when and only when you and I win.
- I feel best when I connect, whatever it takes.
- How can I serve you?
- We’re all in this together, and we will pull together through thick and thin.
- It’s Us plus Them.
- We do best for society by looking out for ourselves and the rest of our community.

Discussion Topics

- Discuss the bar scene in the film ‘A Beautiful Mind,’ detailed in chapter 9 of *The Bond*, when Nash realizes that the best action you can to take is the one that’s not only what’s best for yourself but is also best for the group.
Challenge: What are some ways to apply this idea to your workplace or community?

- What do the lessons of the Nash Equilibrium and other examples of game theory teach us about our current paradigm (“I win, you lose”)?

Challenge: Discuss one area that is currently “every man for himself,” and redesign it as “every man for himself and the group.” How would it work then?

- Engage in a bit of blue-skying. What would it look like to have businesses that work together and not in competition?

Challenge: Discuss ways to incorporate these ideas into your own workplace or a community organization.

- Discuss the old and new paradigms listed above and where they are present in our neighborhoods and communities, businesses and political system.

Challenge: Can you design new ideas in your communities that incorporate the “Us plus Them” ideas of the Bond paradigm into our everyday lives?

- How might this new paradigm be used politically to improve aspects of society?

Challenge: Describe how the “Us plus Them” model might unite people of different political persuasions.

Weekly Practice: Design a superordinate “Us plus Them” goal to encompass the needs of your community and then several communities outside of your own. Begin making plans to put it into practice. Continue reporting back to the group on your progress.

Week 9 Group Practice: Start Building Your Barn

As explored in chapter 11 of The Bond, the best way to unite any group is through a “superordinate” goal — a goal only achieved by large cooperative teamwork of two or more people. Engaging in sharing and teamwork tends to transcend differences, because it emphasizes the very heart of humanity — we are all in this together.

There’s a good reason for why it works so well. The scientific evidence shows that people who fire together wire together; whenever a group works together for a common goal, the brains of all parties begin to get on the same wavelength, strengthening the Bond within the group.

When we work with others for a common purpose, we literally get on their wavelength. Coming together in small groups with a common goal provides a social cohesion beyond money, job or size of property. A common and larger purpose creates instant closeness in any social setting and offers an excellent tool for maintaining cooperation in your neighborhood. And as many experts in conflict resolution recognize, working on a shared problem helps to unite people who are in opposition on other issues.

Join Forces to Fight for a Cause. . .

Satyagraha, the philosophy of non-violence as developed by the great spiritual leader Mohandas Gandhi, literally means “the force that is generated through adherence to Truth.” Central to Gandhi’s methods is polite — that is to say, “civil”— disobedience. In Gandhi’s view, non-violent activism should utterly avoid hostile language, damage to property, secrecy or law-breaking for any but unjust laws.

If you and your group disagree with current laws, follow a path of polite non-cooperation in a civil manner. As Gandhi understood, the power of any law or leader depends upon the people’s agreement to obey it. If citizens simply refuse to obey the law, the law or leader loses its power.

As Gandhi said: “I believe that no government can exist for a single moment without the cooperation of the people, willing or forced, and if people suddenly withdraw their cooperation in every detail, the government will come to a standstill.”

When a cell phone company attempted to erect cell phone towers on my block, my neighborhood began a storm of civil protest, leafleting all the residents, getting petitions signed, writing letters to our council and Parliamentary representatives. A tiny group of us stopped one of the giants of British industry and banded together in the process.
In 1969, a small band of inhabitants of Portland, Oregon, completely reversed the tide of urban sprawl and civic ennui in their home city by banding into a group, The Riverfront for People, and holding a protest of the widening of the riverside roadway. What they wanted, they said, was less highway, more pedestrian access to the river.

After two years of discussions, the Riverfront for People prevailed. Harbor Drive was demolished, Tom McColl Waterfront Park was created, and Portland still remains a model of accessible and friendly urban life.

In the UK, the Coin Street Community Builders, a group of local activists, joined together to successfully oppose large-scale development plans for expensive high-rise housing in a white working-class district of the South Bank along the riverfront of the Thames in London.

After creating a center for burgeoning businesses, the community group built state-of-the-art public housing and a children’s center by donating some of the profits from the businesses they’d helped to create, including a luxury Harvey Nichols restaurant on the top floor of the Oxo Tower. In this way, the Coin Street group made use of community private capital as a virtuous circle: to fund public services to the less fortunate without the need for a government handout.

**Week 9: Group Discussion topics**

- What kind of “barn building” can you do together in your community? See below for more ideas.

- What aspects of your community that presently spur rivalry and competition can be redesigned to run in a spirit of sharing and cooperation? (Planting in the grounds between houses is one way to give a neighborhood a unified “feel.”)

- How can your local businesses be involved to provide more support for the local community and also work together with other local businesses?

- What measures can be adopted encouraged in your local schools to involve children in creating “bonding” in schools and their local neighborhoods?

**Possible “barn-building” goals for your community**

- Plant in community spots.

- Form a “landscape brigade”: take turns gardening or landscaping each neighbor’s yard together.

- Organize block parties and pot luck dinners regularly.

- Cook or bake extra and share around the neighborhood.

- Build a fence or a shed together.

- Walk dogs together.

- Lend a hand: Find out if anyone in the community is experiencing difficulties (ill health, misfortune, loss of earnings, death in the family, etc). Discuss ways that you all can band together to help him/her out.

- Start a neighborhood jogging club.

- Create a Partnership. Start a local partnership for your health care, utilities, or any other service — owned by and run by the community.

- Create a clean-up committee — to get rid of graffiti, sweep up litter or leaves, and generally prettify the neighborhood.

- Run a Neighborhood Watch scheme.

- Take neighborhood suggestions to the school board or local government.

- Share the school run.
• Share the commute to the office.
• Take turns taking food to the neighbor who has just gotten ill.
• Create a youth club for children and take turns running it.
• Tithe (each put aside a tiny regular sum toward your neighborhood each month). Create a bank account for the neighborhood and keep the money there.

Once you've decided on your barn-building projects, your group may then discuss how to implement them. Create a rota so each takes a turn — or better yet, do the work all together one weekend.

**Week 10: From Global to Local**

These days, many people are using ingenious methods of ensuring that they and all around them remain prosperous and in work through a local “savings banks” of bartered services, communal savings and loan, security watch or food sharing. Even Gandhi was a big advocate of “staying local” and “micro-capitalism” to decentralize economic development. Staying local helps to create a close, resilient, interdependent community.

To cite one example, Lucy Wood of Yelverton, a tiny village of 3000 in Devon in the UK was fed up with having to pay exorbitant prices for meat and vegetables from far-flung locations. She wanted to grow her own vegetables, but didn’t really have the skill-set or the land required.

Lucy sought and received the equivalent of $25,000 of grant money and went on to found Buckland Food Growers. She opened its doors 18 months ago with seven pigs, 17 chickens, five beehives and a selection of planted vegetables. The villagers were invited to join the scheme for about $30 on sign-up and $25 additional each year, after which they could choose which group — meat, bees or vegetables — they wanted to join and help out with. A strict rota determined who tended the plants and the animals each week.

All the members thereafter enjoyed the bounty of hand-reared meat and home-grown vegetables, at enormous cost-savings. Wood herself hasn’t purchased store-bought vegetables for months.

Although it's hard work, she says, it's also enjoyable and it's been a good way to build and strengthen her tiny community.

**Start a “Totally-Locally” movement in your town**

In 2009 Chris Sands, who has a background in marketing and branding for large and small businesses, was on holiday in the North Portuguese town of Viana Do Castelo. As he tried to figure out how this tiny town, miles away from anything else, seemed to thrive, he noticed something remarkable.

“I sat in the square and noticed that the café owner would walk over to the bakery for break, the baker would walk over to the accountants with her books, the accountant went to the stationers, the stationers went to the café and the circle started again. It was then I realized that when everyone uses each other, the money in the town circulates round and round, each person supporting the other. I realized that we'd lost this simple way of living.”

Once Chris returned home, he came up with the “Totally Locally” concept, the idea of encouraging the people of any given town to support their local businesses more, and how that would improve their own quality of life and the lives of everyone who lives in their town.

Chris and his team offer a host of ideas and a free branding and marketing campaign that people of any town can use to support their local independent retailers. He encourages teams of volunteers to use the campaign to promote the value of local shopping, celebrate their main street, create community events and ultimately lift their local economy (and get closer in the process). As he puts it, “Totally Locally is more than a SHOP LOCAL campaign. It’s about working together to lift a whole town.”

The cornerstone of his movement is to encourage the people in an individual town to divert just $5 (or £5 in the UK) of weekly supermarket or on-line shopping spend to a local independent shop.
“Do you pop into the supermarket on your way into work to buy milk or coffee? If you do, could you get it at a local shop?” Chris writes. “If you’re buying a present, why not look in the gift shop around the corner? Totally Locally isn’t anti-supermarket, it’s about supporting your local shops so they can support your town. You’ll start a little micro economy — money begins to circulate round and around in your town.

“It’s all about reigniting some of that community spirit towns used to have.”

As an example, Chris says that if every inhabitant of West Bridgford in Great Britain, one of the hundreds of towns now part of the Totally Locally movement, diverted £5 of his or her weekly spend into local businesses, the town would have an extra £9.3 million a year.

For more information and further tools that you can adapt for your own local area, see: http://totally-locally.co.uk.

**Week 10 Personal Activities: How to be Pro-Local**

- Divert £5 of your weekly chain supermarket bill and spend it in a local shop. See http://www.totally-locally.co.uk for ways and free resources to support your local businesses.
- Whenever you need to buy something, think if you can buy it from a local store, rather than a national chain. Support your “main street,” no matter how tiny it is.
- Take out books from the local library or buy from a local bookstore.
- Use your local parks.
- Hire local young people.
- Look up when you walk and take the time to say hello to everyone.
- Support and help your local schools and consider giving of your time to teach skills to the students.
- Support your local hospital and take turns spending time reading to the patients.
- Buy local produce from a farmer’s market.
- Vote for local government.
- Attend town council meetings.
- Clean up litter whenever you see it anywhere around your town.
- Support local initiatives to have local concerts on summer’s evenings.
- If you have a town pool, use it.

**Week 10: Group Activities: Create a Community “Savings Bank”**

As explained in chapter 11 of *The Bond*, the Japanese have a unique system of mutual aid called moai, which is a little like a savings-and-loan club organized by friends who attend weekly or monthly meetings for a set period of time.

The currency is not only friendship, but also, in the case of a tasukeai moai, a pool of money to which everyone contributes for a set period of months, depending upon how many are in the moai; for a group of ten people, the moai will carry on for ten months.

For example, let’s say that everyone agrees to put in $100 each month, and the money is portioned out to one of its members in turn, with the understanding that, at whatever stage you take the pot, you will begin to pay interest of $10 for each of the remaining months of the arrangement.

The person who opts to receive the money in the first month will receive $1,000 and then pay the $10 in interest on top of his monthly $100 for the next nine months. Person B, who opts to take the full pot in month two, will receive $1,000, plus the $10 from the first person’s interest, and in the third month, person C will receive $1,000 in the pot, plus the $20 in interest from the first and second recipients, and so forth.
The first person to benefit from the money will pay the most interest, and the person who patiently waits to take the final pot will receive the most money ($1,900).

Consider making your neighborhood your savings bank. Have each neighbor contribute a set amount every month with set interest and take turns taking the whole pot every month. The idea is to all pool your money or services together each month so that each person gets the benefit of the “pot” in successful months, at far higher interest than is offered presently at any bank. Needless to say, the person who takes charge of the money needs to be trustworthy.

Of course, you don’t have to use money. A moai can be a sharing of resources in any way.

**Here are some possibilities:**

- Mowing the lawn, landscaping or gardening
- Food sharing
- Cooking or baking
- Painting and decorating
- Mending or building a fence
- The school run
- Sweeping the sidewalks
- Cleaning up litter
- Summer paddle pools
- Babysitting
- Dog walking
- Car washing
- Painting
- Building a bird house or bird bath

You could also start a local partnership of your community’s health care center, utilities, or any other service you wish to be owned by and run by the community (refer to chapter 12 of *The Bond*). Or start eco-schemes to save energy and recycle in the community.

**Consider creating a Local Currency**

Besides the local movement, people have come up with ingenious ways to support ailing local economies. For instance, Ciaran Mundy and a group of local business people in Bristol, a medium sized city in the UK, were tired of watching the world’s financial system in freefall and frustrated by the slow death of local businesses in Bristol, which were closing down and being taken over the supermarkets or chain stores.

From this frustration, the idea came to them: why not print their own money, by and for Bristol? And from there, the Bristol pound was born, in £1, £5, £10 and £20 denominations.

Thus far, 100 local companies have signed up to use Bristol pounds, including a family bakery, the Ferry company, the Tobacco Factory theater, many cafes and even a pub.

Here’s how it works. Bristol residents open an account with the Bristol Credit Union (BCU), which administers the scheme, and for every ordinary pound Sterling they deposit, they’ll be credited with one Bristol pound.

For the Bristol pound, BCU has come up with hologram designs, a gold foil strip with serial numbers and other security measures to counter forgery. The BCU also has online banking and support of the local council so that local businesses can use the local currency to pay their local taxes.

Local residents are getting involved to help design the logo of the currency on the Bristol Pound website.

The only catch is that Bristol pounds must remain in Bristol; every pound you spend there must be used by the recipient to pay for staff or local supplies or services. In that way, everyone supports the local economy, Bristol money stays in Bristol, and the residents give new meaning to “buying local.”

There’s no reason why this scheme can’t work in your local area, no matter what country or currency you use, if you can enlist the services of a local savings and loan or credit union to print the money and back it with national currency.
Week 11: Lend a hand

With 46 million Americans on food stamps, just to cite one statistic, we have a lot of people who can’t really afford to eat, even though an untold amount of food gets thrown away in every Western country. If people in your community or neighborhood have fallen on hard times, you can learn from a group of students in America, who began collecting leftovers from supermarkets and restaurants and cooking in university kitchens for the poor and homeless.

Similarly, in the UK, when Ketvin Cheung set up FoodCycle in London, the idea was that volunteers would collect surplus food destined for the garbage dump from restaurants and supermarkets, take it to an unused kitchen in, say, a church or community center, and turn these leftovers into three-course feasts of fresh pasta bake or shepherd’s pies for those in need, such as the sick or the elderly who cannot get to or afford food from a supermarket.

Every location also provides space for volunteers and recipients to sit down to a meal together.

If your area has been badly hit by the recession, consider taking turns getting leftovers from restaurants and supermarkets, finding a church kitchen and, with your neighbors, cooking up a storm for the neighborhood, particularly those people out of work.

You can also learn from the work of Grace Boggs, a 96-year-old of Detroit, who worked tirelessly with her late husband on radical social change for many decades, targeting community organization and renewal.

When Detroit was gutted after the recession spelled the end of the auto industry, Grace looked upon her city not as a wasteland but a showcase for the world in how to continue to prosper and thrive when the old center no longer holds. Consequently, she has spent years working on community projects and either had her hand in or influenced a large number, including the Detroit Agricultural Network, where disused lots have been used to plant food.

She also set up Detroit Summer, to give young people of the area meaningful work, centered around such social concerns as the environment or positive teen self-image, when little paid work was available.

You and your neighbors can ask yourselves: what needs doing? If you have disused plots or repossessed land, use the land for planting. If young people are out of work, put them in charge of some of these projects. Work and purpose gives everyone self-respect. Out of honest labor miracles happen.

Create a Posse of Helpers during a Crisis

A day or so after Hurricane Sandy hit lower Manhattan, leaving most of Avenue C in the East Village under water, Zachary Mack, co-owner of Alphabet City Wine Company, wrote that no business along his street had been spared.

“As someone who saw it in person, the sight was at once surreal and horrifying,” he wrote. “Yet despite all of this, my spirits have never been so high.”

Within minutes of Zachary’s arriving at his wrecked store on the Tuesday, the day after the Con Ed transformer exploded, a group of three regulars showed up with flashlights and trash bags. “What do you need us to do? How can we help you?” they said.

Before long, Alphabet City Wine Company, open for business by candlelight, had become a command center, where neighbors and other business owners met and made plans. Strangers offered dry clothing to those who were soaking wet; chefs coordinated vast neighborhood cookouts to feed those locals in need for free; groups gathered around a battery powered radio for updates. Morale was higher than it had been before the storm.

Every morning, the neighborhood would gather, drink hot chocolate provided by another business owner and formulate the day’s plans: who’d find gas for those cars still working; who needed to drive people to find shelter; who would be assigned the task of finding batteries or candles. By the following day, he writes, the residents had created a makeshift community center.

“Neighbors were meeting for the first time, passing information. Kids were playing with one another. People were shouting out random bits of news from their incoming texts or Twitter feeds. And probably best of all: locals installed a bike-powered cell phone charging station. Complete strangers sat and pedaled to give their neighbors the juice they needed to get back up and running,” he wrote.
When the basement of one of the neighbors filled up with water, he was surrounded by locals who’d stopped working on their own repair jobs to help out.

“Whatever preconceived notions others have about the spirit of community on New York City, I know that I’ll never forget the way I feel today. Alphabet City has long been my home, but it’s now given me a new sense of self.

“The people sitting next to me in Brooklyn tell me they look at the news and they sense desperation. I’m here to tell you that things have never looked or felt better on Avenue C.”

**Week 12: Clean Up Your Neighborhood’s Act**

Every neighborhood has an impact on the environment, even if only in small ways. One chief way of living the Bond at work or home is to engage in activities that recognize and respect our interrelationship with every living thing on the planet. Following eco-practices as a neighborhood is another way to Bond.

Here are some initiatives for your group to adopt:

- Do an “audit” of all your practices and change whatever is not helping to protect and nurture the planet and its inhabitants.

- Protect the global biosphere. Vow to do whatever you can to stop or reduce the emission of substances that cause damage to air, water or the earth in any way, including the destruction or alteration of any natural habitats. Have as one of neighborhood’s golden rules the safeguarding of any open spaces, forests or wilderness.

- Reduce the disposal of waste of any kind and recycle instead. Ask your town or city council for a recycling bin to be put in your neighborhood, and encourage everyone to recycle paper, bottles and any reusable waste.

- Make sustainable use of renewable natural resources and conserve non-renewable natural resources. Examine your use of water, air, soils and wood with a critical eye. Always consider the use of these with a sense of maintaining their availability for many generations to come. Ask yourself and your fellow neighbors these questions:
  - How much water are we using?
  - Can we think of ways to cut down?
  - Are we using recycled paper?
  - Are we replacing what we use up in every sense?
  - Are we as fuel efficient as we can be?
  - Can we cut down on our use of petroleum products?

- Conserve energy whenever you can. How much heat or air-conditioning are you using? Can you lower the thermostat or use fans when the weather isn’t too extreme? What measures can you take to improve energy efficiency? Can you car-pool?

- If possible, redress the injury to the planet you have already caused. If your neighborhood or community engaged in practices that have harmed the environment, what policies of restitution can it adopt? Are there ways to restore the environments you have damaged?

**Week 13: Connecting with people who don’t agree with you**

Make a point of reaching out to people of a different religion, political party, ethnic background or point of view. If you have mostly Democrats in your group, deliberately connect with some Republicans. Invite them to come to the group to discuss community change or improvement.

Once they’re come, invite them to get involved.

**Week 13 Group Practice: Using the art of dialogue in real life**

Initiate new people into your group by having a dialogue, as you have practiced in Week 6. If their opinions differ from yours, use the relationship techniques you’ve practiced in earlier weeks. Listen harder, share deeply and invite them to be participate in one of your group’s superordinate goals. Ask them to suggest some ideas for the goals.
Remember the rules:

- Don’t reach a decision or have a debate.
- Take turns speaking.
- Be alert to your own reactions when something is said that you don’t agree with.
- Be fully present.
- Don’t judge.
- Look for connections in the space between.

Notice how working together in real life on something larger than your own needs overcomes the greatest divides.

**Week 14: Becoming a Game-changer**

One of the most powerful measures available to each and every one of us is what writer Ann Herbert originally coined as “random acts of kindness” — acts of generosity whose only purpose is to brighten up someone else’s day. This idea of kindness without apparent cause has now developed into the practice of “paying it forward.”

The idea is simple; you can never actually repay someone’s kindness to you, but you can “pay it forward” by showing a kindness to someone else in turn. So instead of asking someone to return a favor you’ve done for them, ask them to pay it forward — to someone else. For every act of kindness or generosity you do for a friend, he or she pays it forward to their friends and these in turn get paid forward to their friends’ friends and their friends’ friends’ friends. Before long, through one tiny action you will have set off a cascade of generous and cooperative behavior that could ultimately transform your company or entire community.

As you can see, everyday acts of pay-it-forward generosity, so seemingly insignificant, are actually powerful transformational tools. Building them into your day to day can turn you into a social activist and powerhouse of change, permanently shifting the culture of greed and materialism around you.

Scientific research shows why pay-it-forward strategies are so effective. As *The Bond* demonstrates, all of us have a powerful need to connect with others — mentally and physically — and one way this manifests is in our need to copycat other people’s behavior. We copy whatever we feel is the acceptable behavior of the day.

Just as greed-as-good behavior has now become acceptable norm, so can acts of generosity. When you carry out pay-it-forward activities and acts of random generosity, they also quickly become the norm and seem to take hold quickly. Giving creates a contagion of giving, a network of altruism.

As shown in chapter 12 of The Bond, scientists have discovered that if any given culture becomes too greedy, all it takes are a few people committed to fairness and kindness to turn it around. Pay-it-forward activities are so powerful and contagious that they can entirely transform the culture of businesses, unite neighborhoods, mend broken relationships and rebuild communities.

*When generosity is the currency, the game starts changing.*

And here’s the payoff: the greatest recipient is you! The science shows that when we give altruistically, we feel as good as we do after a fantastic meal or transcendent sex.

After performing an act of kindness, just make sure to tell the recipient to pay it forward. You can even get hold of free “Smile Cards” from ServiceSpace (formerly known as CharityFocus): www.servicespace.org, which “tag” the recipient and invite him to pay it forward. Pay it forward is also fun to do anonymously; when someone receives an anonymous gesture of good will, it underscores the idea that the universe is benevolent.

Here are ways you can pay-it-forward in many areas of your life. Try to incorporate at least one of these acts a week — or even better, think up your own.

**Personal Practice: Pay it forward at home**

- Make a hug a day a daily practice — and randomly pick a member of your family as the recipient
- Tell your child one thing he did right today.
- Make breakfast in bed for a family member every Saturday.
- Leave a cookie on every pillow at night.
• Send flowers to a parent on a day other than a holiday or their birthday.
• Leave a thank you note for your garbage collectors.
• Enlist your children to help with the gardening of a friend who is ill.
• Set up a free lemonade stand at a Little League game.
• Hand flowers to a local policeman.
• Buy a chocolate bar and hand it to the checkout man or woman when he/she is tallying up your food.

**Pay it forward out and about**

• Pay it forward — Pay for the parking meter, toll, hamburger at a drive-thru, soft drink, a movie ticket— you name it — for the person behind you in a line.
• Leave exact change taped to a soft drinks machine for the next person’s Coke.
• Buy a cappuccino for the person behind you at Starbucks.
• When you park your car, leave a kind comment on someone else’s windshield.
• Talk your library into forgiving all library fines on one day. Ditto the parking attendants.
• Pop in to your hospital and deliver flowers or an inspiring book to a patient whose relatives live at a distance.
• Good thought for the day — write an inspiring message on your car’s sun visor so all other drivers see it while your car is parked.
• Help those getting back on their feet. For people employed at a new job, donate some of the professional clothes you no longer wear.
• Write thank you on the back of your lunch or dinner bill with a comment about how delicious the food was.
• Hand an umbrella to someone without one on a rainy day.
• Give cans of non-perishable food to a homeless shelter.

**Pay it forward at work or on the job**

• Blog a “Daily Good News” and email it to everyone in your office.
• Bake a batch of cookies or brownies to take into work each Monday.
• Offer one item of praise to a coworker every day.
• Stand up for someone who gets unfairly slurred or criticized.
• Buy a coffee for a new person on the job.
• Place book that inspired you on your boss’s desk anonymously.
• Print an inspirational poem or saying and leave it on each employee’s desk in the morning.
• Round up all the hotel soaps and shampoos from business trips and give them to a homeless shelter.
• Suggest that the office adopt a “good deed” afternoon — helping out at a local charity, children’s home, hospital or shelter.

**Pay it forward in your neighborhood**

• Do something for a neighbor you dislike. Take out his garbage, mow his lawn, look after his children.
• Open your door regularly to your neighbors, particularly those who are new or different.
• Offer to babysit.
• Cook a meal for a family with a new baby or young children.
• Mow your neighbor’s grass.
• Take out your neighbor’s trash.
• Give a teddy bear to the older children of a family with a new baby.
• Hug a Republican (or a Democrat) today, whichever one is not a member of your political party.
• Shovel snow for a senior on your block or someone who isn’t well.
• Leave cookies for your postman with a thank-you note.

**Teaching Pay it Forward to Children**

• Organize your child’s class to bake cookies and deliver them to a nursing home.
• Create a class “buddy system” where children are buddies with children they don’t know, particularly those who may need friends.
• Suggest your children write to their favorite teachers, telling them why they made a difference to their lives.
• Get your kids to work in a soup kitchen.
The Bond Handbook

- Have the class do essays and collect stories on random acts of kindness and paying it forward.
- Have a day when children have to suspend criticism and only speak well of their fellow children.
- Have them be a secret Santa at Christmas, leaving a present anonymously.
- Have them take flowers to a sick person on the block.
- Make sure they write thank-you cards not simply for gifts but for kindnesses shown them.
- Have your children launch a fund-raising drive, baking cookies and selling them to raise money for a charity or shelter.

**Week 15: Staying Bonded at Work**

The corporate world is just beginning to see itself in terms of its interdependence in the world: on whom it relies and whom it affects by its actions. The most forward-thinking corporations look at the usual dollars-and-cents issues such as product development and R&D in terms of “value creation” —solutions to global problems that also create corporate wealth. These types of organizations also examine their own corporate social responsibility: who is hurt or helped by what they make or do. By examining the ripple effect of your own company, you can ensure that it acts as a “global steward” that not only makes a profit, but also promotes world unity.

**Week 15 Personal Practices: Bond plans for your business**

Adopt many of the practices listed on pages 244-5 of *The Bond* US paperback.

**Week 15 Group Practices: Making Bonded businesses around you**

Discuss as a group the measures you can do together to help local businesses become involved in socially responsible work (particularly those you may have approached in your Global to Local campaigns).

**Week 16: Growing Through Sharing**

Most organizations cloak their operations in secrecy. The managers of virtually every corporation in the West believe that staying ahead of the corporate game is achieved only by keeping all future business plans, innovation, inventions, and client bases under lock and key. However, the most profitable businesses are beginning to recognize that when we use the Nash Equilibrium (‘I win only when you win too’) inside our businesses and with our competitors, everyone wins more.

Here are a few ideas to discuss as a group and try on the job:

- Meet regularly with all the members of your team. Frequently remind each other of your company’s mission statement of service, long-term vision and values.

- Work together on corporate superordinate goals. As noted in chapter 11 of *The Bond*, working for a common goal helps to grow connections between people.

- Follow the lead of “b” companies, which look to the benefit they offer to humanity, and not simply profits, as a measure of corporate worth.

- Design rewards for all employees, not simply individuals. If innovative ideas have produced higher profits, consider bonuses for the entire team.

- Examine ways to make your company a partnership.

- Meet with your competitors. Find out what they need to improve their businesses. Consider elements of your business that can fit their needs, and vice versa. What can you both do together that will enhance each of your businesses in the process?

- Get used to thinking of your competitor’s needs. When you begin solving his problems, you often create an opportunity that benefits you as well.

- Trade customers. One of the best and fastest ways to grow your own business is to trade lists with others. Take turns mailing information to each other’s customers. You’ll be surprised at how quickly you both grow.
• Have a presence on each other’s websites. Create links or advertise on each other’s sites. Offer each other a small percentage of new business.

• Look to create partnerships with companies with a related business. Meet and brainstorm together.

• Tithe. Give away a percentage of your profits to a good cause. That sends out a powerful message to the universe, as well as your own employees or fellow workers, that you’re not just in it for the money.

• Suggest that your business donate a few days of its employees’ time to carrying out a collective good deed. Choose a special charity that is meaningful to your business and let everyone be involved in helping out on a periodic basis. Work in a soup kitchen or visit a nursing home over Christmas and sing Christmas carols. Have a corporate day out where every member of your company works for Habitat for Humanity. Establish a rota for working with disadvantaged youth. Your time is your most precious resource.

• Trust in the power of the Bond.

**Week 16 Personal Practice: Growing Through Sharing**

Everything in our lives is currently based on a competitive model. In what ways can you encourage cooperation, rather than competition, in:

• Your local schools
• Your local businesses
• Your local governments
• Your relationships — close friendships and also acquaintances

Now invite different groups—doctors, members of your local police force, educators—to visit your group. Explore with them ideas for reinforcing the Bond. Use the relationship skills you have learned and practiced in earlier weeks.

**Week 16: Group Practice:**

Visit your local schools, government and businesses. Volunteer to work in your local school or visit companies based in your community, exploring these ideas and how organizations can adopt them.

Talk to them about the ideas that you’ve been discussing these four months. Help them to adopt a more cooperative model. Share your ideas experiences with our Bond web community (www.thebond.net) and learn from their experiences too.

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