



Guide to Collaboration

A COMPLIMENTARY GUIDE

How to find, approach and work well with
the right partners and brands.

WHAT'S INSIDE

Three chapters, about fifteen minutes, and one message to send by the end of the week.

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How to read this guide

Read the lead paragraph of each chapter first. If you only have five minutes, those three sentences are the guide. Come back for the detail when you're ready to act on it.

What you'll leave with

A list of five realistic partners, a way of opening the conversation that doesn't lead with what you want, and a habit that keeps people saying yes a second time.

WELCOME

A NOTE FROM CAROLINE

Almost everything good that's happened in my career came from a collaboration, not a solo effort.



A shared event, a joint offer, an introduction someone made because they thought two people should know each other.

It's the same thinking behind the ENL Collective. It isn't a directory and it isn't a networking group, it's a curated space where the right people, brands and sponsors come together because we've actually taken the time to understand what each of them needs, not just what they can offer us.

That's the part most guides on this subject skip, and it's the part that actually makes a collaboration last. Nothing in here needs a big network, a budget or an introduction you haven't got. It needs one honest question, asked of the right person.

*None of it happened by accident,
and none of it happened because I
waited to be discovered.*

CAROLINE CARY · FOUNDER, EAT NOURISH LOVE

Caroline x

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

It gives you three things: a way to choose the right partners, a way to approach them, and a way to keep them.

Who is it for?

Anyone building something who wants partnerships that outlast a single campaign — founders, brands, creatives and small-business owners. You don't need an existing network to start, and you don't need anyone's permission to send the first message.

How long will it take?

Fifteen minutes to read. Ten minutes to write your list. One message to send. Everything else in here is what you do after someone says yes.

Quick-start idea

Name one business, sponsor or person you'd love to collaborate with, if there were no awkwardness involved. Now ask yourself honestly: do I actually know what they need, or only what I want from them?

Worth reading

The Infinite Game by Simon Sinek. His argument is that the businesses and relationships that last aren't the ones trying to win a single round, they're the ones playing for the long term, building trust, and treating even their competitors as worthy rather than as enemies.

FIND THE RIGHT PARTNERS

Not every collaboration is worth having.

What does the right one look like?

- 01 It shares your audience without competing for it.
- 02 It shares your values without needing to share your exact offer.
- 03 It makes both of you look better for being associated with each other.

TRY THIS

The collaboration list

Write down five businesses, brands or people who serve the same audience as you without directly competing. For each one, note one honest reason a collaboration would help them, not just you.

Listen before you pitch

The collaborations that fall flat almost always start with someone explaining what they want. The ones that work start with a genuine question: what does this person, brand or sponsor actually need right now?

More visibility? Credibility with a new audience? A foot in the door somewhere they can't reach alone? You won't know until you ask, properly, and actually wait for the answer.

Ask yourself

If I sat down with this person and only asked questions for twenty minutes, what would I learn about what they actually need?

SPONSORS AND BRAND PARTNERS

Sponsors and brand partners think differently to peer collaborators.

What are they weighing up?

- 01 Whether this reaches the right audience, not just a big one.
- 02 Whether it makes them look good to be associated with you.
- 03 Whether what's being asked of them is clear, with no surprises halfway through.

Caroline's tip

Before you approach any sponsor or brand, write down exactly what you're offering, in plain terms, as if you were the one being asked to say yes. If it wouldn't convince you, it won't convince them.

Set out tiers or options where it's relevant — people commit more easily when they can choose their level of involvement.

What does a clear offer include?

- ☐ Who they reach through you, described honestly rather than flatteringly.
- ☐ Exactly what they give, and exactly what they get for it.
- ☐ When it happens, and when you'll come back to them.

Keeping it alive

What actually determines whether someone works with you again is what happens after the approach.

- 01 Say thank you properly, and more than once, naming what they actually did.

- 02 Give credit generously — mention them, tag them, tell people what they contributed.

- 03 Check in without an ask attached, between collaborations, not just when you need something.

- 04 Follow up on what you said you'd do, on the date you said you would, or tell them honestly if it's delayed.

Why it matters

Reliability is what people remember longest. A sponsor who feels unclear about what they're getting, or who's chased for something you promised, won't come back next time, however well things actually went.

The three-month habit

Put a reminder in the diary for three months after every collaboration ends. Send one message with no ask in it. That single habit is the difference between a one-off and a relationship.

THE APPROACH

Most collaboration requests fail because they lead with what the sender wants.

Lead with what you're offering instead, and keep it short. The message below is a starting point, not a script — change the words so they sound like you, but keep the shape.

COPY THIS PROMPT

“Hi [name], I love what you're building, particularly [something specific and true]. I think there could be a nice fit between us. I'd love to explore [a specific idea], no pressure at all if the timing's not right. Would you be open to a quick chat?”

Why does it work?

It names something specific, so it can't have been sent to fifty people. It proposes one idea rather than asking them to imagine one. And it gives them a clean way to say no, which is exactly why more of them say yes.

Send it and leave it. If you hear nothing, one short follow-up a fortnight later is plenty.

Your challenge

Go back to your collaboration list on page 5. Choose one name. Before you send anything, spend ten minutes writing down what you genuinely think they need. Then send the approach message this week.

THREE THINGS, THIS WEEK

The whole guide comes down to three actions. Tick them off as you go.

- ☐ Write your list of five businesses who serve the same audience without competing.
- ☐ Spend ten minutes writing down what one of them genuinely needs right now.
- ☐ Send the approach message. One name is enough to start.

If you only remember one thing

Find out what they need before you tell them what you want. Everything else in this guide is detail hung off that one habit.

About Eat Nourish Love

Eat Nourish Love and the ENL Collective exist to support real, sustainable wellbeing, alongside real, sustainable business. We publish guides like this one, run events through the year, and open doors between the people in our community wherever we can.

Thank you for spending this time with me and this guide. I hope even one part of it helps.

Caroline x



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COME AND JOIN US

I'd love to have you with us.

The ENL Collective is our curated community for founders, brands and people who want to grow through connection as much as strategy. We run events through the year, share ideas, and open doors for each other wherever we can.

Come and say hello on Instagram, and if you'd like more like this straight to your inbox, pop your email in at eatnourishlove.com to join the list.

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