



# Conscious Collaborative Accords

Functional Narrative System

Condensed Version · February 2026

Fernando  
*de* Córdoba

# Fernando de Córdoba

Brand, Narrative, and Content Strategist with over 15 years of experience across both client-side and agency environments. I partner with brands, institutions, and cultural projects to define their positioning, streamline their narratives, and build clear, cohesive identities. My methodology blends strategy, brand curation, and public outreach, driven by a simple premise: brands matter because they are woven into our lives and shape how we understand the world.

I balance my professional practice with academia as a professor at the University of Alicante, UDIT, and CEU. I also direct the Brand and Culture program at Instituto Tramontana, where I explore and teach the role of brands in contemporary culture.

A frequent commentator on branding and culture in social and mass media, I have been a regular contributor to RTVE and Cadena SER. I am also the author of the book "Los secretos de las marcas" (The Secrets of Brands), published by Kailas.



# What is this document and what is it for?

This is a strategic guide to understand, define, and explain Conscious Collaborative Accords (CCA). It gathers the key elements that define this proposal: its purpose, its distinctive approach, the concepts that support it, and the words that articulate it.

It is not a technical manual or a closed text, but rather a living tool that allows for the construction of a common framework.

The goal is to offer a shared foundation that makes it possible to align visions, facilitate dialogue, and avoid misunderstandings. Having a clear and coherent narrative not only helps communicate better externally, but also enables more conscious decision-making within the organization. This document is intended for anyone approaching CCAs (internally or externally) to understand what they are, what they are for, and what makes them different.



This document is our  
guide when it comes to  
communicating the  
Conscious Collaborative  
Accords.



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# A collaborative society without tools for it

The communications revolution and our new ways of working and relating have led us to live in an era of collaboration: we work in teams, co-create projects, share spaces, alliances, communities.

In many professional and civic environments, it is common to find informal relationships, tacit agreements, poorly defined commitments... which means that when something goes wrong, we lack intermediate tools between naivety and hostile, litigious conflict.

At a time when we talk about new forms of organization, ethical leadership, team cultures, and relational sustainability, CCAs offer a concrete way to translate our values into real practices.

Conscious Collaborative Accords (CCA) emerge to fill that gap. They are not meant to replace legal contracts, but rather to provide a more human, flexible, and relational framework to build accords based on trust, shared purpose, and mutual responsibility.

# About the promoter of the CCA: Maria José Anitua

## **This is the story of a lawyer who didn't like litigation.**

It may sound paradoxical, but it reflects a worldview that would eventually give rise to Conscious Collaborative Accords.

María José Anitua experienced firsthand, through her father, the emotional, physical, and vital toll of a judicial process. She soon realized that when a conflict reaches the courts, not only does the party receiving the unfavorable ruling lose: everyone loses.

She then decided to look for another way to practice law. She dedicated her life to exploring different responses, focusing on nurturing relationships rather than on the purely technical resolution of conflict.

As often happens, she gradually found scattered pieces—experiences, approaches, practices—that, over the years, began to fit together like parts of the same puzzle.

She started her career in a family law firm, where separations were handled with one lawyer for both parties. The goal was not to pit opposing interests against each other, but to build solutions.

Throughout her professional journey, she founded her own practice, where she explored restorative justice: prioritizing repairing harm and rebuilding relationships before they break. She also worked in real estate law and as a corporate advisor, which gave her a broader perspective on business dilemmas. At the same time, she became involved in the nonprofit sector.

At every stage, the guiding principle was the same: to generate lasting accords. Real connections. Solutions that did not break relationships but protected them.

The piece that brought everything together came with Collaborative Law, an approach seeking to resolve disputes without litigation. María José became one of its major advocates in Spain. She founded the Collaborative Law Association of Euskadi and promoted the inclusion of this concept into legislation.

Collaborative Law does not seek to avoid conflict—that is impossible. What it does is manage it in such a way that the problem (and not the other person) becomes the common adversary to be addressed. Avoiding litigation is not about looking the other way, but about embracing a model where justice is not a zero-sum game, but an opportunity to create value.

In the end, everything was interconnected.

Conscious Collaborative Accords are not just another tool. They are the natural outcome of an entire professional life dedicated to nurturing relationships, transforming the way we connect, and proving that one can work from principles without sacrificing effectiveness. They are the result of all these pieces brought together throughout María José's journey.

María José has not only developed CCAs: she has practiced them, sought them out, and has experienced it in a transformative way. And now she wants to share them with conscious people who also believe that the future is not built through confrontation, but through collaboration with purpose.

## From Distrust to Trust

Most of our tools for regulating relationships remain anchored in distrust: contracts that anticipate what happens if someone fails, and regulations that set obligations and limits—but do not take care of the relationships themselves.

What if “agreeing” meant something else?

**ACCORD.** (From Lat. *cor, cordis*, “heart”; through Old French *acorder*, Vulgar Lat. *accordāre*, “to bring into harmony, to be of one heart.”)

To bring into agreement, or to be in harmony.

- a) n. Agreement, harmony, or settlement between persons, groups, or ideas. “The two nations signed an accord to end hostilities.”
- b) n. Voluntary will or impulse. “She left of her own accord.”
- c) v. trans. To grant, bestow, or concede. “He was accorded every honor.”
- d) v. intrans. To be in agreement or harmony. “His actions accord with his words.”

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# More Cooperation, Less Competition

With Conscious Collaborative Accords, we open up a different way of connecting with each other, shifting the focus from default distrust to trust as the foundation.

A way of seeking and committing to what we can build together to create more value.

From being on the defensive to moving toward cooperation.

**What if, instead of shielding ourselves from conflict,  
we learned to build from trust?**

Conscious Collaborative Accords are exactly that: a tool to transform the way we connect, collaborate, and make accordss—without losing sight of purpose or mutual care.

# Necessity and Opportunity

The definition of need and opportunity determines where we add value, starting from a social insight and showing how the characteristics of our proposal address it satisfactorily.



## Need

**Most agreements are built on distrust, not on connection.**

We live in a society where many relationships—both personal and professional—are burdened by distrust, fear of conflict, and the lack of tools to establish agreements based on awareness and shared purpose.

Traditional contracts assume that, sooner or later, someone will fail, and they focus on preventing or punishing that failure, rather than sustaining the relationship.

Organizations, for their part, often bring people on board without a deep conversation about their motivations, needs, or ways of collaborating.

The result: fragile agreements, transactional relationships, misunderstandings that escalate into avoidable conflicts, and a system that normalizes—and practically rewards—distrust.



## Opportunity

**A relational framework that enables the creation of accords based on trust and shared purpose.**

Conscious Collaborative Accords propose a new way of relating and reaching accords: rooted in trust, awareness, and co-responsibility. Instead of focusing on what happens if someone defaults, they focus on how both parties can thrive together.

This allows for deeper relationships in which both parties—freed from the mental burden of expecting betrayal or failure—can work together to bring value to one another and expand what they share.

As a result, it leads to lasting collaborations, deeper connections, and better outcomes. And when conflict arises, it offers a more constructive and collaborative way of addressing it—one based on understanding, without the need to be right.

# Definition of the CCA

## In-depth Definition (Executive Version)

Conscious Collaborative Accords (CCA) are a process supported by tools that enable the establishment of professional or personal relationships based on mutual trust, shared purpose, and the recognition of the other as an ally, not an adversary.

Unlike traditional transactional contracts, which are usually grounded in distrust and focus on predicting what will happen if something goes wrong, CCAs focus on the relationship and the connection.

It is a guided process in which the parties listen to each other, recognize one another, and agree on how they want to collaborate, what they need, what limits exist, and how they will care for the relationship if difficulties arise. Its purpose is to facilitate collaboration among people who want to build together with intention, clarity, and respect.

The structure of the agreement has three phases: it begins with self-knowledge as the foundation for building trust, analyzing how the parties behave in conflict and what values are most important to each of them. Next, an analysis of these results is carried out to evaluate compatibility. And third, strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results from each side are captured in a shared roadmap, which includes a "peace pact," that is, an explicit commitment on how to face possible tensions without breaking the bond. CCAs do not guarantee that there will be no conflicts, but they ensure that if they do arise, the relationship is not put at risk because there is already an agreed way to take care of it.

ACCs help prevent misunderstandings, reinforce commitments and resolve conflicts without resorting to confrontation or litigation. They are particularly useful in environments where collaboration is constant, such as start-ups, use of vacant homes, partnership agreements, investors with a long-term vision and purpose, complex service provision where flexibility and trust are key, universities, etc.

They establish a new relational framework that is not based on fear of failure, but on the will to create something valuable that benefits both parties, who seek to understand, recognize, and jointly decide how they want to collaborate. This means not only discussing tasks or deadlines, but also needs, motivations, and ways of addressing conflict.

The design of the CCA process is based on tools with more than 80 years of research and proven effectiveness, such as collaborative negotiation, design thinking, appreciative inquiry, and collaborative law, to establish a common framework of honesty, co-responsibility, and relational maturity that generates an environment of trust in which collaboration can flourish.

ACC are a tool for conscious individuals and projects who relate to each other with mindfulness, mutual respect and a willingness to build healthy and sustainable relationships. Individuals and teams who do not act on autopilot, but ask questions, take responsibility for their impact and choose to cooperate based on their values. They do not seek to win at the expense of others, but to create something valuable for all parties together.

# Purpose of the CCA

A purpose must be inspiring yet concrete, idealistic yet actionable, and it must connect with a real need in the world.

The purpose should serve as our guide when making operational and strategic decisions.

Transforming the way we  
relate as a society,  
putting trust and  
collaboration at the  
center.

We seek to drive a cultural transformation in how people connect and, therefore, how they collaborate and reach agreements. A society where trust is the foundation of relationships, not just a desire.

# Philosophical Pillars of the CCA

The strategic pillars are the key ingredients of our philosophy. They are the fundamental ideas that must always be present when we explain, apply, or develop Conscious Collaborative Accords.

These pillars define what we consider important, help us focus our practices, and serve as the foundation for designing strategies and making decisions.

## We Care About Impact

CCAs only make sense among people and projects that act with positive intent toward others, the environment, and the future. They are not based merely on what is useful or immediate, but on what is good, fair, and sustainable—with values that give meaning to what we do.



## Knowing Each Other Better Means Collaborating Better

Getting to know ourselves and others improves our relationships: understanding needs, values, and boundaries allows us to create accords that are more honest, sustainable, and aligned with who we are.



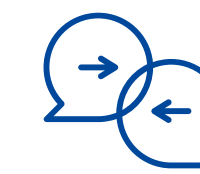
## We Cooperate, We Don't Compete

We leave behind the toxic logic of “defeating the other.” We believe that an agreement is not a zero-sum game, but a collaboration toward a shared goal that allows both sides to gain more.



## We Seek Deep Connections

We aim to create authentic relationships, rooted in deep values to connect from what is essential, in order to establish strong accords that go beyond tasks and responsibilities.



## We Believe in Co-responsibility

Accords are not impositions or obligations born out of pressure or routine. They are conscious, mutual commitments that are sustained over time.

# Methodologies Used

Inspired by methodologies such as Lean and Agile, CCAs incorporate flexibility, iteration, and continuous learning, adapting the process to the real needs of people and the projects involved. This ensures that accords evolve with relationships and do not become obsolete.

## Collaborative Law

Proposes a way to address legal conflicts by avoiding confrontation and prioritizing respectful, honest, and sustainable accords.

In CCAs, the goal is to protect the relationship while also safeguarding interests. It's not only about avoiding litigation, but about putting the relationship ahead of the outcome.

## Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative Inquiry is a methodology that begins with a question: what is alive, what works, what connects us? Instead of analyzing situations based on what's missing or failing, it focuses on what already generates value in the relationship and amplifies it.

It transforms how people interact: it changes the energy, the attitude, and the narrative that is built about the other.

## Design Thinking

Allows complex accords to be approached as design processes: needs are explored, solutions are prototyped, and ways of relating are tested before being consolidated. It draws on the brain's intuitive side (the right hemisphere).

This is key in Conscious Collaborative Accords, where the focus is not only on what is agreed upon, but also on how the agreement is built. It also helps to visualize possible futures of a relationship and create shared scenarios.

## Collaborative Negotiation

Unlike traditional negotiation, which is based on a zero-sum logic (what one side gains, the other loses), collaborative negotiation seeks creative solutions that "expand the pie," where both sides win.

It is based on trust, not suspicion, and on the recognition that all parties have legitimate interests.



**Thank you**

**Fernando**  
*de* **Córdoba**

[hola@fernandodecordoba.es](mailto:hola@fernandodecordoba.es)