MEMBER FEATURE: Global Round Table Leadership
A conversation with Lori Hanau and Jodi Clark

In this season of NHBSR storytelling, it was such a pleasure to have the opportunity to talk with Lori Hanau and her colleague, Jodi Clark, of Global Round Table Leadership (GRTL). GRTL is a coaching and training company located in Keene. They support powerful shifts in consciousness, communications, and community for leaders, groups, organizations and networks from all sectors. Their customized trainings, retreats, facilitation and coaching focuses on stewarding positive personal and group transformation, “wholistic” leadership development and collaborative, vibrant group culture. Lori and Jodi help individuals and groups tap into their greatness.

GRTL’s definition of Shared Leadership is worth sharing as it says it best—

*Shared Leadership is the practice of bringing out the greatest capacity in everyone by empowering us all to be responsible for and engaged in the vibrancy and high function of the whole. This is a fundamental shift in how we understand and apply power and leadership.*

They use strengths-based approaches and tools in their trainings, starting with what is healthy, strong and vibrant. Appreciative inquiry is interwoven with play, performance as well as meditative and wellness practices that cultivate our wholeness and strategic, systems leadership. Lori and Jodi both speak to how heartened they are by what they see transpire over the course of even a 3 hour training that elevates a group into a whole different way of relating. They know that the genius of the group is already there to be unleashed. Their Shared Leadership Framework informs all of their work, which includes the four pillars of Humanity, Equality, Wholeness, and Collective Wisdom. Their newest work has been creating a process for committing to, tracking, and integrating Shared Leadership practices into everyday work life. GRTL’s *Compassionate accountability process* imbeds continuous learning into the group culture along with co-creating soulful accountability measures—what do they want and who do they want to be—and what needs to happen to get them there. GRTL’s aim is always to just stay just long enough to teach a team new skills, and give them the tools they need to powerfully tap into their own leadership.

It was enlivening to learn about the dynamic work they are doing, along with what brought them both to this work. As we know, everyone has a story! Lori and Jodi have wonderfully rich backgrounds. While very different - think corrugated boxes and improvisational theater- not
that we are putting them in a box, they share a deep commitment to inspiring individuals, teams and organizations to become the best version of themselves. Lori’s father consistently told her that life and business is always first and foremost about the quality of relationship and genuine connection in how we lead individually and together and share power and purpose. It is clear from our conversation with them that this value of what they name as shared leadership is integral to their work. But first a little background...

Lori speaks of three essential elements that ultimately inspired her to create Global Round Table Leadership in 2002, how she was influenced by her father’s leadership, her relationship to the natural world and organizational (systems) wellness or illness. She was raised in an entrepreneurial family. Her father owned three corrugated cardboard manufacturing companies in New England. Lori’s father told Lori and her siblings frequently over the years that he believed the 2\textsuperscript{nd} generation could run a business into the ground quicker than anyone on the planet. It was then a bit of a surprise when he broke his own rule and invited Lori (the 3\textsuperscript{rd} of 4 children) into his business, where she worked for 10 years. She wouldn’t know how rare a leader he was until she had direct experience working inside the company. She shares that her father modeled a consciousness of leadership, what Lori now calls “shared leadership”, long before we had such names for leadership styles. She saw her father as a leader with a commitment to see every individual as an equal, acknowledging their individual gifts and ideas. She says he led from humanity before roles, status and expertise, so no matter what his employees’ roles were there was a quality of feeling seen and heard for their whole selves and innate gifts, first and foremost. They were met with a level of dignity, encouragement to be responsible for the overall well-being and high function of the whole ecosystem and trust that together built incredible collaboration throughout the company. This village consciousness and “raising the barn together” mentality is something that had a huge impact on Lori and has stayed with her throughout her career.

Lori’s job at her father’s company was selling corrugated boxes. She was the first woman in outside sales within the organization and also the first woman selling corrugated boxes in NH, VT and Maine. She shares that she called on manufacturing companies large and small, publicly held and privately owned and she was struck by how many people didn’t seem to have a sense of meaning, connection to the whole, or purpose at work. This overwhelming sense that people felt disengaged and disempowered in the workplace would become another notable influence as she moved towards creating GRTL. Another significant influence is her relationship to the natural world. Growing up Lori and her family traveled overseas once a year. She had exposure to indigenous cultures where she learned about the wisdom of wholeness and the innate,
unbroken connection to all of life. She shares her belief in the essential knowledge of seeing oneself as a part of a whole system and the natural world as an integral part of life, wherever and how ever we are showing up.

Following the sale of her father’s business, Lori worked as president and COO for a ceramics manufacturing company for two years, within a distinctly different culture and working environment. Following this she consciously took time and space to begin to think deeply about what she wanted to do next in terms of her life work. She spent a great deal of time alone in nature. She traveled to conferences and gatherings, meeting with people across the sectors, and was introduced purpose and mission based companies, social entrepreneurs and systems thinking. She was very inspired by these endeavors to think and act more wholistically and realized that these were the people, companies and networks she could advise and co-create with. The culmination of these experiences are what led her to create Global Round Table Leadership. She started by coaching founders and CEOs but has since grown to work with teams and whole companies as well.

Other projects Lori has stewarded from what she has learned include founding the Monadnock Mindfulness Practice Center in Keene, NH as well as writing about her learning and work for Conscious Company Magazine. Lori’s further work has lead her to be co-chair of the Management Programs at Marlboro College Graduate and Professional Studies in Brattleboro, leading the Collaborative Leadership Concentration and co-leading the Conscious Business Concentration. Lori and Jodi are both faculty at Marlboro, which is where their story together begins.

Jodi entered GRTL by way of Marlboro, where she did her undergraduate studies in anthropology and theater, and one of her masters degrees, (Mission Driven Organizational Management), as well as having worked there in student affairs. Jodi shares that she has a great love for the depth of community that is practiced at the college. She first learned the power of deep community in theater and being part of an ensemble where they would co-create their shows and through improvisational theater. She shares that in improv, everyone is there to make each other look amazing, while fully committed to creating something that wouldn’t be possible without everyone there. You are building the bridge as you are walking it, in a manner of speaking. It can be incredibly scary, but also amazingly rewarding when you step into the unknown and allow yourself to be present in the moment. Theater, ensemble and Marlboro are integral on how Jodi got to GRTL. In her degree program—mission driven organizational management—it was not long before she met Lori who, as faculty was holding community circle for the graduate school community during the monthly residency weekends. Jodi experienced the dynamic, creative vibrancy of the
community that Lori stewarded as the community builder. In order to model what was being taught in the coursework, it was Lori’s philosophy to lead with our humanity first, and to meet as equals—before roles, status and expertise—so everyone is equally responsible for stewarding the high function and the collective intelligence of the whole.

Jodi’s background is primarily in theater education, beginning with her founding and leading the Vermont Renaissance Festival, which ran for six years in Brattleboro. She was involved with a program in the Monadnock region called “Acting Out,” an improvisational interactive theater for adolescents. In her work here she brought her love of improv and deep community. It was through that work she had the opportunity to explore collaborations across various sectors by participating in regional coalitions and committees. She was inspired by what was possible through the ensemble of these groups. She also experienced moments where the groups would not perform as their best selves, hitting really challenging moments that blocked the groups from moving through into a breakthrough. She felt called to be of service to those organizations and spaces—to build what she knows is possible in collaborative, ensemble, co-created spaces. Jodi knew if it was possible in improv space, it is possible in every space where people come together to create. Having met Lori in the community circle and elsewhere at Marlboro, Jodi knew she had met a kindred spirit with Lori. When Lori invited her to join her work, there was no hesitation in jumping on board.

Lori speaks about how artistry and creativity are essential not only to entrepreneurship but to how we lead our lives every day. We are leading in every moment, regardless of our position or roles. Leading is a creative and courageous act. Lori shares that it is surprising how people are so conditioned to not see themselves as artists in business. And yet it takes so much creativity, at so many developmental levels to create a business with an empowering culture that supports excellence. GRTL offers trainings and coaching that are capacity and skill building, with a commitment to weave these strands back into business. Lori and Jodi believe so strongly in the artistry that we all have—sometimes we just need a little help connecting and believing.

When asked what inspired her to be part of NHBSR—Lori says it best: “to be part of the courageous folks, and while we don’t have all the answers, we care to try to figure it out, we care to try to walk our talk, we care to try to expand our consciousness, we care to try to develop in our humanity and develop our leadership and organizational development. Learning to care and figure it out—while also having a positive impact with our businesses. I’m proud to be part of the NHBSR community.”

Jodi spoke to her own reasons for being part of NHBSR—“NHBSR cultivates a learning community where there is a commitment to learning from each other. The focus on sustainability stories from the inside out of organizations is inspiring. It is a wonderful way of walking the talk of how we are social responsibility for the planet and each other. NHBSR is holding the space for each of us to come together and offer our collective wisdom on what’s working, what’s challenging and how we can help each other through that.
Lori and Jodi both welcome the chance to speak with you—they can be reached via phone at (603) 357-1969 or by email:
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Their website is www.globalroundtableleadership.com
Lori also writes about Shared Leadership as a columnist for Conscious Company Magazine. You can also catch up with them at the Sustainability Slam!