



Contact

GISC News • Issue Number 2, 2010 • www.gisc.org

At the Center

Programs, Events, & other Happenings

In June, we welcomed **David Tunney, GISC's new Executive Director**, and we wished Nancy Hardaway, our outgoing leader, well. David, a resident of Orleans, MA, has worked as an organizational change management consultant for many years with large and small firms as well as independently. He is thrilled, honored, and grateful for the opportunity to serve in this leadership role and looks forward to working with everyone at GISC during this time of transition and beyond. Nancy will remain engaged with GISC supporting David's transition and as a member of the faculty, leading programs on-and off-site.

Continued on Page 2

From the Executive Director **A Transition of Our Own**

David Tunney

One thing I know about transitions is that they are challenging, often life-changing and may require personal transformation. After two divorces and over twenty consulting years with multiple employers, roles and client projects, and nearly ten years sleeping in hotels, I am confident that this transition is one of the happiest of my life. It all seems worth it now having found GISC (20 minutes from my house) in the woods of Wellfleet, one of my favorite places on earth, working for an organization dedicated to the principles that brought me to consulting in the first place.



This transition feels particularly poignant as I turn 50 later this year.

Continued on Page 2

GISC
P.O. Box 515
South Wellfleet, MA
02663

NON PROFIT
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT 21
CCP&DF

Transition

This issue of *Contact* looks at the idea of transition. GISC is in the midst of our own leadership transition, and new Executive Director David Tunney shares his observations in his column. We explore effective leadership transitions with Bridget Farrands, co-author of *Lost in Transition: How Business Leaders Can Successfully Take Charge in New Roles*. We take a look at the mid-life changes undertaken by three women in this issue's "Participant Profile." This newsletter is undergoing its own transition, as we add new segments such as the "At the Center" column in an effort to improve communications with the GISC Community. Please let us know how we're doing. We welcome your comments and feedback at newsletter@gisc.org. *Laurie Fitzpatrick, Editor*

Effective Leadership Transitions

In this conversation with Bridget Farrands, she explains how leaders can effectively make the transition into new roles and how Gestalt practitioners might best help them. Bridget is a member of the GISC leadership faculty, teaching our Graduate Leadership Forum, Facilitating Leadership Transitions, and GISC's Leadership Consortium programs. Interview by Laurie Fitzpatrick

What are the key challenges to leaders in new roles?

There are many, but what comes through in our research and when working with people transitioning into new roles, the challenge is to really get to know the organization quickly. And the challenge of "quickly" is that it's not quick. So it's getting to know it well enough to be able to function,

make decisions that are going to be reasonably reliable and reasonably connected into how things really are. But it takes a while to get to know an organization. There's the official organization you got to know when people were talking to you about the role, but that's the gussied up organization, the one that has its best clothes on. But when you get there

Continued on Page 3

David Tunney

Continued from page 1

I am confident and excited now about this next life stage with a dream job in a dream location and the prospect of a more stable personal life with less travel, home most nights with my sweetheart of the past two years. I am engulfed with gratitude.

Over the years I have probably created an over-developed sense of the strategic as opposed to the intimate, though you might not know that from talking with some of my former colleagues, clients, and employers. Often the lone or lead "process or OD guy" working with technology, operations and business-strategy professionals on large organizational-change projects, I now feel my "process" capabilities glaringly inadequate beside the GISC masters. But that's okay, as I am reminded of an old adage that goes something like, "When the student is ready the master appears." I feel like a student, ready to learn from the many masters of GISC and each of you, fellow transformation students.

This desire to learn and grow eases my anxiety associated with wanting so badly to succeed in this new role, and to connect personally and professionally with everyone on the board of directors, faculty, operations staff, donors, members, and participants in GISC courses and programs. I am lucky and find solace in the safety GISC provides for learning.

Nevertheless, the anxiety re-surfaces as I follow in the footsteps of Nancy, who accomplished so much and will be missed by all, and whom I thank for her tremendous support so far and in the future! My transition is tremendously eased also by the invaluable support and capabilities of GISC Operations Manager, Laurie Fitzpatrick. Building supportive, trusting relationships certainly is one key to successful transitions.

Another key is openness and willingness to personal change, as mentioned in the conversation with Bridget elsewhere in this newsletter. Leading organizational change is easy compared to personal change, especially when it applies to me. I am hoping that the upcoming challenges associated with my transition and inevitable personal transformation will be mitigated by many years of yoga and meditation practice. We will see about that. What I do know is that my mind and heart remain open to changing and growing.

On the strategic front (yeah, that feels better), my eventful transition to this new role started with two weeks that included a weekend board meeting and another weekend with the Next Generation, Clinical Initiative, and LODI groups. By that second Sunday I was saturated, exhausted, and elated. GISC has so much going on! Time to roll up the sleeves and get things done! Where to start? Create a plan! Yes. And now I have a plan to help grow GISC and to fulfill the vision and mission of the current Board of Directors including GISC co-founders, Edwin and Sonia Nevis.

GISC remains focused and committed to being an international center to transform the way we live and work in the world through research, study groups, case studies, and world-class programs and workshops for leaders, practitioners, and individuals. However, the current and future success of GISC and the success of my transition depend on your help. Please reach out with your ideas, questions, concerns, recommendations, continued participation, and referrals! Register for a course. Recommend GISC to someone you know. Participate in one of our initiatives. Let me know how I can help you help GISC.

I look forward to seeing you in Wellfleet or some other location as we expand our global delivery capabilities. Thank you for being part of this transition and transformation journey.

At the Center

Continued from page 1

GISC is gearing up for fall with a full program calendar. In addition to our published programs, we will be hosting "**Celebrating the Art of Writing: the 25th Anniversary of GestaltPress and the GISC Writers' Workshops.**" The conference will feature panels, writing workshops, and more. Information can be found online at www.gisc.org.

Two scholarships for "Leadership in the 21st Century" are being offered for leaders doing work in the Jewish Community to attend the program beginning this fall. Due to a generous donation by a past participant of the program, we will be awarding two scholarships of up to \$10,000 per participant. **Please contact the office for more information or to apply.**

This year, GISC's board began initiatives in the healthcare, education, and clinical fields, as well as a **Leadership and Organization Development Inquiry (LODI)** led by Rob Farrands. The participatory inquiry will consist of several workshop sessions and ongoing dialogue in an attempt to reflect, refine, and further develop GISC's approach to Leadership and Organization Development.

Over 25 members of the GISC community – including faculty and Next Generation members, participants, and friends – attended the first LODI session held in June. The workshop, facilitated by Fran Johnston and Sara Joffe, generated much thought, including this, offered by Rob on the group webpage after the gathering: "... Personally, I can say that the event has continued to stimulate my thinking both from the perspective of the content and also the process of leading that occurred during the workshop. I have carried, especially, one or two little bon mots that appeared, koan-like, on the flip charts and have resonated in my reflective space. One is the relationship between leadership and regret and another is an image of the trail of (hopefully) minor damage that leading can leave in its wake. I ask, 'how does leadership survive in spite of such consequences?'" If you'd like to participate in either of the free upcoming LODI workshops scheduled for September 11-12 or November 19-21, please contact the office at office@gisc.org.

Effective Leadership Transitions

Continued from page 1

you find that there's a whole load of stuff that no one told you. So part of the difficulty is getting to know the official organization and getting to know the un-official organization. Usually it's the unofficial organization that really runs things and finding out who can be trusted, who to listen to and what really matters here is part of the work of the early weeks of transition. Many leaders think that as long as they know the numbers – as long as they know the financials, as long as they know the balance sheet – then they kind of know it, but they really don't. So there's a lot of sensing, a lot of listening to what might lie behind what's being said. One of the other challenges that a new leader has to deal with is his or her own anxiety at wanting to be successful and to prove that the decision to hire him or her is justified. That anxiety needs to be quietened enough to be able to listen, to be able to take in what's being said – not just hear it, but take it in and absorb it and make sense of it in the current context of this role – and not to be rushed into proving themselves too quickly or in the wrong ways. There's more, but those would be some of the early challenges of many transitions.

And how can people in new roles communicate that to those around them? Isn't there pressure from those around them to prove themselves?

I think one of the things they have to do is to know how and what to balance. And they have to remind people what they're doing. We, in our world, would say they have to "extrovert their process." In business language, they have to make a case for why they want to take their time to listen, understand, and get to know. They have to help other people understand what the nature of the transition is. It's a myth that we too often support that fast is always best. One guy I worked with some years ago told me, "when I said to people I didn't want to make the wrong decisions

because I didn't know enough and I didn't want to prove that I was macho to make a decision, I wasn't going to do that, everybody smiled and nodded and they felt relief that I wasn't going to push through the wrong decisions." He was helping other people understand the motive behind listening, going slowly – if that's appropriate. Sometimes going slowly isn't the thing to do – but it's having a sense of balance between "what is my anxiety driving me to prove, and what does the organization really need of me here, and is speed part of it?" At GISC we'd say you have to show some self-leadership, and make people understand how you're leading yourself. It's about explaining why you may not be moving in the way they want - and also you have to be learning all the time about what it is you're trying to step into here.

What are some common pitfalls?

I think people have been seduced into the sort of "Ten Commandments of Transitions" – the 100 days idea, that you only have 100 days to make your mark. I even heard that now it's shrinking to 90 days! Our experience is that's simply not true. The pitfalls are to go along unquestioningly with some of the orthodoxy which says you have to sort your team out in 100 days, you have to make big decisive decisions in the first 100 days, you have to know your strategy in 100 days. Another thing is people think that you've got to start changing stuff and that's not the case. A lot of really unhelpful things are being spoken about in the interest of giving new-in-post leaders a checklist of leading through transition. It's just far more subtle and complex than any list – so becoming sensitive to the subtleties and complexities seems more useful and sustaining of right action. Sure, there are situations where speed is important, but I challenge whether there are that many situations needing so much speed and urgency. Another pitfall is people think, "I must not show that I'm having any struggle whatsoever here: people need to think that I'm sailing through this." It's a big error because you don't get any help

otherwise, and you need help. Another pitfall is to think that your previous experience is going to be just what the present role needs. Importing the solutions to complex issues from a previous organization or role is a recipe for failed solutions. We often ask new leaders if the solution they have so quickly identified is about a good solution or whether it is another way to prove that they know what they are doing – in other words, a way to soothe their anxiety. More often than not, here is nothing like there, and here is where we are at any time so here is what we need to pay attention to.....there was there and past!

What are the key challenges to the organization or to those people surrounding the new leader?

For somebody coming into a new role, whether they're coming from outside as a stranger, or whether they're promoted from within, I think it's a question about whether the organization will let them rise to the challenge and whether they themselves can rise to it – and that's the exciting part of a new role. "Will I make it? And will the organization let me make it? Will the organization sincerely do all it can to support me?" And one of the questions here is about the boss. In our research, we heard constantly that the more senior you are, the less support you get from your boss. And the boss is the person you especially want support from because he's often the person that you're trying to impress. So a bit of a muddle goes on there, which is, "I can't possibly go to my boss for help, the boss doesn't understand the nature of transition," even though he or she may have transitioned into new roles many times. Still, they don't often understand the scale of personal change that a new role is asking them to support. They're relieved to have finally gotten someone into the job, they may have been half doing it themselves, now they can get back to doing what they should be doing all along. So they kind of ignore them – let them get on with it, and it's the very time when they shouldn't be. They should be really supporting

Continued on next page

Effective Leadership Transitions

Continued from page 3

quite differently. So I think that the challenge is for the boss to know how to support.

There are a lot of dilemmas present that have to be managed. The challenge to the organization and to the team is – can we change how we work, in ways that will enable us to chime better with our new leader. Everyone has to change something. And that's often a challenge.

Are there phases of transition?

We've coined three words: there seems to be a phase of **arriving** and certain things that go on when you're new, when you have to get to know how things work, you have to get to know the informal as well as the formal organization, you have to decide what you're going to stand up for, and without really knowing very much, how you want to run things, how you want to run yourself in this transition, not just how you want to run your team or your function. So we call that arriving. And then there's the phase we call **surviving**, where people seem to know enough to feel that they can function well. They don't feel stress every day, they look forward to coming in to work instead of dreading it, there are fewer surprises, and they can begin to focus on other things. They can begin to focus on "what kind of leadership do I need to provide, what are the big things I really want to change now that I know a bit more, or, actually, are things working pretty well and I may not need to change much?" They have other questions.

Then, the third phase we call **thriving**. That's a phase when people really feel they can initiate things and see things through. And stress is much lower, people can turn their attention around. And often, with the sort of people we've been working with, when they get to the thriving phase, they start to feel a little bored, they want something new and different, and they start to want another challenge.

So those are the three phases that we think about. They're very rough phases to help people locate

themselves around. Also, because we think role transition is a process and not an event, it helps people have a sense of moving from one place, one part of the process to the next. They have a sense of progression, which I think is comforting.

Where does Gestalt fit into your understanding of this?

Gestalt is such an influence for me. Some of the influence, is that we talk about there being four capabilities. When you think about what equips people to make role transitions well, one is **self-awareness**. If you aren't aware of yourself, how you operate, and what you're feeling about yourself as you go through your working life and using that data to enable you to take right action in the world, then you don't have the self awareness that we think is pretty important. You have to be aware of yourself and you have to be aware of your context.

Another one is therefore, the **ability to experiment**. If you don't take any risk with how you behave and how you operate, then you may not enlarge your self awareness. So we think that the ability to experiment and to have the courage to do that and the knowhow to design experiments for yourself is pretty important. These are learnable skills for everyone who wants to transition effectively.

Another capability is an **openness to personal change** and a willingness to change. You have to be open to the fact that you might need to be different and then you've got to have the courage to set about doing things differently, sounding different, looking different, showing up differently. We think the readiness to learn without pretending that you already have to know everything is absolutely key. And it's not just about knowing more content, it's about learning about yourself, your own beliefs, your actions, how you feel, your behavior. Another way of saying this is it is about keeping yourself up-to-date with who you are today.

The fourth capability is the **confidence to hold uncertainty**. In other words, in any transition there is never the certainty that people would like. That's

what makes them so exciting and so scary. People want to know, they want certainty. The ability and the confidence to hold uncertainty and ambiguity is a really key capability and most people are less comfortable with that than they are with nailing everything down.

Developing these capabilities is an immediate connection to Gestalt. We teach people how to understand and build these capabilities because each one, separately and collectively, will enable you to contact the nature of your transition much more successfully, much more readily. When people ask "why should I do those things?" we say that these capabilities will reduce your anxiety and defensiveness, that you will better understand the limits of what you know, end the pretense of being who you are not, and that you will build strong and trusting relationships with people, increasing your confidence in yourself and what you are doing. And all that is about making contact with the issues of transition.

What would be your top three pieces of advice for leaders taking on new roles?

Number one: Be open to the need to change personally, not just the need to change everything else but yourself. Ask yourself: how will I be impacted by this transition – not only the more usual question: how will I impact this situation? Two: Demand and use support. It's not a sign of weakness, it actually underpins your success. The third thing would be: Work the transition as a process, not an event which will last ninety days. It's more likely going to last months, it's going to last maybe, about nine to fourteen months. Those would be my three things.

Bridget Farrands is an international organization consultant and executive coach based in Oxford, England, specializing in the field of cultural and leadership change. She is co-author of *Lost in Transition: How Business Leaders Can Successfully Take Charge in New Roles*. She will be leading **Facilitating Leadership Transitions** at GISC November 30-December 3.

Participant Profile

Next-Phase Choices for Three Women at Mid-Life

by Laurie Fitzpatrick

Marcia Feller, owner-operator of Couleur Collection, a successful women's boutique clothing store in Falmouth, Maine, recently drove to a Stonington gallery with ten of her paintings to hang on the walls there. Over the past five years she's gone from pursuing art as a way to escape the pressures of work to expanding its role in her life, and exhibiting her paintings in galleries.

Charlene Vincent travels by subway from her Back Bay condo to class in her last semester in Boston University's year-long Advanced Masters Program in Theological Studies, a culmination of several years of study and exploration. Charlene left rural Cape Cod and her international real estate business to undertake a spiritual and theological exploration in Boston.

Pam Burke races from home to her job as sales director for a Boston-based building company to class at Bridgewater State College where she's completing the education required to become a high school guidance counselor. Raising teenage children with her new husband gave her the incentive to listen to her own desires and pursue meaningful work that would also allow her to enjoy time with family.

These three women are on very different paths, but what they have in common is that they all decided to make a conscious shift during mid-life to change the direction of their lives, and all three completed GISC's Next Phase program (since renamed "Life Strategies") during the process. Several years ago, life looked different for each of these women.

A Shift of Emphasis: Artist and Entrepreneur - Marcia Feller



"I came into the Next Phase program five years ago, and I thought I was going to the Cape to explore how I was going to manage my business over the next few years. I was challenged at the time with my relationship with my store manager, so I thought I was coming to work on whether or how I wanted to change that." Marcia's store, Couleur Collection, presents clothing in color group-

ings, rather than by collection, and, from the beginning, displayed and sold artwork by local artists on its walls.

"I had been painting for three or four years, and my art had started to evolve, but I always wanted to keep my own art out of the business because painting had become a sanctuary for me. It was what I did to get away. But in one of the meditations at Next Phase, I had this epiphany: It became really clear that I wanted to have an art opening!" So Marcia went home, began working with new art teachers, traveling abroad, and making decisions about her

business that would allow her to take this new direction. At the Wellfleet program she explored the idea of what was "enough" and decided that running her existing store rather than expanding to other locations was indeed enough for her. In the year and a half following the GISC program, she eliminated the manager position at her store, expanded the roles of the other twelve people on the staff, and got the business to where those people could make decisions independently. At that point she was ready to gear up for an art opening. For three months, Marcia cut her work schedule to a twenty-hour week and began painting for twenty hours each week.

"I had my first art opening at the store and I was terrified! But I sold about half my paintings and, more importantly, once I put my own art up on the walls, the store became even more 'mine.' I already owned the accounts payable and the debt, but I suddenly owned the store emotionally in a very different way." Now, two years later, Marcia has had a second opening at Couleur Collection and for the first time, has begun presenting and selling her paintings in independent galleries, including the one in Stonington, Maine.

From Goal-Driven to Exploratory: In Search of a Spiritual Life - Charlene Vincent

In 2003, Charlene Vincent was an international real-estate entrepreneur and the mother of a young teenage daughter. She had always been goal-driven and went about setting one, three, five, and ten-year goals for her international real estate business around the time she took Next Phase. Although she had short-term goals, she realized that she had no vision for the business five or ten years out, and – without that clear picture and goals to work toward – she found she had lost interest in continuing to pursue the business. Instead, Charlene began paying attention to what called to her, and what called to her was a more spiritual existence, even while trying to be practical.

"With my impending divorce and a daughter approaching college age, I was taking paralegal and legal writing courses, in order to have a profession I could fall back on if I were to leave real estate. What I discovered, however, was that it was dry for me and I didn't enjoy it." One day, on her way to a lecture in Harvard Square, Charlene walked by the Episcopal Divinity School (EDS), which she had just recently heard about through a student there. She had been intrigued by the woman's research in conflict resolution, so when she happened upon the school, Charlene walked in and picked up a catalog. Page after page of course descriptions appealed to her. "I wanted to take every one of the courses, I wanted to do all these things, and I just acted on that." Charlene applied within days and was accepted to EDS where she pursued and eventually completed a Master of Theological Studies. "I was allowing something to lead me instead of saying, 'This is in the plan, this isn't in the plan.'"

Today, Charlene is still trying to discern what her eventual career might look like, as she finishes her second degree in theological studies at BU. In school she has rediscovered her love of writing and intends to pursue it further when she

Continued on next page

Next Phase Choices

Continued from page 5

graduates, and currently works part time with a Quaker youth group. She regards this phase of her life as what, she explains, the Quakers call having a "leading."

"It's not self-directed. It's that something else is leading you to the next thing. I love that image. If I were going to put any kind of label on it, I'd say I followed a leading into one place and it led me to the next thing that seemed right to me."

Midlife Career Move to Challenge, Meaning, and Balance - Pamela Burke

For Pamela Burke, the process toward change began with an uncomfortable, nagging feeling that would come and go.

"I've been in real estate sales for twenty-five years, and with my current company - in the same position - for seventeen of those years. Pamela acknowledges how much she has enjoyed the work and how it helped her to grow tremendously. After inheriting three teenage children ten years ago when she married her husband, Pam started to reevaluate her lifestyle, working weekends, and the course of her career. She felt content in her job, but not challenged, and began to feel that she wanted to work at something different and more meaningful that would also allow her to spend more time with family. Pam, at the suggestion of friend and then-leader of GISC, Nancy Hardaway, decided to enroll in the Next Phase program as a way to start exploring what this nagging was all about.

"The process got me to explore things at a deeper level than I had before, and the big question that came out of it after leaving was 'What about me?' Because I had been putting all my energy out there to everybody and everything, the question of what do I deserve and what do I want kept coming back. It sounds simple, but it was really pretty profound. I didn't make a change right after that, but I think that was a seed that was planted for me that helped me understand the nagging feeling I had." In the ensuing months, prompted by the real estate downturn and many layoffs at her firm, Pam entered a new

exploratory phase and spent much time thinking and discussing ideas with her husband about the kind of lifestyle they wanted.

"I knew I wanted to work, but maybe not quite so hard, or at least so that my time off was definitely carved out. What kept coming back was education. I'd worked with kids on a volunteer basis, I had been very involved with my husband raising his children, and my undergraduate degree was in psychology. It all came together, and I said, 'You know what? I want to be a school counselor!'" A year after taking the Next Phase transitions class, Pam enrolled in graduate school at Bridgewater State College, is now almost two years into the program, and about to start an internship this fall.

"There are people who will think I'm crazy for leaving what I'm leaving, but I need to do it for myself, and I really feel a sense of wanting to help the younger generation. I think I have some gifts I can share. I've got so much, and I feel like it's time to give back."

These women, and other participants in GISC's Life Strategies program, agree that the process of making a mid-life transition was not often a straight line or all positive, and many learned things they didn't expect. Some found they were "up" one week and "down" the next, and that taking on significant life changes presented new, if exciting, challenges. Without exception, these women expressed that spouses and friends often encouraged them to take risks, helped discuss and explore options, and try on the new identities that emerge when one undertakes a significant life change. Life Strategies sets up a safe and supportive environment to embrace the past, acknowledge the present, and explore future possibilities. ***The next Life Strategies session will take place September 19-22, 2010.***



Pamela Burke meets with Life Strategies program leader, Mary Anne Walk, MCC.

Coming Up at GISC

September 10-11

Wrestling with Ethical Dilemmas

Satisfies APA & ICF continuing ed requirements

September 13-14

Introduction to the Cape Cod Model

September 19-22

Life Strategies: Navigating Personal & Professional Transitions

ICF Certified for CCE credits

September 23-26

Celebrating the Power of Writing Conference

October 7-10

Approaching Organizational Consulting & Coaching

NEW PROGRAM - with Edwin Nevis & Sean Gaffney

October 14-16

Skills for Influential Leadership

ICF Certified for CCE credits

October 26-29

Graduate Leadership Forum

Reunion Workshop for Leadership in the 21st Century Graduates

October 29 - November 4

CCTP Europe Week One (Stockholm)

October 31 - November 4

Leadership in the 21st Century Week One

November 6-10

Building Effective Professional Relationships

ICF Certified for CCE credits

November 14-19

Applying the Cape Cod Model in Organizations

ICF Certified for CCE credits

November 30 - December 3

Facilitating Leadership Transitions

ICF Certified for CCE credits