

## CHAPTER 10: MOVING A LEADERSHIP TEAM

In Chapter 9, I described experiences I have had in coaching others through personal change initiatives and in being coached myself in my own journey toward greater harmonic vibrancy. These experiences have been my “learning laboratory” for individual change. Through them I have developed much of my understanding about how the Harmonic Vibrancy Move process enables people to step up to a higher level of vibrancy and abundance. In this chapter and the following ones, I want to share some of my experiences working with larger groups and the learning I have gained from those experiences.

Most important, perhaps, I have learned that group transformation starts with the individual. By this I mean that each group member must be willing to look critically at his or her own needs, feelings, assumptions and behaviors, and then to address those assumptions and behaviors that may need to change in order for the group to change. By the same token, leadership teams must change their own internal agreements and group dynamics in order to lead change on a larger scale. Chapters 10 and 11 deal with this small-to-large-group process through the example of a corporate leadership team that changed itself and went on to initiate a company-wide transformation on the same principles. Chapter 12 describes how a small team took on the task of making changes at the societal level. Each of these chapters also illustrates in its own way lessons I have learned from these experiences about how to facilitate individual change leading to group change.

The stories I present in this chapter and Chapter 11 come from my most important learning laboratory – the North Carolina sock company, THORLO, Inc. (THORLO). As I described in Chapter 3, I have worked with THORLO for nine years, during which time this organization has partnered with me in developing the Ecosynomics concepts, language, tools and insights presented in this book. By 2009, when this chapter’s story begins, I had been a member of THORLO’s leadership team for four years, and we had cycled through the Harmonic Vibrancy Move process a number of times. In those previous iterations, we had developed agreements about what the company’s leadership culture, structure and processes should look like and the language we would use to talk about them. We had formed a team that was ready and willing to take up leadership on those terms, and we had begun to develop practices we thought would enable the team to function consistently in the outer circle of harmonic vibrancy.

My role also evolved over those years. I had started with THORLO as an outside consultant and moved into facilitating the leadership team through the change processes envisioned by the CEO, Jim Throneburg. By 2008, I was no longer an outsider with inside access through the CEO. I had moved into my current role as an insider who brings outside perspective, based on my way of looking at the world and the fact that I am not a full-time employee of the company. I have made the commitment to show up at THORLO bi-monthly and to play a role equivalent to that of a chief culture officer, particularly within the leadership team. Throughout this evolution, the folks at THORLO have been learning partners in the development of Ecosynomics. The company also supports my work on Ecosynomics through grants it makes to the Institute for Strategic Clarity.

## STEPPING UP TO A HIGHER LEVEL OF RELATIONSHIP

In September 2008, Jim Throneburg (known as “JLT” within the company) had an experience that dramatically changed how he and the leadership team thought about organizational transformation at THORLO. He had been walking through the manufacturing facility when he noticed a problem. He walked over to the engineering room to see if folks there knew about the problem and were working on correcting it. They acknowledged that they knew about this problem and had done nothing about it. From his perspective as the owner of the business, as well as its CEO, JLT was shocked and infuriated by this situation. Rather than taking action, however, he resolved to reflect on it.

Over the next couple of days, he came to the realization that the behavior he observed in those engineers existed because he had allowed the same behavior in himself. He saw that, while he acted like an owner in many ways, he was selective in what he paid attention to. There were parts of the business that he just did not focus on. For example, he tended to leave the complexities of accounting to the finance department rather than truly “owning” its work and its results. From these reflections, JLT determined that, if he wanted THORLO employees to act more like owners, he needed to take on the responsibilities of ownership more fully himself.

JLT resolved that he would take up ownership for every aspect of THORLO’s operations. As he began to put this intention into practice over the next few weeks, the change was quite noticeable. For example, in his next meeting with the finance department, JLT said he wanted to understand the details behind the numbers in the company’s financial statements. In the past, he had only wanted to discuss the implications of what the financial statement showed, so this was a big shift in behavior. JLT assured the finance team that he was not acting out of lack of respect for its work. Rather, he had decided he could no longer simply delegate to others the responsibility for THORLO’s financial management; he needed to fully understand the financial statement for himself. The head of finance then acknowledged that he, too, had delegated the details of the financial statement to his team. He realized that he could not explain them to JLT, and he needed to change that.

As he interacted with people in different parts of the company, JLT observed that his shift in behavior caused others to shift as well. When he took up greater responsibility for the whole, they felt inspired to do the same. Nowhere was this feeling stronger than in the leadership team. The name JLT gave to his concept of ownership of the whole was “brand stewardship.” This evoked all that the THORLO brand represented—our relationships with our customers, employees and key partners, as well as the sole shareholder, JLT. Over the next few months, the leadership team committed itself to learning how to transform its leadership of the company into a consistent practice of “collective brand stewardship.” We renamed the team “5/09,” for the five who took up leadership of the whole company, as a group, in 2009. Then we embarked on a Harmonic Vibrancy Move process to figure out how we were going to enact the agreements necessary to realize our goal.

## THE HARMONIC VIBRANCY MOVE PROCESS

### Identifying the gap

The initial task in our Harmonic Vibrancy Move process was to distinguish between our current way of functioning as a team and the collective brand stewardship we aspired to. When we examined our shared experience, it was not difficult to identify what we all thought was the kind of team dynamic we were after. We brainstormed what collective brand stewardship looked like and agreed that, when we are doing it successfully, everyone is awake and paying attention as brand stewards; alignment within the team is effortless.

We knew what this looked like because we had experienced it in the aftermath of THORLO's "Black Friday," the day in the Fall of 2007 when the team had had to lay off many colleagues and friends. In this difficult situation, a deep sense of company-wide responsibility and ownership had infused the team's interactions. The general consensus within the 5/09, however, was that the experience had peaked in the two months following the crisis and then declined. On a regular basis, we had moments of collective brand stewardship but no consistent practice of it.

We also knew what the opposite of collective brand stewardship looked like. In this mode, we would come to team meetings as individuals, each person trying to do the best for his part of the whole and advocating for his own perspective. Each said, in effect, "Here is my story of what I see about this business issue. I want you to see and accept my interpretation as complete." We thought we were "owning it all," but we really owned just what we could each see individually. We agreed that, when we are operating in this mode, everyone is asleep and, in the five relationships, we are in a completely collapsed state. Alignment is difficult, if not impossible. This had been our norm before the post-Black Friday experience, and the way we were going it seemed likely we would be back there within a year.

We defined the gap as the distance between these two extremes. It was clear that we did not have the agreements and practices in place to support a higher, more consistent level of collective brand stewardship. To fulfill our charter as the 5/09, we had to achieve this higher level of functioning and maintain it over the long term. The sustainability of the company depended on it. We set the intention of closing the gap within a year.

### Exploring the experience of others

In this step of the Harmonic Vibrancy Move process, the 5/09 identified and agreed to take up two new practices to support it in realizing collective brand stewardship. These were "declarations" and "co-hosting relationships." The practice of declarations came from JLT's reading on personal and organizational transformation. It was also a practice he had taken up himself. For example, he had shared his intention to become a fully engaged owner of the company as a declaration—a public statement of his intention to act in a different way. The declaration also included a request that others support him in following through on his intention, both with patience in knowing that he was trying something new, and with persistence in reminding him of his declaration when he seemed to have forgotten it.

The team saw that this device could be a daily reminder of our determination to adopt new behaviors. By publicly declaring our commitment to collective brand stewardship, we could also declare our awareness that change in the company needed to start with change in the leadership team. We were clear that we needed to establish a high degree of consistency in practicing collective brand stewardship before we could expect this of others.

The practice of co-hosting relationships came from my experience in working with high performing, high vibrancy groups around the world. In these groups, I have observed many relational capacities and practices not usually present in groups experiencing the middle circle of harmonic vibrancy. I see these both in the individual group members and in the practices of the group as a whole. In particular, I find that in groups experiencing the outer circle of harmonic vibrancy, many of the individuals have developed capacities for self-reflection that enable them to see and work with their own potential at the possibility-light level, manage their own learning processes at the development-verb level, and make use of feedback on the outcomes they produce at the things-noun level. These individuals, in other words, are constantly working inwardly and outwardly on all three levels of reality. Typically, they have also developed the capacity to support others in a similar process. Group practices support this exploration and inquiry with continuous reflection and experimentation. They enable both individuals and group to engage actively with all five primary relationships at all three levels of perceived reality on a consistent basis.

For example, the practice of sharing one's own personal insights and reflective processes connects the individual to the group through the relationship to self. A consistent practice of mentoring others in the process of exploring their own potential keeps the relationship to other alive in a vital way. Another practice in high vibrancy groups involves regular, public acknowledgment of the specific contributions each individual is making to the group's purpose and activity. In this way, they maintain a strong positive relationship to group and also to spirit, by strengthening the group's awareness of the creativity available in its members. Finally, high vibrancy groups tend to have and use clear terminology to take note of the level of perceived reality the group is working with in the moment. For example, one group I observed referred to "possibility thinking" when it was engaged at the level of possibility-light, "learning" and "over time" when it was dealing with development-motion, and "here now" when it was pursuing outcomes at the things-matter level. Another group color-coded the levels, referring to the possibility level as "red-red" to indicate that people should not run to action with the content at the possibility level, "orange" for the development level, and "green" for the green light to act at the outcomes level.

I call this high vibrancy set of individual capacities and group practices "co-hosting" relationship. When I am "hosting" a party effectively, I do not try to manage all of the interactions happening in the party—who is talking to whom about what, or who is engaging in what activity. To do otherwise would make me a real busybody and drive most people crazy. Instead, as the host, I merely establish the conditions for interactions to take place and then try to remain mindful of how changes in the environment may be influencing them. More than this, I realize that the guests themselves do a great deal of the hosting in a successful party. When I "co-host," I am acknowledging the role each of the participants and the space play in hosting the party with me.<sup>126</sup>

It seemed to me, in observing high vibrancy groups, that the individuals with the capacities for engaging with the five primary relationships and three levels of perceived reality create the conditions for the group as a whole to do the same. Yet the group also participates in creating the right environment and establishing the practices for harmonic vibrancy. This is co-hosting relationship.

For the 5/09, co-hosting became the model of how we wanted to enact brand stewardship, first within our team and eventually across the entire THORLO organization. We began immediately to use the language of “co-hosting collective brand stewardship,” meaning that we wanted to promote this new attitude and behavior within the company in a way that was fully engaged with the five relationships and three levels of perceived reality. We recognized that we needed to develop both individual capacities and group practices to make that possible, and the experiences that JLT and I brought in gave the group ideas about how to go about that. We could envision a set of agreements and practices for declaring a new behavior, holding ourselves to our declaration and co-hosting relationship, all of which we saw could support us in moving to the higher level experience we desired.

### **Assessing our own experience**

When the 5/09 reached the step of evaluating our current state relative to our desired state, JLT’s personal experience once again provided a core framework and inspiration. As the son of the company’s founder, its owner, and its CEO for more than forty years, he was deeply concerned about its sustainability after his retirement. The key to sustainability, he believed, was a leadership team that could run THORLO “as a living, self-evolving, self-organizing system.” He envisioned “a community of leaders able to shift from an old, layered, hierarchical structure that was inwardly focused and rules- and regulation-based, toward a structure able to develop the responsiveness and flexibility increasingly required of a globally competitive entity.” Three times before, JLT had tried unsuccessfully to develop such a team. Each time he had ended up feeling frustrated by the inability of the people he had brought into those previous teams to communicate openly and collaborate fully.

Then he had experienced a humbling insight. He realized that his own way of holding the vision of sustainability for the company was the major obstacle to its manifestation. This was the self-assessment he shared with the team: “Only when I finally ‘showed up’ - and by that, I mean being 100-percent personally responsible for my experience, getting beyond my own ego, being real, vulnerable, and acting as a collaborative equal in dialogue, not ‘boss’ - did others begin to appear who could work in the same spirit.”

The other members of the 5/09 shared JLT’s vision of sustainability. Having worked together for a couple of years, however, they also recognized that their willingness to work collaboratively had so far not been enough to realize that vision. As one team member expressed it:

“In hindsight, I can see we all wanted a non-hierarchical structure driven by a craftsman’s attention to detail, an entrepreneurial spirit of all-inclusive ownership and a sustainable business model. We wanted an environment where everyone in the company worked for more than a paycheck, for something bigger than himself or

herself. But we didn't yet have a way for our group to manifest this intention, other than just working hard."

Our self-assessment helped the team get a clearer picture of why we were "working hard" and not getting the results we wanted. When we compared our agreements and practices with those of the groups achieving what we desired, the main thing we saw was that we had the individual competencies we needed, we just did not practice them consistently. That is, we had experience with self-reflection; we knew how to recognize and support other individuals; we were comfortable acknowledging the unique contributions of each individual to the group; we knew how to engage in a creative process; and we could often see the creativity available to the group. Yet, we saw that we did not bring in those capacities on a consistent basis.

When we looked through the four lenses, we recognized that we knew what agreements we needed. In response to the resource question, we knew that we wanted to agree that the world was abundant, though we often seemed to assume scarcity. Looking through the allocation lens, we knew that we were more effective and efficient when we included more of the primary relationships in determining the use of our resources. Through the value lens, we agreed that we placed a high value on the differences in perspectives and life experiences that our colleagues bring to the table. Through the organization lens, we saw that we included more of the relationships and perspectives we valued when we inquired into each other's perspective and synthesized what we each saw.

We talked about how, in practice, when we started from an assumption of abundance, we tended to look for the unique perspective each of the others brought. From a place of abundance we took a stance of openness and curiosity about those differences: "You must see the world differently, given your completely different experience base and I want to know what your perspective looks like." More often, however, we started from a sense of scarcity and did not think to look for those differences in perspective, much less appreciate them. When we started from a sense of abundance and awareness of the rich differences in perspectives, we were able to see much richer solutions to the presenting problem of the moment. When we started from scarcity, missing those important nuances, we also missed many seemingly obvious solutions that were right under our noses but invisible to us. Sometimes we operated with abundance-based practices, but more frequently we collapsed out of them. Since we had experienced them, they were not completely foreign to us. Yet neither were they comfortably familiar and easy to apply.

When we assessed our experience of harmonic vibrancy, using the 3 Circles diagram, we confirmed that we usually inhabited the lower level between the inner and middle circles—not a place of great abundance. We saw that we agreed to this, however, even though it was not what we wanted. We recognized that while the organizational culture of THORLO strongly encourages cross-functional collaboration in service to the customer, our team practices tended toward separation in responsibility and communication, and a lack of ownership of the whole. The reality was that we each came to meetings of the 5/09 representing our own functional perspective and what we saw of the whole company from that perspective, whether in engineering, finance, information systems, marketing or culture. We agreed that we wanted something different: to be able to see the larger whole available to

us when we could also see through each other's perspectives. This would require a different set of practices, which, in turn, would require a different set of agreements.

### **Defining and enacting the move**

To make the desired shift, the 5/09 determined it would need to develop the capacity, individually and as a team, to co-host the five primary relationships on a routine, reliable basis. We made a declaration to change the group's behavior and to "be the change" we wanted to see in the company as a whole, before expecting it from others. We said we wanted to operate consistently from an assumption of abundance, to always invite in the highest potential in all of us, and to develop practices that would support the experience of the outer circle of harmonic vibrancy for everyone we worked with, as well as ourselves.

It became my assignment to design a series of capacity-building exercises for the team. We agreed that, for a couple of days every two months, we would work on learning to co-host two to three of the relationships. We followed this program for the next year and a half.

### RELATIONSHIP TO SELF

As part of the group's declaration to change, we each also made an individual declaration of intention to pursue self-awareness and growth. Our scan of high-vibrancy groups had shown us that their high level of functioning depends largely upon the group members' individual practices of self-reflection, which enable them to see clearly who they are, where they are in their life journeys, what their potential is, and how they are growing. I had participated in a few groups that used specific exercises for experiencing and developing these capacities in the relationship to the self. The 5/09 was starting with a pretty high level of trust in each other and in me. I thought this would allow us to dig deeply into the relationship to self.

The exercises we used come from the field of adult development, a broad-ranging inquiry into how individuals make sense of the world. This includes how they perceive and work with the strengths they have already developed, how they determine areas in which they could develop next, and how they interact with feedback from the external environment and the information it provides about what is happening there. We worked with action logics, autobiography and heart-to-heart feedback. The goal was to see the underlying patterns in our lives and thereby to understand why we had each taken up certain questions, how we had developed in pursuit of those questions and what questions remained to be addressed in the future.

#### *Understanding action logics*

Action logics are the ways we make sense of our surroundings and ourselves. Operating largely unconsciously, they determine how we act and interact with others. Through rigorous research with thousands of cases, Susanne Cook-Greuter has described a developmental model of these action logics, with each developmental stage adding greater complexity and subtlety. For example, one stage is characterized by the Expert-Technician action logic. People operating from this logic have a well-established sense of individual identity, distinct from the groups of which they are a part. They have excellent problem-

solving skills, are confident in what they believe to be true, have a strong sense of “right and wrong,” and are often harshly critical of the opinions of others. The next stage, characterized by the Achiever action logic, builds on the Expert’s self-awareness and capacity for logical thinking. In addition, the Achiever has an acute awareness of change over time and so is more focused on how he is developing, what his motivations are and who he really is. At the same time, he is more open to diverse people and opinions. Idealistic and action-oriented, the Achiever firmly believes in the power of knowledge and rational analysis to control nature, human nature and society. At another stage, the Individualist action logic places much less value on rational thought and scientific analysis and more on subjective “knowing.” He cares less about achievement than self-knowledge. Far from merely tolerating differences in others, the Individualist goes out of his way to understand and embrace them.<sup>127</sup>

The above are very simplified descriptions of three prevalent action logics. Cook-Greuter offers a detailed online survey to assess one’s primary action logic. All the members of the 5/09 took this survey. Then we reflected individually and together on what the results showed us about how we each made sense of our actions in the world. We saw that we had a distribution of action logics that we used, with most of our sense making typically in one of them, and a leading edge in another. For example, while one team member looked at the world predominantly through the Achiever action logic, comfortable in expressing the creativity he brought to many situations, he was frequently experiencing the Individualist action logic, seeing the creativity available in others as well. For him, this leading edge of the Individualist action logic was intriguing, and he wanted to explore what practices would support him in this new arena. We then saw that one of our colleagues was firmly in the Individualist action logic, and that he might mentor the other to share practices he had developed.

### *Autobiography*

For the autobiography exercise, we each focused on major events in our lives that had influenced how we see ourselves, the paths we have taken, how we act as leaders, and our deeper aspirations. I asked each individual to reflect on these major events and patterns, for themselves, writing them down in a way that felt comfortable to them. Some wrote down bullet points, while a couple others wrote down prose. Some wrote them down in chronological order, while others focused on the patterns they saw. We then shared some of the major events in our stories and the patterns we saw in them.<sup>128</sup>

After sharing what we were each seeing on our own path, one of the group commented, “While I am the one who has lived my life, it was not that clear to me where I was in it. I now see the flow of my life, where I am in it, and I have a greater sense of where I am heading.” Another described his path within the company: “I see that I have shifted in how I perceive myself within the community. I started with my identity as the first degreed engineer, and then I was the Director of R&D, then the Director of Technology, then responsible for all of manufacturing. Now I am just David, a brand steward for it all.” Seeing each other’s path more clearly made it easier to see where they were struggling with new challenges that were stretching them and how to support them.

### *Heart-to-heart feedback*

We also started a series of “heart-to-heart” feedback sessions focused on our capacities as brand stewards. As defined in one of THORLO’s core documents:

“Heart to Heart” refers to the contextual framework in which one experiences their environment, moment-by-moment. When one is “listening from their heart,” they experience their environment from this perspective. The “listening from your heart” perspective is where we “feel” totally connected to everything and everyone in our environment. From this perspective we are aware of ourselves as individuals, others as individuals, all the relationships within the system, and the system as a whole. A perspective that does not include all the aforementioned levels of awareness limits one’s availability to “hear” and “see” themselves as the “creator” of their own environment. Therefore one can still maintain the perspective that the responsibility for what is happening “to” them is external to themselves.

Every two months we spent a half-day providing feedback to one team member. On his day for feedback, the individual completed a self-assessment, while the rest of the team evaluated him using the same assessment form. He then described what the assessment had helped him to see about his own brand stewardship behaviors. The rest of the team inquired into what he had shared and added their observations.<sup>129</sup>

Through this process, each team member determined what declaration he would make about the change in brand stewardship behavior he was going to personally take on. At the same time, other members of the team had the opportunity to offer to partner with him in support of those behaviors. For example, one person wanted to work on being more present as a co-host of the five relationships in meetings. He declared his intention to adopt the practice of preparing for this co-hosting before each meeting, by getting in touch with his own state of mind and calling to mind the gifts and contributions of others who would be in the meeting. Another member of the 5/09 volunteered to meet with him for a few minutes before meetings to support this preparation for co-hosting.

As we moved through these exercises and took up our new practices, we started to see ripple effects extending beyond the 5/09. One team member’s co-workers noticed the difference in his behavior almost immediately and asked him what was causing it. When he told them, they wanted to learn the new practices as well. We also noticed what seems obvious in retrospect: until we asked the questions, “Who am I, where have I come from, and where am I going?” we did not see the answer. Only by asking those questions and sharing what we discovered with our colleagues did the path become clear and easier to take up.

## RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER, GROUP, NATURE, AND SPIRIT

### *Other*

We observed that in the groups experiencing higher levels of harmonic vibrancy, much attention was given to seeing and supporting the other. It was clear that the key assumption was one of the abundant potential in the other, and the key skills for this practice were based on inquiry. We determined that we had to improve our skills in seeing, listening to, and supporting the other.

One of the first inquiry practices we brought to the relationship to the other was simply listening. We agreed that, as we worked through the exercises, we would truly listen to each other, holding the question of whether we could see what the other was seeing. This practice entailed listening carefully, asking for clarification if necessary, and then restating what we had heard as a way of confirming that it agreed with what the speaker thought he was saying. This form of active listening was an important aspect of our heart-to-heart feedback sessions, as described above. Through it we found we could demonstrate that we had received what the self-assessor said and help him understand more fully how we experienced him through his behaviors.

In addition to more effective listening, we worked on strengthening inquiry skills with William Torbert's "four parts of speech," from the field of action inquiry.<sup>130</sup> These are framing, advocating, illustrating, and inquiring. We worked on differentiating and learning how to use the different parts of speech by telling stories in which we stated when we were using each one. For example: "This is a story about how I see the issues around the customer's experience with our new sock. I will frame it by describing how I see our shared intention in regard to customer experience, how I define the problem that we face with the new sock, and my understanding of where we agree or disagree on underlying assumptions. Here is how I think we need to address the problem. I am advocating for this solution and will illustrate why I think it will work with a customer's story about how this fix has worked in the past. Now I wish to inquire what clarifications you may need or what you see is missing from my story." While it seemed a little cumbersome at first to name each of the four parts of speech, we found it enhanced our own awareness of what we were saying and what we might be missing. For example, I might realize that I was only advocating a position, without framing or illustrating it and without inquiring into how others saw it. This practice also helped us to nuance whether we were actually inquiring, as we might say we were, when we were really advocating what we thought, using the language of a question. "Isn't it obvious that...?"

We framed all of this work on inquiry within an invitational practice of expecting and inviting in the greatness of the other, and a mindfulness practice of noticing new information, perspectives, and categories.<sup>131</sup> To develop the invitational practice, we started by agreeing on what we meant by the word "invitation," sharing examples of when we had experienced the best of ourselves being invited into a conversation or relationship. We then agreed to use the word in our communication with each other as a way of reminding ourselves that we wanted to be more invitational with each other. This is a direct practice of co-hosting the primary relationship to spirit by seeing the source of creativity as available everywhere all of the time. After trying this exercise, one of the 5/09 team members said: "It's amazing how easy it is to see the available potential and creativity in you when I remind myself that I want to invite that in, to 'be invitational.'"

### *Group*

In regard to co-hosting the relationship to the group, we observed that the high vibrancy groups were very clear on the uniqueness of the contributions each individual made to the group. We wanted to develop practices to strengthen our awareness of the diversity of distinct voices that make up the "we" in each group. We settled on a 3-step process for approaching each specific business issue with mindfulness of that diversity. The three steps

are: (1) reminding everyone about the “local” purpose of the group; (2) determining how that “local” purpose is connected to the shared, higher purpose of THORLO; and (3) asking what voices need to be part of the conversation about how we will address the specific business issue within the context of both local and shared purposes.

Through this seemingly simple practice, we found we could easily see that certain voices “obviously” needed to be in the room when a particular issue was discussed. For example, an order fulfillment issue was not simply a problem for the distribution function of the business, but an issue affected by decisions made throughout the company, from marketing and sales through production and then into distribution. Yet we had not typically thought to engage all of those voices in conversations about order fulfillment. After working with this practice of co-hosting the group, one member of the 5/09 shared this realization: “I now see more clearly the absolute necessity of each of your voices and what you can see, if we are ever to achieve our shared higher purpose through brand stewardship.”

### *Nature*

To develop our capacities for co-hosting the relationship to nature, we started to practice consciously bringing the three levels of perceived reality into our awareness. We began by identifying situations in which we naturally integrated all three levels, such as the design process in the department of Research and Development. The design engineer in the 5/09 said, “I know the exact moment when we, as a group, see a possibility and it becomes a probability. At that moment, we begin to convert the potential we saw into a process of development, in which we can already begin to see the outcomes we will achieve over time. We do this often, as a matter of being creative, and yet we don’t apply it in most of our committee meetings. We need to, as they all involve acts of creation!”

Based on this realization, we agreed to be explicit in our meetings over the next month about the three levels in our process. We would clarify when we were working in possibility, when we were beginning to develop the possibility we saw together, and when we were focusing on the specific outcomes from that development process. We found that the practice of naming the levels of perceived reality when we were working with them sensitized us to the different feel each level has when we are in it. This experience led us to design the THORLO development process, with “Thorlorized” language for when we were working in one of the levels of reality and when we were transitioning to another level.

### *Spirit*

Our approach to developing capacities for co-hosting the relationship to spirit was the simplest of all—reflection and observation. Through many hours of dialogue about our experiences, we realized that we knew, at some deeper level, that the potential for creativity exists in everyone, everywhere, all of the time. We saw the available creativity in moments when we expected it, such as in the design work for new ads or new products. Creativity also showed up when we somewhat expected it, such as in brainstorming sessions or when we were looking for creative ways of responding to problems. It also showed up, however, when we did not expect it, such as when we thought we were simply reporting out business results to another group. In all of these moments, we realized that the source of creativity was sitting right there. Sometimes we were open to seeing it, and many times we were not. We also realized that we achieved much better results and had much more fun, when the creativity came in, even where we did not expect it.

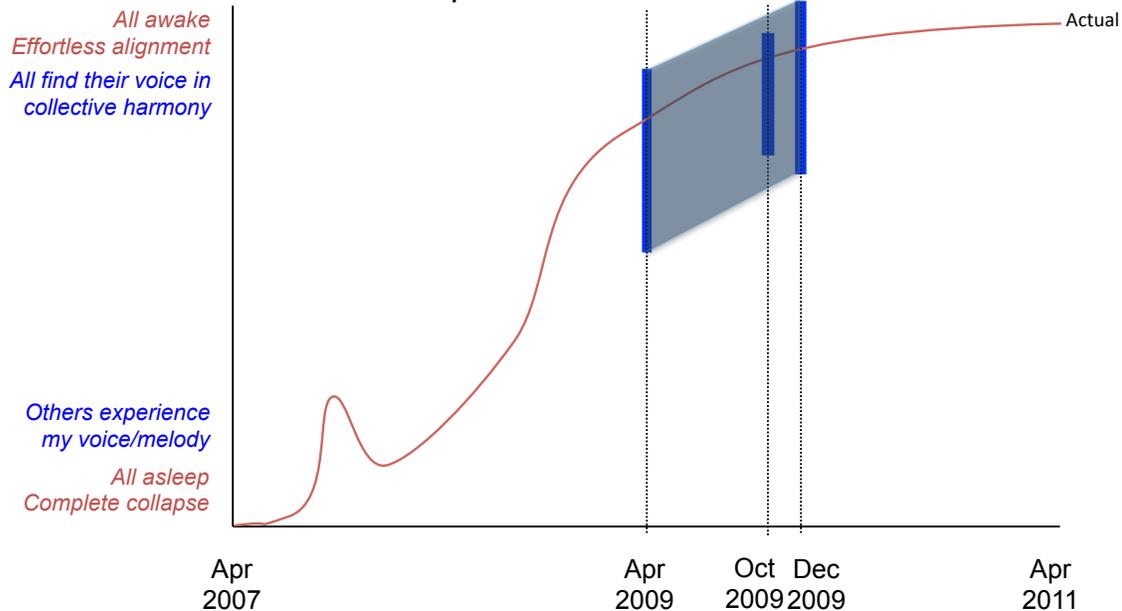
Between sessions, we agreed to observe what we did to collapse our awareness of this creativity and what we could do to reengage it. When we came back together as the 5/09, we shared examples of what we observed in our own daily practices, both potential-enhancing and potential-collapsing. Sometimes it involved simply recognizing the potential-collapsing experience. For some they experienced it in their gut, while for others it was more of a heart-related sensation. We also noticed that when we were in a meeting together, often one of us would notice the shift from potential-enhancing to potential-collapsing, and the mere calling it out allowed the group to see it and change course, back to the potential-enhancing dynamic. Through this exercise, we came up with some simple practices for reminding each other to see the potential always available to us. As these took hold, we began to see that we were indeed declaring that we were open to co-hosting creativity, in all of its forms.

## **RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNED**

### **Results**

Thirty months after our initial declaration, the 5/09 team reviewed its experience of the Harmonic Vibrancy Move. We depicted the results by the vertical blue lines in the Behavior over Time graph in Figure 36, below. As the graph indicates, the group felt we had fulfilled part of JLT's vision for a group of leaders able to be in deep dialogue as they work. We were working routinely in cross-functional teams, and regularly coaching and otherwise supporting each other in co-hosting relationship in those settings, by preparing together before the team meeting, being present during the meeting, and providing coaching feedback after the meeting. We were giving each other constant heart-to-heart feedback about our behaviors and what others perceived as the consequences of those behaviors within the larger organization. And, when we needed to, we were going back to the exercises and experiences we shared during the Harmonic Vibrancy Move process, to renew our understanding of and capacity for co-hosting.

## Consistent Co-hosting of Collective Brand Stewardship



Note: Blue bars represent the distribution of assessments of the 5.

Figure 36: Reassessing the 5/09 Experience, April 2011

In Ecosynomics terms, this team developed the capacity to continuously bring abundance into its daily work, from its tactical, day-to-day projects to its strategic, long-term inquiry. The harmonic interaction and the vibrancy they experienced, the abundance available to them, and the reduced costs of scarcity are the benefits they brought to THORLO. Most organizational leaders can only dream of such results.

### Lessons learned

The 5/09 had an experience of moving to a higher level of harmonic vibrancy that it now could help others have as well. Ecosynomics provided a framework for understanding the structures and processes they were working with. It also gave them the language for talking about this work in terms others within THORLO could understand. The members of the 5/09 realized that, through their own change process, they had developed the capacity to co-host a Harmonic Vibrancy Move process with other groups, both within and outside the company.

Through this process, I have confirmed for myself what others have told me, that group transformation starts with the individual. Each person has to take on the behaviors he or she needs to change before the group as a whole can change. I also learned the importance of building in practices to support these individual shifts, and the challenge of doing this at the same time that people are starting their individual change processes.