



Feature Interview:
Laura Divine & Joanne Hunt
Integral Coaching Canada, Inc.

Interview Conducted by Marilyn Hamilton, Guest Editor, Integral Leadership Review

Marilyn: Well, I want to just start our interview with an expression of gratitude. We're in Canada and this happens to be the week before Thanksgiving. So I thought it would be really speaking from my heart to say thank you very much for taking the courage to open, what I'm calling a "portal" from where new leadership has been emerging. When you started Integral Coaching Canada (ICC), I really think you opened something very new to the world. And now that you're standing on at least ten years, possibly longer, looking back from that portal, I'm curious from the giving birth to ICC to its global emergence today, what do you see?

Laura: First of all, thanks for an amazing opening. Touched our hearts right away.

Joanne: You brought us close to tears.

Laura: I think the word that strikes me is "awe." I'm kind of in awe of this company and what has occurred in ten years. I'm both proud about what's been accomplished and I'm also really humbled at the same time. There are so many people who influenced its success, not just Joanne and me. So I feel humbled by it and also humbled by how big it grew. To be honest, it really exceeded our vision of what we thought was possible in ten years. So it is this humble, quiet, proud awe that I sit with a lot of the time.



Joanne: Echoing what Laura said, what we envisioned when we started out was a lot smaller than what this became. Our ten-year anniversary was in April 2013 so it has been over eleven years. We originally had a vision of the deepest quality and the most advanced adult development program that we could envision and build at that moment in time.

Laura and I each had successful corporate careers for fifteen years. Laura worked in the United States and I was here in Canada. When we left our corporate careers and then started working together, we had already brought about large-scale change at the corporate level. We were both involved in the Total Quality Management movement, various leadership initiatives and had led large projects as executives. When we founded ICC, we wanted to build a very small, highest quality, boutique offering in Ottawa, Canada and it ended up going, as you know, global and way beyond anything that we envisioned. So that was very humbling and amazing to see.

And I would say that what occurred over time was having to separate out listening for what was being asked of Integral Coaching Canada versus what Joanne and Laura wanted. I think that really grew with us over the last decade and is continuing to emerge. What did Joanne and Laura want separate from what is being asked of this company that we gave birth to or opened the portal for? And separating that out allowed us to follow Integral Coaching Canada's dream versus Joanne and Laura's little boutique dream.

Marilyn: So it sounds like ICC came into this world with a spirit that knew where it wanted to go.

Joanne: Totally.

Laura: It sure did.

Joanne: It had a mind of its own.

Marilyn: So building on this dream that has gone beyond your original expectations, I'm curious what came first. Was it your attraction to coaching? Laura, I know you have a deep background in coaching. Or was it your attraction to integral theory and practice? Laura, did you want to start by responding to that?

Laura: Sure. I guess the way I would say it is that what was first for me was my attraction to people's development. When I was 14 I started teaching piano and swimming lessons and developed innovative swimming lesson techniques. I coached numerous sport teams when I was in high school and university including coaching high school girls swimming.

I think in my spirit, I was always looking for how can I enable people to develop. Coaching was



something I originally thought I would do as a career as a professional sports coach, but then I moved into management. And when I did, I always found ways to enable my employees to learn and grow from the very minute I started working in corporate life.

And then in 1986, when I was in corporate life as a middle manager at that point, all of a sudden, "coach" was a new role on our job description. And, of course, people were all scratching their heads saying, "What the hell is it? We're being evaluated on it." It just turned a light switch on for me. "Oh, my God, I can actually coach in an organization and I can coach people formally." So I did invest a tremendous amount of time and training in all sorts of different ways and sought to apply coaching as a manager and then later as an executive, and I've never looked back.

So integral emerged as I was learning more and more about human development. I'd stumbled on to Ken Wilber and *No Boundary* was the first book for me, and that just gave me a fuller way to add to what I'd already been learning about human development and adult development. So, it was really the innate call in me that it all started, then coaching, then integral theory.

Marilyn: Thanks, Laura. Joanne, is there a story behind your introduction to coaching and how did that relate or connect to Laura's coaching path?

Joanne: Well, strangely enough, it was very similar. Like Laura, I grew up as an athlete and did a lot of coaching and playing varsity sports. I also was studying sport psychology at university and thought that I would be working with people in advancing their capacities as professional and elite athletes, but I ended up going into business similar to Laura, into corporate life following my undergrad degree and then was working in management while I did my master's.

Similar to Laura again, no matter what role I was in during my corporate career, while I was always fulfilling whatever the departmental mission was, I was always most interested in how do I develop my team so that they're all hitting their individual capacities while the group meets these particular objectives. So I was always figuring out ways that each unique person could develop versus let's just send them all on *Interpersonal Skills 101*.

And right from a very early stage in my career, I was treating each individual uniquely, requiring very different growth paths that they would need to take. I was always trying to unlock that source code.

I was also wrestling with the mystery of why is it that you can take a course and be so fired up on a Friday night when you finish; and you head back to work Monday, and by Wednesday, you put the binder from that inspiring course on the shelf and you just go back to doing what you've always done? So I was always interested in, "What is the way to bring about change that people are longing for? What is the way



to have that stick?" I was always trying to unlock that puzzle. It was like asking, "What's the source code for development that actually stays, that isn't reliant on another person or a course, and that can actually reside in the human who is longing for it?" So, corporate life for me was the playground for exploring that and trying to build my own understanding of development.

And then, also similar to Laura, at some point in my corporate career, the word "coach" started appearing on people's job descriptions and managers were now supposed to be coaches and no one knew what that was. So I was one of the people trying to define coaching.

I took every kind of development course in a very green approach to learning - every course is a great course - and then started building my own thoughts around what I was figuring out.

Now, how it coincided with Laura is we actually met as neighbors. Laura lived three or four doors down from me in the suburbs of Ottawa when she moved to Canada from California. When we met, actually, the first thing that drew us together - there's synergy on a whole lot of levels - is we were both Zen practitioners. So in a suburb of Ottawa, we were probably the only two people in the neighborhood who had zafus and zabutons in our offices. We were doing sitting meditation every day, and were "book Buddhists," deeply reading and studying Buddhist material and deeply connected to the practice of Zen.

Also, when we first met, we looked at each other's bookshelves and we had pretty much the exact same books on our shelves: adult development, Zen and integral theory. So we just thought that was an amazing synergy.

So integral wasn't actually the first or second or even third influence. It came to be a part of us, a very integral part of us, but it wasn't the first thing. It's now a core driver in our business, but really healthy adult development was the overlap with us and our Zen practice and our key question of how do adults keep waking up and growing up over time? Once they graduate from university and are out in the world, how do we keep waking up and growing up?

Marilyn: Thanks, Joanne. This is really a great way to move into the next question I had for you because I wanted to know a little bit more about your engagement with early coaching. You've mentioned how it turned up on the job descriptions. But I also know that you've been really connected with the early movement of the International Coaching Federation. I'm curious what motivated you to take leadership around founding ICC versus just being part of the flow of ICF? Was there something that once you discovered each other's overlapping interest that you also started a motivation between you to move beyond what you were finding around you?

Joanne: Yeah, absolutely. I think because we were really looking at the various courses that we had each taken over the course of our development, what we found is that we were familiar with a lot of



different schools of coaching, we were familiar with a lot of different developmental organizations and self-improvement organizations. But, we always felt that things were partial, like something was missing. We weren't exactly sure what that was.

So we actually started investigating what is the thing that's missing? And when we found it, Ken's work then gave us a framework to start looking at all the pieces and parts of various programs that we were aware of and ICF's approach to coaching as well.

We're very supportive of ICF. Our program is ICF credentialed. It's great to have a governing body in the world for a profession that's still relatively new. We wanted to make sure that we are meeting the needs of not just new coaches but coaches who have been around a long time and who wanted to keep growing and deepening their own practice in their own lives.

In finding the things that were partial, we started saying, "Okay, so do we want to put our money where our mouths are and sit down and try to build something that at least to the best of our abilities back then and then through the years to the best of our abilities, was as inclusive and as integral as we could possibly make it?" This included concretely articulating our actual coaching method for waking up and growing up the adults who we work with as well as the training program for coaches so that they can work with people out there who are longing to grow and thrive in new ways.

We were both challenged from a course architecture perspective, as course designers and architects of training, and from a clear coaching method perspective so that growth would be able to live in a person, without their coach, without the course, without the binder, that change could actually take hold and stay.

And then we started articulating what had been working for us when we were working with our coaching clients because we were both coaching clients before we established a coaching school. We were sorting out our own method for working with clients in a way that we could actually see from the ground up that this was working. Primarily we were working with executives because we both had executive careers. So that was a market that we were readily brought into, other executives wanting to work with a coach who had been an executive. So it was in that ground of working with clients for a few years that we then articulated here's the method that is rocking their worlds and bringing about change that sticks. And then we faced, "How do we articulate that, build a process for training people how to do that, and then ultimately build a certification school that would enable that?"

So I think that it's this piece, "that this actually rocks people's worlds" that had the business ending up going global because our claims matched what we delivered in terms of this stuff actually being able to work in people's lives.



Now, between Laura and me, it was just contagious. It wasn't even like it was a choice. It was like we have to do this for our own well-being. We need to do this to try to articulate this thing that we've each wrestled with our whole lives.

What was fun is that the very first time we stepped into a classroom together, it was as though we had been doing it forever. It was seamless. That adjustment that often comes when you co-teach with somebody for the first time, there was not a wrinkle. So it was just this weird sense of how easy this is when we walked into a classroom.

Would you add anything, Laura?

Laura: Yes. I think the other thing is just by our natures, both Joanne and I have an antenna for wholeness and alignment. Those are the two words that strike me. So I think we had this seeking and trying to find a coaching method that felt aligned to us, that felt whole. You can argue, when is anything ever whole and complete? Of course. But it was as whole as we could make it. A method that had a profound impact on clients at many levels and also could be repeated over and over and over and over again.

We also have an affinity for being on the ground getting results. So it meant our coaching practices became our laboratory. As Ken said to us when he reviewed all our work, "You guys came to this from the ground up and I came to it from theory down." We both came to similar places regarding development. So there's just something about this kind of persistent pursuit that we had, and then we fed off each other. We were just excited as we kept refining and refining and refining. We still refine, by the way, which sometimes people are tired of.

Marilyn: Yes. You're locked into this continuous learning calling. That's what I'm noticing that you're referring to, that this is something that's coming up through you and almost has a spiritual or an evolutionary impulse. Is that fair enough way to describe it?

Laura: Yes.

Marilyn: I wonder if I could ask you both to speak further about this calling perhaps as the roots of your - what I see on your website you call spiritual warriorship. How do you see that links into the science that you speak of from your very practical grounded coaching experience? Especially since you both came up through sports and yet this real spiritual energy comes through along with the passion and how you speak?



Laura: Let's see. I'll give it a try. I think one of the things - there are two things that I wanted to speak to. One is that one of the bodhisattva vows in the Buddhist tradition is that a bodhisattva will stay here on earth, if you will, through as many incarnations as necessary to stay until all sentient beings are enlightened. So that's a pretty strong call to say, "I could go rest but I'm going to stay." That particular vow - while, I didn't go into the monkhood - has always been a strong compass for me. It always felt like that's how I go. So I continue.

The other piece for me is the sense of lineage, being part of something that has very deep roots has always been meaningful to me. The lineage that I had remained most connected to is my tai chi lineage that I'm a part of. I've been practicing for 20 years. It's a very clean, clear lineage that goes quite far back. That means a lot to me - the ancestors - I'm learning through the contribution of so many generations and that I'm contributing to what's ahead. That gives me some sense of both practical - I'm doing a physical practice - but I'm also connecting spiritually to something that's timeless and endless. So those two things are things that source me.

Joanne: I want to add to what Laura is speaking about in terms of lineage because it's very important in both our spiritual lives and spiritual practices. For me, in terms of my own Zen practice, I've also studied with Natalie Goldberg for many, many years and served as her assistant at many writing retreats that brought a Zen sesshin form and writing practice together, and her teacher's roots, Katagiri Roshi, are deeply ingrained in this practice. So this sense of belonging, forwards and backwards in time, and having responsibilities that you hold in that way is a very different concept, I think, and we brought that into our coaching school.

We hold our coaching school as a lineage school and that it isn't just about each student, their own certificate or their own graduation. When they graduate, they step into a lineage that has responsibility to the students who are coming behind them and to the students who have graduated ahead of them. The sense of it isn't just about you; it's about the greater community forwards and backwards in time. So I would say that's a key part of spirit.

I think that our Zen practice has also informed our warriorship around staying, because in Zen or any kind of spiritual practice where you engage in practices, you sit or you do a round of sitting or meditation even when you don't feel like it. You continue under all circumstances.

Therefore, in our business, you attend to that difficult email even if you don't feel like it. You attend to that challenging student or client even if you don't feel like it. And the spirit of that practice is just trying simply to be with, to build the capacity to be with. I mean I know that it's part of our training as well, the capacity that students build to be with another person's reality, not just to look at them but to look as them, and can you actually function in that being, just being with the ordinary moment or as Natalie would say, "How to meet the moment just as it is."



And so I think that our practice contributes to just meeting the moment just as it is. And also that it's no big deal and it's a very big deal all at the same time. So for us it's not making things too big like, "Oh, we're a big global company," and not making things too small like, "Oh, we're just a speck in the desert of sand of human development," but just attending day by day, bit by bit. The tagline of our company is "Alleviating suffering, one human at a time." And so I think it's that ordinariness of practice versus an elevated state, the ordinariness of day to day that's just meeting the moment and responding with the right action.

If I could just say one more thing that is coming to my mind as I'm speaking, is that we're in awe of the mystery of this work. There's a very mysterious quality about this that we still don't even understand as the founders of it, that we developed this method and then we found, "Oh, my God, it works in Europe and it works in South Africa, and it works in Australia and Brazil," and isn't that mysterious? It works with people studying it in English as their second language or their third language, and that's just very mysterious still to us. And so rather than try to figure it out, it's been amazing just to hold it as a mystery.

Marilyn: Thank you so much. That's really beautiful. I just sort of want to sit with that for a minute, which I think is probably part of the practice. So I really respect that what you're talking about is you're both really devoted to the science of waking up. There's a lot of science around human development that you've become students of but that you have both got this long experience of spiritual practice and the warriorship of really devoting your lives to as you say, "Alleviating suffering, one person at a time."

I'm curious, this seems so - as you just said - it's transpersonal, it's transnational, it's transglobal. I'm actually a born Canadian, and I'd like to know, how did you bring this practice to Canada? How did ICC Canada emerge as the right place, the right name, the right brand?

Joanne: Great question.

Laura: First of all, I'll try to cast back when we came together and formed this company. Trying to decide on a name was a really big deal, truthfully. There was something that we both strongly felt about having the word "Canada" be part of our name.

For me, I wanted to recognize the country within which our company was resident. Maybe that was even stronger because I came from the United States, and people in the United States tend to like our own products, and I thought it was really important to stand tall for Canada and stand tall for our company in that light.



The other is that the culture of Canada, it really struck me a lot moving here, the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms was an amazing thing to behold for me, that everyone is included and everyone has equal rights and freedoms. It felt like it's actually carried out more fully than some of the things I've experienced in the United States. And the people here, they're polite, they're kind, there's a sense of community, there's an attention to more than just oneself. That felt like how we wanted our company to be.

Marilyn: Joanne, I don't know if you have anything more to add?

Joanne: Well, similar to you, Marilyn, I'm from Ottawa. This is my hometown. It's where I grew up. I moved away from Ottawa for my corporate career and then ultimately moved back to Ottawa. What was interesting is after my first five years in corporate life, I left my corporate career and traveled around the world for a year, spent all the money I'd saved in my first five years of working, and decided if I was going to travel and get to know our global landscape, that was the time. So I took a year and traveled around the world.

When I came back, I went back into corporate life for ten more years and saw through very different eyes after having traveled the world, and then ultimately moved back to Ottawa and came to see Ottawa through different eyes after I had traveled so much and I fell in love with the city that I thought was too small for me at an earlier point in my life. I got to see that it was the centre of a lot of possibilities.

What I would say around naming the company Integral Coaching Canada is definitely I am a proud Canadian and I wanted to have an opportunity to put Canada in our name.

Canadians, as I traveled around the world, are well-loved. We have a solid reputation, as a country, globally. And that well-loved-ness is also part of the nature of this company, and so we wanted to have that as a signifier. It was really important to us.

I think the second reason that we used Canada in the name is that we came to see that it's very interesting culturally to grow up in a country that has these radically different seasons and especially that it has a long winter because winter seems to teach patience and having to stay with something lying fallow.

And so I think Canadians, as our first students, didn't want a quick certification program, they didn't want, "Get me certified in a weekend and get me a certificate, and let me hang it out and just get going." They wanted deep development and they wanted it to stick, and they wanted it to take time if that's what it required. They trusted embodiment would develop, like spring would arrive after winter.



And as Laura has shared with me in getting to see Canada through her eyes, winter builds something in people that's really quite astounding in terms of patience and the ability to wait for something that you really want, to wait for spring, to wait for full embodiment, and to trust that it's coming. So "Canada" feels just like the right word to add to Integral Coaching® for us.

Marilyn: Your comment reminds of the French-Canadian song, "Mon Pays C'est L'hiver."

Joanne: We could sing it.

Marilyn: I'm sure you could! So build on this a little bit more. How would you see that Canada offers something at the root of your vision for a global service? You talk about how winter and the prior season even of fallowness and then the continuation of that through winter. How does this contribute to a vision for a global service? You said that originally you started only with a vision for Canada itself, but you've spoken earlier to how this has grown; it seems to want to grow and is there some reason you think that it has been seeded from Canada, and has this energy to become more a service to a global need?

Joanne: That's a great question and I wonder, if we had been born in Brazil, would the same things have flowed through us? If we had been born in Australia, would it have been the same? And I don't really know the answer to that other than the magic that happens when you find somebody with whom you can work that raises your game 1000%. It's like Laura and I have always said to each other that we've each met our match in terms of both a personal partner as well as a business partner.

As we said, we never had an intention to take it global, but I do think that there's something that comes with the Canadian way of being with each other, kindness, regard, care for other and not just self, that I think is universal. I don't know that it's just Canadian. It's an expression that's familiar to us as Canadians, especially you and me, Marilyn, as Canadian citizens from birth.

But I'm also seeing over time that it's a global call to treat each other that way and to wake up, and grow up and develop more and more capacities to be with each other. So it's just a theory, but I think regardless of what country we lived in, this thing would have flowed through Laura and Joanne.

I'm not really sure about the global question. It was quite a while before we brought our courses outside of Canada. But when we first offered our introductory module in Amsterdam, Laura and I said to each other, "Let's go back into the classroom and teach the first module that's being offered in Europe." We didn't know if these courses and concepts would translate to Europe so we wanted first-hand experience. We had had Europeans already coming to Canada to study with us, but we didn't want to assume that Europeans were similar to Canadians. We wanted to go there ourselves and teach the introductory module. And you know, within a day, we were saying to each other, "Our faculty



could have come here." It's the same here. This is working in Europe, and we had 10 or 12 different countries represented in that first European course.

Marilyn: Laura, did you have anything you wanted to add to that?

Laura: I think there was something about how we were holding our coaching method and holding our training programs and holding what it was on behalf of that somehow hit some pretty universal longings or some pretty universal chords. And so somehow or another, while we use the term Canada and that orients us as somewhere on the map, what we're saying and what we're offering and how it impacts people hits something deeper that cuts across cultural groups. So that's the only thing I can add.

Joanne: And as a culture, Canada is a young country, and we are composite of all the different cultures that came to build Canada. So I think it's a pretty multicultural country already that's serving a multicultural globe.

But if I could rename the company today, would I call it Integral Coaching® International? I don't know. I think I would still stay with Canada, but it's definitely something that's more universal than we had anticipated.

Marilyn: Well, thank you for exploring that. I will add just my own biases and why I was really honored to be asked to guest-edit this issue. I've thought for a long time, that Canada has emerged to be set up to serve the world. But the way that she has been performing she has been underserving. So to hear the energy and the spirit that you bring to your work, it affirms for me that indeed there's some role that Canada is called to play, and somehow you've captured it perhaps in your IC Canada name. And the values you point to like kindness, it's something that underlies, I think, what we're learning around the fundamentals of human development that respect for others, that kindness must be fundamental to relationships. Often it has to be learned. It has to be practiced. And if it's in a multicultural society that has more of a mosaic expectation (like Canada) than becoming something that's more soup-like (like the US), then it's really very interesting that you felt this as soon as you went to Amsterdam, which indeed is very much a microcosm of many other cultures as well. So thanks for sharing that.

And really, as a Canadian, I truly appreciate the service that you're offering and following through on what I'm observing as a global call, a global need. Thank you.

Joanne: That's beautiful, Marilyn. Thank you.

Marilyn: So I'm really now curious for you to talk a little bit about leadership and your co-leadership of the organization, ICC. How has it grown and matured, and have there been things that have surprised



you about working in this organization?

Joanne: This is a really great question.

Laura: It makes us giggle because we've grown and changed so much! And one of the ways that I want to open this before I talk about it is not only are we business partners, but we're married. And so it's a great place for a therapist to be hired! That kind of compounds things, if you will.

When we first started the company, of course we were totally excited and were building everything for the school. Initially when we started ICC, it was just the two of us. We ran everything. We did everything. And as co-leaders, we talked about everything and decided everything together. So the first few years was all about seeing what was the same with each of us and doing everything together, and some might argue that might also be because we're two women carrying out the feminine capacity to commune.

Anyway, at some point we realized, "Okay, we can't keep doing this. We're starting to kind of like bump into each other." As things grew, we had more things to do. And so doing them all together, our days weren't long enough to get them done. Also relationally, we started wanting to be different, and we kind of had some rough patches there for a while as each of us was growing in our own rights and starting to feel like the space was too tight.

Joanne: It was almost as though when you find that person where everything is clicking, you're just so focused on what's overlapping and familiar, and shared between the two of you. And you celebrate that for so long and then at some point you have to individuate again. And so we've gone through that cycle a few times.

Laura: We literally at some point sat down and said, "Okay, which parts of the company are you going to run and which parts of the company am I going to run?" And we will only come together when those functions somehow overlap and we will not brief each other on what we're doing. We have very different AQAL Constellations or profiles and one of the things for me is that I orient from the lower left quadrant. And so my way of kind of getting my bearings is actually being able to ping off others or have some echo back from my thinking or my process and that helps me have things take shape. Meanwhile, Joanne orients from the upper left and so she is fine thinking things through on her own.

And so it was really hard for me initially to just go off and be in charge by myself, as I was used to pinging off somebody. So there were some growing pains that we went through there. But I think if I was to bring it to today and what's the surprise of that evolution - and we have some other threads, Joanne is looking at me over here and she's going to add some things - is that in one way you'd think that we might have just become more independent and autonomous, and we didn't connect at all. But



really what happened was to be able to work that way where we're working individually and yet we connect with each other when we need to, that requires a tremendous amount of trust in each other and a tremendous amount of respect for each other's work.

It also requires a really strong relationship where you can just get to the point. As a result, when I think about our leadership, it's more flexible, it's more buoyant, and it's more generous. And between us, we get things done really fast. Really, we can have a five-minute meeting versus some people taking ten times that. We meet for five minutes and we're good to go.

So it's just an exceptional level of operating now that is a delight to be in and there were a lot of pains, and who knows what's next, but I'm enjoying it right at the moment.

Joanne: I think what I would add to that is Laura referred to something that in our school we call an AQAL Constellation which is basically a profile using the six integral lenses that we work with in our school. What's fascinating is that Laura, as she mentioned, has a lower left primary orienting quadrant and her secondary is the upper right. My primary orienting quadrant is the upper left and my secondary is the lower right.

What's great about that is between us we cover all four quadrants, but there are also really large differences in how we approach things, so that's fascinating. And then Laura is an Enneagram Nine, I'm an Enneagram Four. We have different lines profiles, et cetera, et cetera.

In the coming togetherness, we had this massive "we" that was design crazy and blissed-out at an early stage. I think the second stage of our development was this individuation and having these two I's - me over here, you over there - and really trying to define boundaries for who is in charge of what.

Besides splitting up our functions at work, as a married couple we also had introduced - at that same time - a new rule at home: When we go down stairs at 6:00pm, from that moment on we can't talk about Integral Coaching Canada. The first couple of nights when we were practicing, we would sit there at dinner and say, "So how are you?" "Good. You?" "Good. Hmm. What do we talk when we can't share our work days?"

Marilyn: "How was your day?"

Joanne: "How was your day?" "Oh, it was nice." And given that we had also divided up, "You're in charge of that and I'm in charge of this," we couldn't share about our days because then we'd be having a work update meeting at dinner. It was an interesting time for us. It was fabulous developmentally to go through that.



And then I think then we grew into a third phase which was these two really strong "I's" now connecting in a larger "WE" or even a larger "US," meaning not just Laura and me but the rest of our team and our faculty, and the global population that we're serving. And how do we have this autonomy and communion, both freedom and fullness?

And so it's been more of an include and transcend move in the last four or five years of our company where we went from all together to all separate to an include and transcend of something that's kind of bigger than what we had.

Laura: Bigger and a lot more dynamic.

Joanne: Yes, more dynamic.

Laura: Every once in a while we will talk work at dinner.

Marilyn: You relax the rules.

Laura: Yes.

Joanne: But, as you know, developmentally sometimes when your pendulum has swung all the way to one side, you actually have to swing it all the way to the other side for a little while you before you can come to some kind of middle that's got a healthy balance, and so that was really key for us.

I also think that one of the things that surprised me over time being in this company, given the kind of enthusiasm and excitement that was in the initial phases of coming together, is that I never expected the toll it could take as well; that being of deep service in a way that calls upon all of you can extract a price if you aren't also alleviating your own suffering.

So when I think about our tagline that initially started out as "Alleviating suffering, one human at a time," the Part B for me as a leader would be: "starting with me." I need to alleviate my suffering first in order to continue to be of service.

I think the message that's out there in the world is if you follow your dream, if you follow your true love and your passion, then everything works out and you'll have the energy to do it until your last breath, et cetera, versus even when you're in deep service, with very skilful means, you have to take care of yourself and you have to find ways to rejuvenate that are uniquely yours. My ways of rejuvenating are very different than Laura's.



I think that leaders today do have the unique challenge, especially for people who are finding their ways into their own authentic calling and deep ways of manifesting in the world, that coupled with that, needs to be a continued evolution in your knowledge of what rejuvenation looks like for you as your company grows into a global organization. And I think I'm still learning what that is, so that surprised me. I think the societal message: "find your calling and all is well," should be revised to: "find your calling, make sure to take good care of yourself, and all is well."

Marilyn: Thank you, Joanne.

Laura, did you want to maybe explore that a little bit through your tai chi lens? I'm really aware of some of the things that you've both explored through birth and death, and what I hear Joanne speaking about is the cycle of ebb and flow, that there is a natural cycle to this, and maybe you've thought about this in relation to your own health and each other's health.

Laura: There are a couple of things that come to mind, Marilyn. One of the things that I've learned through my tai chi practice - a practice where I work quite closely with my teacher even though he is 3000 miles away - is that my teacher's school is a lot like our school. There is much rigor as well as a lot of heart and spirit and flow. Both are necessary.

Another thing that I've learned over the years is that there are times energetically when your body is not ready to push hard, and on those days I need to practice really lightly, and then there are other times when my body feels really ready to push it to the edges and really push my boundaries.

So there is that ebb and flow I guess I would say energetically as well. And when I push too hard, when my body is really not that buoyant energetically, I am actually doing harm. That has been a very helpful and important thing to learn: when to push and when to back off. A principle that my teacher, Lenzie Williams, introduced me to is this whole notion of minimum and maximum. We always think, at least in my experience culturally, that more is better and harder is even better.

Actually a different approach is to understand the whole spectrum. When is a minimum practice of 5 minutes, where I do it fully at 100% but for 5 minutes, the right practice for me, as a single practice session? And when is it time for an hour and a half of guts out effort as a maximum practice session? It's taken me years to appreciate that the minimum is actually a legitimate practice, and year after year there have been times when I've been really busy or I'm really tired, and all I can do is minimums. Time passes and I head to tai chi camp in June and I have improved amazingly well just doing minimum practice for months.

So I've experienced it energetically and somatically versus just cognitively, and that's been really, really helpful for me given that I have quite a strong propensity for overworking. I'm like a workhorse that



pulls a cart, and I can put on the harness and keep pulling, and so I have to be really attentive to when is it time for just a short walk that day or playing with that metaphor: When do I not use the cart? When is the cart light? When is it a short pull?

Marilyn: And have you seen this reflected in the actual growth cycle of the organization itself?

Laura: Yes, I would say so. If I think about the core team of Integral Coaching Canada, with each person that we bring in we expect really high performance, we expect really high quality, and we also expect that each person is going to take care of themselves. We make sure that the structure in which they operate has room for that. They work flex hours for their own timing and they have unique ways to take care of themselves. I think if you talk to each person, they all have their 'thing' that they keep working on, like mine is the workhorse thing and each one of them will have their 'thing' that they very consciously are trying to attend to so that they do healthily rejuvenate. We are all working on our own edges.

Joanne: I'd like to add one thing. This whole notion of minimum and maximum practice is really key, and I would also say that there are some days when you know that the natural energy that's in your body that day is calling for minimum, but it happens to be the day that you're starting a five-day intensive program that has been on the calendar for a year that people have all been flying in around the world for, and you need to step into that classroom fully.

So energetically your body might be saying today would be the day to go for a walk and to have a nap and to do a minimum practice and do some writing.

Yet, it so happens that on that particular day, you're teaching five days at the start of a certification program that involves working very intensely and deeply with people, as Laura and I teach the advanced coaching programs. So sometimes your energy and the requirements to serve aren't in alignment.

I think what has shifted over time, Marilyn, is our ability to know better how to attend to those periods of time where we had to show up fully when our bodies have wanted to rest. So what do we have to do the week after to really balance that out? You can't just cancel a course because your body has low energy that week, and given that we work very deeply with people on all cylinders, emotionally, spiritually, physically, cognitively, morally, we have to have all of us there. All of 'our parts' have to show up. So those kinds of things have shifted over time regarding balancing out that intensity.

Marilyn: We might cycle back to this because it seems like a really key piece of leading and co-leading and aligning the call of the organization. As we started out, you were saying that ICC has its sort of calling in energy, and that's what you're in service to.



So I'm interested in how the leadership and the organization can do the dance together. As two women running a company, I'd like to know how this has uniquely contributed to the development of both your own feminine and masculine capacities as leaders and how have these capacities informed your leading of ICC?

Laura: Let's see, where to start. Let me think. This is quite something and it is cool that it's two women running a company. I'll answer the question in a minute. But as two women who have been executives in large corporations, when you get to the upper echelons, there are not a lot of women around (maybe there's more now?). So it is fun that the two of us are running the company.

I would say for me, if I just speak about my innate capacities - if we think about feminine and masculine capacities - I tend to be predisposed to more of the feminine needing connection and care and process and fullness and being in the journey and those sorts of things. I know when we first started, that was certainly what I paid attention to or kept bringing to the table or how I would work and how I would do things.

One of the things that I got to see relatively quickly both in running the company and also running our training courses is if I only rely on that, things flow and they're kind of smooth and we travel along. That can really hinder my effectiveness if that's the only thing I'm leaning on. So there has been a lot in my own development around how do I more quickly cut through things, make a decision, and move on it? How do I proactively establish boundaries, establish principles, hold standards, things that clarify things, differentiate things, allow us to see what are the standards and what aren't and so forth.

As I worked on that, what I found was that I became this integration of a quieter, flowing, soft style and very powerful at the same time. And so I found the more that I really try to develop my masculine capacities and then integrate the two of them is that I can comfortably now operate as a full and complete business partner, leader and teacher because I'm attending to both dimensions, if you will. And so I'm enjoying myself a lot more because I have this more integrated blend of masculine and feminine even though I will always have this innate predisposition that I have, but now I've got a much wider range that I think serves everybody a lot better including me.

Marilyn: Thanks, Laura. Joanne, how do you experience this?

Joanne: Well, I would say that when I came into the company, I naturally leaned more on my masculine capacities. Definitely, where Laura was predisposed to fullness and care, I was predisposed to freedom and rights and I'm putting something in place that's going to have action and agency in the world and produce results. So, when we initially came together, it was a great balance between us because we were each bringing these different capacities back when we did everything together.



What's interesting though is that my masculine capacities were sourced from deep care, and the way of carrying out care is different from a masculine perspective versus a feminine perspective. So what ended up happening is that we built a company and we built a coach training program that was really filled out so you could feel both of our feminine capacities around fullness, the wanting to have the full experience, the full connection right to the final detail while delivering actionable results alleviating suffering.

Now, some of that is also filled out by my orienting from the lower right and Laura's bodhisattva way to stay right to the final breath. But what I would say is that the feminine care and wanting to meet somebody right where they are and honor that that person has arrived to this moment in time just fine, well before they ever came across ICC or Joanne or Laura. I think holding people as inherently full and fine comes from more of a feminine capacity that is unique in the coaching world and in our method. If you think about the coaching, a lot of it is about change and becoming something new and having goals and reaching them and so the unstated underpinning is that you weren't okay just as you are. You need to change.

It's never said but because the focus is all on new, new, new, the underlying unsaid statement is, "out with the old." We very much have an include and transcend approach to our work which is about, "You got here just fine" and "Oh, there are some things that you want to bring about now." That you're "up until now" is going to be the platform from which you're going to move into these next things. It is an important include and transcend approach, not an exclude and transcend path.

I think that's a very feminine move - to be able to meet that fullness of a human all the way down to the final inch of them. So I think that over time, what's contributed in a similar way to what Laura talked about building her masculine capacities so that she could actually feel her power as a feminine being, my building of the feminine came from my orienting from the upper left which was very focused on meaning making and wanting to be able to experience other people touching meaning in their lives. That was the path through which my feminine development came - that path of being interested in other people being able to touch what's meaningful to them and being able to fill it out really fully.

So as Laura was developing her masculine capacities and I was developing my feminine capacities, our program got filled out even more all the way down masculine and feminine, all the way down with fullness and freedom, care and rights, standards and love. We would say rigor and intuition, in balance, the spine of the Integral Coach™ and the soft belly of the Integral Coach™ in balance.

As we balanced our feminine and masculine capacities individually, it just exponentially filled out our program. I also think because we're two women rather than a man and a woman running a business, we didn't have any cultural roles to fall into. It was all open territory around what we developed.



Marilyn: Thank you. That's so rich. I must say - just as little foot notes that I'd love to explore possibly at another time - I'm struck by how you see each of your original starting positions and the contrast with the stereotype of the countries from which you originate - so that Laura is talking about the feminine qualities of care. She originates in the USA - this country that's focused on the freedom to pursue life, liberty and happiness. Joanne is focused on the action orientation and she comes from Canada - this country of peace, order and good government. It's almost as if you complement and fill out each other culturally.

I'm also struck by the backgrounds that you both share in sports, which I think perhaps a lot of women don't understand the depth of the sources and resources that you might not really have acquired if you had not come through that sector.

Laura: Those are both really great observations, Marilyn. Thank you.

Joanne: Great observations and I too feel that pull to, "Oh, yes. Let's talk about that now."

Marilyn: Well, I know that when I'm teaching leadership and action research that one of my favorite texts that's gone out of print had the subtitle of *Methods from the Margins*, and it was written by two women who were sports coaches. I always thought that they got so close to something that you've been very focused on delivering with your coaching, as not just the theory but the practice - so the embodiment of what you believe - and that that's how you've discovered that it's possible for others not to walk away with the binder but to really have a deep experience as a coach and as the person they are coaching. So that's very powerful.

Laura: Exactly. That's really great. Thank you.

Marilyn: We've talked a lot about how your journey as leaders and co-leaders has transpired in the last ten years. You've actually been in really pivotal positions because of the people you've been coaching and training to observe others as leaders of other leaders. So looking outside I'm really curious how you might see leadership itself differently now than you did ten years ago and how have you seen leaders themselves change over this last decade?

Joanne: Great. Right now we can talk about other people besides ourselves!

Marilyn: Yes, you can! Well, if we're going to use an AQAL model, we can put aside the left hand quadrant's (not good enough) inferiorities that you've been giving us an insight into and make some observations of the leaders who have been your clients, from the right hand quadrants.



Laura: Yeah, maybe I'll give it a shot first. The one distinction I want to make as far as how my view of others' leadership is now versus ten years ago is the first major chapter of my career was in corporate life. And so I saw leadership and what I thought it was in a very large corporation of 65,000 people. So it was a big company that I was a part of. And then running our company [ICC] as an entrepreneur, it's a very different feeling of "what does leadership mean?" - in my mind at least. And so I kind of have two different views, if you will, or two different chapters and definitions of leadership. I think that where I sit now ten years later or more in running this company is that my regard for anyone who is in a leadership position has grown immensely.

It's hard to lead. It's just hard. And as an entrepreneur, I find that what make it hard are different factors than in a large organization. But in both cases, it takes a lot to stay in and carry out a leadership role over time and sustain a high level of success. So I think I had more criticisms years ago about leaders, even though I was one, and I feel like I have much more empathy in regard to leaders now. So that's one comment that I have right off the bat.

Joanne: I would agree. When I think about all these things I railed against while I was in large corporations - against leadership or bad leadership or senior management until I became senior management and then it was executive management until I became an executive.

Laura: And then it was the other executives.

Joanne: There were the other executives, yeah. I also think leading is a very rewarding job and it's a very, very challenging job. I have great empathy for anybody who has led an organization. It's like when someone reads our website and then calls us up and they want to talk to us because they have ten pieces of advice for our school, even though they have never taken a coaching course or run a company, my immediate response wants to be, "So you go run a coaching school that you developed and built for fifteen years and then let's talk." It's a very different perspective that I have now.

If I was to look at leadership and leaders and what they are facing now that's very different than it was when Laura and I first came together is that the role complexity for leaders is way beyond what it was 10 or 15 years ago. I think it's a huge issue that's facing both entrepreneurial leaders and corporate leaders today which is how to be hitting the bottom line results and caring for your staff, how to be carrying out whatever the standards are that you've set while developing your people, challenging your people to grow and perform while giving them flexible hours, this whole kind of combination of Orange and Green levels of consciousness in business, so it's gotten much, much wider and way more complex.

And a lot of the executives whom we've coached and entrepreneurs whom we've coached and coaches, of course, who graduated from our school and then hung out their own shingles as Integral Master



Coaches™ have faced a role complexity that's really challenging. Supporting executives in managing this role complexity is a real critical piece when they are called on to be a manager, and a leader, and a coach, and a mentor, and a therapist, and the list continues, without giving them the kind of individual developmental support that they need in order to tackle that role complexity. So I'd say for me that the biggest challenge for leaders is role complexity, which is something I've been talking about for the last few years with my clients and students.

For me, the second thing that I see leaders wrestling with is that as their capacities grow to hold more perspectives and to see more over longer periods of time, what comes with that is also seeing all the potentials and all the possibilities and all the things you could do to be of service that you're seeing now for the first time.

And what I found is that the capacity I think leaders need to build, especially heading into second-tier capacities, is when you can see more, and hold more, and know more, and connect to more possibilities, you have to build the capacity to say "no" more. I think it is a challenge for integral leaders to say "no" to many of the things that they now see their second-tier capacities can meet.

It's very hard to say no when you know you can alleviate suffering. And yet, saying no is not a capacity that's celebrated in our culture. I think we're more celebrated if you're a person who always says yes and the person that you can always go to, and they'll always get it done. That's a person that is celebrated. Somebody who is very discerning and says "no" to the opportunities that may impact their strategic focus isn't necessarily someone that's celebrated.

My sense is, as integral leaders, if you can't learn how to say "no" to the millions of possibilities that you now see you could be in service to, it's only going to lead to greater and greater fragmentation. I think as integral leaders, learning to discern when "no" is right action is so critical. The language that Laura and I have often used is, "What's taking care of the tree and what's a pinecone?" If you're scrambling after all the pinecones, the tree may die.

Marilyn: And do you see any difference between men and women leaders? Are they both confronted with this? Are they responding differently?

Joanne: Absolutely. It's both men and women. Because to me, it's not a gender specific capacity, it's a levels issue. As you grow in your level of consciousness and can see wider ways to be of service, and of course to the masculine, it's rights and standards and freedoms and enabling all that, and of course for the feminine, it's care and communion. So there's no difference. What's the same is that they see more and more things they could do and also the ways that they would carry it out. The ability to say "no" at that level is equally challenging for men and women.



I think that in lower levels, where there's more traditional gender roles, it is harder for women to say "no" than for men to say "no." But I think at higher levels, for integral leaders, I think there's a challenge for both men and women learning how to say "no" when there are so many ways of serving. We have seen integral businesses not succeed, whether they've been run by men or women because of their inability to say, "No, this is not part of my mandate," especially when the ability to take in something integrally lets you see all the opportunities for whatever you're developing. So we have served as board members for different integral companies and we have consistently delivered the message, you need to be saying "no" to about 80% of these opportunities, requests, etcetera in order for you to establish a non-fragmented service that's actually delivering on the integral promise.

Marilyn: So it sounds like what I hear you both saying is that one of the great needs for being able to excel at leadership at pretty well all levels these days is discernment, a lot of discernment of right work, of purpose, of how to be of service and at the same time being able to take care of yourself so you can be of service.

Laura: Marilyn, I'd add one thing, it is discernment, as you say, with what I would describe as skilful means because it's not about just saying, "No, go away." It's how to skilfully navigate your discernment, and that is very tricky for all the reasons Joanne just described of what people expect and so on and so forth.

Joanne: And I would say if we had followed all the pinecones that were brought to our attention in the early years of ICC, there wouldn't be an ICC today.

Marilyn: Great. That's a beautiful image. Thank you. So speaking about today, after you've said that you marked ten years in operation in April 2013, now we're in October 2014 - so that's eleven and a half years. How are you celebrating? Did you celebrate in April 2013 or how would you celebrate now if you had it to-do-over again?

Joanne: Well, champagne, really good champagne. Actually our last graduating class bought us a bottle of champagne bottled in 2003, the year we formed Integral Coaching Canada. So we had that champagne this year.

Laura: That's always been one thing that we do when something is really important. We love to have some sort of ritual around a great bottle of champagne and then a really good discussion. We just love that for some reason.

Marilyn: And is that an intimate tête-à-tête between the two of you or do you bring others in from your team or how do you do that?



Joanne: It's both. We always have an intimate, just the two of us, ritual because we know the full inside story and we're the only two actually who have been here from the beginning.

And so, we want to make sure that we were celebrating that. We had some questions that we made up for our celebration ritual that we asked and answered with each other, and some of them were looking back and some of them were looking forward. Then, we also had a celebration with our team, which was also really a blast because our team has been growing and so that was fun.

And then one of the most meaningful things for us is that every year we've taught a mastery workshop. Our mastery workshops are just for graduates of our Integral Coaching® Certification Program, so people who have completed the ICCP join the Integral Coaching® Consortium. So, then, we have mastery workshops for them once a year.

This past year we got together and celebrated our decade in business. The reason we celebrated this year is because last year we were supposed to teach the mastery workshop on our ten-year anniversary, but Laura was diagnosed with breast cancer in the spring of 2013, and so we had to cancel the mastery workshop that year.

So, all of the graduates and Laura and I got together in 2014 instead. What we didn't know is that the graduates worked with each other around the world and professionally made a video of all of the graduates thanking us for something we brought that had changed their lives. And so in the middle of the mastery workshop, they sat us down to watch the video and they had great joy in watching the two of us crying.

Laura: Yeah. We each had our own box of Kleenex.

Joanne: They sat us down in two chairs and then gave us each a box of Kleenex and then started the video on this huge screen. There were about 150 of us there and it was very moving. It was one of those times, Marilyn, where sometimes we're so busy in the day-to-day stuff in the company that we can forget all the impact it has made in the world. And what was so great about what they did was we couldn't ignore what had come through us – because we don't take all the credit for it - but we couldn't ignore the impact that it had in people's lives. So, it was a very, very moving experience.

I'd say those were the major celebrations. And, as you would probably expect now, as you're getting to know us more fully, the next thing we did in 2013 was break apart the structure of our current Integral Coaching® Certification Program to bring in more use of tele opportunities and social media. We changed it from a two-module program into a step-wise developmental three-module program and brought in all of the changes that we wanted over the last few years. I think one of the things that we're always willing to do is break the mold and make it stronger.



And so in 2013, we broke the mold and positioned our Integral Coaching® Certification Program (ICCP) for its next ten years. So ICCP 2.0 was launched in the middle of 2013. It's the same program, the same number of training hours, but it's completely reconfigured to support our best vision of how to grow an Integral Coach™ now.

And then we also started really deep strategic conversations in early 2013 - or maybe even in 2012 – about Integral Coaching Canada 2.0. What is our corporation going to look like in the next ten years? What is its new vision? Which pinecones do we want to develop into trees? Who do we need on the team? We just brought in a new VP of Business Development a few months ago. We're always radically willing to change what's already working really well into something that might serve even more and even better. So, I think part of the celebration has also been being willing to change it all up.

Marilyn: New emergence, another birth.

Joanne: Another birth, yeah.

Joanne: Yes. It's very, very, exciting in terms of how we can serve more powerfully in the world. Also, how we can continue to serve our graduate community that's grown in the world as well. So right now, we have a lot of different things in the hopper that will probably start being seen in the world in late 2015. We'll definitely keep you posted.

Marilyn: As leaders, how do you actually reenergize yourselves? You've spoken a little bit about this and that's echoed throughout our whole interview. Even before we started, you spoke about your lake house. Would you like to just share with us how you are reenergizing yourself and creating the conditions for your own health to re-emerge?

Laura: There are a couple of things, but before I say how we do this, I'm going to go back to when Joanne talked earlier about the intensity when we're teaching really extensively and so forth.

One of the things that we discovered and I'm not sure how we discovered it - maybe you can remember, Joanne? - we started realizing that in our intense teaching and also the intensity of leading the company, if you think about it, there are certain muscles that get exercised when you're leading. You're having to make a lot of decisions. You're having to plan a lot. You're having to process a lot of information. You're having to be in a lot of discussions and so forth.

If you think of those as muscles, and also when you're teaching, you're "on" at all levels and you're taking in people's worlds and discerning what's the right thing to say as well as instruction and so on. What we began to understand is that there were certain muscles, if you will, that get really heavily



worked in our work. To boil it down for me, the one muscle that feels like it gets a lot of work and that feels over worked, for me, is what I call my "figure-it-out muscle" where I'm having to figure out things all of the time. So one of the ways that I reenergize is to make sure I'm engaging in some activities on a regular basis that don't require figuring something out.

Marilyn: Such as?

Laura: Such as I climb in my kayak and just start paddling out, not really knowing where I'm going to go. And I'll just wander around in my kayak trying to feel something calling me and I'm not figuring anything out, I'm not figuring out, "Well, I have one hour and so it takes me fifteen minutes to paddle here and so then that means I can only paddle there." So that would be an example.

Another one for me is what I call my wandering time. I'll take some time in an afternoon, and I'll go down to the Ottawa Byward Market and just wander around. I don't have a list. I'm not buying anything. I may buy something, but I'm just wandering around, engaging on whatever I feel like engaging in so that I'm connected but I'm not figuring out a thing.

That somehow really helps me, especially after I'm teaching or after a really intense time. Gardening at the lake where it's not a manicured garden. It's wild. I can mow the lawn and who cares if the edges aren't quite trimmed. So I find things that allow me to move physically, usually, but without a lot of attention to detail or having to make any major decisions. That's a huge one for me.

Now that I learned about "not figuring anything out," I can readily employ that approach to whatever degree I need. Do I need an afternoon like that? Do I need a week like that? Do I need two weeks like that? So that's one of mine.

Marilyn: Great. Thank you. That's a great example. What about you, Joanne?

Joanne: It sounds so sophisticated, doesn't it?

Marilyn: Well, it does. Actually it's great insight. It's a wonderful insight.

Joanne: I would echo Laura because it's been something we've worked on together and realized for both of us. Our figure-it-out muscles are the muscles that are overworked, whether that's the figure-it-out muscle of what to say to students, how to best work with them in their development to the figure-it-out on a strategic business decision. As leaders, there is no lack of figure-it-out muscle exercises that we are in every day. And so for me, being in nature is really critical, to be reminded of wider rhythms that have nothing to do with my decisions that day.



So watching the loons on our lake, going for a walk on the country lane, moving my body, not cardio exercise but just moving my body because it just wants to move, but it doesn't really have a purpose that it's heading towards. It just likes to move. I love swimming in the lake. Laura loves to kayak and I love to swim. I like plunging into water and just going for however long my body feels like going, and so that whole notion of being with space and time differently now that we've been spending more time in the country. We are deeply connected to the changing seasons. We have seen the deer come and leave. We're seeing hundreds of loons now gathering on the lake getting ready to migrate.

And so there is also something that's very soothing about being connected to the cycles that are happening all the time. When we are in cities, we may not be aware of the larger cycles of birth and death, of seasons arising and falling away. This is really rejuvenating for me and always has been, but we're readily experiencing it especially in this last year since we bought our cottage.

I think the other for me and I think it's along the same lines that Joan Halifax Roshi (Roshi of the Upaya Zen Center in Santa Fe) talks about - especially as we get older - which is the balancing of the in-breath and the out-breath; the in-breath being those times when you are being rejuvenated and having it come inside of you, whether that's nature or wandering time as Laura does or walking down a country lane. The in-breath balancing the out-breath, which is the time when you're out in the world, manifesting in the world, being active in the world. The key is learning how to start really balancing, especially as we get older, the deep wisdom that's available to us in the in-breath and the deep wisdom that's available to us when we're manifesting out.

And so, a key practice of mine continues to be, "What is this balance of in-breath and out-breath in my own life?" Of course, my writing practice is a deep way of rejuvenating for me as Laura's tai chi practice is, but this whole notion of in-breath and out-breath is really key.

And then lastly, just being able to have friends and family up at our cottage has really enabled a different kind of play. Similar to Laura, given that our work is so complex, I love just cutting down dead trees, pulling weeds, chopping brush away.

Laura: Yeah. I was going to say that.

Joanne: Manual, physical labor that is so satisfying. Cut the dead tree, chop it up, use it as firewood. It's very practical. It doesn't have a whole lot of complex integral theory associated with it. I mean I could do a whole four quadrant analysis of cutting down the dead tree but I don't. And so just the physical, manual labor, especially having been in such intense intimate personal development with human beings, has been a great balancer in the last year.



Marilyn: Wonderful. Thank you. I feel refreshed just listening to your examples. I'm having a virtual in-breath refresher here. So I'm coming to our last question, which I can see is bringing us back to the portal.

But in this case I'm also asking you to just give us a little bit of your wisdom now that you have 11 to 15 years of looking back through the portal that you opened, and you have made some observations about what leaders need in the world these days. For those leaders who sense a calling to open a new portal, do you have some recommendations that you'd like to leave us with? I know this question is like how to write something in 25 words, but I'm looking for an essence. I think your own story is a huge reflection for anybody who would want to do it, but if somebody had been there with you 11 or 15 years ago and whispered in your ear now what you know today, what could it have been?

Joanne: So from a dark, humorous perspective the whisper is, "Run. Run quick. Get out while you can!" No, I'm just kidding, but I think the whisper that comes to mind for me if I could whisper it, you know sometimes we've been called integral's grandmothers and people have called us looking for wisdom, support, and advice. I love that term. It makes me feel very warm. I think the whisper that I would say is start small so that you can start. Don't wait for the big vision that is going to be earth shattering. Start small so that you get started and then listen. And revise and adjust and listen and revise and adjust, but the key is to start. And don't start with all of it. Just start with the first thing and then see where it goes.

Laura: Can I just add something to that? One of the things that "just starting" enables is that you start to establish a product or you start to establish a service or whatever it is, and so you start building credibility small and upwards versus I have a vision of a big thing but I don't yet have a product that I'm offering.

Joanne: Like there is no there, there.

Laura: There is no there, there. And so then it makes it hard for you to sell something really large when there is no there, there.

There's another one that comes to mind. I'm trying also not to repeat things that we've said so far because some of what we would offer has already been woven throughout this conversation, I think. The first one that popped in mind has already been said. And that is that bigger isn't always better. It's a corollary to what Joanne just said, but it's more about following your own whisper for the right scale. So there is something about making sure you're listening to your own kind of inner guidance around your choice of scale or size versus following a template out there that says it's got to be this big or it's got to be this [whatever] for it to work. Because you can become disconnected from being guided internally, and that disconnect is going to really hurt you down the road.



Joanne: And if I can build on that. Our culture tends to celebrate bigger, the same way we can talk about, "Oh, ICC went global," as though that's better than if ICC had just stayed serving in Canada. I hope we would have done this interview as leaders even if ICC had not gone global because of the power of this work on its own merit. So, do not be afraid to just say "no." We're not necessarily interested in bigger, which we said for many years until ICC had its own whisper that was different than the voices of Joanne and Laura.

The other one that I would add is that if you can, and this is true inside organizations or as entrepreneurs, find a partner, work with someone else. What we have found in our own relationship is Joanne plus Laura equals a million. And what I can say from experience in having worked with a lot of leaders is one plus one never equals two; it's always more than two.

And so if you have the opportunity to work with an adjacent other closely, it builds your capacities in the lower left for sure, it builds your capacities interpersonally, and it will take your visions to places that you couldn't imagine if you had been by yourself. So I would encourage people inside organizations to find a partner who you're initiating new ideas with and also for entrepreneurs to also widen their capacities to look at what's possible together.

And I don't mean that in a Green, let's all hold hands and create a big community way of delivering. I'm saying it with my more masculine capacities. It produces different results. It actually creates an agency that is pretty powerful. I've been uniquely surprised, as someone who orients from the upper left. I've never been drawn to being and creating with others. I've been more of a solitary being who likes to sit by myself and write.

And so getting to work with Laura has been this amazing privilege for me, and it stretched me more than I ever thought I would be stretched. It's making me quite emotional. And I could never have imagined that I would grow as a being and as a leader if I hadn't been working with a partner that's in the "we've met our match" category. So that would be another personal whisper, if I were to be listened to by anyone.

Marilyn: Thank you, Joanne.

Joanne: You're welcome.

Marilyn: Thank you. Laura, is there anything else, any little nugget that's coming up that you wish to share?

Laura: No, I have been trying to - as Joanne was talking, of course I was listening to you Joanne! - think of things we have said so far, and I feel like throughout this discussion there's been a number of



places where I felt like we said things that might be those kind of whispers in someone's ear.

I think I have one more that comes to mind now. I talked long enough but now something is echoing back. I think there is another thing. We talked a minute ago about start small and build something and so on and so forth, but as a corollary to that is that being willing to break form to enable something new to emerge. You know sometimes when we make something and it's really working and it's humming along, we can really start to get pretty attached to it, and we need to develop the ability to say, "You know what? We're going to break that form and something is going to birth that's better than before." Leaders need to be willing to make that move with that sort of faith. I think I would advise that for leaders. Every time we've broken form, the results have exceeded whatever we thought would happen and we totally trust that action now. I think that's it. Those are the only things I could think of.

Marilyn: Well, for opening portals, I think those are very rich, rich sharings and whispers. Thank you. Happy Thanksgiving. I hope you can spend it at the lake.

About the Interviewees

Laura Divine is the Co-Founder of Integral Coaching Canada, a global coach training company headquartered in Canada's capital. Laura has dedicated her life to the development of human beings, investing extensively in advancing her knowledge of coaching, human resource capacity building and leadership development. Spending fifteen years in the telecommunications industry, she accumulated comprehensive executive experience in change execution, total quality management and coaching implementation within large scale systems before turning her attention to building her own company.

Laura is the lead trainer of faculty and staff at Integral Coaching Canada, ensuring the wisdom of her training architecture and approach to human development is deeply transmitted. She is described as a gentle yet powerful force who brings the precision of embodied wisdom and a steadfast stamina that leaves people astounded. Laura's long-term Zen and tai chi practices are profound sources of sustenance for her as a leader in complex times.

Joanne Hunt is the Co-Founder of Integral Coaching Canada, a global coach training company headquartered in Ottawa, Ontario. Joanne is a passionate visionary rooted in a deep commitment to wholeness and health. Prior to building ICC, she spent fifteen years in senior leadership positions in three multi-national corporations where it was her exceptional ability to get to the 'heart of the matter' that enabled her to powerfully influence, design and implement developmental change initiatives.

Joanne profoundly intertwined Science and Soul in building ICC's coach training programs, informed by her corporate career, never-ceasing study of healthy adult growth, deep Zen and writing practices, embodied application of integral principles, employing the structure and disciplined practice of a martial arts lineage, all housed within a container of love and uncompromising standards. Joanne is the lead strategic designer of ICC's graduate programs and corporate initiatives, providing embodied leadership, unique curriculum innovation and powerful transmission.

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