

GW4W Think Tank Proceedings:

Gender Equity and Healthy Leadership

June 11, 2019

The Breakers Palm Beach,
Palm Beach, Florida



Global Women 4 Wellbeing would like to thank
The Breakers Palm Beach for serving as the
host site for our inaugural GW4W Think Tank
and **Jessica Grossmeier, PhD, MPH, Vice
President, HERO-Health and GW4W
Advisory Board Member** for authoring the
white paper based on notes from the Summit.

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WHAT WOULD THE WORLD LOOK LIKE IF WE HAD MORE GENDER BALANCE IN LEADERSHIP IN THE WORKPLACE?

Mim Senft, Co-Founder/CEO of Global Women 4 Wellbeing

What would the world look like if we had more gender balance in leadership in the workplace? Would we have more successful, sustainable organizations? Consider examples of two female teenagers who aspired to leadership and how their circumstances differed.

The first is Joan of Arc, a teenage girl with a vision, who convinces a king to go to war, and dresses up as a boy to lead the army. While her courage and leadership are inspiring, things didn't end well for Joan. What is it about women in power that is considered a threat?

Next consider Elsa, a fictional character in the movie, "Frozen." Elsa discovers at an early age that she has a special power and it's scary. Her parents convince her that it is dangerous and bad to express her gifts. They command her to repress her power and isolate her so others do not discover the secret.

One of the differences between Elsa and Joan of Arc is that Elsa had a sister who believed in her and would not give up on her. When Elsa ran away, her sister went after her, but she didn't do so alone. She had a diverse cast of characters supporting her in her quest. By the

end of the movie, Elsa began to see herself as good and to assume a leadership role that harnessed her special gifts while her sister also grew to assume a different type of leadership.

Unfortunately, when it comes to achieving gender equity in leadership, our real-life challenges will not be resolved in the short-term or even within a generation. According to the World Economic Forum, at the current pace it will take another 108 years to reach gender equality in the workplace.¹

The June 11 GW4W Think Tank discussions were not intended to solve for the challenges we face in achieving gender equity, but rather to reach a common understanding about what it means. Those without a vision for their final destination are not likely to reach it and so we must begin by understanding what it means to have gender equity and envision a model for healthy leadership that balances the positive attributes of both feminine and masculine traits.

After more than 35 global events with the GW4W network, a common thread has been the focus on understanding why gender equity is going backwards, not forwards.

This is the first of many formal conversations we plan to have with diverse audiences which includes the voices of women and men, spans a range of ages, crosses a mosaic of racial and ethnic perspectives, and covers a broad array of industries.

Attendees at the GW4W Think Tank were selected with diversity in mind. Leadership at all levels came from business, academic and community organizations, including both women and men from varied industries, different ages, ethnic, cultural and religious viewpoints, and a variety of leadership experiences.

These proceedings capture this seminal dialogue and establishes the first brick in a broader foundation that will be laid over the coming months to establish a common vision for our end goal: gender equity in the workplace and a model for healthy leadership. Once established, we can build a strategic framework and plot a roadmap towards that future destination.

¹ Cann O. 108 years: Wait for gender equality gets longer as women's share of workforce, politics drops. World Economic Forum News Release. December 18, 2018. <https://www.weforum.org/press/2018/12/108-years-wait-for-gender-equality-gets-longer-as-women-s-share-of-workforce-politics-drops/>



IT'S AN EVOLUTION, NOT A REVOLUTION — THE BREAKERS' JOURNEY TOWARDS GENDER EQUITY IN LEADERSHIP

Denise Bober, Senior Vice President of Human Resources and Tricia Taylor, Executive Vice President & General Manager of The Breakers Palm Beach

GW4W Introduction: It's a bold strategy that one hopes for in gathering a group of extraordinarily accomplished and busy professionals at an irresistibly desirable location and tap into a shared passion and common mission that engages their target audience. GW4W's inaugural Think Tank was held at The Breakers resort in Palm Beach, FL, renowned for its historic significance, its elegance, architectural beauty, exemplary service and its dedication to employee wellbeing. A tantalizing destination that supports rest and relaxation was one of the many reasons for choosing this 2019 AAA Five Diamond Award winner resort. But perhaps the best reason for its selection is due to its reputation for caring for its own - the true winning nature of this world-renowned establishment – its people.

The Think Tank theme of gender equity in leadership is personal and highly relevant to The Breakers' story, including those of Denise Bober, Senior VP of HR and Tricia Taylor, Executive VP & General Manager, who collectively, have been with this organization for more than 50 years.

Denise began working at The Breakers in 1988 as an executive assistant to the director of human resources. It was love at first sight as she stepped into The Breakers on her first day and took in the beauty of the buildings, the grounds, and its location on Palm Beach Island. But it was also an ideal fit for her personal passion for taking care of people. This first role ignited an aspiration to someday succeed her boss in becoming the director of HR, so she continued her formal education by obtaining a Master of Science degree in organizational leadership and development. Her professional goal was realized when she was promoted to The Breakers' Director of Human Resources position in 1997, and it was surpassed with subsequent promotions to Vice President in 2015 and Senior Vice President in 2019. Denise was exhilarated and honored, considering it a real privilege to be entrusted with hiring and developing people, aligning the individual talents and qualifications of applicants with the organization's needs.

Tricia first joined The Breakers in 1996 as an assistant executive

housekeeper. Progressing through the Rooms Division, she was promoted to hotel manager in 2002, while earning her Master's Degree in Business Administration with honors at Florida Atlantic University. She became General Manager in 2010 and in 2015 was promoted to Senior Vice President. In February 2019, Tricia was promoted to the Executive Vice President & General Manager position.

These are not the only women who have been promoted into executive leadership. For many years, The Breakers has had a focus on developing both women and men and have promoted many women into senior roles across divisions in their organization. Part of the overall culture of care and wellbeing includes an eye on making sure there is leadership equity across gender. Their CEO, Paul Leone, has been an outspoken advocate for mentoring and advancing female talent in their organization and considers gender inclusion at all levels a key focus of the overall success of The Breakers.

While The Breakers is currently recognized and certified as a





Great Place to Work®, this was not always the case. As Denise began her leadership role in employment management, annual turnover rates were at 100%. Anyone who wanted a job was hired after meeting the most basic criteria because they needed the workers and employees were let go whenever a guest complained about poor service. This was very costly for the organization and they needed to make hiring and staff relations a higher priority.

This started at the very top of the organization as a strategic Board discussion, and in 2000, The Breakers began to invest in a “Culture of Care.” The time-honored hospitality industry maxim of “the customer is always right” is a primary focus on team member (employee) satisfaction. CEO Paul Leone, said at the time, “what would happen if we put team members first and guest satisfaction second?”

This didn’t happen overnight; it was a process. But they rebuilt the culture one hire at a time, gradually weeding out the people who were not contributing to this Culture of Care and intentionally replaced them with team members who were a better fit.

The Culture of Care model at The Breakers was a key driver in their approach to wellness. The

first priority was on team member satisfaction, then guest satisfaction. Financial results and social impact followed. Now, 20 years after that strategic decision was made, retention rates are at 80%. Such organizational successes allowed them to reinvest in team members and in the community. Some of the improvements in guest amenities and service have come from team members themselves who are engaged in the organization’s mission.

While Denise was a strong champion for wellness, she noted that it wouldn’t have gone anywhere without the support of the owners, the CEO, and the rest of the executive leadership team. Things evolved slowly with one decision at a time and one program at a time, including gender equity. There was no magic bullet. It required some trial and error and diverse leadership being involved in helping to build a program that worked for all their employees.

In terms of their rise to leadership at The Breakers, Denise and Tricia offered the following tips:

- **Be your authentic self.** It’s essential to be self aware and accept who you are, recognizing one’s own strengths. We grow up and try to be well liked and fit in but eventually we learn that trying to be someone that we are

not doesn’t get us too far in life. Be true to who you are and don’t be afraid of letting your voice be heard.

- **Persevere through rejection.** We can’t be everything to everyone and that means we’ll suffer some rejections and failures along the way. Never surrender who you are or your core values and beliefs to try to fit someone else’s mold. Never surrender your identity by trying to be who others think you ought to be.
- **Gender equity and diversity are critical to a culture of wellbeing.** You cannot have a culture of wellness without gender equity and valuing diversity. According to a 2017 Gallup report, only 34% of employees reported being engaged in their work.² This underscores the importance of how people feel they are treated at work by their superiors and their peers. There is a connection to attraction and retention of top talent, as well as worker performance, which drives organizational success. There is a measurable, economic business case for investing in a better culture for employees and higher gender equity.

² Gallup. State of the American Workplace. 2017. <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/238085/state-american-workplace-report-2017.aspx>

MOVING TOWARDS A COMMON UNDERSTANDING OF GENDER EQUITY

Nancy Board, MSW, Co-Founder/COO of Global Women 4 Wellbeing

Movement towards gender equity is galvanized by organizational case studies like that of The Breakers because they serve as role models and shed light on the potential drivers of success. But there is also value in understanding what it means to be successful. Nancy Board facilitated interactive discussions on what it means to achieve gender equity. After some quiet individual reflection on the words or phrases that come to mind when we think about gender equity, small group discussions focused on collectively creating a definition of gender equity which were refined and reported out to the larger group. A selection of definitions includes:

- The freedom to meet your full potential as a human being in a safe environment.
- Opportunities without barriers and the resources needed to achieve success on each person's own terms.
- Looking at people for their role and not their perceived gender.
- Meeting people where they are and factoring in the things that really matter.
- Respecting and honoring each person's similarities and differences to create an inclusive and respectful culture.
- The opportunity for all genders to

be emotionally intelligent without recourse, have fair pay, security, and balance in life and be their authentic self.

- All genders have the same opportunities, development, rewards/recognition, decisional authority, leadership roles, access to resources, voices heard, mentorship, and supports.
- Equal security (job and pay) and equal decision making.
- Authentically being yourself, which includes a level playing field where you are heard, understood, and recognized.

Commonalities among these definitions include access to the same opportunities to succeed, equal benefits and recognition for one's work, and the ability to fully contribute. When asked to consider what terms were missing from these definitions, three stood out: wisdom, equity, and open communication.

The next round of discussion focused on what it means to be successful. How will we know when gender equity has been achieved? What does it look like? Smaller table groups were combined to fuel creative energy, with teams encouraged to conduct standing discussions at flip charts placed around the room. Specific

contributions are listed below:

- ***Our children and grandchildren say, "this used to be a thing?"*** when they learn about the imbalances in gender equity that exist today. We will have succeeded when gender equity has become the norm and it is shocking or shameful when there are exceptions. Gender inequity becomes part of history while gender equity becomes standard operating procedures in our organizations.
- ***We no longer need special initiatives to address gender equity*** because targets have been achieved. There are no special interest groups because we have equitable gender access, financial standing, influence, leadership, respect, value, and inclusion.
- ***People are happy in their jobs.*** The general happiness quotient has increased. There is success and innovation in whatever environment you are in. Organizations experience demonstrable improvements in employee joy, low turnover, less sick time, financial gains, and innovation.
- ***Authenticity in hiring.*** Hiring practices are based on knowledge, emotional intelligence, experience, skills, and expertise above the adjective of an individual's gender.



Central amongst these visions of success is the identification of metrics and the establishment of gender equity as a norm. It's not enough to say, "this will happen someday." We need specific goals and a time line if we want to create environments where more gender equity can be created.

While our facilitated discussions were intentionally **not** aimed at developing strategies or tactics to achieve success in gender equity, we discovered it's impossible to gather a group of smart, action-oriented leaders and not observe some discussion around how to accomplish a stated goal. Some

suggestions for future consideration are to:

- Empower all generations to consider their role.
 - Make diversity and gender equity training standard academic curricula.
 - Provide parents with training and guidance on how to consider gender equity - breaking down traditional gender stereotypes from birth onward.
 - Build a stronger business case with results from diversity and equity intervention.
 - Align rewards and recognition for achievement of gender equity goals.
- Offer empathy, emotional intelligence, and compassion training.
 - Create role models by intentionally placing qualified women in top leadership roles, including women of diversity.
 - Stop pushing - It has to be a pull.
 - Recognize that barriers to women in leadership can be different for women of diversity and/or in different parts of the world.

Additional ideas were captured on flip charts, generating potential topics for future Think Tank discussions including actionable and measurable steps forward.



VISUALIZING HEALTHY LEADERSHIP AS A BALANCE OF THE BEST OF FEMININE AND MASCULINE TRAITS

Sean Harvey, Founder/CEO of Symponia Studios and Co-Founder of Gender ARC

Sean Harvey opened the session by reflecting on his own leadership journey. After many years in a consulting role for Wall Street firms that embraced more traditional masculine models of leadership, he became increasingly frustrated with the cultural environment and the limited impact of his engagements so decided to leave for an in-house position. After eight months of interviews with Eileen Fisher (2 months for job fit and 6 months for culture fit), he accepted an offer as an internal Organization Development Partner for Creative. On his first day, his two bosses sat him down for lunch and said, “you’ve proven yourself in the interview process, we now want you to stop proving yourself and learn to “be.” Take this time to come into your true authentic self, your best self.” Sean saw this as permission to let go of his mask and begin an inner exploration.

This launched a time of discovery in which his employer supported his forays into co-creating the purpose and personal transformation journey for Eileen Fisher leaders and employees. Sean was sent to an artist commune in Canada to learn to incorporate the arts into creative facilitation, redefining healthy masculinity inspired by feminine leadership principles and practices, and became an advocate for gender equity by better understanding gender dynamics.

One of the insights Sean learned about the leaders he observed while working on Wall Street and with Eileen Fisher is that everyone possesses a mix of both

masculine and feminine energies and characteristics. He kept asking himself, what if more men had been exposed to what he and the other men at Eileen Fisher had experienced, and what if more organizations operated from a more integrated and balanced approach, leveraging the best of masculine and feminine qualities in their business models and in leadership?

To open the discussion, Sean led the room in a guided visualization to transition from the gender equity conversation to a discussion on healthy leadership. He asked the audience to reflect on the leaders they had experienced in their careers and to gradually focus their attention on specific leaders who had the most impact and truly inspired them. He then asked the group to reflect on the type of leader they aspire to be, the impact they want to have on their direct reports, and how they want to be remembered as leaders.

As the group embarked on the first interactive discussion exercise, Sean asked, “what thoughts come to mind as you hear the words masculine leadership and feminine leadership?” While the group was asked to focus on masculine versus feminine qualities and not on a specific gender, many in the room still gravitated towards a more gendered response.

The first two table discussions in this segment focused on identifying words that come to mind when thinking about terms associated with feminine and masculine leadership. The lists generated

include both desirable and undesirable traits (see Table 1).

The groups were asked to not make judgments about the terms or come to consensus if the terms fit into the categories listed. Even so, there were some strong emotive responses to the question and the terms “masculine and feminine” leadership. Many of the reactions to the words masculine and feminine leadership became gendered as “male and female” leadership. Sean asked the group what story or narrative was at play to make the leap from masculine to male and feminine to female. The group was reminded that healthy leadership represents an integration of both categories of characteristics, and that our goal is to consider healthy leadership without regard to gender. Yet there is still a great deal of tension and inequity in the workplace in regard to gender. Therefore, this conversation is more critical than ever as we explore how to move toward a more integrated approach to healthy leadership through the lens of gender equity.

The point of the exercise was not to solve for how we fix current leadership styles but rather naming our perceptions and observations based on individual experiences, recognizing conscious and unconscious bias. Naming the current state served as a foundation for the group to consider the traits desired in our leaders, both from a historical perspective and potentially what is needed in both our current and future working environment.

LOOKING FORWARD: WHAT'S OUR NEXT QUESTION?

Mim Senft, Co-Founder/CEO of Global Women 4 Wellbeing

While GW4W will be conducting more Think Tank discussions around these topics, the group was also asked to individually reflect on *What's Next?* in order to move our conversations forward. Responses were not edited but were categorized into the following broad groups.

Identify Strategies/Process for Change

- How do we create a healthy, inclusive and thriving culture in order to support every person in advancing to their highest potential? What can I do today to be a person who lives this change?
- How did organizations with higher levels of gender equity get there? What strategies are transferable to other organizations?
- How? Specific strategies/ approaches. More conversation about measures.
- More specific action steps to get to what healthy leadership. We want to get to the action not more conversations. Let's do it.
- How do we move forward? How can we empower people to take action? Bring this group back together once white paper is done to discuss next steps/action items.
- How can we move these ideas into actual practice into the workplace?
- How do we impact work cultures in a way to not see categories? Know and appreciate differences which can be masculine, feminine, in turn the variances of this in culture, religion, personality styles.
- How do we create a culture where we have equity for all?
- How are we going to institutionalize healthy leadership

into the workplace?

- How do we create more role models and mentors?
- How do you find your joy/love and marry that with your vocation? To impact others and make a difference/cultural change.
- How do we gain momentum to move this forward? We have identified/defined gender equity and have a framework for gender leadership characteristics.
- How do you practically define healthy leadership?

Training

- Healthy leadership training. Women + Men = 1
- What is the role of training?
- What are tangible steps we can take to ensure future leaders are equipped with skills to be healthy leaders?

Diverse Voices, Including Men

- How do we bring together men and women for conversation to understand, then develop strategies to move forward toward equity?
- How do we bring men into the conversation regarding women and men equity?
- What do we need to do to bring men to the table, so we are not just women speaking to other women?
- All this needs to be asked in a diverse group of men.
- How do we add views of minorities and under privileged groups to the conversation?
- How do we include more men into the conversation? How do we include more diversity of race, ethnicity, and culture into the conversation?

Focus on Next Generations

- How do we change the influences and biases that start even before birth of a child based on gender?
- How do we bring girls and boys together to have conversations around gender equity?
- How do we help parents to raise children that are gender blind, especially our boys?

Identify the Bright Spots

- What organization represents what we are striving for? We must identify the organizations that are leading the way.
- How does GW4W embody and socialize what healthy leadership is beyond a white paper? Case studies? Transformation of gender bias. Stories of transformation? Women in top leadership roles (mentorship, videos).
- What are highlights, case studies, role models of healthy leaders – examples to learn from. Instead of negatives and only conversations, let's look for examples from both genders. Understand and share how (tactics) they got there. First steps in the process. Recognition and encouragement.

Focused Work with Executive Leaders

- Who are going to be the leaders that move the needle? C-Level/ Executive? Which associations and organizations can collectively impact change in leadership in corporations?
- Get more women on Boards. Cultural exchange program with alpha males.

Framework for Change

- What are the underlying social structures in how business and

community organizations are organized? What is the ideological framework that needs to be clearly identified in these social structures? How can we change the ideological framework?

- Creating systems and making systemic changes. Part of onboarding of every organization.
- Are we able to influence existing

organizations entrenched in unhealthy leadership styles?

Research

- More research on empathy difference between men and women. Gender bias, cultural bias, health inequity that impacts leadership, etc.
- More research on empathy among men and women

- Research the gaps.
- Where are the data/evidence on what makes a healthy leader?
- How do we get a better understanding of the drivers of exclusion of women and minorities in the highest levels of leadership? Then how do we address them?
- What are barriers to embodying healthy leadership?



Conclusion

The June 2019 GW4W Summit at The Breakers represents the first think tank dialogue aimed at gaining consensus around what it means to achieve gender equity in the workplace and how to embrace a balance of masculine and feminine characteristics as a model for healthy leadership. Organizations like The Breakers serve as an example to others that aspire to achieve organizational excellence and industry leadership by prioritizing the health and wellbeing of their employees, recognizing that gender equity is an essential element. This inaugural think tank, building off of more than 30 GW4W events, serves as a model for future GW4W programs that include diverse voices across the globe to create a shared vision for what gender equity looks like and how it is applied to models for healthy leadership.

One of the central challenges to addressing gender equity is that many organizations are still rooted in a predominately male oriented leadership culture. In order for true change to occur, more top male leadership needs to be actively involved in the gender equity discussion and be committed to positive change. There needs to be more consensus around what gender equity is and what the economic, social and health benefits are to organizations and communities.

Additionally, gender equity needs to include awareness of the challenges for women of color and other minorities; for those whose voices are rarely at the decision table. Those of us who can speak up must speak for those who can't if we truly want to create an equitable world.

Without a clear consensus around the goals for gender equity, a better understanding of healthy leadership models, more quality research, and the development of more strategic solutions, organizations will continue to be challenged to close the gender equity gap for leadership in all professions. By bringing diverse leaders together - business, academia, and community - it opens opportunities to explore gender equity – and all its complexities – and to address and better understand the personal and cultural biases that continue to negatively impact women in the workplace. It also helps to recognize the historic models of male leadership that perpetuate the gender gap.

GW4W will be at The Breakers again in June of 2020 to build on information gathered over the year. We will be inviting leaders to come together, share their knowledge and experience, and collectively move towards more strategic solutions to close the gender equity gap.

APPENDIX

GW4W Think Tank Attendees:

Name	Titles	Company/Organization
Dr. Alina Alonzo	Director	Florida Dept. of Health
Kelsey Anderson	Chief of Staff	Financial Finesse
Nancy Board MSW	Co-Founder/COO	Global Women 4 Wellbeing
Denise Bober	Senior Vice President - Human Resources	The Breakers Palm Beach
Shaillee Chopra	Principal/CIO	Lumina Health Partners
Laura L. Ciel, MA PsyD	Co-Founder/CEO	NineQ LLC
Kate Connolly	Director, Product Manager	Delos Ventures
Liz Davidson	Founder/CEO	Financial Finesse
Lynette Davis	Admin. Management	Global Women 4 Wellbeing
Krishna Dholakia, MS, RD, CDE, CDN, RYT	Founder	Om & Spice
Laura Dinsmore	Founder, President and CEO	Qudrant Health Strategies, Inc.
Holly Dinsmore	Vice President	Quadrant Health Strategies, Inc.
Marsha Fishbane	Trustee	Palm Health Foundation
Chuck Gillespie	CEO	National Wellness Institute
Jennifer Green	Director	WELCOA
Jessica Grossmeier, PhD	VP of Research	HERO-Health
Sean Harvey MSOD, MSEd	Founder, Chief Compassion Officer	Symponia Studios
Caroline Hinrichs	Director	HOK
Samantha Hooper Reid	Associate Director, Health Management - SE Region	Willis Towers Watson
Linda Howard	CEO	Alternative and President of the Board for the National Wellness Institute
Jenny Jenkins	Executive Program Director	Global Healthcare Resources
Amy Kruse	Lead Business Consultant	CVS Health
Jae Kullar	Manager, Health and Wellbeing	Delta Air Lines
Santiago Leon	Associate Director, Health and Benefits	Willis Towers Watson
Ronelle Lichman	Director of Health Innovation	Healthy Business Group LLC
Kay Mooney	VP of Wellness	CVS Health
Karina Muller	CEO	Maripossa Wellness
Melanie Otero	President	Otero Communications
Fern Pesson	Founder	Pessin Services
Vicki Pugh	VP of Development	Palm Beach Atlantic University
Charu Raheja PhD	CEO	Trialogic and ContinuWell
Ravi Raheja, MD	CTO	Trialogic and ContinuWell
Colleen Reilly	WELCOA Board Member	WELCOA
Rabbi Deborah Salomon	Founder/Director	Hebrew Wizards

Mia Schipani	Principal	Schipani PR
Kathleen Schultz MS, CHES	Regional Vice President	Gallagher
Ruth Schwartzkopf	Chief Nursing Officer	West Boca Medical Center
Mim Senft	Co-Founder/CEO	Global Women 4 Wellbeing
Lesley Jane Seymour	Founder	Covey Club
Yuming Shen	Director of Product Management	Archetype Strategy Group
Kate Siano	Regional Wellbeing & Engagement Consultant	Gallagher
Ilene Silber	Trustee	Palm Health Foundation
Anita Singh	Nurse Practitioner	
Emra Smith	Founder/CEO	Int'l School of Story
Andrea Stephenson	Executive Director	Health Council of SE Florida
Tricia Taylor	Executive Vice President & General Manager	The Breakers Palm Beach
Tevis Trower	CEO	Balance Integration Corporation
Maeve Wang	Entrepreneur	

Resources

Caregiving, Leadership and Financial Wellbeing: Connecting the Issues That Hold Women Back, GW4W White Paper, March, 2018

As Long As We Associate Leadership with Masculinity, Women Will Be Overlooked, Dr. Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic, Harvard Business Review, March 08, 2019

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