

# Holistic Collaboration

An interview with Carolyn Vinup on creating success

by Tim Miejan

**P**assion. Hard Work. Commitment to cultivating transformation. That only begins to describe Carolyn Vinup, an independent woman who owns her own businesses and helps others run their businesses with more focus, clarity and strategy.

This is one of her many taglines: "Creating sacred space where your soul can dance." Carolyn is passionate about cultivating conscious spaces and her work is powerful and transforming. She integrates Feng Shui, sound healing, qigong, space clearing and blessing techniques in her work with individuals, businesses, events, integrative health and wellness centers. She is a seasoned event producer with over 25 years of success. Host of the audio program "Edge Learning Well" on Edge Talk Radio (first Tuesday of each month), Carolyn coordinates learning opportunities in integrative healing and wellness for Normandale Community College.

How does she define herself?

"I am a creator, a collaborator, a visionary, a developer and a maximizer," she says, "who makes great things happen. I am a big picture person who can also dive deep into the details to turn ideas into a reality. I am action-oriented, focused, clear and productive. I explore the possibilities for developing and growing businesses, specific business areas, programs, ideas, and events. I attract partners who want to be the best they can be and share their talents, gifts and strengths with the world. I create opportunities for everyone to win."

People like Carolyn Vinup create an environment for the holistic community in the Twin Cities to thrive. The following is an interview *The Edge* conducted with her, so that you know more about someone who is making a difference.

**Carolyn, your business resume is impressive and you are to be commended for the work you are doing to motivate, inspire and expand awareness for businesses and individuals. I'm curious, as a young girl, what did you want to be when you grew up?**

**Carolyn Vinup:** As a young girl, I always valued having freedom, being indepen-



dent, creative and curious. I valued having the freedom to choose, think, and have my own ideas. If people tried to force me to do things their way or squash my spirit, I would fight to get "out of their box."

My parents were entrepreneurial. They demonstrated the versatility and benefit of having multiple income streams. They were farmers when I was young, so they had to be resilient, independent, creative and problem solvers. Then they owned an Our Own Hardware store where I watched them run a business while my younger sister and I rode tricycles down the store aisles as they did inventory, book keeping, merchandising and marketing on the weekends. Then my father went to work for a plastics firm where he rose from warehouse to VP and became a designer for many product prototypes.

My mother worked, as well, in the plastics factory and then as a bookkeeper for a jewelry firm, and then worked for years in the hospitality and catering business for Leeann Chin and D'Amico & Partners. She retired at 78 from the catering business but still works with my nephew Antonio and cares for the plants at Parma. Toward the end of my father's life, he ran a hearing aide business and then was a courier. My parents loved to remodel homes and made the inside of their homes beautiful, and the outside gardens were their pride and joy. Both parents were active, willing to try new



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things while providing for our family. It wasn't always easy, but they were strong, resilient, independent, get-it-done sort of people.

I started working in the hospitality business when I was 18 and quickly rose to manager for LeeAnn Chin while attending college at the University of Minnesota. I graduated with a Political Science Degree, wanting to defend the underdog, but my true love expanded when I started in the catering business, managing parties for Leeann Chin, becoming the operations chair for a benefit for the hungry and the homeless called Taste of the Nation, and then my true love really exploded when I worked for Apres' Party & Tent Rental, where I became the Sales & Marketing director and was involved in some of the larger events in the Twin Cities – Super Bowl 1992, opening of the Target Center, and the U.S. Open. I managed thousands of parties in my seven years there. Being in sales allowed me to control my own destiny again and I experienced freedom to create, connect, develop and grow.

I started my own business in 1998. I wanted even more freedom. I was tired, exhausted and not very happy. Mike and I were both working so hard, we didn't have much time together and our little girls were growing up. We wanted more flexibility, time to be a family and have some fun.

My first business was called Vinup, Unlimited, Inc. I named it Unlimited

because I wanted a name that would expand and grow with me. In 2001, I started another business called Creating Sacred Space, my holistic practice. In 2005, I created HPSS Global, Inc. and combined my other two businesses, events and wellness into one. I still run HPSS Global but became aware in 2008 that I needed to shift again and started working with my own name as a brand.

In 2010 I was hired to take on a new project for Normandale Community College for WorkForce Partnership & Development. This gave me an idea: I would create a website that communicated the work I was doing for the project I was working on. It became my current resume of work. Now I was creating something brand new again, working with dislocated workers, career changers and job seekers. I utilized my abilities to network, connect people, places and things and produced large events called "Join a Different Herd – Rebrand Your Career" with 600+ attendees and created a new program called the New World of Work. Currently the Carolyn Vinup website is about ready to launch, combining my three areas of focus, business consulting for: Integrative Health, Events, and WorkForce Partnership & Development.

I am grateful that my businesses, websites and marketing have morphed with me as I have changed and developed. They are a clear reflection of my vision and mission and who I am in the world right now. It's important to stay flexible, fluid and open to the gentle nudges that lead us on our journey in life. I know that the universe is conspiring to co-create with me. As one project finishes, another will open. We are always growing, changing and becoming something.

**What or who were the major inspirations for you in your life that led you to become this spark of creativity for others?**

**CV:** First, my family – my husband Mike, who loves me unconditionally and just allows Carolyn to be Carolyn, and my daughters Elise and Haley, who love seeing me happy.

Cyndi Dale co-created Vinup Unlimited in a business development session in May 1998. After that session, I felt like a large metal hook with a heavy chain attached to my heart yanked me forward, and that's when my life really shifted. It's like I was yanked out of one life path onto the path I am currently on. Since that time, I have trusted and known that my

life is guided and supported. It was my job to learn how to communicate, act on and expand into what I was going to become.

I honor Carole Hyder, with whom I studied in 1999 and 2002 to become a certified Feng Shui consultant, and I honor Jonathan Goldman, with whom I studied in 2001 and really expanded my understanding of vibrational energy, the power of sound and the impact I could have by consciously working with sound formulas.

**You have quoted spiritual author and speaker Alan Cohen, who wrote: "Your entire world could open up with one expansive thought!" Did this happen to you?**

**CV:** *Dare to be you, wake up, what are you waiting for, illuminate your brilliance! Dance in the magic of the universe, this life is your playground, have some fun!* These are my internal mantras.

These were all examples of expansive thoughts that had a huge impact on my life. I recognized that when I was in the energy of these thoughts, my life flowed better and I was magnetizing opportunities to me. I began to play more thoughtfully with the principles of the law of attraction, the power of intention, listening and paying attention to the nudges and signals from the universe, taking more classes and expanding my knowledge of holistic practices, trusting and honoring my intuition, playing games to manifest my wishes and desires, and recognizing when I needed to reach out and do some more internal work when I would bump up against limiting beliefs and negative inner-self talk.

When I created HPSS Global, this quote was on the website and my intention for all who worked with me was to "Illuminate Brilliance for All."

**What is your intention and what is your goal when coordinating events and classes at Normandale Community College, and through the monthly program "Edge Learning Well" on Edge Talk Radio?**

**CV:** I feel so lucky to be part of the Health, Wellness and Integrative Health Education team at Normandale Community College. Brenda Dickinson, dean of Continuing Education and Customized Training, is a champion for health and wellness. She is entrepreneurial, visionary and strategic. Sunny Ainley, associate dean for Health & Wellness, is strategic, business savvy

and a marketing expert. Terry Clegg, the Health & Wellness Coordinator, is a holistic professional and instructor cheerleader. And I am a business developer, brand expander, program specialist, talent spotter and event producer. Combining all of our talents together creates an amazing opportunity to expand the Integrative Health Education Center and become known as the go-to place for classes, programs, workshops, training, certificates and special events.

"Edge Learning Well" on Edge Talk Radio gives us a voice to expand awareness, cultivate consciousness, developing community and partnership, sharing insight and knowledge and making the world a better place.

If people were to ask me what my vision for Integrative Health Education and Businesses in the Twin Cities is, I would say: to expand awareness, cultivate consciousness, developing community and partnerships, sharing insight and wisdom, and ultimately making the world a better place.

**The big question for you is this: in this downturn of the economy, which is particularly hard on small, holistic businesses, what advice do you have for small business owners to not only survive, but thrive, in 2012? To what extent is the internal work just as vital or more so compared to the external things that need to be done?**

**CV:** Here's what I do. First of all, I focus on what I can create and control. I tell myself, people are still doing business with other people and organizations and I ought to be one of those people they are doing business with. So, I am the one in a million who is thriving and growing and expanding.

A local restaurant group says that in a downturned economy, they open up a new restaurant. Their thought is, people still go out to eat and they want to see what's new. I do the same thing. I open to the new possibilities and set an intention that says, "Allow my talents and strengths to be noticed, seen and utilized and allow my business to expand and grow during these times."

Small businesses also try to do it all themselves. That takes them away from doing what they love to do and make money doing it. Be willing to hire other professionals to do the things in your business that drain your energy. By sharing abundance with others, it will be shared back to you. It's impossible

to be good at everything.

**What are the most important things for businesses to consider when branding themselves?**

**CV:** You are only as good as the last project, client or experience you create. Make everything you do a home run. If there are issues, make it right. Become part of winning teams. Today's world is about collaborating, teaming, partnering. Teams come and go as needed. It's active, fun, creative and fluid. Stay current with technology. Know who you are. Position your business for your areas of expertise. Don't try to be something you're not.

**What are the most common approaches to business that no longer apply now in 2012 – and why do they no longer work?**

**CV:** Lack mentality — holistic businesses have a terrible time with this thought form. It needs to be shattered. This pattern never did work – ever! If you are clear about the type of business you are, the kinds of clients you want to attract, then be open with who you are, share your talents, gifts and strengths with the world. Get rid of what you don't want so you can make room for more of what you do want!

**Carolyn, what I'd really love is for you to give us an overview of the holistic community. How would you describe the holistic climate in the Twin Cities?**

**CV:** In my world, it's alive and growing. We could all combine our efforts and create a morpheic field that spreads the thought form, "All is well in the Twin Cities. The holistic community is alive and well, sharing its talents with the world. People from all over the world flock to the Twin Cities to work with the holistic community here, because of the talent, inspired and healing work that is taking place here." That's how I view it.

**You collaborate with a lot of businesses and individuals. What is the recipe for success when collaborating with others?**

**CV:** The recipe for success...is that everyone wins. I am a developer. I generate hundreds of ideas and like to be part of teams that are willing to grow, and create something new. I love to hear other people's ideas and weave the ideas/concepts together. I like to be

## **Carolyn Vinup: Ways to Thrive in the 21st Century**

- \* Start with a morning prayer or intention, set up a positive trigger that reminds you to say it over and over again throughout the day, end your day with the same prayer or intention.
- \* Pay attention to universal signals and nudges and act on them.
- \* Understand the role that gratitude, joy and play impact your daily experience.
- \* Develop a relationship with universal energy, trust your intuition and act on them.
- \* Wake Up. Do your own work and get out of your own way.
- \* Dare to be You.

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part of projects where something has to be figured out and we get to be creative in how we provide solutions.

Brenda Dickinson, Dean of Continuing Education & Customized Training gave this quote to me, and she said, "Carolyn this is who you are":

"The best collabornauts are good at making connections, both human and intellectual. They are constantly on the lookout for new ways to benefit from combining forces with partners. They venture into unfamiliar territory, make deals, and return with knowledge that transforms their home world. They bring organizations closer together, introduce people, and build relationships among groups that can initially seem like aliens to one another...they convince their colleagues to forget the old rules and try something new, something that comes from having partners." — Rosabeth Moss Kanter, author of *Evolve*

**What do you do, personally, to maintain your sense of hope and optimism, especially when there seems to be no light at the end of the tunnel?**

**CV:** I am in touch with my energy and body signals. When I am in a place of flow, information, people, places and things show up very quickly. To me, the secret is determined by how much fun I am having. I know I am in a place of flow when I am laughing, being playful and creative. I have to create something almost daily in order to feel alive. When I am not creating, laughing or having fun, I know I have fallen off my stream of energy where all things are possible. When this happens to me, I sometimes just get into the car and drive. Driving and moving seems to jump start my creative thoughts and information and

solutions start to show up again. I also take this time as a signal for me to pay attention to me. I will get a massage, get my hair cut, clear clutter in my house or office, do a blessing ceremony, play music really loud so I can chant and sing to shift the vibration in me, the house, where ever I am. I focus on the inner talk that's going on inside my head and remind myself that I need a new story, a new message. I surround myself with people who love me. I forgive myself.

I go out to eat with my husband Mike, I play with my dogs and I go to movies, theater or get outside.

I am creating another business website right now called ManifestingMamas — a place where I can be playful, creative and share thoughts, ideas and create a community where we can join forces together to make wishes come true. ✨

**For more information on Carolyn Vinup, visit CarolynVinup.com and www.HPSSGlobal.com. Email CarolynVinup@yahoo.com. For more information on Integrative Health Education through Continuing Education at Normandale Community College, call 952.358.8133 and visit www.normandale.augusoft.net.**

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