Stewardship in the Art of Hosting Community

The intention of this work is to offer some clarity in response to hearing a request from the global community; and to be clearly welcoming and inviting all kinds of contribution without holding any as more valuable or important than another.

Two guiding questions that held us well in our conversations leading up to this offering were "What are we already doing that is working well, that can be made more clear?" and "What is the most simple way to hold and offer this clarity on behalf of all?"

We share this, knowing we are all in ongoing learning about how to hold this together in the best way - in good integrity and heart, and in service of our whole, growing, evolving community. Not a surprise that it will be an ongoing process - and it felt helpful to find the clarity that was possible at this time and share that.

(Offered by Caitlin Frost, Teresa Posakony, Tenneson Woolf and Chris Corrigan, with input from Open Space sessions in the Stewards Gathering on Bowen Island, summer 2010. Edited by Ria Baeck, Dec. 2010.   To be clear, this should not be viewed as anything that is 'decided', but as a view that is offered and that might, or not, become a shared understanding.)

On Stewardship

The Art of Hosting community is rooted in a field of friendship and what we call "the mates" - showing up for each other and supporting each other in our work and learning.   It is a generative field of co-creation of the broad community of practice.

This community of practice is held in a field of stewardship and offerings. Gifts of stewarding are welcome and needed. The Art of Hosting field exists, grows and evolves in a healthy way because a dedicated community of people care for it, offer into it and hold it with intention.

The stewardship of the Art of Hosting operates at a number of levels - including recognized Stewards of the Whole; a Holding Circle - a core smaller circle of the stewards group who volunteer to meet regularly and intentionally to hold the energetic center; stewards of local communities of practice; stewards of particular Art of Hosting initiatives. There are also the important contributions of stewardship offered by individuals in the wider Art of Hosting community who contribute to stewardship of the Art of Hosting in some way.

For the purpose of clarity of roles and responsibility, finding each other in our work and supporting and learning from each other, some outline of the different stewarding roles are offered here:

Stewards of the Whole

The Stewards of the Whole, in some significant way, are actively and on an ongoing basis tending to the whole and the integrity of the Art of Hosting – both practice and people. Stewards have chosen the Art of Hosting as a primary community of practice and are actively working to advance the work. They are often, but not always, also

pattern keepers (see below). Stewards of the Whole are both self and peer recognized by the community of Stewards of the Whole.

Some of the responsibilities the Stewards of the Whole are holding are:

- Active contribution and leadership on the email list
- Creation and contribution to the online community space, Ning site
- Contributing to models, practices, and the wisdom field of the AoH.
- Harvesting well from their work and offering that to broader community.
- Actively inviting and bringing the Art of Hosting practice into many organizations and communities
- Leading out on significant AoH initiatives and connecting trans-locally
- Providing leadership to an area of research or other temporary leadership team
- Willingness to attend to the apprenticing of others with integrity
- Actively coaching and supporting individuals who are using the AoH Practice
- Creation and sharing of the generations of the journal/workbook
- Anchors the Art of Hosting community in some way
- Actively (and sometimes fiercely) tends to the integrity of the Art of Hosting
- Gathering to tend to the needs of the Whole

Holding Circle

The Art of Hosting network has always been held by some kind of circle, 'officially' known or named or not. In the first Stewards Gathering it was Toke Møller and Donna Alvorado who stepped forward, later in 2008 it were four people; since 2010 it are now 8 people. The best way to describe what they are doing is: "sitting at the well, and sometimes take out a leaf to keep the water clean". It is very clear: this circle is not a board and does not take decisions.

Stewards of Local AoH Communities of Practice

Another essential leadership area within the Art of Hosting community is that of the stewards of the Local Communities of Practice. This is a powerful role that grows the work and the field of practice in significant ways.   Those working with local communities of practice have documented some of what they are doing to help the communities be vibrant and grow in impact, wisdom, and friendship. Stewards of Local Communities of Practice are self-identified.

Stewards of particular AoH Initiatives

Another essential leadership area is within organizations and communities where the AoH is the core operating system. These are often large-scale efforts others are watching and learning from and referencing them as part of the story of what is possible. Stewards of particular AoH initiatives are self-identified.

Learning by Immersion in the Pattern and Apprenticing

The methodologies and practices that make up 'the art' of hosting are taught and learned through real time immersion in Art of Hosting trainings/workshops/sessions. It

is a particular skill and competence to hold many levels of learning and teaching at the same time. Most of the Stewards of the Whole have become skilled in holding this particular pattern that is central to our community, but not all. The ones who do, we could call them Pattern Keepers.

Pattern Keepers

- Hold both depth of AoH practice in the world and depth in hosting AoH trainings
- Hold depth of personal practice, being on a path of learning and growth
- Are able to anchor a core hosting team of a training
- Have deep knowing of being a "pattern keeper" of the AoH training, affirmed by others (see becoming a pattern keeper)
- Gifts economically to the global AoH community and encourages core teams to do so (for scholarships, website, online community etc.)

Apprenticing

The Art of Hosting is a community of practitioners. Often an Art of Hosting training is the launch of a broader learning journey and a period of developing your "practice." The learning journeys go on on many paths, some deeply personal and many to develop new skills and competence in the Art of Hosting methods, models, as well as design and hosting.

Some people request a more formal relationship of "apprentice" where they receive ongoing coaching/support from a pattern keeper or skilled co-host.   This can happen virtually or in best cases in a local AoH community and in local work.   When local, people can partner together in designs, hosting, and shared learning to support the growth and depth of the work and each other as individuals. It is always about practice and learning. What are the places we can find to practice and how can we continue to learn at our next level? Feedback loops, learning opportunities and community are core to growth.

Stewardship and apprenticing in an Art of Hosting training

Calling Team
The calling team invites an Art of Hosting training/session into an organization or community. They name the core purpose of the Art of Hosting session, create an invitation that resonates with the purpose, actively invite people and fill the room, handle logistics and local hospitality. The calling team works with the core hosting team to deeply understand the purpose and create a high level design. Some calling team members may wish to be part of design days, preparations and hosting of the event.   Often the voice of the calling team welcomes the community, names the purpose and challenge and stays in touch with the core hosting team through the Art of Hosting session/training.

Core Hosting Team
There is an art to constituting strong hosting teams for an Art of Hosting training:

- **At least one Pattern Keeper** and most often 2-3 depending on the composition of the hosting team and the engagement/situation. There is always a commitment to having a strong team and not working alone.

- **Skilled Co-hosts:**
  - Capable of stepping into different roles in the hosting team – actively coaching teams, day hosting, offering teachings in full circle or smaller groups
  - Have experienced an Art of Hosting training and have a hosting practice
  - Often a skilled co-host hosts for a long time before becoming a pattern keeper
  - Strong peers in the hosting team
- **Apprentice:** Someone who has been through an Art of Hosting training or two and wants to know more: more deeply in design, how to work deeply in a team. Student of what all goes on here and how does it work. On a path to being a strong practitioner, as part a broader learning journey for them. Person holds and is of service to the field and helping those who come as participants.
- **Diversity of the team**: Encourage diversity of gifts and practice within the hosting team.

Possible Pathways to becoming a Steward and/or Pattern Keeper

What follows is a possibility of how people could live into becoming either a Pattern Keeper and/or a Steward of the Whole. This is **not** how it is done right now, **nor** is it a rule that is applied. This is a thought experiment that can become a guideline in the future or not.

Some quotes or comments regarding this:

" *I don't quite know how we keep it light and loose with not too much structure and dare I say it 'hierarchy'... but still provide sufficient clarity to fiercely protect the flame, recognise legacy and allow more self organised space for new people to step up into holding more, collectively and individually? A sweet chaordic challenge if ever there was one.*"

"*I would so much like to find an open, non-judgmental, self-selecting simple way - for anyone who wants to contribute to do so fully. How can we do this without creating ranks, hierachies, categories - but with insight and clarity? I am still in this chaordic question. Can we make this simple?*"

Possible Pathways to becoming a Pattern Keeper

- Time spent participating in Art of Hosting trainings, work and community. Declare intention to (at least two) Pattern Keepers.
- Seek Pattern Keepers to apprentice and/or work together with over a period of time.
- Offer yourself/your work into the AoH community - sharing on list serve, harvesting, assisting with site, calling, organizing, creating resources to share.
- When you feel ready: self-declare to Pattern Keepers you have been working with and ask for their support. If they agree with your readiness - then the intention to name and take on the responsibility of a pattern keeper is spoken to the Stewards of the Whole - by both the apprentice coming in, and the 'sponsoring' pattern keepers - sharing the intention and why it feels right. *(If*

the person is also being identified as a Steward of the Whole - this would happen in a similar way thought both would be named separately.)
- Then - if there is an official list - the name would be added.

Typical Ways of becoming a Steward of the Whole

- Time spent participating in Art of Hosting trainings, work and community.
- Declare intention to (at least two) Steward(s) of the Whole.
  Seek out Stewards and Pattern Keepers to apprentice and/or work together over a period of time (work with more than one Steward; at least one Pattern Keeper; work in different settings/environments/communities)
- Offer yourself/your work into the AoH community - sharing on list serve, harvesting, assisting with site, calling, organizing, creating resources to share.
- When you feel ready: self-declare to Stewards you have been working with and ask for their support.   If they agree with your readiness - then the intention to name and take on the responsibility of a Steward of the Whole is spoken to the other Stewards - by both the apprentice coming in, and the 'sponsoring' Stewards - sharing the intention and why it feels right.   *(If the person is also being identified as a pattern keeper - this would happen in a similar way though both would be named separately.)*
- Then - if there is an official list - the name would be added.