

The Secret of My Success: Lynn Honeysett

The new Executive Director at the Pelham Art Center is following her passion while helping others explore their creative abilities.

By Janie Rosman



Before joining the Pelham Art Center this past January, Lynn Honeysett was Senior Vice President for Marketing and Communications at United Way of Westchester and Putnam. While there, she participated in its Leadership Westchester program, which she said prepared her for her current position.

Her professional path of marketing, branding, and broadcast journalism in Brazil for CBS led to her current position as Executive Director at the art center. Honeysett is following her passion for art while helping others explore their creativity and encouraging them to “color outside the lines.”

What drew you to your profession?

I grew up in California, studied there, and also studied at the National Academy of Design (in New York City). The turning point was a feeling of restlessness that I was doing something I felt was helpful – working at the United Way – yet I wanted to do something that answered my own passion.

As I worked more on myself, the longing I felt to return to art was more apparent. What was great about branding was when it started evolving, and there was a focused attempt to understand the product and communicate it honestly. I ran a business for five years doing marketing and consulting for non-profits and for-profits, which allowed creativity and flexibility in different places.

What do you find interesting about the work you do for a living?

Being so close to Manhattan, the quality of our exhibits is amazing – and they're free! I love being in a creative atmosphere and seeing adults and children blossom by exercising their creative muscle - which helps them creatively problem-solve in all aspects of their lives. I'm really excited at enhancing our classes in creative writing as well as the visual arts. This fall we're offering adult and high school creative writing classes taught by an editor of the literary journal *One Story* as well as beginning a series called the Emerging Writer's Salon. We'll bring newly published authors and professional editors here to talk about their craft and answer questions.

How did/do you balance your career with family life?

I loved my career as a broadcast journalist (my husband, Tom Honeysett, is in charge of editing at "60 Minutes"). We traveled extensively, and when my daughter was born I felt I could not sustain that lifestyle for a long period of time with a little one. I reinvented myself several times with freelance writing, local journalism and advertising. Because I had a family I worked three-quarters of the time for a corporate branding partnership, and this segued into marketing. As my children got older and more independent I put more hours into work.

I feel that given the enormous amount of time you spend at the workplace, it's natural as you evolve, and circumstances change, that you be open about a career path.

If you could change one career decision you've made, what would it be?

At times I wasn't sure if I made the right move yet those decisions brought me to where I am now.

What are some key lessons you've learned in your professional and personal life that you think everyone can learn from?

Do something you're passionate about and maintain a lifeline through volunteering or interest or hobbies. It enriches you in all aspects of your life. I started out more concerned with my individual career path, and wanting to stand out. Now I'm more concerned with advancing the organization, and bringing others' talents to the fore.

What are the three most important things a person needs to be successful? Why?

Keep your eye on the big picture, have a focus and allow yourself a certain amount of nimbleness to take advantage of a changing environment, and always be curious. It's all the little bits of information – reading, participating, seeing – all of these take form, and you've a more complex picture of the work that enriches your performance and career.

What is your definition of success?

It's following your passion and doing what you love. Like with broadcast journalism, I was looking through a lens at things I've never have come across - like dignitaries or coal miners in Pennsylvania – and I traveled to areas I'd not have gone to visit. At the end of the day, effect a change.

If you could give advice to a recent graduate or someone just beginning their career, what would you tell them?

Don't be afraid to color outside the lines, be adventurous in your life and your career, and make your mistakes. There's something to be learned in that so color outside the box.