Strengthening your Organization
creating tables that fuel relevancy and impact

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While we wait to get started....

Jot down why have you chosen to be engaged with the Friends organization.
Headlines and watercoolers...

“Laboratories face increasing pressure to do more with less.”
The Law of Conservation of Matter and the Law of Conservation of Energy state that doing more from less is impossible.

-said a college chemistry professor

Law of Conservation of Energy and Mass. The law of conservation of energy, a fundamental concept of physics, states that the total amount of energy remains constant in an isolated system.

It implies that energy can neither be created nor destroyed, but can be change from one form to another.
Framing our Work

**Explore Potential:** What is relevancy, why does it matter, and how could knowing those things impact the organization and programs.

**Emerge Vision:** Create space to envision what the organization and programs can be when mission, WHY, and vision merge.

**Engage Strategy:** Design a relevancy tool that is uniquely yours that will provide direction for curious conversations, engagement, consistent processing, equitable decision making, and sustainability.
Collective Lens

professional

board member

friend member

staff or volunteer leadership

library customer

personal
Collective Impact
Relevant Reflecting

What might your organization need clarity on from your lens?
Paradigms Matter

Moving from the current state and where you want to move as an organization, can only be done by people reframing how they think and operate.
Reframing is foundational to relevancy...

“The way we lead, impacts the way people live.”  - Bob Chapman

“The way we live impacts the way we lead.”  - Sandy Anderson

What can reframing look like?
Reconsidering roles in the paradigm shift...

Pausing to do this kind of work, the work that questions status quo and encourages innovative, crucial conversations requires different roles...

...not always traditional or ones we’ve been trained in.

Pathfinder
Pioneer
Edge walker
Skilled hospice worker
Settler

Adaptive work requires **pause**, we can’t just check the box, we have to create **time** and **safe tables** for **crucial** conversations.

What is working and how do we grow more of that?

What approach worked well in the past but is no longer a wise use of our resources?

“Adaptive work involves **experiencing loss** in letting go of certain elements of the past — loss of a way of doing things, loss of loyalty to the way things have always been done.”

-Rosie Ward, PhD
Setting the Table Well | Community Principles

1. Intentionally create space that allows for transparency, curiosity, and growth.
2. Practice being present.
3. Words (and body language) matter. Strive to use solution-focused language.
4. Challenges are acknowledged; energy focused on what you desire to grow more.
5. Reframe difficulties as external opportunities.
6. If it’s about them, they’re at that table or represented well.
7. Ask rather than assume; if you must assume, assume the best.
8. Take the best from the past; allow what is no longer relevant to be released.
9. Chaotic paths (chaos and order colliding) are a valuable part of the journey.
10. Value differences (e.g., personalities, strengths) knowing they offer innovation.
Setting the table with community principles

1. Intentionally **create space** at gatherings that allows for transparency, curiosity, and growth.
2. Practice **being present**.
3. Words (and body language) matter. Strive to use solution-rooted language.
4. Challenges are acknowledged; energy **focused** on what you desire **to grow more**.
5. **Reframe** difficulties as external **opportunities**.
6. If it’s about them, they’re **at that table** or represented well.
7. **Ask** rather than assume. If you must assume, **assume the best**.
8. Take the **best from the past** and allow what is no longer relevant to be released respectfully.
9. Chaordic paths (**chaos** and order colliding while progressing) are a valuable **part of the journey**.
10. Value **differences** (e.g. personalities, strengths) knowing they **offer innovative perspectives**.
What if we shift the conversation from doing more with less to doing what’s relevant...

relevant programs
relevant policies
relevant processes
relevant roles

relevance
reləv(ə)ns/
noun
the quality or state of being closely connected or appropriate.
We want to be relevant but what does that mean?

How do we determine what is relevant?

How do we maintain relevancy in the organization?
Relevancy is not just a strategy... it’s core to culture.

When people know their work matters (e.g. participation on a board, specific role in organization, etc.), that it links to something greater than themselves, that it’s relevant, and when we can specific link it to human relationship...

...it changes why and how people show up to do the work.

Busy doesn’t equal relevant.
How relevancy impacts culture

Determining *and* practicing relevancy increases engagement, trust, surfaces innovative solutions, and leads to sustainable impact.

It creates a table folks want to...
- gather at (recruitment)
- stay (retention)
- share their best ideas (growth & innovation)
An organization is only as strong as it’s culture...

What happens when staff/volunteers discover, understand, and are encouraged to leverage their strengths/talents for the common good?

They show up differently...and honestly just plain show up!
This work requires going upstream...

We set up *wellness* for failure if we don’t work on improving the environment and culture before we work on individual behavior changes.”

-Dee Edington
A healthy organization is...

An environment where politics and confusion are minimal, relationships and open communication are cherished, employees are intrinsically motivated to come to the workplace and be involved in something larger than themselves, something that contributes meaning and purpose to their lives.

-Patrick Lencioni
Moving from reactive to responsive takes intention…and more energy at least at the beginning.

The intention saves on valuable resources (like morale, energy, money…) because there is clarity and consistent processes rather than on-going crisis management. *But where to start?*
Minnesota Association of Library Friends

Supporting Citizens Who Support Libraries

Mission:
The Minnesota Association of Library Friends connects Friends of Library organizations, provides valuable resources to support their work, and is a strong voice for Friends of Library groups and libraries throughout Minnesota.

What is your local mission?
Your Descriptive Words (aka vision)

What would your local Friends group look, feel and function like in a thriving state?
Why these descriptive words matter:

1. Fosters a vision.
   How the organization could look, feel and function in a thriving state.

2. Offers direction.

3. Consistent lens.
   Decisions on designing, renovating, and implementing programs/events/policies are more clear. (minimize confusion and politics)

...descriptive of what you are moving towards as an organization. Descriptive of what you want more of, of what will foster relevancy, resiliency and sustainability.
Based on Simon Sinek’s Golden Circle
Find Your Why, 2017
Drafting a WHY

To ___________________________so that _____________________________.

(contribution) (impact)

Find Your Why, Simon Sinek, 2017

“To make a contribution to the world by making tools for the mind that advance humankind.” Steve Jobs

“To create spaces where people can gather to explore potential, emerge vision, and engage in positive strategies that lead to doing work and living life with greater intention and joy.” Sandy’s WHY
Your Organizational WHY

What you desire to contribute...

What impact you desire to have...
Collective Practice & Processing
Sketching Your Organization's WHY

To ___________________________ so that ___________________________.
(contribution your organization desires to make) (impact the organization seeks to have)

Find Your Why, Simon Sinek, 2017
Powerful Collective Impact
(partners in the community)

Director/Board Member/Staff
WHY

Program’s WHY

Organization’s WHY

EXPLORE POTENTIAL | EMERGE VISION | ENGAGE STRATEGIES
Mission, Vision and WHY
(your unique relevancy filter in action)

WAIT...mission, WHY? What’s the difference?
- Drives your communication and marketing.
- Guides who you will to seek as partners.
- Directs who you will partner with to seek funding or fund (and possible at what level)
- Assists you in hiring team members/inviting new board members
- Inspires and allow innovative ideas to be explored safely and fairly.
- Offers checkpoints of evaluation of staff/programs and self evaluation of board members.
Develop Your Filter
criteria to drive what you will invest *resources* in:

1. Mission
2. WHY (local)
3. Five Descriptive Words
Practice Processing a Program

1. Choose the program you will assess.
2. Looking at the program *as it is currently rolled out.*
3. How does the program link to:
   - Mission
   - WHY
   - Vision (5 descriptive words)

Set the table well...
work is anchored in the community principles
Practice processing...
Relevant Questions
When you need to dig a little deeper to determine relevancy and impact...
Collective Learning
processing programs and insights
Additional Reflective Questions for Leadership
pausing to impact with intention

- Do current policies, processes fuel or possibly sabotage your progress towards growing the preferred environments/culture?

- Do meetings currently reflect, align with, fuel the mission/WHY?
  If no, what needs to change? How can I help with that?

- Do people in our org. know their purpose? How their work connects to and fuels the mission/WHY?

- Do people in our org. have opportunity to leverage their strengths for the common good?
Give as much attention and intention to the table as you do the task.
Connecting meaning to action...

What is one thing you are willing to contribute/do to fuel your local friends group towards being more relevant and having positive impact?

It’s all about connection.
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