



# **Evolution or Revolution in The World We Want**

Peter Karoff  
Forum of Regional Grantmakers  
Annual Meeting July 25, 2007

---

160 Federal Street  
Floor 8  
Boston MA 02110

---

617.338.2590 P  
617.338.2591 F

---

[www.tpi.org](http://www.tpi.org)

Good morning! And I glad to be among the first to welcome you to Boston, and do so on behalf of all of my TPI colleagues, including one who is with us in spirit only. Joe Breiteneicher's year-long fight against cancer ended softly with courage and grace a month ago. Many of you knew Joe, and will not be surprised that he didn't lose a beat, and his wild and wooly sense of humor prevailed to the end – in our conversation the day before he died he remarked that if he had known what a great diet morphine and popsicles were, he would have tried it long ago. TPI's board Chair Alan Broadbent, even suggested TPI market a new drink called' "Joe's Ice." But while that might be a route to Nirvana, it more likely would be one to jail.

Some of Joe's best work was done with many of you in this room. TPI cut its teeth with regional associations 16 years ago in Michigan when Rob Collier, who may or may not have told Dottie Johnson what was going on, conspired with Joe for him to roam the outermost reaches of the Northern Peninsula. In that work with very small community foundations, I think Joe covered every paved road, and maybe a few dirt ones, in the region. At the time, some of these fledgling organizations had offices the size of telephone booths, but Joe was a kind of Johnny Appleseed and he could have cared less. That may have been the summer when he was out of Boston nine out eleven weekends! His enthusiasm and vision for the work of what a regional association, with a little money and a lot of creativity and drive could do, was a constant in all the years I worked with him. He believed in you, in the critical importance of what you do, and if he were here today, I think he would say that the time of dilly and dally was over. That organized philanthropy has fallen too easily into the trap of response and rebuttal – that we make trends out of what is only noise, and that we have to spend more time growing our souls.

I do think Joe's life-long yearning for social justice was turning into anger. He was restless, and pushed himself and us, in every way he knew how, to dream big, to stretch, and to stand up and be counted. Here is a poem that attempts to capture his passion:

## Kindred Spirits

For Joe Breiteneicher

Hello out there

All you kindred spirits

Bring your sharp edges to the light

Let's make a prism so bright

You and I

A bottle of beer in one hand

The sword of justice in the other

We will make merry

And bring the bastards down

The poetry of the moment

Lives in the life of the man

The poetry of the man  
Vibrates minds and hearts

In splendid castles in the air  
Sing out brothers and sisters  
Sing Emma Rosa Martin César  
Lazarus Parks King Chávez

Make a great crescendo  
Far beyond the rhetoric  
Abandon comfort  
Wake the soul that sleeps

Turn the turning loose  
The song is hope  
Balm to our troubled earth  
And lots of hard work  
For you and I

And I feel that dictum standing here today in front of you as you engage the conference theme - ***Philanthropic Evolution or Revolution? The Role of Regional Associations in the Changing Sector.***

In many ways, TPI's story over the last nineteen years has been joined at the hip to that of both community foundations and regional associations. All of us have been part of the growth in American philanthropy, which is in a very different place than it was in 1989 when TPI began our work. To provide some context for where I think it is all going, here are the headlines.

**There is far more philanthropy and more thought about how to use philanthropy wisely.** Philanthropy is now front page news. New aggregations of individual wealth continue to astound the imagination, and rather than being the exception, the culture of giving has expanded. Philanthropy is no longer just an American phenomenon but is rapidly expanding around the world in cultures where philanthropy as we would define it had not previously existed. Organizations with similar missions to the Forum have been formed in the Asia Pacific, Latin America, UK, the European Union, and India. In addition, corporate social responsibility, of which philanthropy is one of the key elements, has become mainstream as it is increasingly viewed as a key business function.

**There has been a dramatic expansion in the infrastructure to motivate, educate, and service this growing field of donors of which the Forum has become a major player.** There are now more than 700 community foundations in the US, 150 in Canada and more than that combined number world-wide, making them one of the fastest growing parts of philanthropy. Donors now have a wide variety of ways to learn and get engaged.<sup>1</sup> Networks, affinity groups, and as the Forum's recently published research has shown, Giving Circles, are on a dramatic rise. TPI was essentially alone when it started its work in 1989. Now there is a growing cottage

industry of advisors to donors, as well as an even larger group of planned giving, and estate planning professionals.

**The concept of strategic philanthropy was little known or understood when TPI began to promote the concept and the practice.** The elements of strategic philanthropy, research and analysis, due diligence, measurement and evaluation, and deeper donor engagement has now become normative within organized philanthropy. Variations on the theme of strategy, like Venture and High-Impact philanthropy, have energized the field, and continue to raise the bar to what constitutes best practice.

Some of this energy is new, but much of it builds on the best of North American philanthropy which has always been based on a blend of the heart and the mind.

Let me ask you this question – what business are we in? Here is my answer.

**At the end of the day, the philanthropic community is in the legacy business.** It is not the only actor in that business, but it is a very important one, and not only for the reason typically assumed. Legacy is not just about the money. It is the articulation in word and deed of what you believed, what you felt was right and wrong, what you did and didn't do. The legacy you leave is actually the life you have led. You can't be a terrible person and expect to leave a great legacy – the parable that a rich man cannot buy his way into heaven is as true for foundations as it is for individuals. The real legacy is the moral dimension. The moral of the story lies in the integrity of my life, your life, and a foundation's life. It is whether we have stood up and been counted when it was important to do so.

One of Joe Breitenicher's legacies was his inspired conception of the New Ventures Fund. It was his invention out of whole cloth, and from the very beginning of the research that became the basis for the program, there were dual objectives. The first was to design an initiative that would jumpstart the promotion of philanthropy across the country on a scale that had never been attempted before. The second objective was to position the Forum, and its members, as a credible intermediary - one with the capacity for peer review, and assessment of results. In the process, regional associations would grow in their capacity to become a "big tent" that would work across the entire spectrum of the field.

New Ventures was a huge step, perhaps a Tipping Point, in the making, or remaking what have historically been trade associations, into a true community of interest. It also created some leveling of resources. Oh that every state had a Kellogg Foundation, but the reality is it does not. New Ventures brought new resources into regions of the country that had never been blessed with them. A \$14 million investment that to date has yielded more than \$500 million in results – not bad Joe!

TPI's work over the years can be loosely grouped in three areas: motivation, process and program.

**Motivation** – The several hundred speeches, workshops, and seminars, my colleagues and I have done over these years, have had the goal of getting people excited and engaged. Many of these presentations have been in venues sponsored by community foundations, and regional

associations. It is hard to measure the impact of a speech, even a great one, or even a terrific workshop. The buzz that is in the room can dissipate pretty quickly, and yet it has been amazing to us how many people, years later, remember these presentations, or at least the flavor of them. I think when done well, they become part of the iterative flow of experience that can and does lead to increased interest in and enthusiasm for philanthropy. TPI has good evidence that many people take home a pearl from these sessions and act upon it, and sometimes it does indeed change their behavior.

TPI's research to understand better what motivates donors and their advisors includes two landmark studies, *What's A Donor to Do*, the first real analysis of the new emerging donor by Ellen Remmer was published in 2000, and *Doing Well by Doing Good*, which along with its follow-on studies, by Steve Johnson, helped frame the critical role of advisors to the wealthy. Much of the Forum's current work builds on this earlier work. Most recently TPI's research focus has been on global philanthropy, with a new study by Paula Johnson about to be released on Diaspora Philanthropy. These projects are true labors of love. The funding, if there is any, never covers the true cost of producing a credible piece of work. It continues to bewilder me that this field invests so little in itself. It is on the one hand, a serious expression of how undervalued the work is, and on the other simply dumb. We are a \$260 billion field of interest, and yet we invest only marginally in research, in measurement, in exploration, and in the promotion of the field. Just look at the \$2.5 billion Microsoft alone is investing in technology this year.

**Process** - Serious work requires thought and planning, and that includes establishing vision, mission and goals based on values and passions. TPI has worked with more 150 families, scores of corporations and foundations, some of whom were just getting going and others who were renewing existing philanthropic efforts. The big issues of interest are how to translate passion into social impact, how to establish governance procedures, especially between the generations in families, and how corporations find alignment between business goals and community needs. This is complex, labor-intensive and sensitive work. For the past two years TPI has led a collaborative effort with 19 community foundations to develop training protocols and curriculum for staff who work with families. That is exactly the kind of role that TPI hopes to play going forward as it takes our practical hands-on experience, and shares it with the field as a whole

**Program** - To date TPI has managed more than \$900 million of grant making and social investments. This work with clients has included research, design and administration of strategic grants programs, and the measurement and evaluation of their impact. It is intellectually challenging and fascinating work. It has also demanded a very high level of relationship management skills, including the need to teach, mentor, and to sometimes push back on unrealistic or unreasonable donor expectations. It is the time when the rubber meets the road, and there is no limit to the twists and turns it can take.

Is this picture evolutionary or revolutionary? Let's expand the context by taking a look at some of the themes in *The World We Want* book.

The book is a journey, partly my own but more that of an eclectic group of visionary and accomplished people, who were asked to consider these questions:

**What is your vision of a better world?**

**What are the obstacles that need to be overcome to realize it?  
What parts of the vision are realistic, and what ideas, strategies, and plans, can make it so?**

If we had more time, I would love to go around this room, and hear your answers to these tricky questions. It would be a great conversation, and without a doubt material for another chapter or two in a book. I have to confess, my colleagues and I at TPI have been asking those questions, or variations of them, for a long time. The answers are part of a flow, a flow that is not finished.

The book is made up of an extraordinary group of what may be called **practical visionaries**. Some of them are dreamers, some realists, entrepreneurs, activists, spiritualists, secularists, ethicists, critics, cynics, and reluctant seers. So Martin Lehfeltdt, which are you?

While all different, these actors have a common persona. Call it that of a seeker, someone who balances a deep belief in the human capacity for caring and for improving world conditions, with a healthy skepticism of oversimplified solutions. You need both, otherwise the whole exercise would be a waste of time. They are all people who –“put their shoulder to the stone - some days it moves forward, and some days it rolls back.”<sup>ii</sup>

I have this naïve idea that the Tipping Point for the fate of the world depends on how many do just that.

Does the book have an overriding goal? Yes – it is to awaken the citizen within, to wake those who are sleepwalkers, those who choose to walk by, and not walk in. And when you read it, I will be most interested in your take as to whether it works toward that end.

I grew up in what might be called the Walt Whitman America. Here are the opening lines from *Leaves of Grass* – “One’s self I sing/yet utter the word Democratic/ the word En Masse!” This was the romantic post World War Two period when patriotism and the pursuit of America’s manifest destiny seemed unlimited. As a kid, there didn’t seem to me be any greater aspiration than being that kind of an American person.

Soon after graduating from college, I became deeply involved in a small but serious community development effort in Roxbury, Boston’s Black community. That project failed for many reasons, but mostly because I, and my well-meaning colleagues, all of us very young professionals and “smart” and white as well, were rightly perceived as condescending and arrogant. We were rehabbing houses and apartments, but acted as though while we were at it, we would fix up the people who lived there. We never said exactly that, but our actions did, and it led to a memorable night when the Vice President of the local NAACP became so angry he literally threw a chair at me.

Perhaps the only way we learn is the hard way and in retrospect, my hubris, and that of my friends, was unconscionable. How we talk to one another, how we listen, how we relate, may be the most important thing of all. If we do not get that right, our noble intentions will not work. The first question for everyone who wants to help someone else, for every donor and volunteer, is – “Who am I, to come to a place that is not my own and presume to do good works?”

The issues then, and now, are about equity, social justice and race, and leadership, but I mention this history because it was the beginning of the journey that led to TPI, and why I am with you today. The difference it seems to me, is that we are running out of time because –

**The world today is precariously balanced between a disastrous downward spiral and the real potential for the resolution of social dilemmas.**

President Clinton in his speeches these days – and I have heard him twice in the last few months – makes a powerful case “that the world we have is, profoundly unequal, profoundly unstable, and totally unsustainable.”

Do you agree?

How many in this room, on most days, are more hopeful than pessimistic?  
If you raised your hand - what gives you hope?

Here are some of the themes in the book that add to what you have just said:

Every visionary, those who are and those who presume to be - community activist, social entrepreneur, government policy-maker, politician, or philanthropist - dreams about wrestling a major problem to the ground, or of taking an idea to scale, so that impact becomes transformational.

Transformational change has many meanings, including change for individuals, organizations, neighborhoods – cities – regions, governments, and perhaps the most difficult of all, in the way people think.

And visions for a better world run a wide spectrum.

At one end of the spectrum is the struggle of the individual to be heard - the giving of voice to the disenfranchised, a good job, the empowerment of citizens and greatly expanded democratization.

At the other end of the spectrum is a world where silos are broken down – where all the sectors, Civil Society, government, and the market economy, work together to harness and integrate their resources.

Some people advocate big transformational system change because so many of these systems are broken, but many believe change only comes one person at a time and anything else is a wasted effort.

One can debate which is more realizable. Perhaps the better question is - are there ways to accomplish both?

**What wraps many of these ambitions are Social Movements.**

The evidence is building that we have entered an era of broad-based social movements. Like any self-evident phenomenon, one day you were not aware it existed, and the next day it is like surround sound, and ubiquitous. At least the rhetoric is. But is it real, or are only the headlines, the sound bites real?

The writer and environmentalist Paul Hawken believes there are more than a million organizations around the world that work toward ecological sustainability and social justice, and that these efforts represent the largest such phenomenon in the history of the world. I suppose my book might make that count 1,000,000.001. Hawken calls this the movement to end all movements, and notes that unlike in the past, it is often based on ideas and not necessarily on charismatic leadership. Hawken also states that in the end, movements are mysterious and develop organically as much as by design.

There are many examples of large social movements that represent that kind of aggregation. They include:

**The Make Poverty History Movement** first emerged in Europe in the late 1990s and continues to build. **The Environmental Movement**, long the province of small, under-resourced NGOs and economists operating on the fringes, has shifted into high-gear based on scientific data that has persuaded all but the most intransigent that the planet itself is running out of time unless we do something.

**The goal to eliminate major diseases from the earth, like malaria** has reached the level of specific ten year action plans from the World Health Organization, multi-lateral agencies, NGOs, and foundations.

**New partnerships and collaborations to end major social issues like homelessness.**

Conceived and guided by women who were themselves once homeless, a collaboration of foundations, government agencies and service providers in Massachusetts is on plan to end family homelessness in five years.<sup>iii</sup> Led by a Connecticut-based foundation, The Melville Charitable Trust, and nine other progressive funders, The Partnership to End Long-Term Homelessness (PELTH) intends to do exactly what it states, and end the unacceptable existence of homelessness in the wealthiest nation on earth. The political climate for this kind of sustained social action may, just may, be improving.

**Social Movements with these characteristics raise the bar.** For donors, it means striving to go out of business, or at least the business one is in. For policy-makers, nonprofit organizations, advocates and service providers, it means a totally different way of thinking that puts aside organizational and career self-interest and puts those at the center of the problem at the center of the solution.

Social Movements come into being when the moral learning<sup>iv</sup> within a community about something that is “very wrong or very right,” reaches a crises of conscience, sometimes an explosive one. It takes a lot for a population to rise up against, or circumvent, what are always powerful vested interests, what are called the ‘Body of Gods’ who guard the fortress of the status quo and refuse to acknowledge the longer term, big picture, dangers. If the moral imperative is the philosophical basis for social movements, then passion is the fuel.



There are many caveats. One of my mentors, Mike Sviridoff, the legendary Vice President of the Ford Foundation, and founder of LISC (Local Initiatives Support Corporation), was fond of saying – “social change is incremental at best!” This truism makes us wary of clarion calls, and loud pronouncements.

But the sands are shifting, and there are new forces that have the potential to make this era one of monumental social change.

**Perhaps the biggest take-away from *The World We Want* book is the growing impact of what is called the Open Source phenomenon.**

The term Open Source as used in technology is characterized by a flow of ideas, data, services, products, and markets that move more seamlessly across an ever-widening and inclusive landscapes of participants. Open Source and Open Society resonate, and when applied to the social sector, user and consumer adaptation and fabrication translates to engaged and involved citizens active on all levels, and whose voice is everywhere.

The Internet is the major medium and platform of the Open Source phenomenon and its expansion continues to explode - there are now more than 40 million blogs. Many view blogs as the new Town Meeting space, and as a kind of ‘rock tumbler’<sup>v</sup> where ideas can be debated and polished into gems of a whole new realm of citizen action. It is the rare nonprofit that is not exploring ways to deliver its message, increase its profile, organize its community of interest, and raise money, using the Internet. When Jody Williams, who received the Nobel Peace Prize for her work on the elimination of land mines, was asked - what was the single most important reason for the success of that campaign; her answer was one word – “Email.”

The Open Source world becomes “flat” through a “creative destruction” process that among other things, tears down silos between all the sectors.

**One radical proposition is this – that we can’t get ‘there’ – ‘there’ being a better place – with government and philanthropy alone. We need the capacity of the market economy to resolve major social dilemmas.**

One advocate is Steve Case, co-founder of AOL, who has formed a new company called Revolution, which has the “big hairy audacious goal” of transforming health care in the US to become both low cost and patient-controlled. Case calls for a new paradigm that bridges business and the social sector. Another voice is that of Pierre Omidyar, founder of eBay. The Omidyar Network – 14 million members - promotes individual self-empowerment. Like Case, Omidyar is investing his capital only in for-profit and nonprofit ventures that add social value. His major investment to date has been in micro-credit - more than \$150 million. Others social investors, like Google with its new \$1 billion for-profit social investment fund, are espousing the same theme. The concept of social investing is not new. What is new is the flat-out attempt to bridge the traditional divides between the business and the social sector.

This is a view that sees a limited role for government, which is perceived as bureaucratic and unimaginative, as well as nonprofits, who are inherently constrained by limitations of capital and culture – a culture where mission gets in the way of rigor and results.

I asked Sheryl Sandberg, one of the four directors of the Google Fund whether this free-market approach had any downsides. Her answer was a categorical “there are none” - a rather terrifying response at the very least. To free market believers, Adam Smith’s invisible hand” is sufficient as a brake on excess. But a recent global McKinsey survey<sup>vi</sup> of consumers put large corporations at the bottom of the list of institutions that would act in the best interest of society. It is a leap of faith to believe the same market economy that is voracious and characterized by greed, corruption, and responsible for the most egregious aspects of globalization, can now be turned to become an agent of the common good.

Or is it, especially when other domains are snapping at its heels!

**The Civil Society has become a source of innovation and creativity, and the power and influence of the sector is growing.** Nonprofit organizations and NGOs have become increasingly entrepreneurial, competitive, and businesslike. The promotion of the Social Entrepreneur, a term that did not exist 25 years ago, is now widespread. Nonprofits are growing in capacity and competence, and better able to compete and collaborate with businesses, and government. Bill Drayton, the founder of Ashoka, believes this Citizen Sector is rapidly closing the business-social productivity gap and creating a radically new hybrid business/social value-added chain.<sup>vii</sup> - “At the same time, you’re building a business social bridge where the lady in the flowery dress who runs the citizen group and the man in a suit who comes from the city have to talk with one another. They really want to talk because this is a big deal for both of them.”<sup>viii</sup> An absolutely stunning metaphor.

For many of us, the Civil Society is the place that has become the source of moral learning, and thus nurturing and growing the sector becomes even more important.

It is these trends in philanthropy, and those that go beyond philanthropy, that are the complement and the fuel to the growth in higher impact nonprofits and NGOs. In the process, philanthropy has been evolving its own approach to the Open Source phenomenon.

Lucy Bernholtz describes the elements of Open Philanthropy in this way – facilitate adaptation – don’t hinder it – design for interoperability – as in Lego’s – build for the poorest – assume upward adaptability – creative control will happen locally – diversity is essential and complex problems require hybrid solutions. Bernholtz makes the Market Economy, Civil Society, government linkage seamless – “...where all three sectors are involved in defining problems, creating solutions, and implementing strategies.”<sup>ix</sup>

From these perspectives, philanthropy’s role becomes integrative to all of these trends. Its very flexibility allows it to seed, stimulate, support, model, evaluate and encourage important ideas, and new innovations and innovators. Philanthropy is in fact the risk capital that operates at the intersection of all three sectors.

**Taken as a whole, these concepts represent a revolutionary approach to social dilemmas. They are what some people are calling a 4<sup>th</sup> Sector? Do they represent a major opportunity for the Forum and its members? I think so.**

Here is my bet for the future.

**The number of formal and informal collaborative social investment efforts, and the intermediary organizations established to support them, will dramatically increase.** Some of these will share information, others will facilitate collaborative or aligned grant making. Some will look and feel like giving circles, some like pools of investment capital. Some will be internet based, but despite the hype I think more will be locally and community-based. Many will be extensions of what we call affinity groups and focus on one field of interest. They will, for all intents and purposes, fulfill many of the functions of regional associations of grantmakers - and community foundations, but few would become one or join one. In fact, most would not even know you exist. They may reside in organizations like YPO and WPO, Chambers of Commerce, churches and temples or come roaring out of the Blog-blue. One example is the World Economic Forum in Davos, which five years ago became enthused about social entrepreneurship and promoted it on a scale that dwarfs what could have done within the field. Another example is the TED Conference that meets annually in Monterey. TED stands for Technology, Entertainment & Design, and is an incredibly powerful network of the wealthy and technology superstars that has shifted its focus toward the resolution of large scale social issues.

On one level, this represents serious competition to Regional Associations, and to ignore these trends would be at one's peril, but to my mind, they represent even greater potential opportunity.

**What this dynamic calls for are those who can lead and manage collaborative efforts across domains on a large scale.** Why not build on the mapping and community visioning capacity that many Forum members have developed, select one or more critical issues that need the participation of all three sectors to resolve, and use the convening power inherent within the membership to reach out to new players, and make something important happen. **In essence, why not start a movement!** If you want a model, read the section in *The World We Want* about Chattanooga, and the work done by the Lyndhurst Foundation over 25 years.

**But there is one other major area which is hugely underserved, and where regional associations can play a much needed leadership role. It is the issue of integrity beginning with integrity to the communities of interest you represent, but also including integrity of purpose, and integrity of self.**

Many years ago we developed The Philanthropic Curve<sup>x</sup>

Level One – you become a donor, and begin responding to requests from people and organizations you know, often from a stack of envelopes that you get to at the end of the year. (No that anyone in this room would be caught doing that)

Level Two – you decide to get organized in order to keep track of the growing number of solicitations and gifts, so you establish a foundation or a donor advised fund. That stack of envelopes at the end of the year continues to grow.

Level Three – you decide to become more strategic, develop a mission statement with goals, and you begin to focus on fewer things, and to learn more about the specific issue areas that interest you, and become pro-active in seeking programs and organizations that meet your criteria.

Level Four – You become increasingly focused on issues and results, you help nonprofit organizations grow, and perhaps you establish new programs or organizations that fill a gap in an important area.

Level Five – You seek and find ways to leverage your own resources through research, advocacy to government and networks of other donors - and as we have discussed today, through collaboration and partnership with all the sectors.

Level Six – had originally been called Nirvana but I notice my TPI colleagues now call it Harmony and Congruence, which is better. At this level, philanthropy is among the most important and satisfying part of who you are and what you do!

**Where are you and your members on that curve? And more important, what determines if one moves up the curve? Here is where the integrity factors come in:**

It begins with **integrity to the community of interest being served**, which speaks directly to what regional associations are. The central responsibility, and opportunity, a regional association has is to set standards of excellence for its members, to hold up role models, to provide learning opportunities, and to be a bridge maker and convener. To become in its very essence a learning community and that is directly tied to good philanthropic process.

**Integrity of process** begins when a donor makes the commitment to become a learner, about the issues, about best practices, about emerging leaders, about what works and what doesn't, and about new ideas. The economist Kenneth Boulding, whose amazing body of work was done in the 70s makes the case that “values and images are the result of human learning.” To Boulding, “the ethical principle underlying philanthropic conduct is “the principle of being willing to learn.” **And the big question is – “How do we produce the will to learn?”<sup>xi</sup> At the end of the day, it is always a matter of will – political will, social will, moral will, and the will to listen and learn.**

Learning is like any other creative process of discovery – if you know where you are going to end up, it will fail. It is the always the unanticipated, unexpected, insight that becomes the important one. Do you hear the echo of an Open Source way of thinking?

I was recently interviewed by a reporter from the Chronicle of Philanthropy about what motivates donors to be generous. In the course of the conversation, I mentioned the TPI experience that the more successful we were in educating donors about the issues, the more generous they became. The reporter's response was, “but that's donor education, not motivation.” Wrong! The two are intrinsically linked.

The third factor that moves us up the philanthropic curve is **integrity of purpose** or what some call “**integrity of voice.**”<sup>xii</sup> It recognizes that “elements of self-interest and pride lurk even in the best of human actions.”<sup>xiii</sup> Voice relates to the relationship between the recipient and the

investor-donor, foundation, individual, nonprofit organization, corporation, or government, and too often that goes horribly awry.

You may have seen the distressing article in the New York Times last month about a wealthy couple with lots of hedge fund money who were threatening to withdraw their support of a charter school. The donors had generously funded the school since its inception and now are in a big public fight with the community board over the school's academic and fundraising progress. The donor's statements as quoted in the press were outrageous – stating that this is “our” school, as though their money had bought the rights, and calling for fewer community board members. If there is any one dominant theme from *The World We Want* book, it is this one - **“if it isn't good for the community, and only good for the donor, it isn't worth doing.”**<sup>xiv</sup>

This leads to a final factor, one that is seldom even acknowledged but may be the most important one of all, **which is integrity of self**. This is from Shirley Strong, whose Project Change has worked on issues of racism in communities across America – “One of the first questions that must be asked of leaders and participants in any movement is: Does everybody understand that we are coming to the table to work on our own stuff.”

Anyone who doesn't understand that runs the risk of having a chair thrown at them someday.

Strong continues with this - “The work has called for growing our souls while we seek to transform society. One thing has become clear: there can be no sustained institutional transformation without our individual transformation. They are inseparable.”<sup>xv</sup> Peggy Dulany, founder of the Synergos Institute, echoes those sentiments with these words – “The only real transformation is the transformation of the human heart.”<sup>xvi</sup>

The Talmud tells us – we see things not as they are but as we are.

**What the Forum and Regional Associations could uniquely be is a powerful advocate for the moral dimension of philanthropy- that is what we are really talking about.** This would be an enormously important area for Regional Associations to take on. It is not just the idea of taking the high road. It is far more than that. The philanthropic pendulum has swung in the direction of management science, of greater impact, of going to scale and organizational capacity building, of metrics and measurement. The market economy will become more of a player in the social sphere, and those trends will become even sharper. We want and need all of those elements, but with the perspective of something else. **We need the moral dimension.**

The practical visionaries in *The World We Want* got it right. Here is what they said:

Listen to the stories of others before you tell your own – serious listening yields big dividends –

Acknowledge that people know what they need. Help individuals find their own power and take control of their own destiny –

Those at the center of problems need to be at the center of their solutions<sup>xvii</sup> -

When one listens one must obey<sup>xviii</sup> -

Seek out the assets that every community has, build on them and celebrate. Make heroes of those who do this work -

Find the alignment between self-interest and the common good. When there is none, push back and stand firm -

Make bridges and go across them. Break down silos. Create common ground. When there is no firm ground, do the right thing –

Go downstream – transformational and top-down change only works when they become concrete and aligned with individual and community needs and aspirations –

Break out of the box. Use all available resources and innovation from every sector – business, citizen, government, nonprofit – to get the work down –

Do whatever it takes – disruption, confrontation, jujitsu, logic, data, advocacy, and traveling the parallel tracks. The tactics and strategies are endless –

Abandon comfort. Raise the bar. Put your whole self in, and hold the moral conscience of your community dear –

Open it up: open yourself up. Provide building blocks for others to make their own dreams come true –

To truly love, you must touch<sup>xix</sup> -

**Integrity to community, integrity of purpose, integrity of process, and integrity of self, are intrinsically linked and make up the tone of voice of the ethical and moral relationship we seek.**

Does this mean a name change? How about **Regional Associations of Community Change** or **Associations for the Community We Want**.

Here is a poem to end these comments. It is the poem that begins *The World We Want* book:

### Conscience

“..caught in the dangerous traffic between self and universe.”

Stanley Kunitz

I carve out a small space, a nest  
Of sorts and lie my conscience down to rest.  
As a gift it bears little resemblance to  
The madness around me, those who think  
They know everything, those who despair.

My own absurd, hesitant, presumption is hope.

I watch the Osprey hunt the harbor at dusk,  
It soars and glides to a frantic wing-beat  
And like an acrobat hangs in mid-air  
As flashes of silver scales below  
Signal time to make a precision dive.

My own hesitant presumption is hope.

As an infant flails, wails, loss of womb,  
Its wet, loud, pronouncement – I am here!  
My conscience, not newborn, nor single-  
Minded like the Fish Hawk, hears the cry  
Of the wounded heart.

My own presumption is hope,

Even as deadly fog shrouds the backstage  
It is no match, these awakenings are legion,  
New dimensions of spirit and soul  
Rise from sweet hearth and beloved earth,  
Feminine and Divine.

My own hope  
Lies in Mahler's 1<sup>st</sup>, from minor to major,  
From darkness to Frère Jacques. So rise  
Tired traveler, renew, seek secret places,  
The great percussion of possibilities within.

6484 words

---

<sup>i</sup> See *The Stellar Rise of the New Philanthropic Intermediary* by Cathy Pharaoh in *Alliance Magazine* March 2007

<sup>ii</sup> Governor Cuomo used these terms when he described what he missed most after stepping down from being Governor of New York state

<sup>iii</sup> The Massachusetts *One Family Campaign* was originally funded by the Paul & Phyllis Fireman Foundation, led by Executive Director, Melinda Marble

<sup>iv</sup> Ibid – Chapter 13 *The World We Want*, conversation with John Isaacson

<sup>v</sup> Ibid – Chapter 13 *The World We Want* conversation with Phil Cubeta

<sup>vi</sup> See *The McKinsey Quarterly* – June 2007 – by Sheila M. J. Bonini, Kerri McKillop and Lenny T. Mendonca, based on a survey of 4,238 global business executives and 4,063 consumers.

<sup>vii</sup> These terms are Bill Drayton's

<sup>viii</sup> From *Citizen Jujitsu* in Chapter Two in *The World We Want*

<sup>ix</sup> From *The Building Blocks of Open Philanthropy*, Chapter 6 of *The World We Want*

<sup>x</sup> TPI has been using variations of the 'curve' for many years – this is the current version

<sup>xi</sup> *Boulding's Global Socialist Theory of Philanthropy* by Gordon Lloyd in *Conversation on Philanthropy*, Volume four, 2007, published by the Donors Trust

<sup>xii</sup> The critic Helen Vendler calls the "tone of voice" the unifying element that established the ethical relationship between the poet and the reader – see *Invisible Listeners: Lyric Intimacy in Herbert, Whitman and Ashbery* (Princeton University Press, 2005)

<sup>xiii</sup> Quoting Reinhold Niebuhr from *Beliefs* by Peter Steinfeld, his interview with Gary Dorrien, *New York Times*, Saturday, May 26, 2007

---

<sup>xiv</sup> Alan Broadbent, of the Maytree Foundation in Chapter 4, *The Listening Post: Reflection and Radical Change*, of *The World We Want*

<sup>xv</sup> Ibid - Chapter 13 *The World We Want*, conversation with John Isaacson

<sup>xvi</sup> Ibid – Chapter 4 – *The Listening Post: Reflection and Radical Change*

<sup>xvii</sup> From the conversation with Melinda Marble

<sup>xviii</sup> From the conversation with Jack Murrah

<sup>xix</sup> Ibid