



A Spiral Full of Foundations

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INTRODUCTION

Different foundations exist for different reasons, and serve multiple purposes for the people who create them, the folks who manage them, and the populations and causes they were designed to serve. Historically, foundations can be grouped into six overlapping categories. Each category has a different core motivation and priority for existence, with different reasons that “matter most.”

This document will describe the different types of foundations with a specific focus on the newly emerging form called “MeshWORK.”

THE SIX TYPES OF FOUNDATIONS

Here are the various types of foundations with their respective “matter most” bottom-lines.

F¹ A **Humanitarian** foundations has a heightened sensitivity to the human condition and sees, as its primary function, the elimination of human suffering. It promotes the social upliftment of people so they can live out their lives with sufficiency and dignity.

Meeting the needs of people, now, in a caring way---matters most.

F² A **Family** foundation is essentially an economic/social entity that serves as a vehicle for a closely-held “family” to achieve financial leverage or fund what are essentially “pet projects” preferred by specific members. Resources are to be transferred to each generation.

The family’s name, heritage and reputations matter most.

F³ An **Empire** foundation is simply the extension of the personality of a strong, domineering leader, founding principal, or highly-visible celebrity. Decisions are made based on meeting the needs, goals, aspirations, ambitions and peculiarities of such a personality.

The image and ego of the “personality” matter most.

F⁴ An **Advocacy** foundation exists to promote a specific belief system, a missionary-like cause, movement, or set of prescriptions and ideologies. Such a foundation will only be interested in the issues associated with the advancement of its own “truths” and convictions.

The defense of “The Cause” and its spread matter most.

F⁵ An **Enterprise** foundation is typically formed by large companies or other growth-driven professional groups and is designed to promote the proprietary interests of the owners and/or stakeholders. The primary motive is to expand the bottom-line, enhance the status, or win at the public relations game.

The success of the business and the executive matter most.

F⁶ An **Ecological** foundation focuses on the preservation of the elements, primarily in nature, or in the historic traditions that contribute to the quality of our life and stability of our cultural life-forms. Nature as such must be protected for future

generations. This foundation will take the longer view, think in a macro fashion, and act to preserve our natural habitat as well as historical places and memorable events.

Protecting and preserving the total quality of our lives matter most.

While a specific foundation, through its myriad of activities, may incorporate several of these basic foundation functions, most will tend to identify with one of the categories over the others, as its core motivations and central thrust. Many of the disagreements and debates that occur within various brain syndicates or groups of stakeholders may, indeed, reflect these differing and often conflicting perspectives. And, a specific foundation may start out in one category but as power and control change hands, it may end up in yet a different grouping. A foundation is not identified according to what it does, or how it donates its resources. Rather, it is grouped based on its reasons for doing so, the core beliefs that drive and support its initiatives.

F⁷ The Meshworks Foundation: a New approach to Philanthropy

In this type of foundation, a newly emerging value system and priority uses the power of “mesh” in identifying, integrating, aligning, and mobilizing all available resources. These, in turn, are focused like laser-beam on specific challenges, goals, objectives, or outcomes.

Such a foundation will be less interested in its own image, data banks, financial resources, or proprietary position in a specific professional or public niche. Rather, it is an open system; one designed to aid and assist other efforts, even if they appear on the surface to be competitive, to work for a greater goal, the power of the Third Win. The **F⁷** entity will accept, as its unique and transcendent role, the enabling and empowering of all of the elements that can contribute to a positive outcome. This new foundation is an inclusive (rather than exclusive) force designed to raise the total national or global capacity for both short and long term solutions to complex problems. It will use both the cyberworld and personal contact summitry to bring all of the other foundations (and other interests) together around common purpose. It will accept a major

information sharing and technology transfer role. It will assist other entities to become healthy and vibrant. It has no need to re-invent the wheel since it is wasteful to duplicate resources and absorb capital in unnecessary expenditures, fancy offices, or expensive public relations efforts.)

Such a **F**⁷ initiative will be relatively lean in stature, with the capability of big-picture thinking cobbled with a quick-response intelligence. It will offer its “good offices” to the academy, marketplace, milieu, or meshwork that links all of the efforts and resources in a given field or cause. As a result, more is done by less, solutions are both short-term and long-term, and the whole “brain syndicate” continues to learn, get better, improve, and even develop new and imaginative solutions that no specific effort, foundations, or entity could invent on their own.

The Third Win Purpose

By their very nature MeshWORKS foundations search for a central objective for which it seeks to “mesh” people, organizations, and other resources. Such a transcendent purpose gives the foundation the high levels of trust, integrity, legitimacy, and respect that it will need to (1) attract high levels of funding; and (2) bring diverse elements together in common cause.

This --- “matters most.”

So, what will a **MeshWORKS**-type foundation actually be able to do that others can't or don't?

1. A **MeshWORKS** foundation will learn how to align its own resources, stakeholders, clients, and customers so that internal operations run in a smooth, positive, and additive way.
2. A **MeshWORKS** foundation understands the decision-making “codes” inherent in all of the other six foundation types, to enable it to “mesh” them in common cause, enlist them in cooperative projects, or elicit funds from them for the larger, transcendent mission. This skill in marketing and fund-raising also extends to other funding sources, media interests, and technological assets.

3. A **MeshWORKS** foundation thinks in a time-line fashion in that it “meshes” the past, present, and future into an integrated wholeness to avoid generational gaps, historical cul-de-sacs, or total focus on dealing only with contemporary issues, problems, or situations. It both sees and takes the long view while dealing in tactical issues on a daily basis.

4. A **MeshWORKS** foundation is more interested in *what* is right rather than *who* is right; who has *competency* rather than *status*; and stresses what is *natural* (rather than *artificial* or *contrived*) F7 thinking occurs in highly functional flex-flow states as it synchronized and even harmonizes what appear to be discordant chords, frequencies, and conflicting forms of energy.

5. A **MeshWORKS** foundation measures and assesses itself based on what it is able to accomplish, whether it has been successful with the unique win:win:win strategy, and to what extent it has created greater abundance (wealth, technological knowledge, greater access to resources, higher life quality, more people being helped in better ways and at less cost, a healthier family, community, society, or world, etc.)

6. A **MeshWORKS** foundation always has an eye on building something for the future; contributes to a growing body of knowledge; creates innovative “skunkworks” initiatives; and searches for ideas, concepts, and solutions from far beyond its own discipline, boundaries, or spheres of influence. Such a “WORKS” is always a project under construction.

7. A **MeshWORKS** foundation continues to renew itself, absorb fresh ideas, tap-in to new resources, redefine its macro and micro goals, learn from mistakes, and be open to constant change, transitions, and transformations.

8. A **MeshWORKS** foundation possesses an uncanny ability to *morph* itself to find rapport, identify with, and shape itself to connect with a number of different organizations, interest groups, political groupings, and professional societies. This capacity is essential since it must “mesh” with these resources to accomplish the Third Win objectives. Further, it must be able to generate “full court press solutions” that deal with both causes and symptoms, that recognize the limitations in single cause fallacy thinking, and senses that most difficult issues are the rest of the “dance” between entities, parties, forces, ideologies, and other such interests.

Obviously, a **MeshWORKS** approach is informed by many of the assumptions within the Spiral Dynamics body of knowledge. As such, it is able to deal with the deepest human codes and cultural “DNA” to focus specifically on the elements and influences that are generating surface level behavior.

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