



THINK *generosity* for FOUNDATIONS



idea 01

PLAY BRILLIANTLY

To find what's possible, we must venture where we've never been. Be curious and wild and creative—the very things we associate with play. For great leaps, we need more than hard work. We need radical disorientation and invention.

Some play takes us nowhere. But there's a kind of play that opens worlds and changes us. It's this we need in foundations. We want spaces to escape what's assumed and reasonable. Spaces where we shape reality rather than believe and bend to it. We want permission to see what no one else sees, try on outrageous powers, and spin new narratives.

As we do, we uncover pure potentials and bigger worlds. And realize that most of what looks like solid reality all around us is little more than shared delusion and creation. We are what we believe, and the world is what we make. Play is, most essentially, about assuming our role as designer.

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Foundations, like people, must continually invent themselves. Once every resource is captive to production and the pressure of today, stasis sets in. It takes more effort to achieve the same result. There's less euphoria and less breakthrough.

To evolve, we want time and money to look in unusual places and do things we've never done—to explore, experiment, and prototype. Prototypes may be about designing donor experience, attracting different allies, awakening generosity in a clinical environment, creating philanthropic tribes, building purpose-driven neighborhoods, structuring new models of investment, or any number of other things.

We expect only a tiny number of prototypes to succeed. If there are few failures, it means we're not looking widely enough to catch the biggest possibilities. We're still playing it safe. Doing what we know.

It's the board's role to set the philosophy of innovation and funding. Some foundations may allocate a portion of every gift to philanthropic innovation. Others fund it through their operational budget or in partnership with donors who make gifts specifically for this. What we cannot do is allow innovation to be crowded out and left for last.

It's easier to be small than bold. Easier to do what's proven rather than reach for what's possible. But to renew ourselves, we must venture. Be immensely capable *and* a tiny bit wild. Work diligently *and* play brilliantly.

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a blue dress with a red heart on the chest, is running on a green hill. A bright light source is visible in the background, creating a lens flare effect. The scene is set against a blue sky.

LET'S ASK OURSELVES:

How many prototypes do we have in motion?

What simple things can we do to advance our culture of innovation within the foundation and play brilliantly?