



What's Next for Philanthropy in the 2020s

Flipping Orthodoxies: **General philanthropy deck**

About this Document

This document is intended to accompany the [Flipping Orthodoxies overview](#), which was created as part of the field-wide “What’s Next for Philanthropy in the 2020s” initiative supported by **Deloitte Tax LLP**, the **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation**, the **John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation**, the **W.K. Kellogg Foundation**, and the **McConnell Foundation**. The initiative engaged more than 200 philanthropy executives, professionals, donors, board members, experts, and grantees in a dialogue about the current state of philanthropic practice and where it might be headed in the coming years. To learn more about What’s Next for Philanthropy in the 2020s, visit www.futureofphilanthropy.org.

For more information on the Flipping Orthodoxy exercise, please review the instructions in the [overview](#) document.

To produce your own customized Orthodoxy Card Deck, print the following pages, double-sided, “Actual size” on heavy card stock. Combine those pages with any additional Expansion Packs that are relevant to your philanthropy (e.g., Community Philanthropy, Family Philanthropy, etc.), which can be downloaded separately from the [website](#).

Once you’ve printed the relevant additional pages onto card stock, cut the combined set of cards to size (eight cards to a page) to create your full deck. Most copy centers or print shops can print and cut the cards for you. Make sure to print one deck for each small group participating in the exercise.

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Flipping Orthodoxies
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We should stay
out of public
policy

We should stay
out of politics

Donors are the
best people to
decide where to
give money

We shouldn't take
controversial
positions

We should
focus on
problems where
we can show clear
impact

We should
support proven
approaches

Money solves
problems

INSTRUCTIONS

Deal out the full deck of cards around your table. It doesn't matter if people have a slightly different number of cards in their hands.

Look at your hand of cards. For each card, think about the orthodoxy described and consider: Does it still make sense? What would it look like if you flipped it — partially or completely? What impact would flipping this orthodoxy have on your organization or community?

Choose the card with the orthodoxy that is most interesting to you. Why is it interesting? What would it look like if you flipped it — partially or completely?

"Play" the card at the center of the table. In 30 seconds or less, explain the orthodoxy to your colleagues, telling them why you chose it and what it might look like if it were flipped. Go around the whole table, with each person playing his or her orthodoxy.

Discuss the cards on the table. Choose or vote on one orthodoxy that the table finds most appealing. Write one sentence directly on the card about why it was so interesting to the group.

Share back with the full group in 30 seconds or less.

This exercise is part of the *What's Next for Philanthropy in the 2020s* initiative. For more information, visit www.futureofphilanthropy.org.

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Failure should be
avoided

We work in the
nonprofit world

We know the
community's
needs and issues

Our money is our
most important
asset

Our role is to lead

We shouldn't
draw attention to
our giving

Giving is about
the heart, not the
head

Large
organizations are
the best
charitable
investments

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Philanthropy
should be easy

Philanthropy is
about nonprofits

Philanthropic
giving should be
kept separate
from other
investments

Philanthropy
requires less rigor
and analysis than
business

For-profit and
non-profit
activities
shouldn't mix

Philanthropy is
about getting
recognition

Solutions to social
problems come
from nonprofits

We can make a
difference on
social problems
on our own

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We are neutral

We know what
others are doing

The community
comes to us, not
vice versa

We should spread
our resources
across many
recipients

Philanthropy
can't shift cultural
norms and
narratives

Problems can be
solved by an
individual
organization

We support
organizations

We should be
hands-on with
grantees

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We should be hands-off with grantees

Impact assessment is for grantees

We should plan comprehensively before “doing”

Our grantees give us honest feedback

We should only give grants to things that are “on-strategy”

Beneficiaries are “receivers”

Solutions come from the “sensible center”

Good stewardship of resources requires close monitoring of grantees

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We can't support
movements

We work
independently from
other funders

Low overhead is
the best way to
judge a nonprofit

Philanthropy is
safe from public
critique

Add your own orthodoxy

Add your own orthodoxy

Add your own orthodoxy

Donors need a
foundation to do
their work