



Provoking Flourishing Not-for-profits

Call forth your best, then play above that

Provoking SMARTer Conversations

Brian Fraser

Admit it, you talk a lot. It's the primary way in which you establish, develop, and improve relationships. That talk always takes the form of a conversation – with yourself, with colleagues, with supporters, or with the people whose lives are transformed for the better through what you do.

You can generate synergy and significance in what you do by managing the vibe that your voice generates, and thus the value that it creates. Voice, vibe, and value – that's the basic flow of every conversation. And that is always a flow that you control. Ignore it or control it for the wrong reasons and you will create negative value. Pay attention to it and control it for the right reasons, and you will create positive value.

For well over a decade now, Jazzthink has been asking participants in its engagements what qualities of great teamwork they see in a jazz performance. We have analyzed thousands of responses and these are the 10 most commonly identified qualities:

- Melody
- Harmony
- Rhythm
- Joy
- Collaboration
- Support
- Trust
- Creativity
- Flexibility
- Confidence

As we have worked in and with organizations, we think 5 kinds of conversations are essential to generating such teamwork:

Soulful conversations generate a positive self-talk that builds confidence in your flexibility and creativity.

Mindful conversations pay constant attention to the positive alliances being formed that enhance your collaboration and joy.

Astute conversations build on the alliances to play the melody with harmony and rhythm, analyzing all the factors involved and making the best decisions you can.

Responsible conversations assign accountabilities and provide support to ensure that there is a smooth synergy in your service.

Trust arises from how well strategies and results are monitored and measured, then reformed, to ensure that lives are transformed for the better through what you do.

Everyone would benefit greatly by paying attention to these 10 qualities and the 5 conversations best designed to achieve them.

Think of the conversations you've had within your nonprofit over the past month – in a staff meeting, with a colleague, at a board meeting, with a supporter, with some who benefits from the work of the organization. How well did you manage your voice in that conversation to generate a vibe that created value? How well is your nonprofit doing in sustaining SMARTer conversations to generate that value?



Jazzthink can provide you with keynotes, master classes, and coaching, specifically designed to meet your aspirations and needs for improved governance, leadership, and teamwork. Visit jazzthink.com to find out more. Contact us at fraser@jazzthink.com to explore the possibilities.