



# Provoking Flourishing Not-for-profits

## Call forth your best, then play above that

### SPACE for Flourishing

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I've been working with jazz impresario and sax player, Cory Weeds, since the launch of Jazzthink way back in 2002. He's been a mentor, a critic, and a companion on this journey of discovery about the connections and parallels of jazz and conversation.



We've had an ongoing dialogue about what leaders in jazz groups do. It's a substantive, but subtle, role. One of the best answers Cory has composed is this, probably five years ago now:

*As a leader of my jazz group, I create space for them to perform, then perform with them.*

As I have tested this idea with colleagues and played around with it myself, I've come up with another acronym for the key elements this concept of leadership helps us remember. This acronym for SPACE provokes us to pay attention to Spirit, Possibilities, Appreciation, Collaboration, and Elation. Think with me as I expand on these a bit:

**Spirit** – this is the positive, beneficial, and common cause that brings you together to perform – clear and concise wording is crucial in energizing your Spirit

**Possibilities** – the tone and tenor of your work depends on where your focus lies – if it's on the negative, problems will define reality and depress your conversations – if it's positive, possibilities will define reality and elevate your conversations

**Appreciation** – everyone involved in your work has something positive to offer – finding ways to appreciate those gifts will greatly amplify the flow of your efforts, drawing them into sync and making them effective

**Collaboration** – this is the actual performance dynamic that emerges when Spirit, Possibilities, and Appreciation are honoured and respected as you work together – constructive conflict is welcomed as long as it deals with the best ways of achieving your purpose

**Elation** – this stimulating mix of joy and pride in a project or process well-done lifts the work of the organization to new heights – it arises from the groove of everyone's life being connected and enriched

The stories that go with this acronym for me would take up too much space in this provocation and I'd rather you added your own stories in your conversations about what SPACE means for you. One possibility is that you compose your own acronyms for SPACE and explore them together, enriching each other's understanding of how teams flourish with this kind of leadership. Let me know what you discover.



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