



Partnership and Community Collaboration Academy

Shifting to a Network Mindset

Through their research on nonprofit and leading-edge networks, Jane Wei-Skillern and Nora Silver have identified [Four Network Principles for Collaboration Success](#):

- **Focus on mission before organization.** Effective network leaders identify strategies that advance the shared mission, rather than focusing on growing their own organization.
- **Build partnerships based on trust, not control.** Leaders depend upon shared values and trust rather than top-down controls and accountability systems.
- **Promote others rather than yourself.** Network leaders exhibit a strong norm of humility, sharing credit and promoting network achievements, rather than individual advancement and brand building.
- **Build constellations rather than lone stars.** Leaders who catalyze successful networks acknowledge their weaknesses as readily as their strengths. The goal is to build the larger system that is necessary for delivering the shared mission, rather than to become the “market leader.”

Noting that these principles may seem counter-intuitive, the authors recommend that:

To harness the tremendous potential of networks...leaders must let go of conventional wisdom and shift their focus from organization level goals to network-level impacts.

Reference: Adapted from Wei-Skillern, J., & Silver, N. (2013). [Four Network Principles for Collaboration Success](#). *The Foundation Review*, 5(1). <https://doi.org/10.4087/FOUNDATIONREVIEW-D-12-00018.1>

Explore your mindset when working with networks, partnerships, and community collaboration.

1. Think of an internal or external network or collaborative effort that you are part of.
2. Which mindset best describes where you and/or your group tend to operate from?
3. For each element, mark *where you tend to be*.

Tend to be here	Organization Mindset	Network Mindset	Tend to be here
<input type="checkbox"/>	Focus on sole mission	Focus on shared mission	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Focus on sole identity	Focus on group identity	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Focus on control	Focus on trust	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Focus internally	Focus externally	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Focus on acquiring resources	Focus on sharing resources	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Focus on promoting self / organization	Focus on promoting others / network	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Focus on singularization	Focus on systems	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Focus is narrow	Focus is broad	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Identify 1-2 areas above where you would like to help your group move towards or further develop a network mindset. Consider:
 - What would it look like for the group to move in this direction? (e.g., for the group to focus on sharing resources)

 - What next steps might encourage the group in this direction?

5. Share your take-aways in the [Self Study Form](#).