



Knowing When to Step Aside

Many of the people and organizations I most admire went out on top, before they became complacent and self-serving. When organizations live too long, even good ones can become self-centred, uncreative, and timid. Energy shifts from innovation to maintenance, from purpose to preservation. What began as service risks becoming routine, and routine dulls courage.

More than a few no longer challenge themselves as rigorously as they challenge the world and, therefore, should not presume to continue simply because they can. I've long believed it's important to kick the struts out from under yourself before they rot out.

When the Charles Bronfman Foundation chose to wind down, its leaders spoke plainly about mission accomplished and about avoiding the trap of institutional self-preservation. That deeply resonated with me.

Harmony Foundation was created to contribute, not to endure indefinitely for its own sake. So, we've decided to step aside while our values are intact and our performance high.

Over four decades, we have worked with partners across Canada and around the world to seed innovation, support communities, push leaders, and take risks that larger institutions could not, or would not, take. It's been challenging at times, but a life of purpose and meaning is exhilarating.

The work still matters and yet ending our work feels like an act of stewardship. It's sensible and responsible and ending well is an expression of discernment, not withdrawal.

Now is the time to create space for new ideas, new leaders, and new ways of doing good, and that's why we chose to invest in others doing important work, rather than holding on to justify the past, conform to shifting regulatory and ideological pressures, or defend our relevance for its own sake.

We extend our deep gratitude to all who walked this journey with us, and step aside with hope in the future. The world is faced by many serious, some existential problems. We must hope the next generation has the necessary integrity, commitment, knowledge and humility to work together to address them. A good dollop of humour will help too!

For me personally, this is also a moment of re-alignment. I look forward to expanding my role as advisor, mentor, educator and connector. By supporting others as they pursue ambitious goals to make the world a better place for ourselves, for other species, and for future generations, I look forward to contributing to a spirit of curiosity, humility, joy, and respect for each other.

— **Michael Bloomfield**