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# Perspectives on NFP Governance

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# Schools of Thought

- “Roles and Responsibilities”
- “Policy Governance®”
- “Governance as Leadership”



# School: “Roles and Responsibilities”

BoardSource, with headquarters in Washington, DC, currently identifies the following core roles and responsibilities:

1. **Constructive Partnership**
2. **Mission Driven**
3. **Strategic Thinking**
4. **Culture of Inquiry**
5. **Independent-mindedness**
6. **Ethos of Transparency**
7. **Compliance with Integrity**
8. **Sustaining Resources**
9. **Results-oriented**
10. **Intentional Board Practices**
11. **Continuous Learning**
12. **Revitalization**



# [ School: “Policy Governance®” ]

## **Core Features of Policy Governance®**

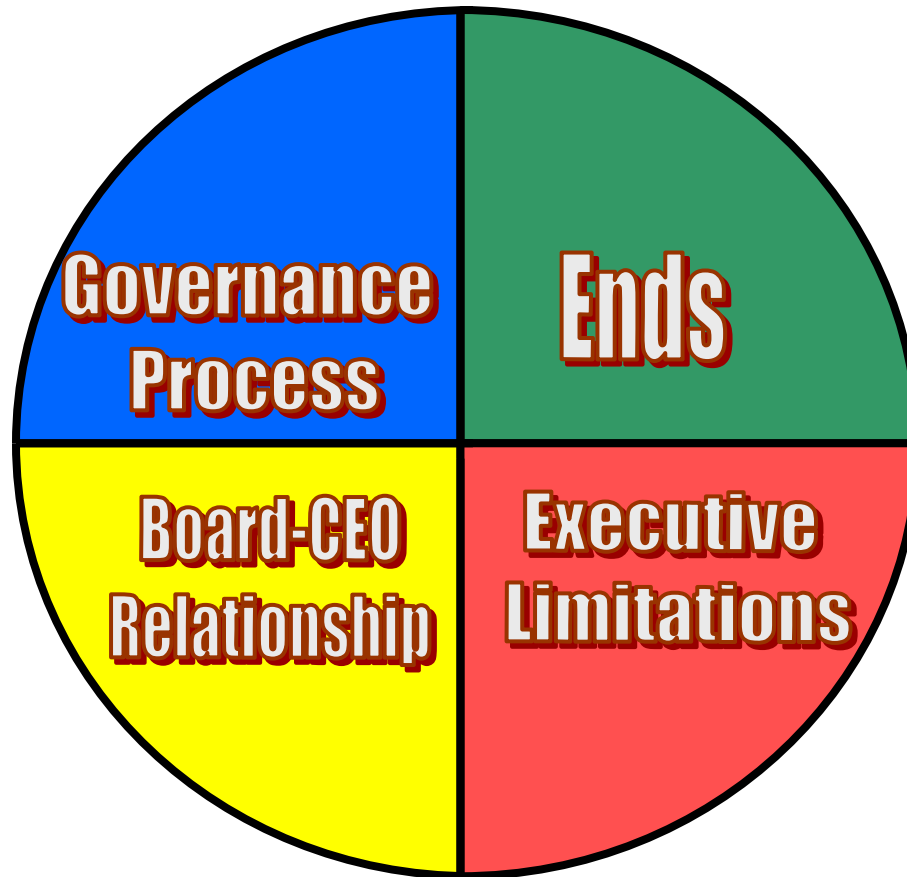
- Complete operating system
- Set of 10 principles
- “Outside - in” approach
- Servant-leadership philosophy
- Maximizes accountability *and* freedom
- Boards accountable to legal/moral owners
- Enables efficient delegation
- Rigorous, regular monitoring system

# [ School: “Policy Governance®” ]

## Core Features of Policy Governance® (continued)

- Four policy categories
- Policy developed from broad to specific
- Being concise: "any reasonable interpretation"
- Saving time: what have we already said?
- Focus on the *difference* in the world (vs. activities)
- Ends: what benefit, for whom, at what worth
- Establish parameters (i.e., manage risk)
- CEO/staff decide how to achieve Ends, inside board-set parameters
- Set rules for board's own processes, and how board links to operational side

[ School: "Policy Governance®" ]



# Core Features of “Governance as Leadership”

- Looks at governance as three modes of thinking – fiduciary, strategic and generative
  - Each mode requires a different set of skills for the board to hone and use
  - Like any skill these thinking modes need to be used to keep developing the skills of the Board
- Focus is best boards spend time in each mode
  - Each mode may take more time depending on needs of organization’s life cycle
  - Boards must do its job and provide support and guidance to management
- Find time to do generative work
  - This is like using planning processes in an ongoing fashion instead of once a year or every other year
  - Each meeting the Board should think or discuss something in generative mode
  - There are many different tools that help to lead a board to do generative work

# Core Features of “Governance as Leadership”

## ■ Fiduciary

- Facts, figures, finances, reports are reviewed by the board
- Insuring the organization stays in compliance with local, state and federal regulations
- Develop benchmarks to be able to monitor organizations compliance

## ■ Strategic

- Strategic indicators, competitive analysis
- Make decisions of services and programs to add or divest
- Make decisions of significance to organizations environment

## ■ Generative

- Signs of learning and discerning what is going on in the environment
- A time for Boards to think about an issue before any strategies have been formulated to address
- This is where a Board will develop key questions or thoughts on a potential problem to help frame the problem in the context of the organization

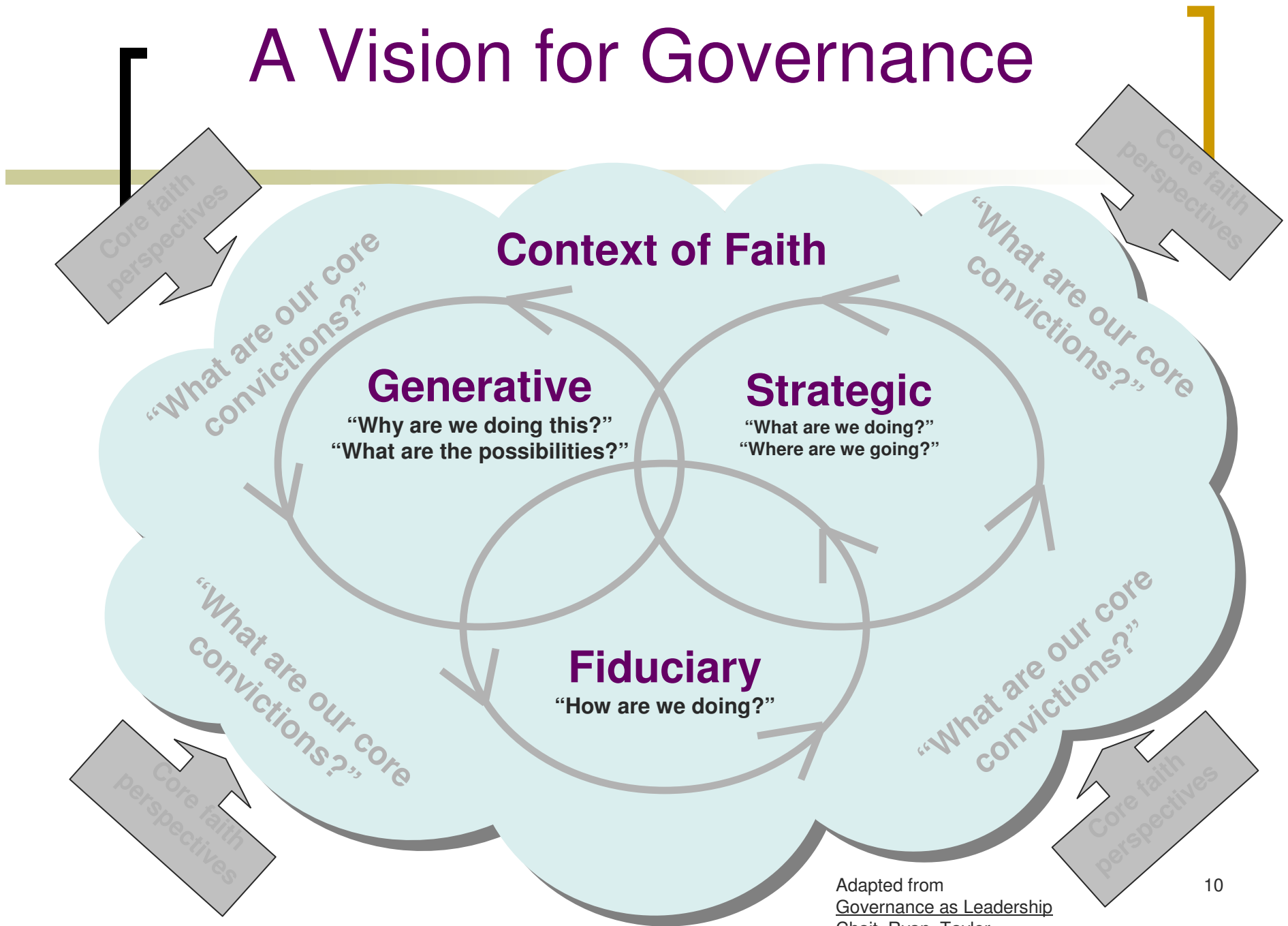
# “Generativity” Defined

“Generativity” can seem like a big word, but can best be understood as board work/thinking that focuses on an organization’s “roots”—its mission and deepest held convictions, as well as its work on “wings”—the possibilities ahead.

-Stiffney



# A Vision for Governance



Adapted from  
Governance as Leadership  
Chait, Ryan, Taylor