



# Seven Turning Points: Leading Through Pivotal Transitions in Organizational Life

*Susan Gross*

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As nonprofit organizations mature and grow, their staffs and programs expand, their operations and dynamics become more complex, and the climate they operate in changes and presents new challenges. If they are to move to a new level of effectiveness, they must periodically adjust their leadership, management, structure, governance, and operating style to fit their changed circumstances. Author Susan Gross calls these adjustments ""turning points."" The author's forty years of work with nonprofit organizations has shown that turning points are most likely to arise at seven predictable times in a group's life. Recognizing these turning points and taking action can ease the adjustments necessary as your organization pivots in a new direction. The seven turning points are: 1) When a loose, family style of operating leads to disorganization and a lack of professionalism or accountability; 2) When the management needs of an organization outstrip its executive director's management skills; 3) When a founding volunteer board hires its first executive director but finds it hard to delegate and adjust to a less involved role; 4) When opportunistic, unplanned growth results in an absence of focus and priorities and spreads an organization too thin; 5) When strong central direction becomes micromanagement, top-down control, and over-dependency on the leader 6) When decentralization goes too far, splitting the organization into autonomous units that have little or no connection, coherence, or coordination; and 7) When a longtime, cherished executive director must prepare to step down. This lively text includes charts, illustrations, and an engaging graphic design to help readers assess the state of their organizations and decide what changes to make.

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