

FIGURE 3: DECISIONMAKING WHEN FOUNDERS ARE PRESENT

It is not uncommon for founders who are accustomed to making their own decisions in business to take charge of the foundation, often using the unilateral decision-making model inappropriately. Founders may think of the foundation as their own and feel impatient with or disrespectful of group decision-making. At the same time, they genuinely want their family members to be part of the foundation.

This situation is not always easily remedied, but family members are not powerless. They have options for dealing with strong founders, including:

- Decide what is an acceptable degree of authority you need to make it worth your while to serve on the board. If the founder does not agree, you can choose not to serve on the board.
- Negotiate lines of authority for making foundation decisions, e.g., hiring staff, making governance policies, or voting on grants. You may relinquish authority to the founder on certain issues and require a say in others. For example, the board may agree that the founder controls the largest share of the grants budget.
- Agree to the founder having final say on most issues, as long as he or she is willing to consider the views of the other board members.
- Develop a persuasive argument for including board members in decision-making, e.g., if the foundation was established in perpetuity, the founder's children and grandchildren need education and experience to make the best decisions with the money the founder worked hard to provide.
- Encourage the founder to attend professional meetings where these situations are discussed and where he or she can talk with other founders. Alternatively, provide him/her with a copy of this edition of *Passages* and ask to have a conversation about these issues.

Often just having these discussions can make a founder aware of family members' desire to participate in the foundation's decision-making. Many founders choose to establish a family foundation because they want to create a legacy of philanthropy for their family. How a founder includes other family members in the foundation's decision-making will shape the family's involvement for generations to come.