

**DANCING ON THE CUSP:
Why We're Both an .org & Inc.**

In June 2004 when we began, we chose a .org designation for our website and applied for incorporation as a non-profit, but we decided in June 2005 to reincorporate as an S-corporation. We retain the social, ethical, and spiritual aims that led us consider becoming a non-profit. There are other reasons, related to creativity and self-sufficiency, that have led us to add Inc. to our name. However we are retaining our .org for the website because we now define ourselves as dancing freely on the cusp, with the desire to be self-sufficient in our activities but with strong social commitments that guide all that we do.

When we began to envision Universal Table, it was clear we wanted to create an organization, not just design and conduct a series of inter-related activities. We were clear that those activities would best flourish and cross-fertilize under one common conceptual roof, whether the organization we created comprised two or ten people. It was also important to us to honor that understanding of a common roof by incorporating in some form. This has become more important to us once we started Wising Up Press in 2007, since we see its home as securely under Universal Table's conceptual roof.

Given the social inspiration and focus of our vision, it felt most congruent to envision ourselves and in almost all ways act as a non-profit since economic profit did not provide the creative impulse, motivation, or goal of any of the projects that called to us. We did, on the other hand, want to be able to act freely on our vision, with minimal logistical and bureaucratic resistance—and we wanted our authors to benefit directly from their own works as well as benefitting from a collective structure. Paying taxes—or not—was not why we considered being a non-profit. An active commitment to the social good was—and remains—the better way of understanding what inspires our projects, what motivates us to realize them, who we want to reach with our books, our web anthologies, and our workshops, and how we define success.

On the other hand, we think that we would prefer to put our energy into reaching the right people with the right books and workshops and finding our base of support there, rather than in trying to have our development as an organization at such an early stage be defined by the division of activities and funding sources that IRS non-profit guidelines require.

This doesn't mean we can't accept donations, just that they aren't tax-deductible. Or that we can't apply for and accept some grants, which given our research interests we still intend to do. It does mean that at present one way we will express our social commitment is through paying taxes, rather than asking to be relieved of them. Another is to retain our .org address. Both of which invite us to a new, more creative take on this meandering divide between the private and the public good.

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