



**BERRETT-KOehler FOUNDATION**

Action Learning Fellowship – 2020 Final Shareout Series

By Peggy Holman, BKF Board Secretary

## Listening Reimagined

Reflections on BK Fellow Meg Van Deusen's Journey of Discovery and Action

When I heard Meg Van Deusen's desire to make listening the norm, I felt an immediate kinship. As a long-time engagement practitioner who knows the transformative power of listening, I was wowed by her passion and commitment.

Meg put her belief into action by opening her presentation not with talk, but with a question of us – her audience. She used polling software to ask us “What comes to mind when you hear the word ‘feedback?’” Then she wove our responses into her talk.

➡ Respond at [PollEv.com/fbl524](https://PollEv.com/fbl524)

➡ Text **FBL524** to **22333** once to join, then text your message

**What is one word that comes to mind when you hear the word  
"feedback"?**

learnings  
teamwork two-way  
**improvement**  
curiosity trust  
tweaking wisdom  
"heart-to-heart"  
connection listening respect  
reciprocity incremental  
time changing work  
communication  
power growth  
empathy



As her fellowship project, Meg developed a fellows program to grow feedback professionals. She was supported by her employer, Feedback Labs, a nonprofit that works to democratize aid and philanthropy. With Coronavirus, her program fellows immediately put what they were learning to work, listening to their constituents to adapt to changing times.

Something that struck me about Meg was that, like the fellows she supported, she applied what she was learning from the BK Fellowship to her work with the Feedback Fellows. Specifically, she tied her work to the BK Foundation mission – sharing resources to co-create a world that works for all. She supported her fellows from eight countries to grow into a community, just as she became part of the BK Fellows community.

As a BK Foundation board member, I appreciated her speaking to what she valued about her fellowship experience. Not only did she find community, Meg also spoke of her appreciation for what she learned about herself. Discovering she is a creative. Finding her love of group facilitation. She said the program changed the way she does her work. Meg did more than support a cohort of fellows to adopt listening as a norm that they're taking back to their organizations. Meg also discovered the gift of listening to herself.

Meg's journey parallels my own in many ways. Discovering the power of engagement practices that support groups in taking responsibility for what they love has led me on a life-long quest of self-discovery and a belief that I can and do contribute to creating a world that works for all.

I am inspired by Meg and her peers – a new generation on a never-ending journey of discovery, hope, and movement towards equipping people with the skills to create the world they desire.