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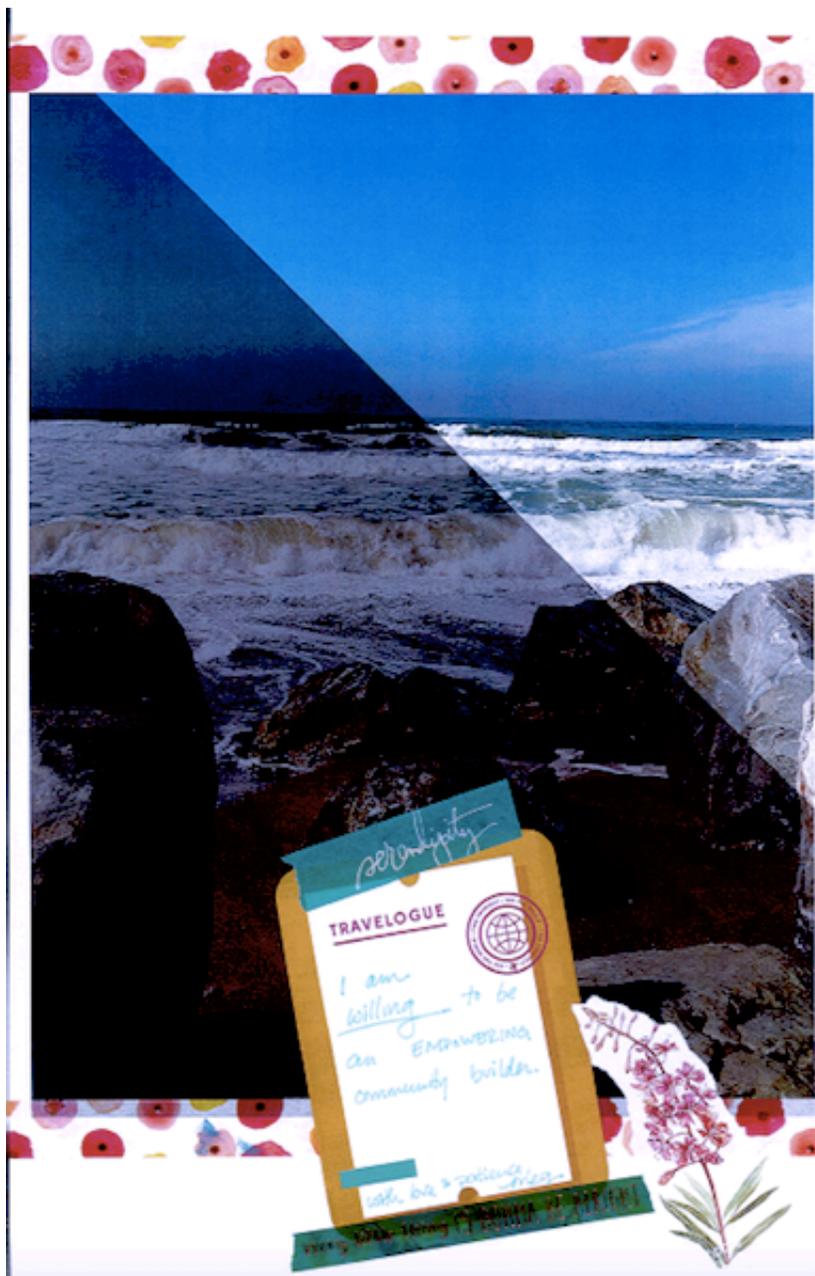


BERRETT-KOEHLER FOUNDATION
CO-CREATING A WORLD THAT WORKS FOR ALL

October 25-27 kicked-off the eight-month Action Learning Fellowship at a powerful (even during a power outage), in-person retreat. With a deep commitment to crafting community-focused solutions, this 3.0 cohort is actively seeking the space to play with deep inquiry around community as a vehicle for social transformation.

On November 13, the first bi-weekly virtual meeting (aka "The Oasis") was convened, with the fellows purposefully creating the opportunities for themselves to carve out this space as a regenerating oasis. When we asked at the retreat for the fellows to communicate their initial experience to BKF's community, we had no idea how moving the responses would be. To give space to what they generated, we will be showcasing one or two reflections (visual, written, video) each week for the next few weeks.

Today we introduce Meg VanDeusen's visual reflection, and she shares with us her journey to create it.



When I was first asked to craft for this reflection, I was riding on the waves on confidence and assurance from the weekend. I had tapped back into my best self - the version of me that is creative, that is open, that is vulnerable. But removed from the oasis, I was paralyzed. Who would want to see my creation? A visual reflection? That's really just for me - no one else would find meaning in it.

So I started with something I once knew - baking. The first night on the retreat we played a game called "weird or profound?" and answered - you guessed it-

weird or profound questions. In doing so, I admitted to no longer being a baker, to have become a cook, because it allowed me to release my hyper attentive tendencies, and just create. So perhaps, for this activity, I could find the oasis that brings those two parts of myself together. And so I baked.

I baked a carrot cake. A cake that has always intimidated me. It takes so many very different ingredients, a long time, and precise measurements. But that is how I felt my oasis was created. The community weavers selected the fellows with such intention - ensuring that what we all brought to the table was uniquely and powerfully our own. They planned time for us to sit together, in-circle, and each person's questions and experiences complemented another's. It felt fluid and natural, but I know the intentionality with which the weekend was planned was anything but random. And so, I baked.

As I moved through the kitchen, trying to bake a cake that represented an oasis of thought, of action, of passion, and of leadership, I discovered two key learnings for me from the weekend: 1) the power in convening together people who would otherwise not have a way to find each other, and 2) from darkness, there is light.

And since I cannot send you a slice of that cake (although it did turn out if I do say so myself) I decided to get over my crafting fears and take one more look at the latter.

In its most literal sense, this group of people created so much light when the power was shut off to help protect the state from the rapidly spreading wildfires. But not only were we resilient through the outage - cooking by candle light and more - but we thrived in that darkness. It was the night where everything clicked. Where we felt the most connected. The most alive.

What were the elements that enabled such lightness, such immediate comfort? A comfort that was anything but contentedness, a comfort that equated to a space of deep questioning with kindness and hope?

That is what this image tries to reflect. There is no way to capture who we were

that weekend and where we will be going, but the ocean tide continues to come in and out and drive our movement forward. We are the tide. Together, we bring with us all the power to create light out of literal darkness. But we also know that for the tide to come in, it must go out. This weekend was the tide coming in, and as we disperse to the rest of our lives, as the tide goes out, we must hold on to the fireweed that spurs us, the wonderment that grounds us, the drive that drives us, as we continue to create light in each of our own ways, until we can create that oasis once more.

**Click the picture to learn
a little more about Meg
and her amazing co-creators!**



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