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

Welcome to the final week of our Action Learning Fellowship kick-off reflection series. Today, **Renee Bradford** (linking the positive role modeling of philanthropy, activism, and Authentic Leadership of Black women with the treasure of Young Black Millennial women) and **Heera Sharma** (founder of Go Laadli -aka 'beloved daughter' in Hindi - empowering young women to become problem solvers, change makers and leaders) share how the hope and confidence they find in the togetherness of the ALF cohort nurture them as individuals to make the changes they are working for in their communities.

Our current cohort - a vibrant, thoughtful and committed group of eight women who are building strong and resilient communities across the world - is engaged in initiatives as varied as catalyzing a new generation of active citizens and responsible leaders globally to realize a world in which people with power are accountable; more fully optimizing African diaspora community giving to move the needle on economic development in Africa; designing more intimate, inclusive and youth-led initiatives around climate justice; and empowering young women to become problem solvers, change makers and leaders.

We're asking for your help to continue to create this space, and to provision the journeys of future Action-Learning Fellowship change-makers. Every donation made by December 31st contributes to reaching our year-end goal of \$15,000.

Donate to BKF's Year End Campaign!



Renee is keeping the retreat momentum alive! On December 3, she co-hosted the Pink Lemonade Oasis: Our power lies in our stories. A restorative space for the fellows focused on reclaiming narrative, this virtual gathering was inspired by the courageous women of the past who have had to “squeeze the day” to face life’s complexities with strength through the giving of time, talent, and treasure.

Heera, who identifies with fire as her element, recognizes movement as the truth of life, and is in a rush to create change that makes an impact, shares with us a reminder to embrace and hold complexity and paradox:



The Action Learning Fellowship (ALF) retreat was a welcome oasis from the hectic pace of life. I am immensely grateful to the ALF community weavers for creating the container that allowed us to be our authentic selves and encouraged us to skip superficialities and forge deep, meaningful connections with each other. I am also thankful to my fellow cohort for immersing in the container so effortlessly and for holding and allowing for that space for connections to happen – for seeing and being seen, for hearing and being heard.

During and post retreat, I have felt a few things emerging for me. Firstly, has been a deep appreciation for the importance of authentic engagement in

meetings and gatherings. I realize how often we do injustice to getting together, by not focusing on building meaning, but focusing more on externalities and logistics - which while important, should never be so important as to take away from the essence of gatherings – the building and deepening of human connections. What also resonated with me strongly was the focus on the “heart of the matter” for any gathering – “who am I” and “who I am in relationship with others” from the Art of Convening by Craig and Patricia Neal. These are deep questions that I am still pondering on and know will keep with me as I grow and evolve in my life journey.

Secondly, I remember the ending of the retreat pushing me unexpectedly into more of a chaos, an unsettlement, a questioning rather than a sense of calm and clarity I had envisioned. As a person who is in a rush to create change and to make an impact, who identifies with fire as her element and recognizes movement as the truth of life, it was incredibly hard to slow down, to question, to reflect. Yet, however incapable I have been of the same, I recognize and have always recognized the importance of reflective practices, of doing the inner work and the retreat was a sharp reminder for the same. It was also a reminder to embrace and hold the complexity and paradox – of movement and stillness, of being and doing – with kindness and compassion for the self. As I continue my journey, I realize more and more the importance of sitting with these paradoxes, of anchoring the movement with inner stillness and self-awareness, so that I may be able to bring myself fully and completely in service to my community.

A world that works for all takes a community to create.

Donate to BKF's Year End Campaign!

Help us reach our \$15,000 year end goal.
Your donation provides funds for fellows
to test a new aspect of their project
they think will make the biggest impact.

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