**It’s Not All About “Us” - Re-Orienting The Language And Power In Philanthropy**

Speakers:

* Carlton Ford, Head of Strategic Partnerships
* Satonya Fair, President and CEO, PEAK Grantmaking
* Dawnn Leary, Chief Program Officer, Greater Washington Community

Hi, my name is Lindsay Gruber, my pronouns are she her. I am so thrilled to be able to welcome you all back or say hello for the first time for folks that are joining us today on the second day of the US pro bono Summit, as those of you who were here yesterday will recall, as a part of our accessibility efforts, we're also doing visual introductions. So for those who cannot see me, I'm a white woman wearing a black blazer with long curly hair that my daughter called springy this morning, which I'm going to take as a compliment, to continue to hear that throughout the day, as you meet the fantastic folks that are part of this work today. But I have the pleasure of being able to welcome you back, the folks in the room with us here, the 600 Plus folks who have registered to be a part of this online, and to have the chance to be a part of this incredibly important conversation, which truly is about accelerating trust, connection and impact through pro bono.

And yesterday, we had some amazing opportunities to dig into those conversations with the thoughtful and comprehensive data shared by Francis Cohen from the building movements, projects with that race to lead data about confronting the nonprofit racial leadership gaps, and the incredible and interesting information and suggestions that she began to help put together and distill through that presentation and discussion. Moving into the ways that in partnership between HR and CSR, within companies, we can design and shape preventive programs that can be even more impactful and in depth and thoughtful in the way that they come to life. And then the incredible examples from Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina and Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation, on ways you can operationalize DEI intrapreneurial program, and the pivotal changes that they made in their programming, particularly through incorporating lived experience, just a tremendous way to start these conversations. And hopefully for many of you start bringing these conversations back into your work, regardless of which piece of this pro bono ecosystem that you're a part of.

And today, we have the chance to have even more amazing and tremendous speakers and presenters as part of our discussion. And that includes all of you listening, joining us from your homes, your offices, airports, various places, folks in the room today, you're all a part of this privilege. You bring folks together in order to not just discuss things as they've been for as we see them happening in the future, but to really push ourselves. It's why we've been discussing this preventive summit as going to business unusual, not returning back to business as usual. So we want to continue with that theme. And we have some incredible sessions today. To help us do that. I'll have the pleasure in a moment of introducing folks as a part of our first session. But we get to really lean into naming and confronting the power dynamics and challenges that exist within philanthropy, and identifying those unique ways that preventive service can really start to counteract and counterbalance some of those existing inequities, we have the chance to challenge the norms and expectations placed on nonprofits for how we tell our stories, and what those expectations are, to understand how to ask the right questions and move us forward in that way to identify and understand the way the role of executives within pro bono service can affect the culture of an organization and how that advances. And then a very special spot at the end of the summit to ask a root. as many of you know, we call our employees at taproot, our Roots, and they are truly at the at the heart at the core, the root of what it means for us to bring our mission to life. So I'm very excited to return back to the stage at that point to be able to moderate that session as well. So think about questions you have for our Roots, things you want to know more about when it comes to building these amazing programs and being a part of bringing this mission to life. And in the meantime, without further ado,

I am so thrilled to be able to queue up our incredible first session led by my esteemed colleague, Carlton Ford, who is the head of strategic partnerships here at the Taproot Foundation. as many of you heard me say yesterday, one of the many sort of founding principles and guiding elements that led to the founding of the Taproot Foundation 20 years ago at this point, was to really be able to disrupt and address and confront the different power dynamics and the inequities that exist in the way nonprofit organizations can access resources. And it's a really important way to dig into this conversation by really being able to confront what that looks like in the realm of philanthropy, and hearing from folks within that space, who are willing to go there with us all together, to start to ask those questions. So with that, I'm gonna turn it over to Carlton for to introduce our wonderful panel.

12:55:13

Absolutely. Thank you so much, Lindsay. Welcome to day two of the US pro bono Summit. And this conversation entitled, it's not all about us reorienting the language and power in philanthropy. So, following Lindsey's introduction, my name is Carlton Ford, head of strategic partnerships with Taproot Foundation, my pronouns are he him and for those unable to see me I am a black man, wearing a light blue shirt, dark blue blazer and really fashionable red glasses. So I am eager to introduce our guests here and have them introduce themselves and happy to be joined by Tanya fer president and CEO of Pete grantmaking. Pete grantmaking works to transform philanthropy by elevating the field of Grants Management and empowering branch management professionals to lead the way in operationalizing, equity centered values driven grant making practices. Also we are graced by having Don Leary joining our conversation, Don is Chief program officer at the Greater Washington Community Foundation, where she is responsible for providing strategic clarity, advisory and management of the foundation's competitive and discretionary grant making, including how to implement racial equity practices within the organization's grant making strategy. So, John, and Tanya, I hand it over to you to have further introductions. Please, Don, you want to kick us off?

12:56:46

Yes, I'm happy to thank you so much. And it's such a joy just to be in rooms with humans. So thank you. And hello, Dawn. Good to be with you today. I am, as you heard the tiny fair, I use she her pronouns. And I'm from Akron, Ohio. I just love to look that up because I love Ohio, so go Ohioans in the audience. And I am today wearing a navy blue dress to match Carlson because they prepared in advance and black boots, and I am a black woman with hair that changes by the week. Today, it's a little bit of a reddish brown. So that is my introduction. And again, thank you for having me.

12:57:31

We do have some coordination here between the blue and the red that I see Don. But Don, we hand it over to you for introduction.

12:57:38

Great. Thanks so much. And just wish I could be there with you all in space. That happened to be a part of this conversation. My name is Don Leary, Dawn, two ends, yes, Donna none Leary, she her pronouns. I am a black woman, with what we call in our culture, Sister laughs and a wonderfully partly shaved head that I am rocking today with some butterfly earrings and black sweater and a gold top. So just so happy to be with you all.

12:58:14

Absolutely. So you know that in our prep for these for this conversation, we had what we call fire in the chat moments, we had a lot of candid, courageous conversation. And I'm really excited to bring that to this to this body today. But I think let's start with why. Why are we sitting here talking about this? What is our personal lie for entering into the philanthropic sector? I think that that's a great way to get a foundation and kind of level set. So Tanya, do you want to kick us off?

12:58:47

I will. And then I'm gonna go to you because I want to you have a story here as well. But I love philanthropy. I started off in early in my career as a case manager for kids and families. Some folks might recognize the attendance programs that used to run back in the 80s and 90s. They have morphed in this day. But my charge was to really support a group of, you know, give them families who really had been forgotten. And I did that and worked in all black neighborhood. And then an all white neighborhood that was mostly Appalachian, it was such an experience because I think I was paid exactly about $4 a year to do it. And I had to raise not only my salary, but definitely all the money for any programs after school programs or anything for my kids or families. And so I got very good at making sure I could pay my own rent, but also trying to make sure that if my boys wanted to go shoot off rockets after school, that we were finding dollars and someone to support that. So with time I just realized, I'm pretty good at helping raise money for things I care about what would happen if I took my legal skills and my all my case management skills and volunteering, and started working for an organization that was positioned to give money to the people in places that I had become very familiar with. And at that time, I was in Cincinnati, Ohio. And so I named it and I said, I'd really like to go into corporate philanthropy. And someone heard me I got a grant years later, and they said, I'm leaving my job. And I remember you say that you wanted to come work in corporate philanthropy, would you like to apply for my job and she spearheaded me from being in you know, in the trenches over to this face? And so I have just found philanthropy, philanthropy to be a wonderful place. for both my heart, my head, my gut, my skills, and just have tried to make sure that everything I'm bringing to the sector makes the sector stronger. But most of all, if pika successful, non profits are better off. And so that is why I stay right here and I go at philanthropy like nobody's business for change.

13:01:00

That's AI. So look, we ended yesterday, I think Sophie from Blue Cross Blue Shield, North Carolina said, chicken skin goosebumps she got goosebumps, I'm already starting the day with goosebumps, you talk head and heart and the balance of head and heart and philanthropy. That's that's the secret there. You also are reminding me, Francis cowriter started us off yesterday talking about the importance of black and brown executives having sponsors to enter into their leadership, right. So that story is a lived and learned experience. Don, I'll give you a little more time, if you want more time to think of your why I'm happy to go next. My why, you know, growing up as a black boy from Southside of Chicago, it was entering into the cultural arts, I wanted to enter into a world that was different from otherwise what I had been experiencing when you walk into monolithic arts institutions. And you see the marble wall, and the names etched in the marble wall, it was clear to me and it was described to me that very few of those names, if any, were black and brown donors, black and brown individuals, right foundations, family foundations started by black and brown families and individuals. And so it became part of my task to change that narrative, right? And to really open the aperture of exactly who is behind the funding, right? And then strategically, how do we do what we're going to talk about how we're building in those communities, and to elevate those foundations, whether they be corporate, private family? So that's, that's my why for what brings me to this seat, Don, handed over to you. So Don, I think you're on mute. And as I say, we all get one mute a date. You're good. So I think maybe Marian will be able to help unmute there.

13:03:00

Here we go. It wasn't allowing me to unmute, I don't know why. And so when I was thinking of when I was listening to your both of your journeys, I don't know minds is, this is my word, not yours. But as sexy as that. Or as intentional. Honestly, I. So I'm a native, northern Californian, and ended up in the District of Columbia, to go to an HBCU. Bison, Howard Hu anyone who's alum, and fell in love with the district and stayed. My entrance into the nonprofit space was more in the community development space, I worked for a community development corporation that was focused on neighborhood revitalization, we were affordable housing provider, in a community in a Ward, Ward eight in southeast DC. And that was really my founding job that really, in a lot of ways, shaped how I see the world and how I enter into spaces. I really entered into the philanthropic and financial institution space. By accident, it was not an unintentional step. And I think what I sort of tried to come into any space, as a result of that founding and community development is how organizations intentionally center and work with in partnership community, nonprofits, residents, etc. And not to come to this space from an extraction point of view, but come to the perspective as a partner, and to find ways in which to support and not always to lead. And so that's kind of what brought me here.

13:04:58

It's, that's I hope everything's resonating. Because many times what folks will find when they enter into the philanthropy space, is how did they get here? You know, the road to philanthropy, philanthropy is a relatively new sector, right? When and when it comes to the intentionality of being able to learn philanthropy, right? There's some great schools of philanthropy out there. But those are these are newer endeavors when it comes to formalizing philanthropic practices. But this brings us to our first question, right. So when it comes to philanthropy, and when it comes to are engaging in this power, dynamic and power shifting, the question is, is the evolution and awareness Notice of shifting the power dynamics between grant makers and grantees a moment or movement once they kick us off,

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nonetheless, atonia can kick us off. That was her. She started that movement moment or movement, Emma letting her set that table, she said it so well, when we were prepping for that I'll just say the jury's out. And I think that that's real. Already, with the pandemic, we saw, organizations, funding institutions, individual high net worth individuals really go completely outside of their norms, and trying to move money as quickly as possible with the least amount of time and restriction to causes that they both cared about, but often we're outside of their mission. And thankfully, the IRS understands a good emergency. Right. And we can, there are mechanisms by which one can go outside the lines. But I was very, very surprised. Despite being an organization that also received a MacKenzie Scott investment, I was really surprised to hear a lot of our funding entities last year begin to say, my board, and even sometimes my staff colleagues, and these are at all different size and type of philanthropic institutions. But in particular, the question about my board is asking, When will we go back. And I found that to be extremely distressing. And interesting, because I love a challenge. And I thought go back to what, and I had the opportunity to present earlier this year in West Virginia to a bunch of founders of philanthropic institutions that the title was called, we're not going back. And as a nonprofit, I just think that as humans, change is experienced, not positively even when that change is good for us. And the same is true for institutions. And so I do think that what may feel very good for my colleague and I, when we are hearing from a donor who says you're doing great work, we'd like to invest in you, unrestricted that the money's on its way. That's beautiful. And that's wonderful. I'm always intrigued about what kind of conversations are happening back at the ranch on that, though. And was that a one off? Or is this the beginning of a trend? And so when I do hear our colleagues, the people who are at these more than 500 Foundation, say, folks are starting to ask about Will you go back, I know that that's a human tendency to go to stasis, because it's where we all go in trauma and crisis. So I do think it's intriguing that I seem to see some organizations sticking their landing. And they have said, we can do this, we're moving to a 50% or 75%, unrestricted portfolio, we're going to do and but we absolutely would be not being honest, if we didn't report that there are organizations who are going back to the way they operated, and 2018 2019 before we were talking about equity, racial equity, healing, all of these things like upfront, but also, before this interesting crisis, that literally changed us all, we will never go back to who we were before March 13 2020. as humans, we have been changed. So it is intriguing that institutions will seek to go back to what they know best, and the practices that they know best. And I will be a very vocal reporter on who's really changing for the benefit of community and nonprofits, and also to be a great sector leader for other philanthropic organizations. And absolutely, with the help of Betsy Reed, my communications director at p grantmaking. We will absolutely be calling out the shortfalls because we have to, to I don't know if it's a movement or a moment, but I'm hopeful.

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there's so much truth and what you just shared. And I think that the so one of my one of my colleagues, one of the Roots on our team said there's this additional he's learning baking said this additional ingredient is time there's the materials, the seasoning, and then there's time and I think time is the thing that we still need to figure out to know if this is a moment of movement, Dawn that sparked anything for you.

13:10:06

Yeah, and actually sparked sort of one of my thoughts around a question that I guess we'll talk about more around equitable, philanthropic practice, but I attended a virtual Summit, hosted by an amazing group, at the end of October, focused on racial and social justice and the organization is called service never sleeps. They're in Arlington, Virginia, please look them up. And the topic of the summit was what does it mean to be black LED, and it was just a dynamic conversation where we were being educated, creating safe space to for processing. One of the keynote speakers was Karen Suarez, who is CEO of equity in the center. And in her remarks she called racial equity and social justice, forever work. And I think that's really important to echo and the iterate over and over and over again, and talking about that this is not an initiative. Right? This is not a one off, this is not a one time this is for ever work. And I think we need to get in our spirits, our minds, our souls, that this is not just a moment in time, right? How can we think about this, and you were mentioning, Carlton in terms of from the time factor, and to address the fact that this is going to take time This work takes time and intention. And so just listening to both of your comments, just wanted to lift up the fact that this is forever work, and how do we keep that at the center?

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This is forever work. Let that be the hashtag. For this conversation. I want us to go into even leaning into what we were seeing some of the practices we were seeing previous in the philanthropic space, we talked about the savior complex, that happens a lot of times right when we're swooping in to give the dollar on the on a tight timeline. And we need all the metrics. And some of the onus that happens there with with reporting in the grantmaking fashion, can be undue. And we'll get to that later in the conversation. But this question is, how does the savior complex present itself? In the philanthropic space? God?

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Yeah, I mean, when I was thinking about this question, and, you know, something that really struck for me, and one of the things that I think that we don't often talk about, where I believe this complex stems from is this belief about whose knowledge and expertise is valid or better, right. And this idea is sort of birthed in the structure of white supremacy that an expert, or someone who's knowledgeable looks like, dot dot, dot, right, or even whose role or function is more important on the collective team, which can show up in many ways. But if I view my expertise and knowledge as a philanthropic entity more or greater than a nonprofit who's providing a direct service, or working to disrupt and transform a system, then it's going to be easier for me to view them as needing rescue, versus as a partner needing support. So I do think this narrative that about how we view who's knowledgeable who isn't, we need to unpack we need to tackle we need to confront as an as philanthropic entities, but also as us for us as individuals. So that's one thing that just I just wanted to name in this conversation.

13:13:57

Absolutely, there's a wonderful quote that I'll paraphrase that one of our founding board members, enough and wonderful partners, Caroline MARLAR, and brought to our attention that the quote, goes something along the lines of if you came to help, and perhaps turned back from whence you came, but if you came because you see that our futures are mutually aligned, right? Our The Future of Us is something that happens together, then let's get started. Right. So I think the intentionality is really important. Okay, savior complex, how does it show up?

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I mean, I've been in the funder seat and the nonprofit seat, and I've also been like a person whose family needed help, right. And so when I think about from the different vantage points of it is intriguing to me that both power and resources can definitely influence how people walk into rooms. So what Don is saying, and it is intriguing for me to work with philanthropic institutions who continue to stay in the language, because language is part of what we're talking about trust and impact. Language matters. But the whole idea and this is something that we definitely try to get more of our members to get in the habit of saying, is that your grant maker grant seeker, who are those people? We're a group of human people who go to work every day. We have expertise, we are on the ground, and all we do all day is study funders. That's what we do. And we study what nonprofits need. That's our expertise. So it is intriguing to me to not see that as expertise. Is to Don's point, which is proximity to community, awareness of needs and community and expertise and working with x y group of people, whether you are direct service or whether your client is foundations. We have expertise, you have dollars, that sounds like a partnership, because I don't think that the typical funder name, your favorite funder, in your mind, hold that in your head. That organization is not equipped to show up in South Chicago, and go put those bookbags in the hands of the families that need them. It's probably an organization that Carleton or gone through list has possibly worked through during their time, you got to let them do their work and get out of the way. And that's great that you have resources. That is the whole point.

But I've got something and you got something that sounds like a partnership. And I think peak tries to really drum that because not everybody's ready for us to talk about white supremacy culture, the fact that most of the people, the corporate wealth that built the family foundations, right? Come on y'all 400 years of slavery. This is not mostly our people, the Robert Smith's of the world are we don't like to say exceptional, but how many of them are there. And at the end of the day, even Robert Smith needs to talk to Pete grantmaking about how to give money away and not have it be extractive and or burdensome for the people who receive it. Because even giving money away at Morehouse has a tail has a tail. And so I do believe that there is an important moment to just realize that the funders and the nonprofit practitioners and social sector organizations are best positioned to help community wherever that is in the world. And for whatever the cause is, when you are mission aligned. And you trust that you're both coming with a similar aim and goal. Let us lead as nonprofits. We let you lead and managing the investments and the dollars that our families and communities need. It's a partnership.

So the language matters so much and we are not there. There's still a lot of work. treyvion shorters, if you all have never heard of him, the team I talk about him all the time, which is that the scarcity mindset that nonprofits get what we deserve, and it's very little, and that abundance only sits with the thunder is a problem. But you make us work in scarcity. You make us live in scarcity make a small win, I think that what we have to offer to the world, most nonprofits is pretty amazing. And so there has to be a reckoning, that we both have something to offer. And that is a shift for philanthropy.

13:18:15

Yes, asset based language. And more than language, right, that language then really will impact the head and heart balance right. And when I'm hearing about partnership is partnership trust building. This takes time, right? Equity work, work takes time, it's forever work. Okay, here we go. The drumbeats happening. But truly that the time that it takes is is something that living in the community, knowing the community deeply reminds me of Valerie, short yesterday RBC like talking about their having been founded with community branches, right branches in the community, the banks are in the community. And so when we ask the question about how equity, who started the conversation about how equity work and pro bono and CSR and HR, all this got started, it was from the people because the people live in the community. Right. One of the things I love about the work that we're able to do in philanthropy is getting straight to the point that again, we're all people and for profit sector, nonprofit sector, our tax codes, right, that's tax language, right? And behind it are people that live in your community. So how do we get there?

And I would just say getting to the point trying to get to the point, I do think that the honest dialogue, nonprofits are are actually very much forced to lie, have small lies every day to funders around their outcomes and things like that, to go back. transformation takes time. And it's wonderful that the nonprofit has a $2 million budget and you've swooped in with a significant grant for your organization, you're giving them $500,000 Right now on Oh, this is significant. This is great. That's wonderful. That may not be the largest grant they ever received. So be a little humble brag. You got to know your organization. But at the end of the day, like that entity is receiving those dollars, but they’re not saved by that, right. They're not being saved by that particular grant at all. And you have to really get to know the organization and have a relationship with that organization. And then you say, Thanks, here, we gave you that money in six months. Can you give me a report? What did you do? Every year? What did you do? And like list the org as a nation that Don worked with, we worked extensively, you're talking about your neighborhood revitalization, private public partnerships, agencies involved. It takes time, it takes time just to build a building, that's going to be for low income housing. It takes time. And so you're asking a nonprofit sometimes to give you because you gave a significant grant for them to give you information. They don't quite have yet, but they're forced to do it or else they may never get a grant again from you or you may badmouth them on the street about it. And so the savior complex shows up in so many different ways. I do think we just have to be very mindful that nonprofits need to be able to get to the point more with their funders, and to be honest with their funders, but that's gonna be transformational kind of relationship building stuff. And it's not where we are. And sorry, Don, please.

No, no, yeah, I just wanted to add, I mean, I don't want to say that money isn't critical, because it is critical. It's critical to give. So Tonio saying, give that money to nonprofits get out of the way, and let them do their work. At the same time, I don't want us to lose our history, in that when we look at movements, when we look at change, that we sort of sit under the banners of we are the beneficiaries of or my ancestors didn't have a lot of money. When we talk about labor, the labor movement, when we talk about the gay movement, we talk about women's rights movement, when we talk about these, just on and on, it wasn't necessarily large dollars, they weren't getting like huge operating support got dollars, right for movements. That doesn't mean don't invest in them, invest in them. Now we have an opportunity, we have resources at a time, 2030 years ago, we did not. But just remember that as funders as philanthropic institutions, $1 is just one spoken that we'll there's so much more that organizations are putting together and having to navigate juggle, in order to address challenges that their neighbors are facing, or to transform and disrupt systems. There's so much other in so many other ingredients in that mixing bowl, right to get to that goal. And that's why we're just it's highlighting the topic of the summit. We are one spokes in a wheel, we're not the wheel. And if it was, if it was just money, right, a lot of the movements that that we know of, again, that we are beneficiaries of would not have been in existence. So I just want us to also, you know, to remember that history is proud of history.

13:23:23

Yeah, we are spokes in the wheel, and we are an ecosystem. I think I'm starting to hear about the word partnership, right? Trust time, all of these things, create an ecosystem. So that we can I think this came up in Blue Cross Blue Shield yesterday, it's about shouldering the burden. But being really aware of of how we are dividing the work, right, and where the power is sitting, right being nonprofit center. So my next question is for you, Don, and this is how can funders learn from community leaders without putting the onus of the work on them? Right, so this looks like avoiding unnecessary or exploitive emotional labor on behalf of nonprofit leaders?

13:24:08

Right? Yeah, I think I think the first thing is recognizing that those with lived experience, have expertise. That really is important. And we were talking about that earlier about this, this, this narrative around who's an expert and who isn't. Right. And once you recognize that it is expertise, then pay them just like you would pay any other consultant for that expertise. Right? expertise is not only about college degrees, or white collar jobs, expertise means know how. I have never I had the privilege of not going hungry. I might have been strapped for cash and lived on ramen noodles. But I've never walked that journey of being hungry. And so an individual who has walked that journey and knows what the systems that are creating barriers in order for them to meet this basic need. That's an expertise. Right? That is a no house. So recognizing that those will have the expertise, lived experience of expertise and pay them for it. I think that's one thing. I think the other thing is really be clear about what it is you want to know from community. Right? What is it that you really need to know what you can and should you learn on your own or learn first And then what's most important to learn from community? So is that subscribing to local publications or blog posts or newsletters? Is that attending a meeting in listening mode around certain issue areas? So and if it's an issue that you're want, you're really wanting to dive in over a long period of time? How do you sort of build relationships long term with organizations who are working in this issue areas. And then are there ways that you can bring folks together in terms of to discuss and engage what's going on, they really did a lot of different examples. Around this.

One, I wanted to just shout out the San Francisco Foundation, which has a funding collaborative focused on jobs and workers. And they convened a table, a group of labor organizers and workforce development organizations, and community colleges to really kind of strategize plan, think about how best to support workers and the San Francisco Bay Area. And in order to do that, they gave him an operating support grant. And the operating support grant was just for them to come together for a couple of months. It was outside facilitated by a consultant, the funder was not in the room. And just sort of the general themes and ideas were lifted up. And then the San Francisco foundation or this funding collaborative kind of took what those learnings were, and developed a strategy based upon what labor and the system was saying it needed and, and was challenged with. But folks received the money in order to, to pay for their time to get their expertise to understand what was going on. So and maybe you can't just wanted to set a great example, I'm trying to work my funding collaborative to do that, that takes resources. But wanting to lift up that example, just to say, what are ways that you can also just engage pay your nonprofit partners for their expertise, their perspective. But really more this thing about being clear, and being intentional about what is it that you really want to know, and trying to find ways in which to do that, that acknowledges the individuals time that you are taking to learn that information from what I love about that is it it reminds us that the partnership doesn't start once the grant has been approved, right? The partnership starts in the in the table setting work and the pre work and to end to value that time. And that know how I mean, you say know how and what I hear is my grandmother saying common sense and common and to live and to live through that to have those experiences to learn those lessons, took some effort, right? And to codify that takes effort. And so to value that with meeting the moment by perhaps funding even those early conversations. I'm, I'm eager to hear if you have anything you want to respond to that.

13:28:53

I just want to pick up on a thread that Don is saying and I having been a development director at one point in my own career, I come to think about what would be the value, if both if foundations and funders had a development director. So exactly, to Don's point, I am invited to meetings. So it's an invitation. And I get in the room and people will say where are you. And I find that so intriguing. Because I was invited to your foundation, which is a request only foundation. So you've already decided that peak is probably going to get money. And then I get into a room with a staff. And we have done our due diligence. My team's run that foundation, we check the program officer out on LinkedIn, we know your programmatic areas. I can't tell you how much I've known about taproot for years. But I still do my due diligence. And I wouldn't dare come in here, not understanding what this organization has been doing your mission vision. I'll be crazy. I find that to be at the heart of what I experienced day to day when my team and I are trying to do due diligence, because a funder has reached out to us to potentially support our work. And when I get there, they have no idea who the heck the president CEO is. Anybody else on my team, right? This is a real the leveling exercise. And one of the development director was sitting at a funders office doing that same due diligence and checking out that org and saying, Oh, we are totally mission aligned. Why don't we just write that check? Like there is like how many conversations are when we're mission aligned? But I think it's just damn disrespectful to invite a nonprofit in. And nobody in your team, maybe other than one person has even looked to see who that organization is. We have a pretty robust nonprofit, I mean, website, we, there's really not much about P grep. Making that's not right there in front of us. And we know it because we just had another grant for $25,000 sent to us, because they said we want on your website and everything we need it was there done money in the bank on its way.

So we know that we are listening, when people have questions for us, we fill those gaps, we make it public, we try to make sure everybody on the staff and our board has their talking points. But it is so intriguing, just to Don's point that if a development director, were there to make sure that you understood what our needs were, it might allow us to get to that partnership piece. But often we're doing the dance, we're trying to show that we're the better of the organizations to get the grant. And it's like, we're immediately kind of almost sometimes put in competition with org or other organizations. And so I do love like my fantasy world is leveling, where development directors exist to inform teams who are ready to go out community and work with nonprofits, the same as nonprofits, go do their due diligence before we ask for money. So I do think that there's some real modeling like what let's get a couple of foundations that just model that and then hear from the nonprofit's that experience it. And go, wow, it was just a different experience completely, to walk into that room. And they actually knew what Pete grantmaking did. And what you know, this organization did, and it was really, we got to the work quickly, because we came in having done our due diligence. And that's just a very practical kind of like, think about it. That's what you experience.

13:32:22

I could imagine you've already mentioned that you have worked with an institution that was in receipt of a McKinsey Scott grant. And I know that he's there. So you know, that's, that's an amazing moment to say, Okay, someone was looking at and came to us, right? That is a call for change in a lot of how this is done. So my last question before we go into q&a is how does one create change without sparking fear? Right? Because a lot of these things are these, these are big changes, and small changes, right? But there's anything is going to be perceived as a big change if it's been done a certain way for a long time. So how does one show up in this work? Or what would be from dawn and Titania? How does one create change without sparking fear?

13:33:14

Can I just lift up really quickly as MacKenzie Scott has the ire that has come at that woman for deciding to give her money away is extraordinary. And shame on anybody with money? Who's going after her on Twitter or LinkedIn, out of her level of generosity as being wrong? Or a bad method? How dare it's so interesting. And I still would say that if she were a man, she wouldn't be dealing with it. So I just want to be honest, that this is where gender does show up sometimes. And Jeff Bezos and Elon Musk are doing some really interesting things with dollars right now. And it's NC Scott's trying to. She's just showing up and trying to do some things to help Girl Scouts, or whatever, help P grantmaking. Have a grant like we've never had before. So that we can just go do the work. And as she said, In that letter, buy a chair, take a nap, which is not the joy that most of the nonprofit's I've talked to, even this room get. And so I don't know, like, there's a really interesting kind of thing that's happening with people who are trying to go about the new models, right, and they're, and they're definitely experiencing some things. I like language, I know that I can't walk into every group and begin again with white supremacy, or white with gender or with Roe v. Wade, and that decision. And so I definitely do a lot of time just like working with language. I know that if people have called Peak, they're ready for something. I say it's Dracula. Like if you call us we were like, invited us like a step over the threshold. You're writing for equity, you're ready to talk about lack racial equity, equitable practices. I think that's why you're calling Pete grantmaking. Because that's what we do. And if you've done your due diligence, you know that that's what you kind of cut out for. But I do think we have to meet people where they are. I'm not a fan of just throwing people away because they're not where they are. But I will tell you what a wonderful moment of growth and shift. When my team said to me recently, we were having a conversation with potential funder grantee, and they were like, Why is equity important? And they were like, Okay, we're not here for that. When you get to why it's important, we are right here, but we can't go about convincing you that it's something you should care about. And I love how they drew the Why call was back when you're ready. But that part is not our responsibility, you got to at least crack the door. And so that's kind of where we are with regard to this. We try to meet people where they are, we use appropriate language for people who are ready, we go straight in. But we just don't think that any funder or any individual who's funding institution maybe doesn't care at all about what we're doing. But that person does. We let them in, and we try to really support them. And so I do think having a nuanced approach. Language matters. And just if you can, if you have the wherewithal, just try it and not leave anybody on the street if they're trying. And that's a thunder, like, I'm gonna do my best to try to meet you where you are. So it's a scary land. I understand it is scary.

13:36:22

I love it. I'm taking notes. I'm taking notes, Don add to the list here. So what does how does one create change that sparking fear?

13:36:31

Yeah, I mean, you know, it was funny, I was thinking about this question. And it was landing different to me as I was thinking about it. And in Tanya's comments, it just also sort of resonated, I guess my first reaction is that it's really not our job to sue someone else's fears. It's not, and how do we sort of identify lift up that there is individual work we have to do. And it is not the responsibility of someone else to manage that. That just because sort of across the board, having said that, I'm also just again, just sort of, just because this training is so front and center, and it was so impactful. Service never sleeps, has what they call an ally ship philosophy or training, that please go check it out, please engage them to the black led organization for that training, but they talked about two things, grace, and humility. And the fact that, you know, we are all learning. We are forever students. And there are places maybe we sit now that, you know, if you reached out to us a few years earlier, maybe we weren't seeing the world that way. And so some of this, you know, requires grace. That doesn't mean we don't call things out, things should be called out. But to remember the fact that, you know, we are all learning and have made mistakes in this journey. And we're keeping that in mind as maybe we're engaging with someone who is going to make a mistake, as it relates to this work. So that's, that's all I would just add to this conversation.

13:38:27

I love it. Race, humility, truth telling, right research, meet people where they are, be intentional about your language, right during that initial work. This is a fantastic conversation. I want to thank both of you for opening up your head and your heart, and your calendar and your time, right to be here with us. So let's now open up for q&a. I know there may be questions coming from the chat. So we'll hear a question from the chat. And then anyone in the room, please feel free. Sam,

13:39:03

Yes. I'm reading a question from the chat here. I'm gonna use this microphone. Attempt to at least. So this question came from one of our digital attendees. How do we start conversations about systemic problems, nonprofits experience, particularly as it relates to internal capacity of organizations that are majority bipoc LED and staffed an example that they provided is the amount of administrative burden to receive grants in the first place, such as a long RFP processes? Right,

13:39:38

great.

13:39:44

Course we have to start with like the hardest question.

13:39:49

There was a beautiful article that was posted a few weeks ago about whether about it was a conversation on whether the term nonprofit capacity building needs to be thrown out there. And so we'll find that and get married or someone to post it for folks. There are, if it goes back to scarcity, it goes back to this really interesting kind of idea that the most you can get requires the most support. We for instance, as an organization do not accept government funding. We have less than we 14 staff at peak grant making. I think we punch above our weight and the work we do but when you think about receiving like Real government funding which has been available, there's been some RFPs. Where I think absolutely my CFO, and I said, but then we looked at the reporting requirement, and we don't even have a development director, we have membership staff. We have amazing people, folks who really take the fundraising responsibilities of running nonprofit very seriously and all of our roles, but it was just beyond our capacity. And so it would have been a pretty significant opportunity. But we had to go past it. There's also been RFPs, that we've been invited as a nonprofit to apply for. And it just was like, You need to step up for the RFP to this question.

And so what I've found that's beautiful, because there are some really great stories is that there are funders who are out there really supporting a lot of nonprofits, to have a little more of that bandwidth to be able to get through the process, because one thing that foundations of funders have is what experts, experts in tax experts and due diligence experts and legal. So I've really seen this very, you know, we're here for pro bono Summit. I've seen organizations like MacArthur others, who really said, Wait a minute, we actually have people who can help you through this process. And so yes, there's dollars that you can give to support organizations. But there's also just like that true staff talent that exists even in a small step under or funding institution, Community Foundation, like we're DoD is you have expertise to really kind of go in and help those organizations, sometimes by going in and building up that bandwidth for them to accept these more complicated, grants her to get through the RFP process, or allowing them to get $30,000 for grant right, or someone who, that's what they do. That's an amazing gift for an organization to be like, we're just going to give you some funding, so you can get the person to help you through the process. You're building the mechanism and the bandwidth of the muscle for that organization to be able to do that better than next time, maybe without the additional support or to bake that into their budget to have that kind of specialty around that they can tap into just like a lawyer on retainer. And so I've just seen so many funders realizing that oh my god, it might not be my funding, that's hard. But funding can be hard to get.

Here's an outside the box way of supporting different nonprofits. So we're starting to see some of these models. And just again, they're not even calling it pro bono service or not that but that's what they're doing. And I love to see that. So there are some things happening. But there is more work to do. And remember, we don't start from zero. We start with abundance. And so if you begin to interact with more nonprofits from that perspective, you can maybe say, what do you have? What do you need, fill the gap and keep it moving. But there are some really good models out there how people are really activating their staff to help.

So the gap, I'm hearing again, doing that research on what the broader needs are, and so I heard, it may not be our process that is as onerous but we understand that that's, that's something that's out there. Right. So philanthropy plus pro bono, right can work can be a way that we can prepare you. Right. Okay. I want to make sure that we have time for more questions. So Don it unless you have something you want to add there.

13:43:47

Yeah. But I do think I wanted to lift up more answer that question more from to the philanthropic institutions in the room. Right. And this, I think this is getting out the question around kind of equitable, philanthropic practices, I think it's important that we as foundations are always examining and being more intentional about what information we really need as it relates to grant applications. We need to do that more, why are we asking for it? Are we using this information? Truly? And if we're not, let's stop asking for it. Right. Let's also be more transparent about how we're making decisions as it relates to these grants. Are we making it by committee? Are you making it by staff? Organizations sort of need to know, they need to know that they need to have have an understanding of that, right? And then how can we explore different ways around our applications like so I know there are some grant makers and grant making tables that accept video submissions, we need to do a better job in terms of language access and translation. So there are things there are small steps also, that we can do as philanthropic institutions that can make it more accessible for bipoc organizations that are small, and that don't have as many staff or doesn't have a staff person to dedicate to putting in, you know, the the lion's share of applications to to funder so I just want to make sure that like for us to highlight there things we can do now, and small steps that create that sort of lower that burden and barrier for our bipoc peers.

13:45:35

It goes back to what was said yesterday. Um, many times throughout the day, which what's the intentionality? What are we here really to do? Right? And so those questions that you're asking about, can we make our applications less onerous by saying this question isn't one that we're really tracking? This isn't a metric for us that we're really using to make strategy, we can take it off, right, because at the end of the day, our purpose is to resource communities through the work of nonprofits, yeah, use data to make decisions that you do not stop. And then using that equity lens and practice lens to right size, your process for the nonprofit, not for you for the nonprofit. And we know that that's a wide range of institutions. But funders do have flexibility to Don's point to right size, that profit process, if Harvard is getting the same grant application and reporting process as a small grassroots nonprofit, you have to wonder if you as a funder, maybe have the capacity to right size, that that doesn't seem fair. And so that equitable practices piece is so important as we go forward.

13:46:43

So I'm getting the flag of time is up, but I'll ask for grace. I know Lindsey yesterday pulled her card to say if we can do one more question, she put it back in her pocket. So I'm gonna take it out of hers and put it in? Is there a question in the room? And if so, I'm happy to extend a question in the room. Otherwise, we'll recycle this card all throughout some question, Don had brought up the concept of fear. And coming from only having three and a half years in the nonprofit sector. That is such a huge hurdle this whatever it is, I don't know if this is new to me, like what do you how do you break through that? Just a very quick, if you had to tell somebody, you got 15 seconds, Do this, do this, do this. This is how you overcome like, this is how you ask for things that like especially the money that you brought up, like to me, like, I just never understood it. If like you if I need something, I'm going to ask for it. If you say no, oh, well, I should probably keep asking. So what how do you? How do you chip away like at that? Because I know it's not gonna happen overnight.

13:47:56

So Kevin, if I'm understanding so for those who couldn't hear, Kevin asked a great question. Essentially, I think you overcome the fear of making the philanthropic ask.

13:48:09

There's data that says 95% of our ask, or even maybe higher or receive it and now, right, and if you start to add the lens of being a black woman in this space, you just kind of looked at this and like urban Institute's nonprofit trends, Association of AFP has some data out there, but I just feel like I believe, and so I can take your No, but I'm gonna ask, because I love my team. And the people who do the work of this organization deserve me to be strong enough. And so I do think that the my love of my team just gets me past the fear of rejection. But I do think if you're going to be a nonprofit executive, you've got to be pretty good at nose. And you've got to be pretty good at learning to just be a bit fierce, especially when you have staff because their literal livelihood depends on you trying to conquer it. And so I will say that in the beginning, it was so hard. And I just kept at it, I kept at it. And I kept at it. And it was because I believe that the kids and the families that I was asking for that money for, they also needed it. And so I just kind of went at it. And I said, in life, life has taught me rejection. And so let's just keep at it. And sooner than later, there were more yeses in the nose. But I also do believe that you do it by not just making the ask. But by getting to storytelling, the storytelling is very different. And how people hear that out about you is just to me that became like, let me tell the story of this of these folks, while I'm making this, ask and let them let that resonate. And not I'm asking for 25,000 hours from Carleton, let me tell you the story of why that 25,000 To RS is gonna significantly shift the work we do and the people that we serve. And so I learned to move to story way before we talked about that, but also just there has to be a fearlessness and helping the people who are at the subject of your of your mission and your staff. I think they just deserve leaders who will be able to just pick yourself back up. It's not about you, grace and humility. Keep asking,

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you know, I don, I would love to hear how you overcome fear what what you reminded me about storytelling is remembering whenever you're sitting in that conversation, it's not you sitting there you are an agent, you are a reference representative on behalf of others and to put them in your mind and your heart and then also to keep true wrap up turnovers actually set a no goal, don't set a yes goal set a really high level and try to get Taiwan 100 nose and the nose be excited when they say no say yeah, I'm getting my goals. Okay, Don

13:50:55

that's such a good tool I'm like I'm writing that one down. Um, you know, the one thing I guess I just wanted to let that because just acknowledging that it is hard to push through that fear and one just the power dynamic of an entity that has resources, an entity that says I need those resources and to do what I need to do and all what comes with that. I guess I wanted to portray a different way and and think about or consider how you can identify certain philanthropic partners that can help you navigate. I mean, one of the questions kind of we didn't get to was Krauser was going to ask us kind of what do you wish partners would ask themselves before reaching out to you? And we talked a lot about that, you know, foundations are very different. You need one foundation, you meet one foundation. But one of the questions that I had for me is that not only for an organization to ask themselves, what they're in most need of beyond financial resources, and I'm the person that would be a good partner in that. I've had folks reach out and just had said, you know, Hey, Don, I'm really not understanding what this greater what the Community Foundation is, I'm sort of really confused. And, you know, that then prompted, hey, it's this, and it's about this, about that. And we've sort of developed that partnership, or a relationship, honestly, and folks have reached back out to say, hey, this whole crazy philanthropic scene, what is it about, and in Greater Washington, and we've had those conversations, I do think there is value in sort of the relationship building with certain philanthropic partners, there are great program officers out there that are really knowledgeable and care and, and serve as good thought partners, in terms of the space, knowledge of the philanthropic space at large in your region, but also in terms of navigating philanthropy, that might help with some of that fear, right? That might help quell some of that give you a different perspective. So with their ways to begin to build allies and in with your philanthropic partners in your your region, your area. I don't know, take that approach. Consider that. Because that might help quell some fear.

13:53:38

Can I just say go with a friend, as nonprofits, we have boards. And people always say that people with money given give money to people with money, your board becomes extremely important as your partner to pick up on that partner message. And the relationship message is if you are at a nonprofit, and your board is not ready to ask for money and help you seal the deal, we need a new board here you because that is part of the role. And so that relationship, Don, you just park me to just come back to that, right? Because we're talking about pro bono board services, one of the best things that we as humans can go do at a nonprofit in our community. And so your board has to be trained and supported and coach to really be your partner in those assets. Because that's their world, it should be. And so I would love to talk more about that offline. But boards become extremely important so that you're not making that asset alone that they're giving you have easy entry into the world of other funders and so or the world of business or community that they come from, I think that becomes really critical. And you shouldn't be alone as an executive director making that ask. And so go boards go after that, buddy, get the nose 100 Nose this year.

13:54:52

I have to say thank you so much, because Tonya and Dawn, thank you for this conversation, thank you for everyone in the room, and virtually all just to say to be continued because I think there's so much more that we can and should have the chance to discuss together and in this capacity. I have so many thoughts I want to share coming from that but I'm instead going to make sure everyone can have their five minute break before we get into our next session. And I'm gonna bring us back with some thoughts and connecting the way these different pieces come together. I have a page of notes from that discussion. So thank you all so much.