

BETTER ...

... together!

When we gather together, whether it be through formal business partnerships, sharing our Truth in a safe manner, engaging in Sacred Ceremony, or just enjoying the company of one another by sharing a meal, the story becomes one of possibility. What emerges are new connections, powerful perspectives, and countless opportunities no one saw before. We become **BETTER ... TOGETHER.**

In whatever capacity we gather together, Miskanawah has taught us (myself and others), to be thankful for both the challenging opportunities, as well as the solutions. Typically, this is the great deficiency of the whole philanthropic exercise - often, we are all so focussed on solutions that we forget to think about the problem. We become human 'doings'; rather than what we are: human 'beings'.

Since I began participating in Ceremony and walking side-by-side with others, I have learned that there are no easy solutions when working to address complex community needs that impact us all. It takes time to wholly understand what we are working on, opening ourselves up to all perspectives and staying in long enough to see the opportunities. Thank You, **Miskanawah**, for your contributions to this end. Your gifts breathe life into every aspect of the healing experience.

Through Ceremony with Miskanawah, they have taught us to learn and explore the interconnection of our purposes, and consider community needs from a systems perspective. As these works are further brought

together, distinct roles - whether as funder, community partner, thought leader, or client - begin to fall away.

By participating in Ceremony together, I have discerned that Miskanawah's philosophy of life is one that promotes health and wellness through a 'fully ecological' approach, grounded in land-based teachings. Given this, Miskanawah knows that all of Creation continues to assist those of us on our healing journeys. This includes you. This includes me. This includes 'US'. Us - being all of Creation.

One of the desirable outcomes of these Gatherings has been the powerful way Miskanawah looks at the spectrum and evolution of our shared community work: the **with-of** versus **to-for** model. (Historically, funders and partners are often in the 'to' and 'for' space, wanting to provide support 'to' communities and/or clients, or 'for' them to address specific needs.)

Frankly, the 'to' and 'for' space is where I distinctively (as a professional Fund Developer per se), have the most experience. It is undoubtedly more familiar for me to ask you 'for' than to ask 'of' you.

Certainly, an ask is a legitimate solution 'to' an identified, specific need, 'for' the benefit to all involved. Yet, it falls way short of the possible.

To truly tackle complex community needs and bring about lasting change all players in a system - including funders and communities - are best served by adopting the 'with' and 'of' space - the space of co-creation - going beyond themselves to

something much, much richer. Miskanawah truly lives and breathes this way of knowing. It is beautiful to witness.

That's what participating in these Gatherings and Ceremony is all about. We don't know exactly what we will learn each time we gather together or what the impacts may be. Yet, the space - and the trust Miskanawah creates there - gives us time to imagine the possible, step into the future, and bring forth the world we want to see.

So ... Where do we go from here?

If you are anything like me, you will be challenged to your core by the Indigenous concepts that you are a co-creator in life and that the greatest gift we can bring to the circle is that of all of ourselves. WOAHH! That you are powerful - beyond measure and to not be afraid of your gifts ... WOW! That each and everyone of us has a piece of truth and understanding - yet, it is only when we start weaving together that we create a circle of true knowledge. And that is what the people deserve - what you put into the circle. It feeds the multitude with knowing, being and doing. It feeds us with hope.

On behalf of 'Us', we offer Miskanawah our deepest gratitude. You fill us with hope and our lives are woven with the gifts of the co-creators before you. Thank you!