

Hello again,

From what I've been told many times, Des Moines is one of the most generous cities per capita. Des Moines continually outpaces other cities in regards to giving. While this is incredible, I also wonder if it's why we are stuck in many ways.

I was just at an event earlier this week where the event location fought to keep the food that had not been touched from going to a local nonprofit. Multiple people worked quickly to get all the extra meals, others brought rubber gloves to repackage, I supplied to go containers. But, the banquet manager and executive staff said no.

Even after being told they were protected from liability.

Even after being told the food would go directly to a fridge and then to families in need that evening.

Even after talking through how the food was still in the window of being safe to consume.

No, that food will not leave our building. When asked if they really wanted this food to go into the garbage instead of to a person, their answer was a resounding yes.

Y'all. I lost my cool. I don't know if I chose courage over comfort or just fire, but I was furious. Mad cry furious. It didn't take long for me to get reprimanded for pushing the event location to do better. I knew the reprimand was coming.

Once I was home, I read a recent email from Brene Brown - "Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and freedom."  
—Viktor Frankl

She shared, "In one of the best speeches I've ever heard, actress, screenwriter, director, and producer Michaela Coel said, "Do not be afraid to disappear, from it, from us, for a while and see what comes to you in the silence." I'm a big fan of silence."

The past couple of years have been hard—personally and professionally—and I've found that space closing in on itself again. My responses have started sliding too close to the stimuli. I'm tired, and the pause is suffering. I can't let that happen to me or to our organization. We need breath and space.

It made me think. Maybe that's what I need too. More space. More silence. It seems apparent the way I'm approaching some situations isn't working. What I'm regularly told is to 'be patient'. Be patient, we need to give some of these companies struggling to change more time. Be patient, these companies and systems in power need more time. More time for what? How many more studies, data points, and personal stories will be enough for real change?

None of this to say I won't still be focused on doing our work. It just means I'll be setting clearer boundaries on my time and where I chose to show up. I'm looking for more folks who are ready for action. Ready to implement the practices and ideas we know work. For now, I don't think it's good for me to continue sitting in spaces to help others with tremendous power and resources to twist themselves up trying to figure out how they can simultaneously raise millions of dollars while also creating meaningful change. Change is uncomfortable and not always fun. I'm looking for more folks willing to be uncomfortable. More folks who are ready to challenge antiquated beliefs that prioritize food in the garbage over stomachs. What's that mean for me? Hopefully, less meetings where all we do is talk about change but go nowhere. So, maybe you'll see me around. But if you notice me missing, you can probably guess why.

