

NARRATOR:

The Disability & Philanthropy Forum presents Amoretta Morris, President at Borealis Philanthropy.

AMORETTA MORRIS:

One of our first lessons maybe, or just a continued lesson in this work is that as we consider ourselves as a social justice intermediary, we consider ourselves accountable to movement and accountable to movement priorities. And so for us, part of what funding for liberation means is letting communities define liberation on their own terms.

We see our role as unlocking the masses of resources that are out there. Maybe I'll tie that to lesson number two, which is just thinking big, being able to think big and to genuinely hold a posture of abundance because it is so easy for us in our communities, because of our life experiences, because of the barriers that have been placed ahead of us, to think from a place of scarcity. And part of that, and for us, many times when we're doing that is because we're us, we're used to making a dollar at 15 cent. I mean, that's one of the things we heard from the data. There's so little money going to this work. And even with that, look at what we have done.

And so we shouldn't have had to work on so little resources, but look what we've been able to do, but just because we've had to work with pennies, it's this duality of working with these fewer resources that we've been given while still pushing ourselves to maintain this notion and idea and frame of abundance. Because the other lesson about moving in philanthropy and raising money and being in these places is having to remind ourselves how much money is actually in play.

I was in a meeting the other day and being reminded that there's 234 billion, billion with a B, \$234 billion in donor advised funds right now. And so that's money that folks are getting a charitable write off for because they've placed it in a donor advised fund at some financial institution, but that money doesn't actually have to move and reach communities, \$234 billion. And so when a funder, or if I'm a funder thinking that somebody is going to completely eradicate ableism or eradicate ableism within the climate justice movement on a \$50,000 grant, that's a problem. And so it's my job as a funder, as a grantmaker to really be able to think more broadly to figure out, how do I rightsize the resources that I'm trying to move to match the scale of the change that we hope to see? How do I give at the scale of the problem and also knowing that I can't do this alone?

At Borealis, we absolutely know that we can't do this alone. So really what giving at the scale of the problem means is collaboratively giving. It's collaboratively giving, it's creating vehicles for alignment, creating vehicles for aligned action and complimentary action. Because in order to have the resources that groups really need to be able to make big change, that takes more than just one of us. And so thinking that an organization's going to be able to do it on just that one grant that I'm able to give them or for just that one year that I'm able to give it to them for is not how change is going to happen. So just this abundance thinking and this clarity that

communities must be able to define liberation on their own terms, those are two of the lessons and the ways in which we try to move in our work at Borealis.

NARRATOR:

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