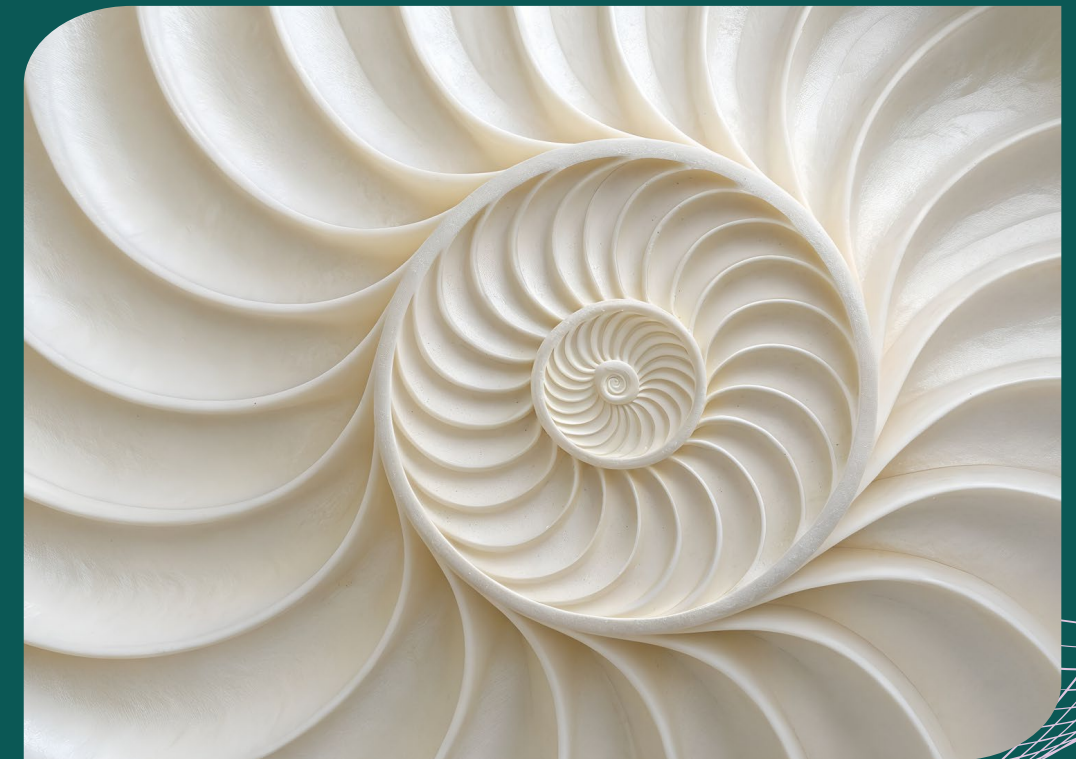


Sitting in the Fire, Without Being on Fire

Opening Session

League of Oregon Cities | 2025 Leadership Workshop



Meet your Co - Facilitators



Nina Vetter
Newport City Manager



Jessica Mole Heilman
CWL Co-Director



Nina Vetter & Jessica Mole Heilman



Agenda

Sitting in the Fire, Without Being on Fire

Opening Session

- Setting the tone for your day
- What does it mean to “sit in the fire?”
- Learning from fractals
- Reflective practice
- Relationship building with peers

Coming up next ...



Political vs Organizational Leadership

RON HOLIFIELD

11:30-12:30 PM

Building Coalitions

MARCIA HARNDEN

1:30-2:30 PM

Maintaining Your Values in a Changing World

SERILDA SUMMERS-ROSCREE

3:00-4:00 PM





Learning Community Engagement Norms

We promise...

- Options and tools, not one-size-fits-all solutions
- Unfinished business
- Discomfort
- Opportunities for engagement
- Curated experiences based on needs of the group

We request...

- Shift from judgement to curiosity
- Share the learning, not the story
- Consider airtime, intention/impact
- Resist perfectionism
- Consideration of cultural, racial, and socioeconomic differences



Sitting in the Fire, Without Being on Fire

Based on the work of psychologist Arnold Mindell, "sitting in the fire" refers to a method of deep transformation through embracing and staying present with intense conflict and emotions rather than avoiding them. It's about maintaining awareness and equanimity in the midst of turmoil.

- Conflict as a teacher
- Embracing the uncomfortable

"Then I remembered: sitting still in the middle of a fire or a tornado or an earthquake or a tidal wave, sitting still.

This provides the opportunity to experience once again the living quality of our life's energy —earth, air, fire, and water".

—Arnold Mindell



Antidotes

Recommendations for sitting in the fire



- Learning from fractals
- Staying grounded
- Setting boundaries
- Learning to hold multiple truths
- Clarity between intentions and impact

Fractals

The Relationship Between Small & Large

Fractals are infinitely complex patterns that are self-similar across different scales. They are created by repeating a simple process over and over in an ongoing feedback loop.

- What we practice at a small scale can reverberate to the largest scale.
- What we practice at the small scale sets the patterns for the whole system.
- At a collective level, this is the invitation to practice the world we wish to see in the current landscape.

“In a fractal conception, I am a cell-sized unit of the human organism, and I have to use my life to leverage a shift in the system by how I am, as much as with the things I do.

This means actually being in my life, and it means bringing my values into my daily decision making. Each day should be lived on purpose.”


—adrienne maree brown





Staying Grounded

Finding stability not in external achievements but through inner transformation, trust, and finding joy in one's authentic existence.

- 
- Build a support team
 - Be clear on your values
 - Rituals

Resources





Setting & Holding Boundaries

Defining and communicating your personal limits to others, then consistently enforcing them through your actions. Boundaries are not about controlling other people, but about taking responsibility for your own well-being and managing how others interact with you




Resources





Holding Multiple Truths

Acknowledging that two seemingly contradictory or opposing ideas can both be valid at the same time. This concept moves beyond "either/or" thinking and embraces a more complex, nuanced, "both/and" perspective of reality. It is a key element of dialectical thinking



Resources





Intentions and Impact

Intention is the motivation or purpose behind your actions, while impact is the actual result or effect of those actions, regardless of your intent.



Resources





Parting Thoughts

