

In your own words, what is a beautiful collision?

Have you had a beautiful collision in your own life? (Mission trip? Life-changing book, person or class? Waking up to an issue you never knew existed and know is wrong?)

Did your beautiful collision affect your life? How?

Did your beautiful collision affect the life of those around you? How?

A Prayer of Blessing for a Beautiful Collision

May God bless you with discomfort
At easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships
So that you may live from deep within our hearts.

May God bless you with anger
At injustice, oppression, and exploitation of God's creations
So that you may work for justice, freedom, and peace.

May God bless you with tears
To shed for those who suffer pain, rejection, hunger, and war,
So that you may reach out our hands to comfort them and
To turn their pain into joy.

And may God bless you with just enough foolishness
To believe that you can make a difference in the world,
So that we can do what others claim cannot be done:
To bring justice and kindness to all our children and all our neighbors who are poor.
Amen

Reflection Questions

Would you prefer to be defined by your weakness or your strengths? Your assets or your liabilities?

How do you think your community would prefer to be defined?

Who are you? What makes you unique?

Are you defined by the extraordinary moments in your life or the commonplace ones?

The Collect

Keep us, O God, from pettiness;
let us be large in thought, in word, in deed.

Let us be done with fault-finding and
leave off self-seeking.

May we put away all pretense and meet each
other face to face -- without self-pity
and without prejudice.

May we never be hasty in judgment and
always generous.

Let us take time for all things;
make us to grow calm, serene, gentle.

Teach us to put into action our better impulses,
straightforward and unafraid.

Grant that we may realize it is the little
things that create differences,
that in the big things of life we are one.

And may we strive to touch and to know the great,
common human heart of us all, and
O Lord God, let us forget not to be kind!

--Mary Stewart

Creating a Blueprint for Change

Step 1. Build your team.

Each member of your team should agree to three requirements:

- 1) **The team should be ready to see strengths first.** A community, and issue or an individual should be considered first an asset rather than a deficit, being disciplined to focus on what is possible and not impossible.
- 2) **The team should have a common agenda and share the load.** Full participation in setting goals creates **ownership** and cooperation creates **action**.
- 3) **The team should be driven by relationships.** Be willing to learn from each other. The team should *respond to people* rather than *dictate a list of demands*. It is good to get the work done, but if you are wounding people on the team or in the community during the process then your *helping hurts!*

Step 2. Define Communities.

Label and define YOUR community

- Your community can be defined as the group of people you wish to cooperate with to make a change for the better. Your team should be an active part of this community in some way already.
- Answer the following questions in brainstorm fashion—no right or wrong answer—by jotting responses down on one piece of the butcher paper provided. This should be a judgment free zone, with honest answers allowed.
 - What are your first thoughts when you think of this community?
 - How would you most naturally define this community? By name? By culture? By geography? By religion or economic standards? Or by a combination?
 - Is there a statement, catch phrase or symbol that can define this community? Decide on one as a group and place it at the center of the second piece of butcher paper. All the work you do in the next session will flow out of your community.

Label and define additional communities where your team would like to see a change for the better. If your team is focused solely on change within your defined community, this step is not required.

- What are your first thoughts when you think of this community?
- How would you most naturally define this community? By name? By culture? By geography? By religion or economic standards? Or by a combination?
- Is there a statement, catch phrase or symbol that can define this community? Decide on one as a group and place it on a post-it note in a corner of the second butcher paper.

Step 3. Discover your assets.

Step 4. Bridge your assets.

Step 5. Take Action

Final action step: Evaluation

Reflection Questions

What “beautiful collisions” have you encountered during the conference?

What worldviews did you hold before this conference that you are now willing to change due to your collision with the truth?

Mother Teresa’s Prayer

People are often unreasonable, illogical, and self-centered;
....**Forgive them anyway.**

If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives;
....**Be kind anyway.**

If you are successful, you will win some false friends and some true enemies;
....**Succeed anyway.**

If you are honest and frank, people may cheat you;
....**Be honest and frank anyway.**

What you spend years building, someone could destroy overnight;
....**Build anyway.**

If you find serenity and happiness, they may be jealous;
....**Be happy anyway.**

The good you do today, people will often forget tomorrow;
....**Do good anyway.**

Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough;
...**Give the world the best you’ve got anyway.**

You see, in the final analysis, it is between you and God;
It was never between you and them anyway.

Amen and Amen.

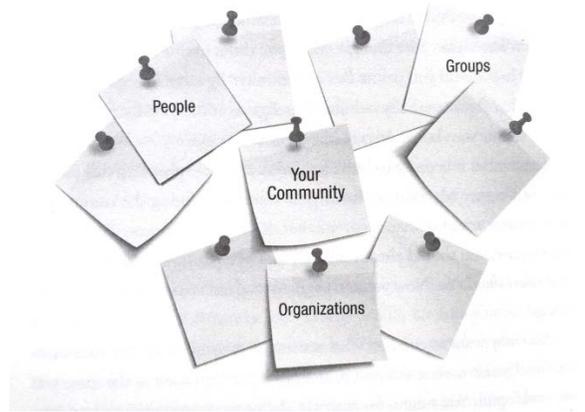
Creating a Blueprint for Change

Step 1. Build your team.

Step 2. Define your community.

Step 3. Discover your assets.

- **Lens One: People**
 - What are the community's valuable gifts, abilities, skills, and relationships and who do they belong to?
- **Lens Two: Groups**
 - What are the community's valuable collections of people? This can be as wide ranging as social, spiritual, institutional, economic, special interest, etc. Sometimes there are groups within groups that can be considered, such as youth groups, trade guilds, artist cooperatives, study groups--all representing community assets.
- **Lens Three: Organizations**
 - What are the community's valuable structured groups with collective goals? Consider businesses, religions, government offices, non-profits, educational institutions, media outlets, parks and museums, local schools, etc. Occasionally it is helpful to recognize the separate parts that make up an organization as individual assets.



Repeat with any additional communities defined in Step 2.

Step 4. Bridge your assets.

In a world filled with isolation and exclusion, bridges create natural connection and inclusion. Bridges can help a seemingly normal asset transform into a *super asset* in a single bound. This step requires imagination, creativity and logic all in healthy doses. Your team should be willing to think outside of the box when making connections between assets.

What bridges can we make between our assets that will help our community toward a better future?

- What natural bridges exist **within** each of the three lenses (people, groups, and organizations) that you identified around your community? Does the Mayor know our pastor? Does our Bible study group know the artist guild? Does the restaurant know of the school? What is the nature of the bridges between each of them? Formal or informal? Close or distant? Welcoming or hostile? Tackle each group separately, moving post-it's into pairs or small groups of logical and creative connections.
- What bridges exist **between** each of the pairs and small groups you are creating? Do our Mayor and our pastor know of the artist group that advocates for clean water? Does the restaurant that hosts our bible study care about hunger in the homeless groups around town? Create bridges by moving your pairs and groups together with other groups.
- What bridges exist **between your community assets and the assets of any additional communities** your team identified and mapped in previous steps?



Step 5. Take Action

In order for a community to move forward, it needs to be “activated”. Giving action to your connections is one of the most exciting steps in building a just blueprint.

Remember you know who you are. You know what God has asked of you. You know what you believe and why you believe it. Now is the time to ask--

What **can** we do? What **should** we do?

As you and your team examine the bridges you have built between community assets, identify your most promising bridges and give action to them. What action words work naturally with these bridges? Consider the following actions as fuel for your team to begin putting feet to this forward moving vision:

| | | | | | |
|-------------|----------|----------------|------------|------------|----------|
| projects | events | performances | reports | campaign | concert |
| auction | protest | editorial | advocating | awareness | tweet |
| celebration | award | scholarship | vigil | fixing | making |
| growing | teaching | protecting | partnering | presenting | blog |
| critique | sit-in | collaboration | pot-luck | provide | march |
| shelter | recovery | commission | panel | conference | class |
| study | build | resource-drive | encourage | fund | de-fund |
| host | pray | demonstration | town-hall | open-mic | petition |
| serve | collect | write letters | visit | schedule | service |
| advocate | defend | rehumanize | support | equip | befriend |

As a team, remember your commitment to placing strengths first, sharing a mutual agenda, and remaining relationship oriented as you move into the decision making phase of community asset mapping. It is time to ask—

- **What will we do?**

- Write out the concise asset-based action your team recommends.
- What is the end goal of this project?
- How will you know the project has succeeded?

- **What steps do we need to take to get there?**

- Let your asset map help you create lists of action steps needed to move forward on your project. The bridges between groups and communities will spark your ideas for the resources and relationships needed for the community to make progress.
- Do you see a resource or relationship that is missing or weak? Is there a missing step before a strategic connection can be made? Mapping begets mapping when considering community assets! Consider creating a specialized set of community asset maps to help you modify your project so that you are not focused on what is NOT in the community (you may have missed it, or there may be a good alternative), and help to bring missing assets to light within the community.

Final action step: Evaluation

How will you assess the effectiveness of your plan or program as you begin? Halfway through? As you complete your goals?

Community participation in execution and evaluation are KEY in the creation of heroes!