

August 6th,

It's been a few days since I reflected on my Doctorate journey. At least in the written format. I have been reflecting mentally and spiritually. The week intensive was just that, intense. 37 strangers who come together with one thing in common - the desire to change something in their context. As I have been moving through this process, and it has not even been a month since I started, is that we are mostly being referred to as scholar-practitioners. I just went on my merry way when I heard this term, not thinking about what this really means. Over the past two weeks, I have been really reflecting on whether or not I'm in tune with the somatic self, or if I am just merely going through the motions. What is it that I want to achieve. Transformative leadership seems to come in many different forms - from reflective and reflexive practices, to adaptive leadership, to somatic leadership, to transformative leadership etc. I feel like depending on the situation I am in I can float amongst all of these - so what does this mean? What do I need to do to hone in on my scholarship as a practitioner. What do I truly believe in when it comes to leadership. I know some things to be true. First, I am truly champion social justice, but I find it's sometimes selective, depending on the safety I feel within the situation. I feel like well-being is something I have never really considered when it came to leading. I am a true working horse and I just keep going, regardless of my health, my wealth, or my relationships. I don't think I'm alone in this situation. I feel like there are so many principals and educational leaders out there who work their fingers to the bone at the expense of themselves. I also think the view of the principal has shifted - the title itself comes with the label of authority. There are so many decisions, tensions,

and extremely difficult and aggressive conversations that are thrown at principals, and I wonder why? Principals have no power, they follow a routine of running a school - It's like setting up a tent. It takes time to figure out the instructions initially, you may need help to align tent poles and lift the tent...and then you're relieved it's just up. You may forget to put in the tentpoles, and you have to deal with that, but eventually over the years you get used to set up and take down - but truly there is no change. You may get a fancier tent set up, but the set up system is pretty much the same. Why do I compare running a school like setting up a tent. Well, when I started as an administrator I attended the UBC Short Course (a similar set up to the UBCO Doctorate Intensive). During the Short Course, I was put in a group with people who had one thing in common, they recently became Vice Principals. We went through tasks, readings, and activities all surrounding leadership. Not once was well-being brought up. Dealing with difficult decisions and conversations was talked about, we did some skits and looked at Educational Law, but we were not taught about conflict resolution - just to listen and that relationships are important. We even did a skit comparing the Wizard of Oz and what it means to be a Principal - I was the Tin Man and I used the metaphor of needing to have heart in your work. We had a crash course in what to do as a principal, and it was exhilarating, and nerve racking, and sometimes boring, but at the end of the week, I was ready to run a school. This kind of farce I see in education all the time, go to one day of training, take a week intensive, read this book, and you'll be ready to lead. Read these instructions and you can set up your tent. Well, just like setting up a tent, you need not only the instructions, but many times you need help. You need people to talk about how to set it up. You need help with feeding the poles through the tent fabric to get to the

other side of the tent before you bring the poles up. You need strategy, time, patience, and you need to know when to walk away when frustrated. As a leader, I lean on people within the district to bounce ideas off of, to see what kinds of projects they are doing, to look for collaborations, to help me set up the year. So what does this all mean for me? Well, I see that Principals and educational leaders will not get the help they need when they are unwell...or when others are unwell...or when the lived histories of others seep, particularly of those who have gone through life with oppressive identity markers and school being the place that they experienced as a negative place. The principal is labeled with this negative attachment.