



National Benevolent Association

XPLOR
FAITH, JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY

The Complacency Paradox

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I am not good at change. I know what you are thinking: “But Mel, you just moved halfway across the country with people you didn’t know two months ago to do this NBA XPLOR program.” I know, team; let me try my best to explain.

I am not good at change, but I crave it. Being in the same place for long periods of time makes me squirm. I can’t even sit still for an extended amount of time without getting fidgety. It still doesn’t make very much sense, does it? Okay, let’s try this one more time.

I am not good at change, but I am also not good at routine. I live my life in what I am going to call “The Complacency Paradox,” that place in life where I so often sit, longing for a comfortable life and striving for a revolutionary one. The place where change makes me nervous, stepping out of my comfort zone takes the most effort, but if I don’t do it, I get stuck, and being stuck is worse. So, that is the place I write this from—the place of change and what it looks like for someone who both embraces it and tries her best to avoid it.

There has been plenty of change in the last two months. Some of it has been challenging; some of it beautiful. While there has been more than a fair share of things that I did not expect, I am exactly where I need to be. I am embracing the paradox.

It’s funny how things work out in a way that you were not necessarily prepared for. Even as I sit in this Starbucks, trying to stop listening to “Hamilton” long enough to make this make sense, I am realizing just how true this complex dynamic is of my time here so far. I spend two days of my work week at the CCH corporate office, doing the typical deskwork that you would expect to occur in a corporate office. I see the ins and outs of the business world of a nonprofit, through the lenses of marketing and contracting and property management. I know what I am walking into on Mondays and Wednesdays, the routine.

Then, Tuesdays and Thursdays I am working with a service coordinator (essentially a social worker) at one of the CCH properties. It is different every single day. I have no idea what we are going to come across or who I am going to encounter. I sit and listen to stories from people who have years of experience and wisdom, and I am amazed by their lives. I see the system—where it succeeds and where it fails—through the eyes of those being impacted by it the most. It is hard; it is rewarding; and it is anything but routine.

So, what does all of this say about my experience in NBA XPLOR so far? One of the main reasons I am here is to figure out a calling God put on my heart a long time ago. One that would push me out of my comfort zone and into the potential of ordained ministry. This path has been filled with the security of the church as home, as well as the overwhelming sense that I am in way over my head.

The contradiction presents itself yet again. I don’t think it is one that is going to go away anytime soon. So for now, I will wrestle with the in-between, with what it means to find the balance in life between reckless and so consistent that I feel trapped. Like I said, I am not good at change; I am not good at routine; but I am learning to embrace my place in the paradox.

*NBA XPLOR is a 10-month service residency opportunity for young adults ages 21-30, with the purpose of empowering young adults to discern and develop a “heart for care” as they live together in simple community, engage in direct service and justice work, engage in leadership development, and discern their vocational calls to honor the various communities they are called to serve. **Learn more and apply at nbacares.org/xplor.***