

# REIMAGINING RURAL FUTURES

HELLO! I'M ASHLEIGH WEEDEN

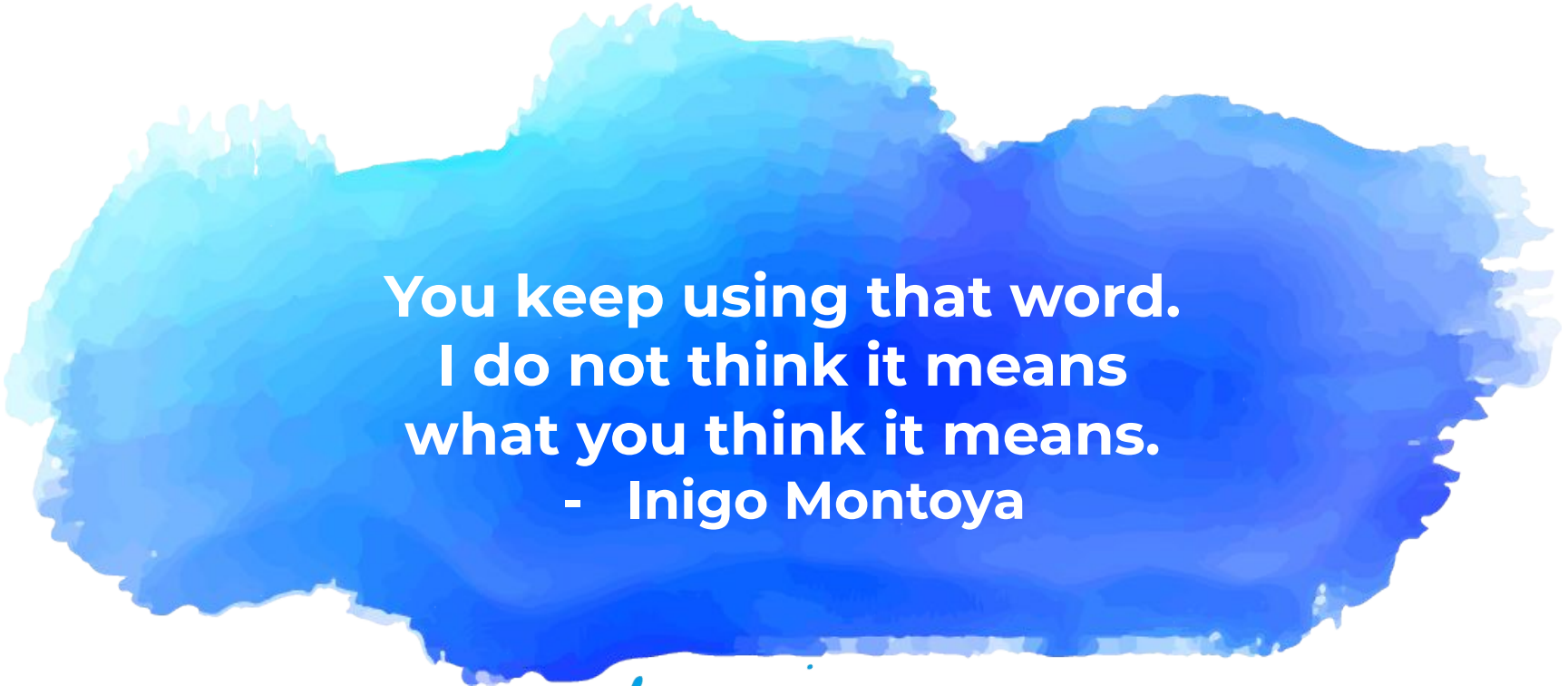
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Why are  
we here?



**You keep using that word.  
I do not think it means  
what you think it means.  
- Inigo Montoya**



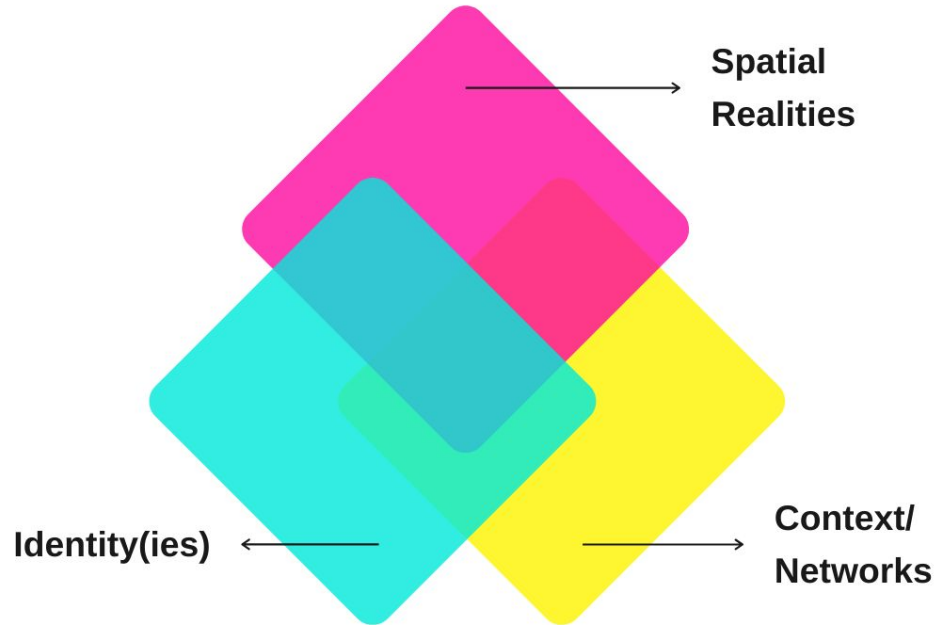
# PLACE?

**Place is somewhere in particular.**

**Places have multiple identities.**

**Places are dynamic processes -  
not frozen in time.**

**Places are not containers or flat  
surfaces - they are alive and  
composed of layers of stories  
written through time and space.**





# INNOVATION

**is taking two  
things that already  
exist and putting  
them together in a  
new way.**

- Tom Freston



- ☑ Develop *relationships*
- ☑ Get comfortable with *ambiguity & nuance*
- ☑ Create *capacity*
- ☑ Empower *community*

# THE INTELLIGENT COMMUNITY MODEL:

**Broadband  
Knowledge Workforce  
Advocacy  
Innovation  
Digital Inclusion  
Sustainability**

- ▣ Grey County, Ontario
- ▣ Whanganui, New Zealand



WHAT DOES  
THIS LOOK LIKE  
IN REAL LIFE?

BUT I THINK  
THERE'S MORE  
TO IT....

# SCENARIOS PLANNING, PLACE + RURAL POLICY

- ▣ Time to reconsider **'policy by projection'** as the dominant process
- ▣ **Multiple uncertain futures** that may play out based on today's decisions
- ▣ Exercises in story-telling based on what's **possible, plausible, and exciting** for the people most likely to be affected in these future scenarios
- ▣ **Re-imbed social science** into scenarios planning for a **holistic approach** to rural policy + development - including **both foresight AND backcasting**



HOW DO WE USE  
PLACE +  
INNOVATION FOR  
FORESIGHT?





**We are all  
on the hook  
for dealing with  
the hard stuff.**



**WE CAN DO  
HARD THINGS**

"VULNERABILITY  
IS THE  
BIRTHPLACE OF  
INNOVATION,  
CREATIVITY  
AND CHANGE."

(BRENE BROWN)

**What have  
I noticed  
here in  
Scotland?**



# LET'S TELL DIFFERENT STORIES



# Future-oriented place-based policy requires tools + channels that are targeted, transparent & tangible

- ▣ leveraging **local, regional, national, and global networks**
- ▣ play with the **people who love you** & learn to **see unicorns** (hint: they're just fat and we call them rhinoceroses or narwhals)
- ▣ choose wisely, do it on-purpose and own the fact that **no one will care more than you do**
- ▣ be delighted & delightful: this can (and should) be fun!
- ▣ get out of the **black box**: make everything clear & transparent

IT'S NOT  
JUST ABOUT  
TECHNOLOGY.

EXCHANGES ≠ ENGAGEMENT  
TRANSACTIONS ≠ TALKING  
MEETINGS ≠ MEANING



**“THE DOING IS *THE THING*”**

*The talking  
and worrying  
and thinking is  
**NOT THE THING”***

(Amy Poehler)

**Thanks!**

*Let's jam!*

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