

***Reanimating Storywork: Indigenous Elders' Reflections
on Leadership by Larry Grant***

Edited and introduced by Alannah Young-Leon

SFU Indigenous Student Centre, 2011

Reanimating Storywork:

Indigenous Elders' Reflections on Leadership by Larry Grant

Introduction

By Alannah Young-Leon

Although post-secondary institutions provide training for future leaders, few provide relevant models of Aboriginal leadership training and often do not have relevant resources by Indigenous authors. To address this gap we have, in this project, *Elders' Reflections: Reanimating Storywork*, compiled eight full text interviews on Indigenous leadership with local Elders, to be accessible to the wider community through the SFU Institutional Repository.

While the Elders have embraced the possibilities of wider access through technology, we affirm that they remain the rights of authorship and retain copyright of their stories. In this way we aim to reaffirm and restore Indigenous pedagogical forms and contribute Indigenous knowledge perpetuation from Indigenous perspectives, while honouring Indigenous intellectual property rights/protocols.

These interviews were originally conducted as part of my MA work entitled "Elders Teachings on Indigenous Leadership: Leadership is a gift." I identified nine themes important in Indigenous Leadership that emerged from the Elders' teachings: Aboriginal historical perspectives, positive cultural Indigenous Knowledge (IK), decolonizing and self-determined education, community service, holistic pedagogy, respect, responsibility, relationships and reciprocity. Guided by the teachings of the Elders, I concluded that strong Indigenous leadership is developed by empowering people to reclaim cultural values through the investigation of local living genealogies, oral histories and reflexive praxis, within an environment that supports self-determined changes. It was clear in the Elders' stories that leadership is a gift and a responsibility: we must step forward and demonstrate community responsibilities.

These nine themes delivered within an anti-racism education framework contribute to the understanding about Indigenous leadership and broaden the existing views of leadership and inform Aboriginal programs, pedagogy and retention at post-secondary.

While small word bundles were extracted and published in my MA study of Indigenous leadership, this is the first place where the extended interviews of the eight Indigenous Elders are available. This project reflects an Indigenous storywork process and supports a political self-determined sovereignty initiative that aims to reflect the teachings of the Ancestors in ways that they would recognize.

Location/Place of the Researcher

My name is Alannah Young-Leon. My background is that of a member of the Opaskwayak Cree Nation, Treaty #5 and former member of Peguis Anishnabe, Treaty #1, in Manitoba. I am a visitor to British Columbia's unceded traditional territories where I share my life with my Coast Salish partner from Chehalis BC. My perspectives and positions are outlined next.

I acknowledge the leadership of the sacred directions, the earth, air, water and fire and the plant and animal relatives. I come from the Muskeg Ininiwak peoples and acknowledge our place in Creation through my clan systems and the teachings of Treaty inherent in Indigenous wisdom traditions. We acknowledge these relations as extended families and the life-long responsibilities associated with these relations. Our engagement with research confirms that the Ancestral Teachings continue to provide education leadership excellence that benefit of all peoples.

I acknowledge many circumstances that have brought me to this work: while I understand the history and ongoing dispossession of Indigenous lands and access to resources in this place, I also acknowledge that I am a responsible citizen of sovereign nations governed under treaty agreements; I consider my work to address solutions that can repair this on-going violence rooted in the history of dispossession, enforced and founded on racism and violence.

The Indigenous Teachings are gifts and this knowledge demands that leadership aspirants (everyone is a leader) prepare themselves to be ready because they contain lifelong responsibilities. The Elders' life histories and stories tell a narrative that engages the political, the educational and the spiritual dimensions and inspire and animate our own life long leadership explorations.

I understand the serious commitment to reciprocal relationship building that is required for working with and protecting Indigenous Knowledge (IK) and thus I approached the SFU First Nations Study Program's Deanna Reder, the Indigenous Student Centre's Jenna LaFrance and Chelsea Mackay, and the Institutional Repository's Don Taylor. We acknowledged and followed the local Indigenous protocols and involved the Elders in a series of consultations to reflect an appropriate respectful, reciprocal relationship building process, while discussing how to protect the Indigenous Knowledge holders' responsibilities to the collective knowledge characteristic of IK and thus the Elders specify that they remain the holders of the information and stories they share herein.

In briefly referencing my own stories here I intend to convey the braiding together several Elders' life histories, to contribute to Indigenous narratives that engages the political, the educational and the spiritual dimensions of Indigeneity. Indigeneity that invokes a decolonized sense of being in the world, one that sustains other ways of being in a place and space that operates beyond dispirited and displaced patriarchal notions of

nationhood (Grande 2004, 174) and an adamant refusal to dissociate culture, identity and power from the land (Lyons 200, 457).

Context

The Elders were interviewed at the University of British Columbia, as part of the development of the Longhouse Leadership Program (LLP) at the First Nations House of Learning (FNHL) –a non-credit student support service. In order to further explore aspects of Indigeneity, I interviewed nine Elders who have worked with the FNHL. The MA was entitled “Elders’ Teachings on Indigenous Leadership: Leadership is a Gift”. We discussed what the role of culture is in leadership development and how cultural aspects and storywork processes were factors in their own leadership development.

Reanimating Archibald’s storywork principles provided a relevant research framework for the work the Elders and we create together. Storywork and storytelling is central to Aboriginal education and incorporating anti-racist education with culturally relevant pedagogy will transform leadership education, theory and practice. Lifelong learning that reflects the teachings of extended family relationship responsibilities are still relevant today and are conveyed herein.

I applied Sto:lo scholar, Jo-ann Archibald’s storywork principles to help guide the research journey. This project is part of the post research engagement relationship responsibilities. Storywork as described by Archibald (2008) brings together Indigenous ways of knowing and leading and teaches how to remain connected to the land and to each other.

Author Biography

S?eyetheq/Larry Grant, born and raised in xwmuthkwey'um Musqueam traditional territory by a traditional hun'q'umin'um' speaking xwmuthkwey'um Musqueam family. After 4 decades as a tradesman, Larry enrolled in the FNLG program, which awoke his memory of the embedded value that the hun'q'umin'um' language has to self-identity, kinship, culture, territory, and history prior to European contact. He is presently assisting in revitalizing hun'q'umin'um' and co-teaching the introductory hun'q'umin'um' course.

Larry Grant is a sessional instructor in the First Nations language program at UBC, where he teaches hun'q'umin'um' language. He is the current FNHL Elder in Residence and provides guidance to the Longhouse Leadership Program and teaches protocols to UBC First Nations House of Learning community. He is a former band counsellor, a grandfather, educator and cultural practitioner.

Reanimating Storywork:

Leadership Musings by Larry Grant

Larry Grant (LG): I think oral traditions have changed drastically because we don't know those stories anymore verbatim and that's why I have a problem when people say I don't want this in print or on tape, I don't want to sign a consent form. We don't learn the way it was in my mother's time or even my time. Where we sat in the same room with old people the parents the grandparents and great grandparents and we as young children, we heard their stories and they were repeated to us over and over and over until ...it's like the kids watching a video today, the little children they might watch a video a hundred times. Our parents would tell us their stories our whole life so that we could actually relate those stories again verbatim. We don't do that anymore so this is why I don't understand people saying they are oral traditional people and that to me is where I think we are losing it because in a sense that we live in isolation from each other. Our lives have sped up so quickly that we don't have time to sit unless you have an appointment, and that's what oral tradition is about. This is how I feel about it. Oral tradition is about when you go to visit relatives or friends and spend real quality time like in my youth. My mother would go to Vancouver Island and visit with her cousins and her aunties and she would stay there for over a week just talking and they would talk from the time they got up until the time they went to bed. And that's what they were doing they were relating all the different stories back and forth and all the different kinship relationships that we had. So that to me is really what oral tradition is about. It's not coming in and talking to or doing an interview for an hour or two and then disappearing because we are losing the finer details of all our stories.

For us to record them and put them in print I think it's the only way we can say these are our stories because we then are able to go over those tapes or writings and fine tune them to the point where they actually come out as they were told to us they are and attending to the fine details. I am a prime example very many things that happened in my life I speak of them in generalities- the fine details are missing, you know like who did this and what are the exact words that were said. I've lost those because to me all I've done is remember the general outline of the stories; the details are not there because we don't relate those stories on even a monthly, never mind a daily, basis. So we lose all of that. We need to balance the oral with the written for effective leadership.

Alannah Young-Leon (AY): *Regarding the generalities –it is a challenge to make the general specific to the context. Because of two education system our last few generations have had to look at what is written and reconcile what we recall and remember the stories in order to navigate the multiple training we encounter in our education systems.*

LG: Yes, the oral tradition is the part we don't do as much anymore. It's like this brunch we had today, the childcare preschool children were there and they get to interact with

the people that are taking care of them, plus they could of interacted with the older people and sat and listened to them. And then you hear and feel their energy, and to me that is part of oral history, where the young children, even though they are not sitting and paying attention like in school, they are in the same area and see how people act or how they are reacting to things that are being said and they are learning social skills. They are learning how to formulate public speaking skills and that's all part of gradually working up into leadership roles. Many of us are not aware that we are capable of this.

AY: *Yes, like earlier we were talking about how many of us don't think of ourselves as role models or leaders or even cultural. But younger people see that, even if they don't actually say it.*

LG: They probably don't recognize what they are seeing. I know that the cultural training, unless you are involved in it, you don't really see. Like I was talking earlier about the oral tradition, unless you are involved with it intimately, you don't actually understand the preparation and the build up to the final product which is the cultural happening. And if you don't have all of those fine details you actually can't be the leader. You can always be the speaker, because you have been trained and then you understand- yeah, this is how it goes; I am the voice instrument of the host.

Therefore whatever I say although there is not what you see on television like there is not a writer on it but everyone if they are culturally attuned, understands that whatever the speaker is saying is not the opinion of the speaker, it is the host that is asking the speaker to relay this message to the invited people. And that is their role, is to be the voice instrument of the host, that one there, usually the person has the ability to project their voice without a microphone the one that is able to stand up in front of a crowd and keep control. And also a person who has a good memory for names and kinship terminology and how people are related culturally and genealogically, how they are connected. That is the speaker's role. So when I speak of understanding the intimacies of producing a cultural event such as a naming or memorial or even what went on this morning, the speaker who had never done a complete potlatch although this person is learning and is a kind of organizer and supplier the resources but has never done one from the ground up. To facilitate the event one needs to organize the gathering of the wood, the preparation time leading up to the event, the collecting of resources for redistribution, the gathering of the food, designating who is going to do the preparation of the food, who is going to do the fire, who is going to be the speaker, who is going to be what we call the ushers today the ones that seat the people down, who is going to be the one to announce when the food is ready, who is going to contact personally each person that is involved in the cultural event.

It was a revelation the amount of people, time and energy to do one night cultural ceremony. It takes you a whole year or two years of continuous working to do that personally and I understand how that happens because we have done that for our

mother and our aunts, grandchildren, children. We've done potlatches and naming ceremonies from the ground up. My wife does that also. She's able to actually do all of that on a personal basis. The people that you involve, they see that- they see who is the go-to person, they see who is the general is and they see who is the actual driver of the event and gradually they become the leader and it may not even have been their intent. It is not their intent to be telling other people what to do in the sense that each family does an event a little different. And then when you become the go to person many, many times it is not your intention to be that the go to person. It's that you have the ability and the strength, the mental strength to keep everything flowing and to me that's part of the cultural leadership. And also that you are able to share your knowledge with whoever is asking how do we do this or how do we do that, because many people who have the ability to do those things they are quite reluctant to share their knowledge freely within the community. Sometimes they will say well weren't you listening, weren't you watching, didn't you help? And you say well I was busy doing this or that they say well you should have been watching this and then leave it at that.

You need to have the ability also to handle criticism while you are doing all of this. Because a lot people their feelings get hurt pretty easily and to me some of that reason is that they are not able handle criticism and as a go to person you need to handle that criticism even if it is not constructive criticism, it is quite something...

AY: *So developing diplomatic communication skills to get the task done in a good way and believing in the task are important leadership skills.*

LG: Yes, you have to believe in the task and you have to have some kind of understanding of why you are doing and you have to impart the urgency and the pride of workmanship. Many of our people have come to believe that we are on 'Indian time' but my grandparents didn't do things that way. When they said we will eat right after dark in the evening, usually it was quite early, when it got dark in the wintertime it was around four or five o'clock and you were to ready at that time and if you were not there as invited guests it is your responsibility to be there and if you are not there when the host time is ready, the host in my grandfather's time would just begin the process. This concept of Indian time is a very ...I would say is a misnomer, because when you live by resource gathering like when it is time to fish it is time to fish and when there is fish on the ground it is time to process the fish right now. Not tomorrow or the next day or the week because the longer you wait the more of the food resource you lose through deterioration.

You can't explain that to a young person today if they have the attitude that yeah okay if I get ready by ten o'clock instead of nine o'clock it is okay...but then they begin to move their whole life in that in that attitude you know and it's never been in my experience that you had to wait and wait for things to begin, the only things we had to wait for were things to get finished.

So the young people today have begun to think about Indian time as it's okay if do things tomorrow or the day after. As resource gathering people that is not the way it is when it is time to move it is time to move. Our young people never had to move with the seasons probably my generation was one of the last to have to move by the seasons. Then I have a dual experience because my father was a farmer, my Cantonese father was a father, was a farmer, and when it's time to plough the fields it time to plough the fields. When it's time to plant or transplant, it's time to transplant; you can't wait so you have to understand that when it's time to move, you have to move. A lot of young children and I don't mean little children I am speaking of the ones in their 20's and 30's the young people don't have that concept of how the life cycles work and it's the life cycle that moves you, whether you like it or not and that's part of a leadership skill learning how to live in relation to the natural world.

AY: *So that's important for leadership development because the recent generations education environment is away from the land in schools and so if we were to reinvigorate this land literacy as part of leadership education perhaps first through storytelling because it's important I know I missed out on learning these skills. I did not learn how to hunt for myself as I grew up in primarily in the urban institutional environments.*

LG: And when it's time to go berry picking you have to go others wise they are gone or the birds got them ahead of them. And when it's time to go harvest the crops, they have been planted, you have to go or you lose out, because they deteriorate quickly. Or it's the same as cutting fish processing it if you leave it too long, and say yeah tomorrow's good enough or this afternoon is good enough you have lost a whole day of goodness out of your resource. It's not being respectful, that respect for what we call It's like that story of the first story. Because those creatures allowed you to harvest them they are the creatures that give up their life so that your life can carry on and that is the thing about respecting the resource that you have there, that you don't let it go bad on you. You process it as quickly as you can because it's another life that has been given up just for you.

AY: *And there's only a certain window of time and a way of working with gratitude so that they work together.*

LG: That's all part of it This is where I have difficulty Well, most of the time when I am asked to pray at the beginning of a meal I never saw that as a youth or young child. And when I asked my mother about it, saying grace at the table before meals, how come we don't say that because I remember my grandparents being in the Catholic church singing, praying and responding to the priest's Latin in hun'q'umin'um'.

She told me the story that whoever is the one that is the hunter is the one who gives thanks to the Creator, for the creatures or to the, how do you say, the natural growth the food growth the plants. Whoever was doing the harvesting or the killing is the one

who has already given thanks to the spirit of that creature or that plant. So that what you're doing is like a superfluous thing . . . It's already been done. The creature at the time of harvest when its soul is departing has been thanked and when you are harvesting the plants it's been thanked before they have gone there to take. So there is no reason to stand there at the table and give thanks. It's already been done by the person that's done that. So I remember the few times that I have been asked to say grace, I say I can't because I have never done it, it's not part of me. I am slowly getting over that. It's something I understand in a little different way but I also understand there's a change happening that needs to be there and how do you tell and give the message across that it's not normal for our parents to do that. I don't know why it should be normal for me other than that this is the accepted norm today. Other people are able to get their psyche around it at this point in my life that it's sort of having difficulty.

AY: *Sharing that story might be helpful because I know from my time spent around here that whatever looks like prayer to some people really is a way of life but it's looking like prayer because of some of the influences of intercultural norms may isolate some people so this is always the dilemma. How do we be inclusive, because I would never normally do the Christian grace thing either? But it does give me a chance to check in, to think about the spirit of the food because I don't have that direct experience of the land that's my way of making that connection. I think about that Y2K scare a few years back I though how would I gather food and shelter, so I saw how limited my education in relationship to lands and I see how colonialism is about separating peoples from lands. And I could see what my mom was talking about that our generation doesn't have that direct relationship with the food, that we hunt in grocery stores and become dependent on colonial practices – I can see now how my leadership and sovereignty is compromised by urban education.*

LG: We have lost who we are in that sense. I've said that a few times in our own community, we don't know who we are anymore, some people get upset and I am not saying exactly what I am trying to say. I just feel like trying to explain that we don't fish we don't hunt we don't use our language for geographical spots. We don't use our language for the different animals and plants. We don't need to use all of our language we just need to understand our language.

AY: *So that's an important part of culture.*

LG: It is and I see it more and more as I work with the language but it was always something that was imparted to me by my mother is all these places had names prior to contact with English speaking people.

AY: *I can see what you mean about cultures they are always changing and always did. The cycles are important to know that we are not in tune as we could be and we have*

these other skills that are happening and we should not cancel things out if they are helpful and have the choice to decide.

LG: If I could figure out how not to say God or how not to refer to God as the Creator I probably wouldn't have as much trouble as I do to say grace.

AY: *Oh yeah, so thank you to the animals...*

LG: Thank you to the ancestors of the animals, that kind of the things, the ancestors of the sea creatures and the ancestors of the creatures that fly and the of the plant growth without using that God connotation. This God in a religious sense is goofy because you have the Catholics, you have the Protestants and the many denominations and the Jewish faith and whatever it is that the non-Jewish Hebrew does and all refers to that one person. But they all have huge differences with each other and one is correct and all the rest are not depending on which one you go to.

AY: *Is there something in the language that refers to...*

LG: I haven't heard of anything and maybe I am looking I the wrong direction you know how people that have brought into a hundred percent into Christianity into God and I say well our language doesn't have a very specific word God it doesn't have that and this is looking at other linguist stuff there is no specific word for God. I was up in the Yukon Territory I asked that specific question all the time looking for a word, do you guys have a word for God you mean the Creator I am not asking about Creator I am asking about God.

AY: *Is the Creator... what is the distinction?*

LG: Well you know how we thank the Creator because we don't know who he or she is. And in our language and stories that we have, they have always been here, they are the stories from this place. Some people have that creation story about falling from the sky. Theirs is one. In our language, in our community we don't know how much influence that person had about creation because they spent a huge amount of their life in the church site, that's where the school is. They speak reverently about this person they call God and I don't remember my mother or my grandparents or my grandparents or peers speaking reverently about God.

They used to tell stories about whoever that was that created the things that were here for us to use. For us here, there a came another person . . . xe:ls, he was the re-creator as we call it today. He was the changer, the transformer. So whatever the person's habits, say we're antisocial or I don't like the word non-conforming, it's someone that was doing something that was not quite right. The re-creator xe:ls would fix it or change those people into another form to fix it up. To bring it right for the people to live in harmony. And those are the only stories that I can remember concerning the

supernatural power or the ability to have created the world as our Ancestors spoke about it. When I asked these questions, do you have a word for God, do you have a word for heaven, not the sky, but heaven, or do you have a word for purgatory, or do you have a word for hell? Do you have a word for the devil? And they all come up with Chinook Jargon. Everything to do with God comes out the Chinook Jargon. That's not your language, that's not my language, that is not the Ancestors language.

AY: *Chinook is the trade language.*

LG: The trade language, the Chinook Jargon.

AY: *So off shore ideas or imported concepts from somewhere else or a way of questioning the origins.*

LG: Yeah. So that is the real reason why I have a problem with saying grace in prayers because it is always the reference is to God. When I asked my mom do we have a church service? She says that's not ours. I said when you say it's not ours, what do you mean? She said that's the white man's way of understanding how they become where they are. It is not ours, we have a different story, we have a different belief of how we are here.

AY: *I could see how people could find meaning and direction from re-creator xe:ls. To make things right.*

LG: At this point in time we have so many things to overcome. I think the biggest thing to overcome is the off shore influence (laughs). Because I believe we are the only race in the world and I am getting into this pan Indian thing-the North American Aboriginal people I believe are the only peoples in the modern world, that their language culture and spiritualities, dances and ceremonies have been legislated against and made illegal.

Because of the legislation we have not been able to keep the same continuity of our social and cultural and legal structures. The colonial history of this legislation completely disconnected us from our genealogical selves. People today do not understand that this disconnection, the incarceration and the school systems have emotionally, culturally and linguistically arrested the formation of our previous systems and structures. And now we have a huge gap – a void from the 1890's to the 1960's and the fall-out from that legislation continues today.

The North American Aboriginal person and their communities were totally disconnected from family, lands and languages and legislated into small areas of lands, prison cells, school buildings and treated as second rate and criminalized in our own homelands. I would say the biggest reason for incarceration is because the foreigners' want control of our lands and resources and continue to impose foreign institutions and values onto our peoples.

So they brainwash the kids. The kids go home and totally reject the language, culture and spirituality, everything to do with their own people. So now when that legislation is lifted (1960s) they have no one to turn to. There are very few of the people who remember things and so much of it has been changed through our social evolution. We have accepted so many different ways and have incorporated them into our own culture. Because we are not connected to the land and the sea, we are not connected to the resources in the same ways as we would have been, had there not been race-based legislation. So we lose all of that and we try to come back. We can only come back so far. And we have to incorporate everything from other cultures into ours and from there make it ours.

AY: *The University is another microcosm of what goes on in our communities, so I see Aboriginal peoples fighting for ground here, too. I went to the hun'q'umin'um' language class presentation dinner and support the fact that the hun'q'umin'um' language is being offered at UBC. The UBC Humanities 101 course offered in the xwmuthkwey'um Musqueam community, the xwmuthkwey'um Musqueam Memorandum of Affiliation with UBC, the Aboriginal Strategic Plan and academic caucus which includes the protocol of acknowledging the local unceded territories are some of the initiatives which are in part responses to address the history of genocide through institutionalization, surveillances and segregation of Aboriginal peoples in our own homelands you mention.*

What are some of the protocols for engaging with xwmuthkwey'um Musqueam or with Indigenous Elders to build a respectful long-term relationship? It is one thing to recognize xwmuthkwey'um Musqueam people, the fact that we live, study and make a living from your resources that you have taken care of since time immemorial, but if a hundred people on campus start calling xwmuthkwey'um Musqueam, that is not quite appropriate either.

LG: It's pretty complicated because I remember when one of our late Elders was alive and sometimes we never saw him for months, he would be going to two to three functions a day. There are quite a few others doing things as well, he was only one of them. Now that I am in this position in my life, there's quite a bit of stuff going on. I'm always moving and on the move. And a lot of our politicians say we don't have the budget for this stuff, they get upset we got things to do and you're going to these functions. They are social functions and yet they are actually not social functions, they are public relation PR functions.

That is all part of it. That's addressing part of our disconnection and we have to try and work it out so that it resembles things from the past. So that more actual identity genealogy and protocol comes out of what we do so that we are all better educated.

AY: *Some of the ways Elders lead is by role model how things are done in their own territories and how to acknowledge being a visitor in another Indigenous territory and to*

acknowledge the impact history has through stories and through engaging in the local protocols, to be ready for knowledge and to remember how things were done and pointing out inconsistencies in our thinking. Like your mother and other relatives telling you that religion comes from somewhere else and that just because it is accepted social norm today it does not mean you have to pray like the colonizers do or do things the way they do. Leadership involves remembering how history and our relationships can continue to teach us and that we are always learning.

LG: The thing about singing and prayer it makes more sense to sing it and you heard the TseilWaututh Elder sing and giving thanks in his language. A lot of old timers like his father and grandfather would have had the ability to just sing that. It makes sense. Like feast songs. When you really get into the words of a feast song they are just saying thank you. It was like the amen song that Harry Belafonti movie was in he sang it along with some nuns and they sing amen and that's it and that's really what the Elder was doing and he has the ability to do that because he has worked with more old people that did those things. I am older than him so I had different education and teachers.

In xwmuthkwey'um Musqueam time that had almost disappeared or had not been used in my generation and my mother's generation it was just about all gone...the ability to throw these things together in some kind of rhythm, because most of the time those songs are only maybe two sentences and they said thank you, thank you Creator or something like that and it always made more sense because when a lot of our people where crying it was like they were praying.

When someone is crying or praying in the reverence to a very recent death it is called tew'uqun and that is crying in reverence the act of crying- is a prayer. It is like talking to the spirit of the person that is departed. And talking probably to an Ancestor early, early in the morning at day break that's when all our people talk about praying is at daybreak just before sun up in the predawn.

They would be saying things to a rhythm or a tune as to why have you left? I am all alone now I have no one to go to, that sort of thing and you will hear that and they will do that for maybe four days. And they will cry and cry but they are praying. I don't believe we need to be that serious when we pray in the sense of that I am here with my hat in my hand and asking for a favour. I don't think people need to do that. People need to stand up right and say this is what I need to be able to help Alannah, give me the strength. I need the strength tell me what I am going to say. What can I say to help Alannah? I am not asking prayers for me I am asking for the strength and the knowledge to be able to impart all of that to you and that it is what I should be recording.

Because when you are asking questions like this it triggers a lot of stuff because you have to understand who you are, really understand who you are.

AY: *And it's ongoing, there is a lot to integrate and synthesize.*

LG: If you grew up in an urban setting, there is a huge difference in the language. I could never envision myself being in this part of the language program or being the co-instructor But my vision, when I finally signed up to relearn the language, was to be able to relate a whole story for the days' events, like this morning, I just stand there and talk about that whole event. It's still what I would like to do. I am slowly getting there.

AY: *I witnessed you that time you did that welcome at MOA (Museum of Anthropology) in your language for the first time. It was emotional and it affected a lot of people in the great hall.*

LG: Yes, to me that's who we are. We used to stand up and speak in our own languages. Talk for hours in front of people and talk to people and relate how life is and not run out of time. (laughs)

AY: *I think about our history and that is not really taught until maybe university and then it's hard because then there's lots of grief because the older people don't really want to be the bearers of grief and then you cope with that. Then you do your language and then you get to learn a little more and then you feel a little more confident and then you do some ceremonies and then that takes another ten years*

LG: Yeah Oh yeah.

AY: *It is a process and the younger kids need to know you do not just all of a sudden get there. It is an ongoing check in and you have to commit the time to do it.*

LG: You know the only other time something like this happened to me We as a young family were always involved in the Bighouse winter ceremony because our grandparents had Bighouses so when my first wife became a dancer in 1967, I, along with my youngest brother, we were always there because our cousin was there and we would sing for him. He was an initiate a year or two before that so we would just sing for him. And then one day my aunt's husband who was a leader in singing gave me his drum and said my throat hurts, I can't sing, you lead. Just like that. And there I was with a drum. He said, you know your wife's song you sing it as loud as you can, that is it you lead it. It was like being thrown in front of a crowd to say welcome. And I became a singer for a few years until things changed and I left it for ten or fifteen years. But then coming back the mindset has changed so much. It's difficult to do those kinds of things again because a lot of times the old people say each one of us has a gift that makes us stand out in that area and if you don't nurture it and take care of it is going to leave you. I know at that time I had developed the ability to understand how the dancers were singing and then be able to sing the song without ever hearing it before. And then when I left there I wouldn't sing again and when I came back I couldn't follow a song even after hearing it two or three times. It wouldn't stay in my head. It was something that sort of disappears and I understand what they were telling. If you don't look after it, it is

going to leave you and that is something you are good at. So don't let it go take care of it. Don't let your personal feelings get in the way of who you are. When you do that, things don't go right for you all the time. So that is something that needs to be understood in the cultural side of it.

AY: Yeah, like you were saying you live long enough you get to do different things with different gifts. Different seem to develop or maybe it moves around...

LG: Yes. I don't know what happens, like in the language I had never spoken, fifteen was the last time I had really spoken. It was only because my mom's aunty and great uncle couldn't speak English so I ended up coming home after spending the summer with him, speaking hun'q'umin'um and it was because of him and I never spoke again until 1999. That was over forty years so when I stood up and Vincent was still alive then and I just stood up and said thank you everybody for being here, just through a few words, and that was the first time I had ever spoken in public like that but it was Vincent's remark that made it worthwhile; he said *hoa* just like the old people, you sound just like the old people Wow So that it was there and holy smokes And then kept asking me to do stuff. He could see something, I guess, and it just developed from there – the relearning of the language and being able to not feel bad in public about relearning the language publicly.

AY: Yeah, it is okay to learn from all sources and the languages that come from the lands does have power.

LG: It's more power than I ever thought.

AY: Yes, like that George family song, I never used to sing, it's got its own power going on. . . .

Musings on Leadership (2011)

The hun'q'umin'um' language program is now held in xwmuthkwey'um Musqueam community. When it began it was held at First Nations House of Learning. How did you get involved with the Elders in residence program at the First Nations House of Learning student services?

LG: About four years a request came in to the band office for suggestions as to who would be suitable for the Elders in residence at First Nations House of Learning at UBC. It went through the band office right to the chief at the time and went through council and one day there was a phone call, they said come on down and we will talk about this request. So I went to the band office and they said would you be interested in being an Elder at UBC? I said well there are still a few other people older than me, they said no we kept going through the gamut of names and yours keeps coming up.

Yes, but first question what is an Elder? What is the role of an Elder and why do they need an Elder? I said an Elder is an old guy, an old person. Well, yes and no because my concept of what I consider an Elder would be someone with an MA and you know they are older than an MA. Some people are Elders by the time they are in their twenties because they are so steeped in culture and knowledge and able to share it. You don't have to be old. They said would you like to or not.

So I said yeah okay. I will try it out for a while if I don't like it I will just disappear. They said yes, do that. Well the First Nations House of Learning was in transition at the time, they were in between directors. I show up here every once and awhile, everybody says hello, everybody shakes my hand, everybody says this is Elder from xwmuthkwey'um Musqueam. Would you do a welcome for us? I said yes, okay sure, and I do it and it has kind of worked its way around to become what it is now. The assistant director at the time was working on it, she said you are the Elder. I said do we have a structure, like a letter or memo outlining our relationship roles and responsibilities? Well, what did the director say? Well, he said the previous Elder in residence just came and went, just dropped in on his own time and when there were scheduled events. I said well that doesn't sound very productive for the students. Isn't that what we are here for? If I am an Elder from xwmuthkwey'um Musqueam, am I not there on a regular basis to talk about my life experiences or to talk about issues that students have, to support young people away from their homes? Yes, that is pretty well what it is.

Because of my being a student for a couple of years I understand the structure that these students don't have a lot of time to be around here. But if you are here at a specific time they can work around their schedule to come and talk. I think it needs to have a more structured way about it because it will benefit the students and we have accomplished that since then.

AY: We used to have funding for Elders program through Health Careers when that program was in existence; they had a budget to hire Elders a few hours a week on Fridays. That ran for about two years. Different Elders came and depending on the students that came and the Elders interests, we did everything from talking circles, medicine teas and tinctures, clearings, and moccasin making. Then that program and funding moved and so part of the reason for talking with Elders is to document what kind of student service supports are required and to learn from Elders' thoughts, stories and experiences.

LG: That is what I thought, and then this is what I wish I would have said. There needs to be equity in exchange in the payment and reimbursement for the value of Indigenous Knowledge exchange that it is as valuable as someone with PhD credentials because the Elders are passing on knowledge and life experience that no one else has and has melded the teachings together and take out the most value of the teachings to pass them on to others when required.

The value of non-text interactive learning facilitates the relation building aspect that is largely missing in academia and is reflected in the interactions-we have a long way to go to respect the word bundles- the exchange of knowledge practices, payment and protocols. The BC Aboriginal Advanced Education committee meeting asked me, what is your opinion about budgets for Elders. I was taught that it is offensive to ask for money. It is implied that one should come from their heart and mind-to know the value, as equivalent knowledge, highly specialized knowledge and treated as such. When you are teaching, your time gets gobbled up. You need a structure that reflects this specialized knowledge and flexible equitable pay allowances so you are a benefit to the students, staff and the academy community.

AY: *I know discussions across the country are around how do we pay, what pay scale do we use or fit in. This is guesswork here but there was an option to pay one lump sum honoraria per year because of paper work and tax purposes. Plus, events are always being planned in the process so we don't always know how many times per year you would be asked to welcome people to events. I think that was how they worked it before. But that is not the same as sitting with the students for a designated time that you would be here so that people could plan around that.*

LG: That was the thing that I couldn't figure out at the time. What really do you do and doing the welcome and being around doing some prayers in order to teach people the local protocols and education practices, that is fine. But in my life the old person was someone that could pass on their knowledge at whatever it was that they were good at and sharing it with you. And it may be just a life experience to share with a young person that hasn't had many life experiences. You know this is what happens if you do this or this is what happened, it is not to be a psychologist or anything it just because as you grow older and you have children you sort of understand the concerns about stress within the system that you are able to talk a little about that. As a surrogate grandparent that has a major role in the sense of a community feeling, I know they are only here for a few short years sometimes it is the thing that changes their whole life, just experiencing for a short time someone that has a different perspective on the same issue that the student had. It was something that I thought would be a value to the student and the institute. That to me as I have spent time here is really what should be happening-this coming and going this ad hoc thing is not, maybe it is because my life has been structured. I don't see the value in it, it is illogical. Not that there should be classes or anything like that. There should be a certain time to be here. To say yes okay the students are okay they will be here at this time and you will be around, it is great.

AY: *Your ability to demonstrate through role modelling the orality process, the acknowledgement and welcome to your territory in the local Coast Salish hun'q'umin'um language is an invaluable teaching. We need to have deeper layers of understanding which we haven't addressed in the universities and because of the transitory nature of institutions we are limited. FNHL Elders lounge as a utilized space for Elders to share*

their stories, teachings on a regular basis is recommended. Who was influential to your leadership development?

LG: My mother, but it was not just her. My mother never went to school and she understood the value of education, in the sense that our life style was disappearing. The Aboriginal lifestyle in xwmuthkwey'um Musqueam territory because by the time I was born this area had already been logged out twice. So there was nothing in the territory really that could support life as it used to be. And then my grandfather was instrumental in the logging part of it because he was a logging contractor. Mom always said you have to go to school and you have to learn all the stuff you have to learn to do, whatever it is you are going to do. Then from there my father's peoples always said the same thing, they are vegetable farmers. You have to go to school to learn the system and to learn whatever it is you need to learn to -become a doctor, lawyer or whatever it is you are going to be. So from that I can't really pull out one particular person that made me understand that I needed to become educated. Even at that finances didn't allow for anything more than high school graduation. You were quite lucky to make it through that because of finances.

Not being status person at the time, I was very, very lucky to make it through high school and to be supported by my mother, who also supported me through the first three years of my apprenticeship because I didn't have enough financial assets to pay for a loan. I couldn't even afford boots to go to work. To me, it was my mother who was the driving force even though she didn't harp at it. She was the type of person if you have made up your mind to leave it she said I will still support you. You go do whatever it is you have to do. There was always that support. Whatever your decision was to do, in her eyes, was your adult decision she supported it. To me, that was the person that was a major influence in my education.

And probably a couple of other things, like my uncles were fishermen. What I understood about fishing was that when you are fishing, that when the fish are here, you have to fish around the clock. There is no time to rest. Then the other part was my father as a farmer, he would be up in the morning probably four thirty, he was the teamster. He drove the truck, delivered the produce came back to the farm usually at three thirty, four o'clock in the afternoon. Many times during the heavy growing season, would load up the truck again and deliver to the wholesaler. Sometimes make two trips in the evening and still load up for his four thirty a.m. trip in the morning.

So to me those two things were great inspirations, even though I am not going to be a farmer or a fisherman. In my eyes it was like doing straight labour. You have to work and work and you can't stop whether it is Saturday, Monday or whatever, the days don't count. You had to keep working. In my mind I had already begun to say, you have to have a few hours off a day, even though my mother said, life doesn't stop, whether you like it or not.

AY: *Working with the seasons and directly with the land is an important connection to learning, part of a life way, particular to places, language and meaning making processes and protocols. Our family, circumstances and relationships affect our leadership development.*

LG: I couldn't envision it at the time. My mind says it is not logical. When you saw the life style that had to be carried out to do those things -it wasn't logical to me. I don't know why it has to be logical to me, but it made more sense to make less money work forty hours a week and have less money but more personal time. My mind set became part of trades mind set. Not having the finances to come to university, which was UBC at the time. I had to be a tradesman. So that is when I became a tradesman.

AY: *What stories inspired you?*

LG: To move in the life that I am moving in?

AY: *Yes. As a leader, are there particular stories you tell your children or grandchildren?*

LG: The only thing is that when I enrolled in the language program there was a reason for me to want to be in there besides wanting to be enrolled in UBC and keeping busy. It was to be able an orator. As I can remember in my childhood, the orators, I remember they would stand up and talk and talk. They would talk about history they talked about genealogy and just life experiences and have the people just sit there and listen to them. That was the transferring of Indigenous knowledge traditional knowledge in how we were related to each other to our culture and to our territory. That to me was one of the biggest things I could see for me to be enrolled in the language program. However it took on a life of it's own that thing. For me to be able to speak in my own language to be as I can remember those old men and ladies being is grew to the point it is like I have no control over it. It has taken me way beyond where I ever thought I could be in the sense of I am here at First Nations House of Learning supporting the university community and the Elder in Residence Program, I am with the First Nations Language Program, not only as a student but also as a co-instructor. It has brought me more places that I ever thought it could and more places than I ever would have been without the language.

So that part to me just envisioning myself standing there talking to the people in my own language as I remember those old people, it was something... that I can't explain it. It was a wonder for me just remembering those guys that can make want to relearn the language. That to me what was always told to me as a child and I try to impart to my children, my grandchildren many times over, my understanding more of the language and culture just from the language itself. It was something that even though I didn't intent to be this in depth in language, culture and representing my people publicly, this where this has led to just from that. But it was just remembering those old guys talking that made me say, yeah that is what I want to do. I want to be able to do it. Not that is

what I want to do, it is I want to be able to do it. Now I am doing it and that is further than I ever envisioned myself going with it. I haven't learned to say no.

AY: *I know in the language there is the wholistic understanding that involves the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual and includes the relationship with the land through the language. The wholistic understanding benefits the family, community, and nation as we have outlined in the Longhouse Teachings brochure. It sounds like by recognising your inspiration has really helped you to move, beyond what you had hoped for.*

LG: That part to me, remembering that, is because many, many of our people believe that the Longhouse, the Bighouse is the sacred spiritual place to meet and that is all it is used for. Because our contemporary minds don't allow us to think about living in that Bighouse. Many of our young people can't imagine living in one of those places. Yet as a child that is where we lived. We didn't actually live right in it, we lived right beside it and we could stay in there at night, if we wanted to. Mom would fix up a bed and blankets in there. We saw our moms, aunties working in there. We saw our grandfathers and uncles working in there. It was a place to be and that is where our life was. That is where our history and many of our teachings came across to us, in there.

AY: *Where there particular people, stories or incidents that might be helpful to share with students who are developing their leadership?*

LG: Orators, those are some of the leadership requirements and that the Bighouse, it is not just a sacred place. It is not a place of worship or religion. When you are speaking and use that word wholistic that is what that building is it is wholistic. It is where you live that is where procreate and that is where you watch life, learn and where people die. We have naming ceremonies in there, you had memorials in there, you had puberty rights in there, marriages and it's all part of normal everyday life. It is not a place of worship although today a lot of younger people bring in organized spirituality.

If you talk about it sometimes there is a little bending of noses, a little out of joint. Because a lot of those Bighouses were places of residence. Many of the things we are talking about took place outside in the field in front of the Bighouses. That is why you'll see in some of the old pictures of our village, they have potlatch platforms out in the middle of the village. They held the potlatches out there in the fall or in the springtime. Inside the Bighouse structure, it is only since anti potlatch legislation came in effect that all of these things that it moved indoors.

The mask dancing, the *XwayXwey*, most of the time was outside. That would be from spring to fall. But now it is performed inside. But by the time I was a boy, when you speak of puberty rites, I have never seen them until recently, in the last few years. I never saw that happen. That has actually changed quite a bit from what was told to me by my mother.

Because when a young girl became woman she was actually dressed and treated like a new initiate, in the spirit dancing ceremony. But the last two times that I saw puberty rites carried out here, I am not sure exactly where those ones originate from, because they are quite different than the stories my mom talked about. These girls are not separated until their cycle is complete, they are not dressed up like a new spirit dancer initiate. This is taken place indoors and I am not sure if it takes place indoors or outdoors. So those ceremonies, I am not familiar with only familiar with the stories that my mother talked about.

As I grew older getting closer to puberty, I would be sent to go with my uncle. Go help your uncle, go do this with your uncle. That is all I remember, because up to that time you are with your mother learning everything she has to do, plus you are learning all the skills the women have. You are learning the language, the culture, the genealogy plus you are learning the role of the plants. Also you are learning all the things the women do. Then as you get closer to puberty you get shuffled off to your uncles.

AY: *Learn what the men do.*

LG: Yes.

AY: *So you have a rounded knowledge.*

LG: Yes you really do, because when you speak of culture I have a difficult time with pulling that out. You are just growing up in it and it is all around you. It is not until you become more educated that you understand that it is culture. It is actually a life skill.

AY: *It is an important one for the ones that don't have it.*

LG: Very. To me someone else asked me, how do you feel about women's role women's rights, the whole gender thing within the culture. I said I don't have an opinion on that. I mean I probably do, but all I understand is that my mom gave birth and gave me life because she kept me alive after birth. She taught me her language, she fed me, clothed me, taught me all different things, how to behave socially, taught me about medicines. Whatever was around you at the time, talked to me about animals and spirituality, she gave me all of that knowledge plus life before saying go help your uncle. So I don't have an issue with this gender thing. The only issue I have with the gender thing is why is that not recognized? The women play a huge role in the formation of a male child's life, that when that male child reached puberty all that is pushed aside and I don't understand that. It may have only been in the contemporary post-contact that its importance was pushed aside.

AY: *Patriarchy moved in.*

LG: It doesn't make sense to me.

AY: *Yes. In our language there is no gender, the speaker translating will say he and she interchangeably.*

LG: Yes, you have to know who they are talking about. If you don't know who they are talking about then you haven't been paying attention. I know in our language there very few gender words, mom and dad, boy and girl, man and women. Then after that there is no gender for male and female cousin or relative. It is the determiners that are male and female. But the actual kinship terminology has no gender. To me, and psychology has found this out, that a child knows everything that is important about life by the time they go to kindergarten. My father always said if you have a stepchild or a child comes into your life that is not yours, biologically, and if that child has reached the age of nine forget about trying to teach him about how your family plays out their roles within the family structure, because that child will have already had everything set in its mind about how it is going to behave.

AY: *Yes the next stage of development, that begins at eight or nine years old.*

LG: Once you have reached that age and if that child has bad habit forget about trying to change it that person has to have a life changing experience to do it.

AY: *Did you have one that people can learn something from?*

LG: Probably, a thought changing event happened in grade nine. My mom got sick. I don't know what it was, she couldn't move or walk. I don't know if it was her kidney, it was something internal. I was fifteen sixteen at the time, sometime in the middle of September, she cooked for us morning noon and night regardless. That was the first time I had ever seen my mom in bed. I stayed home, my older brother was doing whatever he was doing, my sister was going to school my other brother was only five. I stayed home from school and took care of mom for two months and she said go back to school. I am okay now, I can walk now. You have to look for some work and we need money. I must of looked around the city of Vancouver for two three weeks. All they ever said was go back to school kid. That was when I finally really made up my mind to go to trade school as a goal.

I am glad it happened that way because all of a sudden I couldn't get a job and I couldn't do anything. All they told me was go finish high school and come back and we might hire you. That is one of the few things that stand out. But other than that, in grade eleven English in homeroom, our mom couldn't read or write so any time I stayed home from school I wrote the note, told mom exactly what was in the note word for word. Now you sign it or don't and she would sign it. Got to school and the instructor said, you played hooky. It was the third or fourth time and I said well my mom can't read or write and I don't lie to mom. I might lie to you but I don't lie to my mom and she knows

exactly what I have written and she signed it. The instructor said you played hooky, you play hooky again and you are finished and not just from my class but from high school. So I never played hooky again. He said you are just lazy.

AY: *So there was a challenge there.*

LG: Yes, it was something, all through school it was like that. I didn't go to school mom. What was wrong? I am going to put down here that I wasn't feeling well okay? And she would sign it.

AY: *What would have helped you to stay in school? One of the questions is what do we need to do in our communities and schools to regain some of our cultural values and enhance our identities. What would have made you want to go to school?*

LG: I really don't know. That is a really good question. That is a social problem you are speaking of. Originally, while I was in high school I wanted to be an engineer, a structural mechanical engineer. Because of finances- knew I couldn't be at university. So I choose the next thing, not being the ambitious person everyone wanted me to be, I chose to be a car mechanic. That to me I knew it was a way I could earn a living. But I never did get that part. I became a machinist which I didn't want to be because it requires a little more intricate concentration. Just to understand that there is absolutely wrong or degrading about being a tradesperson. That is an honourable way to earn a living. The real issue is that our own people have become dependent on the social programs that have been provided by the government and the exclusion from mainstream society and the non-recognition of our people being industrious people.

Many of our people through the loss of culture and the loss of respect of Aboriginal culture through the school system, a lot of this is a trickle-down effect from the original residential school people, that has degraded our cultural standards and created a disrespect or dislike for the old cultural ways the old ceremonies, all the old, or considered old stuff. Yet as a boy I saw my grandparents work seven days a week. I saw my mother work seven days a week. My father worked seven days a week. Very few people worked six days a week at the time, forty eight hours a week. So what is missing here is the understanding that our people worked seven days a week and to understand that there was no weeks, Monday, Tuesday etcetera that is European innovation, that our people were self-sufficient and survived for millennia prior to colonization. And it is true through, that degradation of culture and values, that I believe our young people are not able to carry on an industrious life, in the sense of success.

AY: *So how would you talk to people about why it would it be important to have local languages, protocols and land uses or culture in the classroom?*

LG: We want culture in the curriculum because culture brings out who you are. It identifies you and that is what is really needed to reverse the degradation of who we

are and with the culture comes the language because culture and relationships to lands, creates the language. You don't talk about something you have never done before, you do the deed and then you do the language. Culture is there for self-identity.

AY: *So it enhances self-identity and sovereignty such as self-determined relationships to lands and resources in to create more options to become self sustaining. Like contributing to local community development rather than responding only to corporations driving the agenda.*

LG: Self-worth, having culture in the curriculum helps the person to identify because the recognition of culture in curriculum is something that is needed for culture creates the self-image and the self-worth, brings with it the language and with the language you fully understand exactly what has happened to create the word in the language. That has all been taken away from us since the residential school time because prior to the residential school people existed in this country side by side. The culture also talks to you about seasonal activities. You know when it is time to go fishing then you don't wait for tomorrow to go fishing you go fish today. This whole thing about Indian time is goofy, because our people had to work when it was time to work, not when we felt like it.

AY: *So self-sufficiency from cultural standards as part of relevant leadership development.*

LG: Yes it brings about the understanding of self-sufficiency and all of that is tied into the culture in the curriculum, which brings about the relevance of Aboriginal people in the formation of country called Canada.

AY: *And that we have a lot to contribute.*

LG: We are a contributing factor in the formation of this country, which is denied by not having our culture recognized regardless of how diverse our cultures were and are. We played a major, major role in the structure of Canada. A systematic ignoring of the existence of Aboriginal culture and language because the culture brings about ceremonies, language, geography, history, medicines, on the West Coast we have marine engineers who built the canoes the structural engineers built the Bighouses all of that. Culture identifies, the curriculum would identify how industrious, self-sufficient and reliable and intelligent we were and are. If you research what goes on with our language the level of sophistication that is in Indigenous languages is passed on for generation after generation. Without one certified linguist. Without paper and pencil.

Something that our contemporaries are not able to grasp and that is the huge thing that keeps our young people out of school is that we have no identity- there is no light at the end of the tunnel. Who am I when I finish here? Some one that has no goal in life because we don't identify with anything to me that is what is keeping our kids out of

school. I think they have not gotten out of that trickle down degradation effect from the residential school.

AY: *Some of the academic language may be how we might decolonise our mind.*

LG: Decolonisation is an oxymoron because as long as the colonizer is still here they still colonize.

AY: *What would help to move away from this exclusion and denying of whole information systems that really doesn't help anybody?*

LG: Systematic exclusion because if you keep ignoring one child in the house hold that child as it goes in to the world will disappear because it understands that it has no self-worth and whatever it has to say it will not be paid attention to. It understands that if I don't do anything then that is okay, because no one is going to pay attention to me. So that is what has happened in the residential schools. It has come down to the point after a few generations, the young people and I hear it all the time. They don't listen to us or talk to us or pay attention to us. Doesn't matter what I say it is not going to happen.

The whole system reflects that. So shoot six Aboriginal boys because they are packing something in their hand and won't drop it when a cop tells them to drop it. Could be a cell phone – they still get shot to death. Nothing happens.

Aboriginal boy gets shot to death because he refuses to drop an unidentified object on the command of drop it or I will shoot. A prominent soccer coach in the city of Vancouver son gets shot in a marijuana bust they immediately change the laws. So the right person has to die.

AY: *Systemic racism.*

LG: Yes, very systematic, very institutionalized and it is there. It is the media analysis approach on this stuff like the First Nations Study Program is working on all the time. Critical analysis – editorial stuff. Media representation, Aboriginal guy – Dudley George, gets shot at a rally at an occupation against colonizer.

It doesn't say Dudley George, an Englishman. If Dudley George were an Englishman it would have said Dudley George shot while trying to bring about change within the Canadian government's issues. However because he is non-Aboriginal and is not a person of colour his race is never brought up. To me, it tells me that this is a normal behaviour pattern of a person not of colour. A person not of colour their race is never mentioned because it is normal for that person to cheat, to lie, to steal, to kill. There is value difference.

I remember when the coach's son got shot. It stands out quite clearly because a couple of European guys that I worked with said look at this: Why did they shoot that boy? Do you know that is so and so's boy? He was the coach of the local soccer team, they shot him and killed him. I said why are you so upset about that? He said that boy has potential and he wasn't doing anything but he had something in his hand and the cops couldn't clearly see his face.

I said do you remember two months ago sixth and main – do you remember the people that got shot there and died? Killed dead. I do, two young Aboriginal boys on two different nights were shot in that same city centre parking lot because they had something in their hands and they wouldn't drop it. So the cops shot them and when they check it out it-it was a cell phone. That part is understandable, what I don't understand is why are you so upset about this white kid getting shot? Why are you saying that?

I say not only that but he is a brand new immigrant's son who is meddling in dope, illegal substances, so he is a criminal. What are you so upset about? He had so much potential. Those guys had potential too. It is because if it is Aboriginal guys you can't even remember the incident but here is an immigrant's son, who is the coach of a soccer team, the son gets shot because he is participating in illegal activities and you are upset. So the right kid got shot or killed.

They have been having this problem about investigating drug deals going down and it was all in the paper. They were trying to change the law so that both sides would be safer now they are going to change the law, you watch they will fix it. They said boy you are an ugly man and I said no I am just telling you the truth. You got to shoot the right kid before the laws get changed. That is it. You think about it.

The child got kidnapped they figured it out and they got the guy and he was tried and convicted in roughly three or four months. Larry Grant's daughter gets kidnapped they can't find the guy, they can't figure it out if they do catch the purported suspect, might go to trial in ten years. The right people got to get hurt the right people are not people of colour. That has always been my bone of contention. They said no you are reading stuff in to this and I say oh no you watch it.

All the recruitment they show all the doctors, the lawyers they don't show the Indians here all the people that are here. Maybe they want to keep a low profile. We don't have many role models.

AY: *So role models are important.*

LG: Recognition of role models within the institution and I don't really mean recognition of PhD and MA but recognition of people who are successful and self-sufficient in the

productivity of their lives. You can't get her to stand up any ways like Susan Point who had been carving and gradually becoming successful.

They don't have PhD or MA some get honorary doctorates. There is not real recognition for people who have gone and worked without the system. There needs to be someone to actually promote more awareness. My cousin passed away last week and in his eulogy, I thought I knew him but he achieved more things than I ever thought he had. A lot of that is our problems we don't talk about things that we really accomplished and a lot of us don't even think they are accomplishments.

Goals: finished high school graduated. Aspirations: to be a tradesman, to get married to own a house, to have children, to be comfortable, and maintain a healthy life style. You go out in life and you do, you don't think about it you just do. You figure it out yes okay that is it and you do it. Fifteen twenty years down the road you think about it yes become a tradesman, got married, got a house paid for, children, comfortable and healthy lifestyle. What is that? A successful life.

AY: *What would have been in place for you to continue to be a structural mechanical engineer?*

LG: Our community was very cash poor. There was no free education, if there was tuition to get at least a BA, then I would have become an engineer at the time. When I look back at it, it may not have been the right time anyway because two brothers. Two wrongs don't make a right, that is a joke, two brothers were civil engineers graduates of UBC. They are tailors, they make my suits because they finished UBC they could not get a position in any engineering company because of the racism. They are ten years older than me. Probably not having resources was boon to me in that sense.

AY: *And yet here you are.*

LG: At UBC that is the whole irony of it all. We talk about that on occasion.

AY: *So by reclaiming your language and therefore your culture and have memories and access you can go anywhere pretty well.*

LG: Pretty well and what has happened with the language, me actually being able to analyse the language and research it has lead me to a better understanding of our cultural activities. We were immersed in it from childhood, so understanding the word culture is difficult to conceptualise it is something in the language that brings out the activities that brings one within. When you look at the language it is really particular about what it is talking about and as contemporary people engrossed in cultural activity we use words in the English language that don't bring out or epitomize the culture.

AY: *Would you recommend language in the school system earlier than in university?*

LG: Oh yes. We are trying at this point in time to bring the language into grade five, six and seven. We need more people to take the language and be able to use that language, to be able to teach the language to young people. We don't have the human resource yet as xwmuthkwey'um Musqueam people. Other people have that, we don't have it, yet.

We don't have the capacity for that but the language yet and the culture is not relevant in many of their minds. See because many things in my mind are about what my mother and uncles talked about, as what xwmuthkwey'um Musqueam people do to live -was to go to work.

My mind is already logical and structured that way. These things they are going to disappear and all of that entails your life, so when you are thirty years old -this is going to be gone and so why do I have to learn how this works? Many of the people they are not involved in the culture like the ceremonies and that what you see happening here many of our young people and when I say young people I also mean the parental group who are not involved in it. Because of the misconception that it is a spiritual and religious thing and it only happens in the Bighouse so we won't go there because I am Catholic or whatever. Many people balance them both, leadership reconciles what is appropriate and where it is relevant.

AY: *So it will be a challenge to make it relevant so that maybe eventually language in the lower grades starting small is an intervention and in grade eight or nine to keep them interested the topic could be coffee bean industry and then the drug and alcohol trade and colonialism.*

LG: Yes.

Well thank you very much for visiting today. All my relations. Chi Migwetch. Hyska O'Siem.