

***Reanimating Storywork: Indigenous Elders' Reflections
on Leadership by Lee Brown***

Edited and introduced by Alannah Young-Leon

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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 Elder's 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 Elder's 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

Dr. Lee Brown is the Director of the UBC Institute of Aboriginal Health and is the former coordinator of the Indigenous Doctoral Program in the Department of Educational Studies at The University of British Columbia where he wrote his Doctoral thesis entitled: *Making the Classroom a Healthy Place: The Develop of Affective Competency in Aboriginal Pedagogy*. He is the co-author of *The Sacred Tree*, an educational curriculum based in Aboriginal values and epistemology. Lee has also contributed to the Round Lake Native Healing Centre in Vernon, BC during the last twenty-nine years in a number of capacities, including clinical supervisor and currently as a cultural resource to the centre. He has been the keynote speaker at many Aboriginal conferences including the Awassis Education Conference held each year in Saskatoon. He has been invited to share his knowledge of culture and healing in over five hundred Indigenous communities in North America. Lee is a member of the Cherokee Nation and the Wolf Clan. He has run men's wellness circles at the UBC First Nations House of Learning (FNHL) and participates in the sweat house and other ceremonies.

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Alannah Young (AY): *Thank you for agreeing to interview for this project. The main question is: what is the role culture plays in Indigenous leadership?*

Lee Brown (LB): I would describe Indigenous leadership as sharing and utilization of knowledge while being of service to others. I feel that the real essence of leadership as we understand it is to be of service to your family, your community, your clan, your Nation and in a broader sense to all the people. I believe that service is greatest when a person is able to find their own gift and can use it wisely for the blessing and the benefit of those around them. This is why some people seek their gift through fasting and ceremonial and cultural procedures that are used to find their gift. And if they find the gift then they would be of more service to others but if they haven't found their gift they can still be of service to others by watching the community and see what the community needs are, see what is happening in the community and finding a way to help, with the highest degree of selflessness possible.

The best leadership is leadership of people who are not really trying to be leaders but who are trying to be helpers. Helper is a word I appreciate deeply. It's a really good word. I remember that story I heard about Sitting Bull when he went to Washington, DC and he was introduced to the leadership of the United States and observed that the people in the leadership were very rich and powerful. He said, this is a government that would lead to corruption, and I think that sums up the native ideas that leadership should be no wealthier than, you should not have more than anybody else.

The role of leadership should not separate you from people it should make you a more integral part of the people. Anything that separates you from the people lessens relationship which is our primary value. I think this concept of leadership is very different than the leadership defined by the broader society in which leadership is often used as a position of power to achieve or acquire things for themselves.

AY: *So what would you say the role of culture is?*

LB: I think the primary role of culture is to provide the values and methodology by which we find our gift and create a good strong community. Values are foundational to good leadership. A primary value which I already mentioned, relationship seems to me to be the core value and that all our other values such as respect and kindness and cooperation and sharing and caring are based on. All our values are aspects of relationship. So relationship is the central core value that teaches how to be related; related first to ourselves, related to the spiritual realm, related to the family, the community and the world around us that exists as environments. So culture is a teacher

that holds our highest values our knowledge; it holds the accumulated knowledge and wisdom of our Ancestors.

I think culture not only provides the values through which a person can be a good leader; the value of service, of respect for others necessary for serving and helping others, it also provides the institutions by which a person can rise to leadership. Culture assists a community to train specific people to become leaders in certain ways because the Elders in their wisdom perceive certain young people have certain kinds of gifts, talents and abilities and so that person will be trained and assisted through cultural processes so that they can be strengthened and so they can become good strong leaders of the people.

A young man or woman, for instance, might be chosen to be a knowledge keeper in which case they would be told to sit with or be around the elder knowledge keepers who would probably share knowledge with them. And then as they grew older they would start sharing more and eventually would be trained how to use their voice and how to address the people and in this way. As he was growing up he would receive a background in the leadership in the sense that he would be speaking and possibly facilitating community processes such as ceremonies or giveaways. They together would retain some of the history or knowledge that they could repeat, would gain some of the knowledge and history of the family's background and the family songs in the community and could use that knowledge that was necessary. At certain particular times, in times of ceremony and times of community gathering. So that that's an example, I think.

I don't know if I am a leader; in fact I am not really a leader in anything. I am not the head of any group. I think in the sense of being a person that sometimes presents in front of the community. My practices have been informed by the Elders that I had the opportunity to listen to. I had the blessing of an Elder man who would often point out when people were leading in inappropriate ways. So then I would see that as an example of what not to do.

And he might talk about stories about good leaders in the past, stories that contained the values and principles of good leadership, I already mentioned. So for instance if a person was misconducting themselves or they were using their position to obtain money for themselves or their family, they might point that out and point out the fact that is not what leadership is. Leadership is service and you give to others.

When I was young I was involved in the Powwow through the North West Tribal Club. Each year, all year long, we worked, had fundraisers to gather money and take donations from members of the community and usually by the time we had our annual powwow we would have several thousand dollars, which was a lot of money then, to give out to the community. Everybody that came to the powwow was given food for each day and members, singers and dancers were paid each day. It wasn't the kind of

huge prizes you see now but it was an exercise in serving and giving to the community, doing something for the community. With no expectation of any gain, or any kind of benefit other than the joy of knowing you had done something good to help the people and that you had done something to strengthen and to perpetuate the culture.

I think that I am involved in a community here at UBC which is really on the cutting edge of Indigenous education, leadership and research. I am really happy to be apart of that community and I think whatever role I play in that community, whatever writing I can get done in the community, I am hoping that it will have some influence, that it will help somebody in some way.

What I want people to know is that our culture is important, that our values are important and as good as anybody else's; that we have something to offer not only to ourselves but to other people.

I think that the Canadian Journal of Native Education publication that is published here is an example. I believe that the Journal provides leadership and creative thinking and knowledge to the community. I think there is a lot of educational leadership. For me it's really about hard work, working really hard trying to focus that work. On doing something that is helpful to the community rather than focusing on trying to have a great career by being, as Graham Smith states, a privatized academic.

But for me it is just about the work. As long as I have a place to do the work and to write and to focus my energy and to practice my spiritual disciplines, I am happy. I am often times a lot happier to contribute to ceremony and being part of it rather than leading it. When you are leading there's a certain amount of pressure that requires a greater focus. So I like the way things happen here sometimes, when we all do it together, when we gather and do ceremonies and things together, such as the sweathouse rather than have one specific leader.

It is true that Round Lake Native Healing Center on the Okanagan First Nation in Vernon, British Columbia I presided over some of the ceremonial processes such as the sweat and the some of the other ceremonies that occur at Round Lake as part of the treatment modality. One of my primary concerns there was to lead in such a way that the leadership potentiality of all the participants is touched, activated and manifested. A poor leader leads in such a way that only their own potentiality is manifested and some leaders even oppress the group and try to actually limit the potentiality of others so that their potentiality will be greater.

But to me a good leader activates the group to learn and assume responsibility which is another primary requirement of being an effective leader. This is why I like the community here at the Longhouse; it seems like we do events and ceremonies together. It seems like the community is really innovative and on the cutting edge and we encourage each student to make their unique contribution and in that participator

process we learn from one another. Both here at UBC and at Round Lake it is not one person out front all the time but a communities engaging together.

My observation is that there are some cutting edge things happening here and I want and am involved in some of them. I want people to know about the Native Training Institute that I studied and to know that the educational process developed there was unique and probably ahead of its time. What happened at the institute was an outgrowth of the native community; it was Indigenous women designed the Institute and for a moment, for seven years, something great in the form of educational leadership happened there. It is important to know that at the institute we realized that leadership requires hard work to develop yourself as well as writing every day for a few hours, seven days a week is necessary to succeed academically.

The other aspect of hard work that relates to leadership that is very relevant is the work on purifying yourself, examining your intention by constantly investigating yourself. Examining your inner most motives to make sure that your motivation is as pure as possible. Not that we are not pure human beings that's why we need ceremony. That's why we need cleansing processes, that's why we need the sweats and ways of purifying ourselves. As human beings we have the capacity to get off balance pretty easy. So we need to be constantly focusing and examining our intent. Examining what it is we are doing in the community and if we are in a leadership position why are doing it, who are we doing it for and whose benefiting from it?

For me, I try to go to the sweathouse as much as I can to just to pray and purify myself and to let go and to acknowledge the spark, the heat, the rocks and the presence of the water. That's another thing about leadership, that whenever you are in a leadership role there's always going to be a certain amount of people you come into contact with. When you are in contact with that many people, then you need to constantly to be re-purified or else you can be overwhelmed by it.

You can be sunk by it; you can lose your leadership position or end up quitting whatever you are doing because you can be overwhelmed by the negative. For instance, yesterday there was a presentation for an education leadership position and the person sounded like they had spent their lifetime making their career without considering the community. I have seen this happening to a few people who basically ended up outside the community.

Because of my desire to be of service within the community it makes no sense to go outside the community because the real place of service is within the community. Besides, I think some of the most exciting things in the world are happening in Aboriginal communities right now and right here.

I think in the last thirty years we have healed ourselves to an amazing extent. I think we are rewriting our systems of education and that our ceremonies are strengthening.

People are participating in ceremony again not by the hundreds but by the thousands. So there are a lot of healthy things happening and I think that an amazing amount of healing knowledge still exists with the communities and with the elders.

I think the number one most important thing is addressed and not only addressed but it's actually done here, is understanding protocol. Another very important thing is the understanding of respect and relationship within the context of protocol. One of the things I really like about the LLP and the Longhouse is the respect for the local Indigenous community: the Musqueam Nation and the acknowledgment of their unceded territory. The inclusion and the relationship to the Musqueam community here is a really essential part of protocol and it teaches the students to observe protocol and to observe respect. So I think protocols and understanding relationship and learning how to be of service to others are all critical in leadership formation. I think the LLP models a way of service because the LLP itself is a service to the community. It's important for students to see that.

And many people have little awareness of our protocols and using them at every occasion is such a clear example of leadership and it's really good for them to see it here in the UBC longhouse community.

Cultural components need to continue if our leadership is to have balanced. I have often wondered about the pipe, if we could have more pipe ceremonies. For me as a student these have been a lifeline and it's very, very important just knowing that they are there are very important. I think they are very important. I think that they are at the very core of what give the Longhouse community its unique essence and being.

AY: *In some sense these are central prairie teachings and so because we do follow protocol the ones that take care of those ceremonies are from those tribal backgrounds and we are also include the west coast cleansing ceremonies for the house.*

LB: It's always difficult to express the extreme diversity of all the students that come to university, but I think what we can do is identify those cultural universals that people agree upon. Practice those as much as possible and allow the diversity to manifest through the individuals that are here. If we focus on the universals of prayer, fasting, sharing food and things that are culturally universal and find ways to express these values together the diversity will arise naturally and organically. We don't want to give up the cultural universals that we have because people are upset about the cultural specifics, we can allow the specifics within a universal framework.

Quite a few authors I have been reading, for instance, Cajete, Duran, and many others all say that our culture is much more universal than most are aware even though there's a tremendous diversity on the surface of the tribes. But if you start looking at what is actually happening within the real values structure beneath the diversity, there are great similarities. So we see that values are the way that people do things; the process

of the culture that is what is being done. The differences are on the surface and when we get really deep into process the values are the same. Eventually all the ceremonial processes we have always had have lead people towards their gift, ultimately towards finding themselves, finding the balance and using the gift wisely.

The men yesterday here at the Longhouse were sitting down at the table and commenting on how much they missed John, the Elder. I think the mentoring with the Elders is really important and somebody mentioned the calmness he that he brought to the Longhouse and the strength and the fact that he had a lot of really good advice. Yes I think that's something really important. It's too bad that we can't have an Elder in residence program. Even Elders for the day, where we could sit around with Elders for the day and talk, and it might be slow at first but I think that eventually people would start accessing.

AY: *Yes we used to have Elders coming out on Fridays and the funding got cut and the program morphed and moved out of the building. The Elders Lounge's primary purpose is to visit with Elders. Are there particular Elders you would like to see?*

LB: Somebody acceptable and available to the community, I think that having a male and a female Elder would be a really good idea.

In my study, there were several major findings, one is that most students when they came to the Native Training institute hadn't finished college but many went on to finish college. The institute had amazing transformative powers and I was trying to see what it was that made it transformative and how they activate the potentiality of the students. One of the things I found was that in every area of the medicine wheel the mental, the emotional, the spiritual, the physical as well as the volitional, the will in the center of the wheel, the will there was two things that were happening: one was learning and one was healing.

Every student needed healing in at least one of those realms and in fact most students needed healing in all of them because of past educational experiences. So there was a process happening you could call healing and learning. The students made it real clear the process of education is painful. First of all they came into the institute already carrying a lot of pain from their life experiences. Some of those experiences were from residential schools and some were public schools. There was a lot of pain that had come to those experiences that requires that healing be part of the learning process.

For any child that enters a school in Canada today that is a Native or mixed blood person the very process of learning is painful. The absence of Aboriginal knowledge in the curriculum is painful, the absence of Aboriginal values in the school system is painful and the presence of racism is painful. These are all the things that inflict pain on our children when they are going to school.

I believe my own children have experienced this, my nieces and nephews have experienced this. What contributed to transformation and healing that allowed people to go on and become much more educated than they ever thought that they would be? Several PhDs came out of the Institute. Leadership developed and people moved to leadership. This is a good point for leadership, that people will rise to leadership when they think that's what they need to do. When people heal their hurt and get their hurts out of the way, they will naturally rise to leadership and service of some kind because human beings are basically intelligent and loving when the hurt is not present.

That is to say that I believe that all human beings are basically caring and will care for each other as a form of service which eventually becomes leadership if they are free of pain and hurt. Another major finding of the study was that the holistic nature of the curriculum was very important. In fact it was mentioned four times as much as anything else as being really beneficial to the students. The second most often mentioned thing was the fact that there was an emotional component to the classroom education.

Four women that founded the institute: Marie Anderson, Marilyn Napoleon, Norma Manual and Elaine Hebert realized that there had to be something more than just a mental education; they realized that mental or cognitive education alone will not succeed. Education as we had experienced it was not working for the Aboriginal community. The communities that they were working in, they wanted to develop human service workers who would be of service in the community. The Institute was an educational opportunity for people who were already in the service worker field. So they embraced the holistic approach, they came across the medicine wheel through the four worlds program and the concept of holistic education. They really did embrace that and emotional, spiritual and cultural education was a part of the holistic approach.

In my research study I was particularly interested in finding out what emotional components worked in the education program. I already had the concept of affective competency at the start of my research but it developed through the study into six principles that are essential for the emotional development of the student. Let me see if I can remember all six.

The first one that came out of the research was that it was really important that people be able to identify their emotions. To know what they are feeling. Many people don't know that, people have a very limited range of emotional understanding and identification. Secondly, it's really important that people learn how to communicate emotions and that they need to develop emotional literacy and emotional vocabulary. Third, we need to be able to understand the process of emotional feedback and the various emotional processes such as empathy and what those processes tell us when we are feeling an emotion. Students need to know that emotion tells us about our situation, about our movement towards our potential or assists us to achievement our goals. Students can learn how emotion relates to achievement and to the realization of potentiality and to leadership. And fourth we need to be able to develop some

emotional skills, emotional management, to have the ability to change from one emotion state to another. For me in my personal life I've learned most of those emotional skills through ceremony.

I use ceremonial process, such as smudging, to change my emotional state if I need to and to once and awhile change to a better emotional state, a more loving and kind state, I never feel as connected as loving and kind as I do after a sweat; that's the best feeling that I usually have and so we can view the sweat as an emotional tool. We have the ability to identify our emotions the ability to communicate our emotions the ability to communicate emotions the ability to understand the feedback on the emotions that we need to manage our emotions and the fifth emotional principle is to understand the process by which emotions become values to understand the ways in which emotions are structured as values and that values are structured as identity and that within identity is the motivation for learning. We now have a multicultural society with a mono-aculturated, mono-valued school system. I think that all people's values should be taught. People should learn something about the values of all people around the world when they go to school. To understand how values are different.

I had a long debate with a student yesterday for which the value differences were really obvious and it's unfortunate that there has not been more education that helps to people to understand their own values. Just to be aware of what their values are, most people functioning in the dominant society do not understand their values they don't have to and oppressed people have to be aware of the values of the oppressors. The oppressor does not have to be aware of their own values or the values of the oppressed because of the power relations that are involved in that equation.

And the sixth and final emotional principle that arose from the study was that there needs to be a way of healing ourselves, a system of emotional healing in the school systems. Because emotional hurt arises in the classroom all the time and at the Native Training Institute this was done in a number of ways. First of all by the teaching of counselling skills, people became peer counsellors they learned peer counselling and a form of counselling called co-counselling and counselling techniques.

Secondly through ceremony, ceremonial ways were used to change from one emotional state to another. And another major thing that happened NTI was that emotion was acknowledged, when someone became emotional in the classroom the class would stop and it was dealt with. It was agreed upon that emotions were given as much weight as cognition. Once you take care of the emotional self of the student the rate of learning increase tremendously because the learning energies that come up from the heart and go into the will-the center of the medicine wheel engage the mind in the process of learning much more efficiently when hurt is absent.

Within the will are our processes for learning, the first process is our capacity to pay attention. The second process is the capacity to set goals and third one is the capacity

to achieve these goals and the fourth is to set new goals in relationship to vision and to a high set of ideals. So when that road, called the good red road, between the heart, the will and the mind is cleared and the emotional hurt is ameliorated the emotional energy that is our source of our learning, which in my thesis I call the learning energy, is released and is manifested five, ten, fifteen, twenty or maybe even a hundred times what it was before in a student. Their capacity for learning increases in such a way that they learn so much faster. The time you take to deal with the emotional self in the curriculum process is well worth it.

I started coming to the House of Learning as a result of working at Round Lake Native Healing Centre. I was invited to share with students some of our cultural beliefs and some of the traditional theories of health and healing developed from interaction with the Round Lake Elders. These are now incorporated into the treatment healing process.

These trips lead me to applying for the PhD program. I mentioned to the beloved Elder, Shirley Sterling, that I was thinking about a PhD and she rushed to get the application forms and insisted that I begin the application right on the spot. So that was how I came to engage as a student here and part of that decision was the wondering feeling in the Longhouse as a building and in the Longhouse community of people that work and participate in functions here.

I am not sure what my role is but one of the major statements that Dr. Graham Smith from New Zealand says is that Indigenous people are change agents. I feel that right now myself and appreciate my place and opportunity within the Department of Curriculum Studies. I feel there is need for a lot of change and a lot of awareness and I see my primary role as that change through writing and probably some teaching.

I am really excited this semester teaching Theories of Knowing and I am excited with the students I have and where they are taking the theories of decolonization and change in their own work. They have used the emotional competency theory that arises from my thesis and have applied it to their work. It is exciting actually to play a small role in raising their awareness bringing not only some culture in the classroom but a complete total change in the way that we are educating people, moving from a cognitive to a holistic approach. My big interest is of course the emotional area, but the approach itself has to be holistic and that is a huge change for people who have been totally focused on the cognitive all their lives. When students experience a holistic teaching style that addresses and communicates with their mind, hearts, physicality and spirit their entire beings come alive. The educational experience activates their entire being and for many of my students that is the first time they have experienced holistic learning and it becomes a transforming experience in their own process of becoming their gift.

There have been many outstanding events for me at the First Nations House of Learning (FNHL). I really have appreciated the sense of community here at the House of Learning,

the ceremonies that are here, singing with the group, being included with the Longhouse ceremonial processes and being included as a singer and being acknowledged. But the biggest event was my PhD defence. I was really happy to have the Longhouse as an Indigenous setting for the defence. I think it made a huge difference. As a matter of fact, I was discussing this with a number of people who have done their defences both in and out of the Longhouse. And we said that we feel that as soon as the non-Indigenous professors and people on the committees reviewing the work enter the Longhouse a totally different attitude arises than they have if the person is defending across the road, in basically their territory.

So one of the consensuses we reached was that there was a lot more respect when Indigenous work is presented in Indigenous setting. It seems there is a lot more respect and the attitude towards the work seems to be different, the Indigeneity of the work is acknowledged more. Not that our work should not stand up anywhere or be acceptable anyplace. If it is great work it is great work anywhere, but my defence was the biggest thing that happened here at the Longhouse was outstanding for me.

I really enjoyed the FNHL graduation, some of my children came to the graduation dinner and that was a really nice way to acknowledge the work. The dinner and reception here at the Longhouse after the graduation ceremony at the Chan centre, that helped me to demonstrate education leadership to my children and community.

AY: *So the student services here in the Longhouse community has a holistic approach to their programming. Could you comment on how the holistic approach has influenced you or may have assisted your leadership development? Round Lake's philosophy is culture is treatment and sounds like you transferred that work to culture also informs educational leadership as well.*

LB: I have been here for three or four years now. The Longhouse is really made a huge difference in my educational process and the services that are here have really helped me tremendously. In my case the process might have been a very lonely miserable academic experience if it hadn't been for the Longhouse. And some of the things that really helped were having people who were of assistance in acquiring funds that was one thing that helped.

Having ceremonies here, attending the Leadership program and listening to other Aboriginal people who have risen to leadership positions in various ways of life. The story that most affected me or that I remember the most is the story of Shane Pointe and how he went through training, I thought it was a very moving story about how he became a leader in his cultural setting. The Xwi 7Xwa library services were huge and Ann Doyle the Head Librarian was a tremendous help with her extensive knowledge of research topics.

The FNHL librarians helped me with my research; they helped me complete two months of work in about a week saving a lot of time. Having the library where Aboriginal resources are concentrated and to be able to walk up and down isles where the bookshelves are full of books; that help was huge.

Another helpful thing for me at the Longhouse was the food. I had a lot of meals here and it was really neat to eat with other people and to have the food shared at the student services lounge. Especially the computer lab; I typed over half my thesis in the Longhouse, it was nice to be able to go back and forth from my room to the Longhouse and have a change of scene and move around a bit. So I think the services at the Longhouse were huge and I think that they did help over every aspect of my life while I was here.

I think about the Elders growing up had a huge impact on that in the process of becoming a helper and I see that the people that work in Education Studies at UBC, Dr. Jo-ann Archibald and Dr. Michael Marker, are helpers as well. I see them really as being helpers that try to bring about something good and bring about significant change in Indigenizing and transforming the university. They have been very helpful since I have been here. I appreciate the fact that the FNHL leadership leads in supporting ways, in terms of supporting the people around them. Dr. Eduardo Jovel, Dr. Richard Vedan and Dr. Graham Smith all helped with the writing of my thesis; they all seemed to come at the right time when I was having difficulties. I don't really see myself as a leader.

My initiation process into the cultural life and ceremony was the illnesses and difficulties I had as a child between the ages of five and twelve. From twelve to fifteen I was fairly ill and mostly bed ridden and then from age fifteen to eighteen somewhere in there I was in recovery. I started getting involved with healing in ceremonies and in the processes of becoming a singer as a way of healing and helping myself. I eventually attempted to extend some of that help to others and this has led me into a life of service to others by trying to be a helper, at Round Lake for instance. I see being a singer as a way of life and as being a helper: you know it's a good way to support ceremonial process without really being front and centre which I don't like to be.

In addition to those influences, there have been a lot of dreams, a lot of guidance in dreams. One of my major teachers has been in the dream world. For about twenty seven years I had a dream series with a Tibetan Elder named HE Dezhung Rinpoche III who I eventually met in real life in Seattle, Washington. I sort of see myself as having been blessed by knowing many great Elders who took me into their lives and shared knowledge with me. Their kindness in this regard is almost beyond perception and it is an act of generosity that I appreciate deeply.

I had two Elders who were my singing teachers and then I had one main teacher who was my sweathouse teacher and he had two helpers that I also consider teachers. Then

there was the Tibetan man in the dreams. The man that was my sweathouse teacher, from Pullyup tribe in Washington, he taught me how to do the sweat and he taught me how to present the pipe to the directions in a way that can reach into that which is beyond this and he had had two teachers himself.

I saw the respect he had for his teachers; even as an older man he was learning from one man from Rosebud South Dakota and another man from a Six Nations reserve New York State. Those seem to me to be his two primary teachers, teaching him both the Lakota and Iroquois ceremonies. So I learned because I was often there when he was being instructed. So I picked up some teachings from his teachers as well. So the formal process of having a teacher is very important for one's spiritual deepening; you know there is that formalized kind of relationship of teacher and student that opens the door, through protocol, to deep learning through time. And that learning continues for me today, because Elders often teach with stories that are not fully understood by the student at the time. Still today those stores echo in my being and occasionally there is a new teaching that arises in my life from the words shared many years ago.

I learned how to do ceremonies, I think in a very good way that has blessed me with a more healthy life than I might have had. I learned how to sing and I hope I learned how to do it in a way that is one of being a helper to the people. I taught my children how to do the sweat. I taught them quite a bit about the pipe and I hope that each of them become pipe keepers. The children were in ceremonies all the time they were growing up starting in the womb. My daughter has Sundanced and the other daughters have all been to the Sundance and in the sweat. They all like saying prayers and are really comfortable saying prayers together with me which is a really good thing, so quite a bit of it was passed on.

I am aware that some of it wasn't passed on but then each person gets their own teachings and I know that they have other teachers besides myself, so they are all good dancers, they are in the powwow. They all got their Indian names at the Kamloopa powwow and they all had giveaways. They all received Indian names there from their great grandparents who gave them their names.

The main ceremony I am now involved in is the sweat. I'm going to a few sweats now and then. I would say it is the only one I am actively doing now for me but it is very important because it gives me a chance to relieve stress, to refocus and most importantly, to reconnect.

I remember one of the Elders one day pulling out some grass and throwing it into the wind and saying that is how the people are becoming and that is seems like how his words are coming true that a lot of people are just like grass blowing in the wind. They don't have a teaching or any kind of way they are following that connect them to the environments around them; the physical, social, spiritual and learning environments.

I think though, that even in the urban areas many people are finding teachers and reconnecting to those ways of learning and being for themselves. I believe people will find their way but if they have teachings and a teacher they have more guidance which is always helpful. It's a question of what a person has to work with to make a good life for themselves and their family. To me the teachings are about having a good life; if you have good teachings they can help support you in those times when you need them. Good teachings can help you have a clear mind and a caring heart and that will eventually manifest into a healthy life.

I think the ceremonies and teachings helped me to become centered and connected. I think they helped me achieve a certain amount of balance and harmony and hopefully connectedness with others and caring about others as well as with myself. I think that for many years they helped me have a very good family life. They created some really good strong and enduring relationships with other men and women in my life that helped me to develop an adopted extended family that has been very supportive and meaningful. The teachings bring meaning and meaning brings health, as meaninglessness brings sickness.

I think that from these teachings in general we can learn to have a holistic approach that will develop balance in our life. We have to have teachings that address all four parts of ourselves rather than focusing on just the mental or just focusing on technology or acquisition of material things there is a lot more to life than that.

As I get older the thing that is standing out is, especially now that I am in the city, is that the teachings have to be practiced on a regular schedule. Everyone needs to have some kind of discipline and devote time when these things are being done on a regular basis. I think that our spirit needs something each and every day. We have to have things that we practice and things we actually do because if you just have the teachings but you don't actually practice them, your spirit can become weak. It is good to have the teachings but to really get the most out of them you have to be using them, you have to be living them and practising them.

I don't really try to practice ceremonies in the classes I teach. I try to introduce people to the concepts and what they do is up to them. I try to broaden their vision to include these teachings. One of the students who is non-native told me the other day the class had made profound changes in his life and everything had shifted for him. So in the classes I am trying to share some of the knowledge in a way that will be respectful for all the students in the class and at the same time give them something to think about that will enable them to look at education more holistically. As Dr. Graham Smith has said to try to alter perceptions is to be a change maker.

Instilling a holistic vision of self is extremely important because once the vision is embraced by the student it becomes the motivator in the present that impels them to move towards their future by embracing their highest potential in their own process of

becoming in a good and healthy way. If the vision becomes holistic rather than focusing on just a small part of the medicine wheel, the person will begin moving and learning holistically. In the movement toward their vision, they will begin developing a broader more whole part of themselves, a greater degree of themselves than if they have the very limited vision that it is just about a degree and a job and that is solely a cognitive process.

I had my first vision quest in 1971; I have fasted many years since then, not every year though. But I don't think I ever had any kind of great vision but what usually happened for me was I usually got an assignment. I used to call an assignment for the year. During that time of sitting on the mountain, the assignment usually came as a short statement that I usually heard in the voice of my grandfather, something usually brief, it might just be one word or it might be one or two sentences that would give me something that I was going to be working on in that coming year. So there were different topics and different things that I worked on that were aspects of developing myself and my personality.

If you stop eating and drinking water it will cause you to turn away from the world and eventually you do turn within. If you go without food and water long enough something will happen. Spirit never yells, it always whispers.

To attain sovereign nationhood and self-government you have to have the right to government and the development of self. So education is about the development of the self both in the non-traditional and traditional sense. We need to develop people with a strong sense of self and who have a lot of discipline and are able to conduct themselves in a good way to have a good government. You can have all the rights to government in the world if you have people who have not developed themselves or who are not holistic and unhealthy you end up with not holistic and unhealthy government, which is what I think the dominant government in the country is.

In terms of the class room I was really lucky to have worked in the Native Training Institute (NTI) and the four Aboriginal women that developed the Native training institute, Marie Anderson, Elaine Hebert, Marilyn Napoleon and Norma Manual. These four women put together a holistic educational process. There was a conscious effort to have a curriculum that had a cognitive component, people were acquiring knowledge but at the same time there was a physical component where students learned about being healthy. What is healthy food and what is wrong with junk food, what is wrong with sugar, what you can drink besides coffee that is healthier for you. At the same time the students did things, exercised and learned the traditional teachings of the body so that they had respect for their physical self. So there was a physical component, there was a spiritual component; people were encouraged to investigate their spirituality. Many of the students at the NTI said that was a totally new concept to them. They had went to schools all their lives where native spirituality and native culture was put down and to be in a place where it was encouraged and even sometimes a pipe ceremony was

done or people were encouraged to seek out their own Elders and their own cultural and spiritual teachings.

And at the same time to be in a classroom where Indigenous emotion was respected and when people's emotions came up the class was stopped and emotions were processed; talking circles were done and at the same time in the cognitive sense counselling principles were taught. People learned how to become counsellors, peer counsellors. They learned something counselling principles, they learned something about dealing with the emotions traditionally and they learned that it was okay to feel. One of the students I interviewed said that he had been stuffing his emotions all his life and to be in a place where he could talk about his feeling or just to see another Indigenous person, let their feeling out without shame or embarrassment and be willing to release feelings in a classroom was extremely important in his healing learning.

One of the major things I learned in studying for the PhD is that the essence of colonialism is the denial of feeling and I found lots of statements and quotes by colonizers that said exactly that. I found evidence in the document that started the residential schools that a major component of residential school was to eliminate Indigenous emotion. I believe that most of the Indigenous students that leave school in British Columbia, the sixty percent of the students that leave school leave because of an emotional issue. You know I remember and I was talking to someone yesterday about what liberating, absolute totally liberating thing it was to be involved in at least one of the major race riots that occurred in United States in 1960's. I thought it was the most wonderful thing.

People look at it now and say there was a lot violence, people were burning things down, people were yelling and shouting in the streets, busting windows, fighting the police and all those kind of things. I thought it was the most exhilarating feeling to see a massive release of emotion. Not that emotion always has to be violent or destructive; Indigenous emotion can come into the classroom as a very positive feeling that supports the learning process. Usually when I talk about Indigenous emotion the first thing people think about is anger because Indigenous anger is the most feared thing in Canada. Anytime Indigenous anger comes up if it is on the street native people go to jail, if it is in the classroom they get kicked out of school, if it's at work they get fired from a job, I see it over and over again. Indigenous anger is feared; as soon as it comes up there's an immediate and powerful response to suppress it. But anger is not the only emotion that we have, it is one of hundreds, but it is certainly one that needs to be dealt with.

I spoke with 900 teachers last week in Saskatoon and there was not one who disagreed with me and that surprised me. Every teacher I talked to after my talk agreed with what I had said about the need to develop emotional competency in the classroom. I basically said that if native students get angry in a school – in Saskatchewan the dropout rate is 95 percent – and if the native student gets angry, that anger should be welcomed

because that anger is an attempt at healing from colonialism. So not only should it be welcomed, it should be appreciated; it should be supported and encouraged.

I was talking with Eber Hampton and he was talking about the anger and the fear and the pain that existed in Aboriginal students and I said yeah but underneath all that is caring and loving. Beneath the anger and hate we are all naturally loving and caring human beings. We have to get that stuff out of the way to support the learning process. Healing needs to happen with the negative emotion. Abdu'l-Bahá said that to be angry at an injustice is a virtue. There has been a lot of injustice and some of our anger is virtuous anger that should be there. It should not be put down it should be welcomed in a way that it is educated and directed into positive achievements.

In the classroom a child should not be kicked out of the classroom, teachers should know how to educate anger in a process that develops emotional competency. Unfortunately most teachers have not dealt with enough of their own anger to be able to deal with the anger of others because you have to be aware of yourself emotionally before you can create emotionally competent students. I think we need schools where the curriculum is balanced. I think Indigenous people, Canadians, and Indigenous peoples around the world have a vision of that and have held to that vision. To me that is a big part of the major shift that Dr. Graham Smith talks about that needs to occur.

One of the ways I would justify cultural ceremonies in education leadership is that people are going to be working as teachers and educators with cultural students in cultural communities. I gave a half hour talk in a class of education students that are graduating with a teaching degree last spring. Many of the students in the class said it was the only information they had received about First Nations students in five years of college which I thought was terrible because many are going to be teaching native students. They need that cultural understanding.

Right now in Canada we are trying to develop a multicultural society with a monocultural school system. We need a multicultural school system. Teachers need to be aware of not only Indigenous cultures but all other cultures in the world. We need to make the school system a place where all cultures are respected and the values of all students are respected. School systems where the values that the students have are used to promote their own learning rather than being forced to adopt a completely different set of values which is what happens now. Everybody that goes into the system has to adopt Western system of values of individualistic competition rather than a tribal awareness of cooperation and having a more harmonious way of doing things. We all have to adopt the Western world's way of competitive education.

So I think the cultural and value atmosphere of schools should be more receptive to Aboriginal values. I just read, as a matter of fact, just two days ago in Goleman's latest book on emotional intelligence where he was talking about the workplace in business and stated that 80 percent of what makes a successful businessman is their emotional

competency and only 20 percent is the cognitive competency. School systems have produced students that have a very high cognitive competency but are not successful because they don't have the emotional skills to be successful. And those emotional skills exist in the culture. They don't exist in the cognitive curriculum that most of us have learned from, they exist more so in Indigenous cultures that have that feeling of caring and sharing for each other. It would benefit all students, native and non-native, if the culture is in the school.

I believe to not teach the fundamentals of each religion in the schools, creates and promotes the division and the violence we have around religion in the world. For instance in Vernon where my kids went to school I asked them when they graduated from high school what they had learned about the Sikh religion because there is a fairly large Sikh population in Vernon. They had not learned hardly anything. They didn't know the major holidays, didn't know what the religion was about, didn't know how the religion was formed.

I think for a student to go to school for twelve years where there is a significant population of any kind of people and not learn about them just replicates the constructed ignorance. One of the first things teachers say to me when I do teacher trainings is: I have forty kids in the classroom and they represent twenty different cultures, how can we teach them all? Well, what we are doing now is taking those students from twenty different cultures and forcing them all to learn one culture and that is absurd. Not only is it absurd but it reduces the students ability to learn. So when teachers ask me I say, yes, all twenty cultures should be in the classroom. These cultures are resources, not problems. Teachers see them as problems now rather than resources.

I don't think there should be one specific course that should be separate; I think it should be part of the study of the history of Canada. I think it should be part of literature classes. I think it should be part of English classes and even mathematics. People should learn about mathematical systems different cultures around the world have had, including native mathematics. I think if there was even a small amount of native mathematics in the curriculum native students would be doing a lot better at math. People have different math systems; they have different mathematical understandings of the world. So I think rather than have a separate class studying the native culture it should be integrated into the curriculum; everyone would benefit. Right now with my children, they got three months on Native people in third grade and then they have the option of taking First Nation 12 in twelfth grade and that is the Aboriginal content. I think there should be Aboriginal content in every class. There is nothing you can teach that native people don't have an aspect of in our culture so it should be there, represented in the curriculum. Because it's the history of this land but also because it will promote learning of all students. It will begin to break down the social constructs and the kind of racism we have in communities. I also think Chinese culture should be there and Japanese and all the other cultures should be there because it will promote

learning for all students. More than just the cultures it is important that students are able to express their own values; I think we need to make a huge effort to understand what Indigenous values are and make a way for Indigenous students in classrooms in British Columbia to learn as an expression of their own values and not have to adopt other values. That would be a huge shift.

AY: *It sounds like for the leadership program because there are different notions of what leaders are, people say there are political leaders and cultural leaders those are two aspects, like mainstream and traditional. Is there anything missing in the leadership program as we give an overview of leadership styles and communication skill, respectful research, political overview of the Canadian political context and Traditional approaches as well as stories? Are there particular stories you would like to see?*

LB: I like all kinds of Elders' stories; the more stories the better. I am just sitting here thinking: I wonder what emotional leadership would look like? You have political leadership, you have cultural leadership, we had the men's wellness group and I thought that was really successful. What would the cultural, spiritual, cognitive, political, and emotional leadership look like? It would be nice to have some official Elders in the Longhouse; to have more of an Elders presence and a greater connection with the Musqueam Elders and the local lands throughout the university.

AY: *Chi Migwetch Hyska O'Siem. Thank you and you are welcome.*