

# **Transcript for The Empty Chair: From Anti-Racist Intention to Action in B.C.'s Post-secondary System – Session 1**

**BCcampus event held on March 31, 2022**

**Presenter: Jennifer Anaquod**

**Introduction by Valerie Cross**

VALERIE:

Ne:w q̓ə and mi ce:p kwətxwiləm. Hello and I welcome you to The Empty Chair: From Anti-Racist Intention to Action in the BC Post-Secondary System. hay ce:p q̓ə, I thank each and every one of you for taking the time out of your busy schedules to attend today's webinar. Valerie Cross (in hən̓q̓əmi̓həm̓ language) Tsawwassen. My name is Valerie Cross and I am from Tswwassen. My ancestral name is Chemkwaat. My grandfather Isaac Williams, Texwilem, was Tsawwassen and his mother Elizabeth Point was sister to James and John Point who were Musqueam, connecting me to with my Musqueam relatives . My grandmother, Pearl, her family was from Squamish, and I carry my great, great grandmother's Squamish name Chemkwaat. Her father was chief Khatsalanough. And that connects me to my Squamish family. I am really grateful and happy to be welcoming you today from my nation's traditional territory, who we share with the Cowichan tribe. Hwitsum, Katzie, Masquem, Sto:lo, Tsleil-Waututh and Semiahmoo nations. I like to call myself the chief collaborator at BCcampus. But my official title is the director of collaborative projects and indigenous engagement. And I'm truly honored here to be welcoming you today. It's another beautiful day on mother earth and my heart is just full of gratitude for today's webinar and for the opportunity to be here. We are all on our own learning and growing journeys. And as we learn more about our behaviors, and the sector's behaviors, we become more aware. And once we are aware, and once we know our good intentions alone are no longer good enough. We must transform our intentions into actions, to create meaningful change, to create antiracist and inclusive on and off campus environments. Today's webinar has created the space for joining three amazing individuals, we explore the ways in which BC post secondary sector can move from well meaning equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives and anti racist statements towards concrete, transparent and measurable actions that result in equitable outcomes for all. Today, we can take some time to pause, observe, reflect and explore ways to bridge the gap between equitable intentions and equitable actions in our post secondary systems. We are proud to be hosting this webinar on the international trans day of visibility. A day dedicated to celebrating trans people, and raising awareness and bringing positive visibility to the lives of trans gender diverse and to spirit individuals. I now would like to invite you to join this webinar. And here are three exceptional guest speakers for today's empty chair session. Jennifer Anaquod, a curriculum developer and consultant for Indigenous education and virtual learning who will speak about the importance of relationships and safe spaces to unpack what we think we know about indigenization and anti racism work. Harshita Sandhu, a strategy policy and program analyst at title equity, who will lead the discussion about inequity challenges within the post secondary sector, and how honing on collective wisdom and collected co intelligence can help us find tangible ways to solve it. And Olaolu Adeleye, a learning and teaching advisor at BCcampus who help us answer the question, how do we move the academic process and discussion about anti racism within

the post secondary institutions in BC from debate to deliverables. This is going to be an exciting journey of learning, listening and reflecting. And let's remember on this journey today, to be part of the safe space by being kind and respectful. I hope at the end of the webinar, you are inspired and have new tools to add to your journey towards the work of an inclusive, accessible and decolonized future for higher education in BC. Thank you for the honour of letting me start your session off in a good way. Jennifer Anaquod will be coming up shortly to begin her presentation. I want to thank you again for joining us today and hay čx<sup>w</sup> q̄ə for listening. and ?e sweyal.. Good day.

JENNIFER:

Good morning, everybody. (Traditional Greeting) Jennifer Anaquod. (Traditional Land Acknowledgement.) Good morning, everyone. My name is Jennifer Anaquod. And I am Anishnaabe. And Sioux from treaty four territory and Saskatchewan from a community called Muscowpetung. And I have grown up here as a guest on Coast Salish territory. So, I'm really excited and happy to be here today. I am coming to you from the unceded traditional territory of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh people. And I would like to start by spending some time locating myself and really introducing myself in a good way. How can we go to my next slide, please. So, I am the granddaughter of Great Eagle, Tom Aniquod and Sophie McDonald, these are my grandparents here. And they are both residential school survivors. I am here in the work that I do because of them. I'm the daughter of Sandra Anaquod. And I was really blessed to be able to grow up with my family and to be kept in my family. My journey and education starts long before I could walk and talk. My grandfather was a native court worker and took me with him to work on a regular basis. So, I spent a lot of time beside him watching him do the good work that he did. But, like many did not have indigenous people who did not have a good experience through education. And I returned to education as an adult, and have have really spent a lot of time thinking about what this means since then. So I'm excited to be here today. And I'm excited to share a little bit of my story. I'll share a little bit about my thoughts and my experiences in Indigenous education, and working with institutions, and hopefully create some good dialogue on what this means. So, I'd like to start with a story. So, when I was nine years old, my Kookum, this picture was teaching me, was going to teach me how to make bannock. And this was really exciting. As survivors of residential school, they didn't necessarily, my Kokoum didn't necessarily parent us or spend time with us. Because she didn't really know. So, we didn't spend a lot of one on one time with her. So, this time, this invitation to come into her kitchen and cook bannock with her was really exciting. And I remember that day I was so excited. I remember standing in the kitchen, I remember the smells, I remember the sounds. And the first thing she said to me was Jenny, I'm not going to give you my recipe. And in that moment, my my heart socket broke, I thought, How am I supposed to make bannock? I don't have a recipe. What are we even doing here? I really wanted to go home and be able to make bannock for for my family. So, she she continued on and she got out the you know, all of the things that she needed the foals that we always saw that excited us when they were getting bannock. And she said, I'm not going to tell you my recipe because it's not going to matter. You're going to learn your own recipe over time, you're going to learn from what people tell you how to, you know, make your bread softer, needs your bread more, people tell you more sugar, more flour, whatever those things that go along with it. Those are the things that will matter, that feedback that other people give you. So, it's important to listen. And then she still told me that it would never be the recipe that mattered, because people would remember my recipe. What they would remember was the stories that were created in that moment, that learning that took place

together, that shared experience. And that's what people would take away. At nine years old this meant nothing to me. I was disappointed, I wanted that recipe, I wanted that piece of paper to take home with me that told me what to do. And she was right. So, over the years, I learned how to make bread. And I took that feedback from people seriously. You never want to be the person at an event that has heart panic or so you listen to that, and you take it to heart, and you change your recipe. And sometimes that feedback hurt, you spend a lot of time and effort. But I learned to listen. And I learned to appreciate what people were telling me. But I didn't think about that story for a long time. It's when I thought about my Kookum and making bannock, I honestly thought about the disappointment. In that moment of not learning her recipe, I carried that with me, and thinking, oh, I never learned how I didn't have this recipe on how to do it. Even though through my own practice, my own learning and my own lesson, listening, I figured this out. And it was in my master's degree that the story came back to me. And it came back to me in that moment of thinking about the connection of people, the importance of story. And that was really what we were doing an education, we were trying to connect, we were connecting through story, we're connecting through mutual experiences of have safe places where we could give feedback and it would be listened to. And more recently, I realized what I wanted was a checklist. I wanted a checklist to be able to go home and say, I don't want to do this hard work, I just want your recipe so that I can go home and do this without thinking about it. So, this has really guided me in my work, this is really brought me to where I am today. So, I hope that as we go through my presentation today it raises questions for you, it raises moments of reflection to your own stories. And overall, I really hope I don't answer all your questions. My auntie tells me frequently, that if I think I know it all, or I think I know the answers, I better go back and check again because I most assuredly don't, and that there's more work to be done. So, I can't I encourage you to kind of step into a space of unlearning. And to question, what you do know. Go to my next slide, please.

So, what are we doing? If think about these questions for a minute, and what are we doing as institutions to support indigenization? What are we doing personally on our indigenization journey? And what are we doing unlearn? Feel free to throw answers in the chat if you want to share any of those things. But for me, these are really big questions. And they're all apart, we know they're all a part of anti racism, work and EDI. And these things have, we have very similar experiences, very similar discussions. But we really need to think about these questions individually, and know what are we doing? And once we answer the question, what are we doing? We can take a step back and reflect on if we're actually ready to be there. Yeah. So, for me, I find that in the work that I'm doing, when I'm working with faculty, when I'm working with different people, I often, they're able to answer these questions, oh, we have this report, or we have this in place or we have this in place. But often the capacity is not there to engage with that, you know, in a way that that is authentic, that is safe. Many faculty members or people that I'm working with come to me and say there's there's still something missing there. I'm not sure how to connect with these resources. And that's that space where we want to spend some time to unlearn. So, asking ourselves, what are we doing to unlearn? And unlearning is difficult, because it requires us to think about and evaluate what we think we know. What do we think we know that? What education looks like, what teaching looks like? What are we doing in the classroom, that can be unweaved to make space for different ways of knowing. So, these are difficult questions, because on the surface, you know, we list them off. But most of the time, what's happened is, what we list off is a commitment to reconciliation. And I want you to think about that word for a minute, reconciliation. A

commitment to reconciliation means that we've spent some time and created a space where our relationship has grown in a good way, that we have spent some time we're agreeing on outcomes, we're agreeing on ways of being and doing in the classroom or in our institutions, wherever we may be, and that we've agreed on a space of reconciliation. And I can tell you as an indigenous person that works at higher learning institution, that we are not there yet. I am not ready to reconcile with the institution, I'm not ready to reconcile with many of the people that I work with. And that is going to take some work, that is going to take some unlearning, some spaces of discussions, some spaces of renegotiation, but really what it's going to take is returning to the truth. So, I think many of us, in institution work have skipped over the truth. And I know lots of people are doing this hard work. So, please, in no way I'm meaning to offend you. But even for myself, I often find that I have to return to the truth. I have to return to the truth of, what are the stories that need to be heard? What are the stories that have been told? What are those that I'm working with, Indigenous students that I'm working with, indigenous faculty that I'm working with, indigenous communities that I'm working with? What are they telling me? What are they saying they need? And often that means setting aside my own kind of ego and saying, Oh, well, I do this work all the time, I know what you need. Engaging in the truth means re evaluating our own stories, re evaluating our own knowledge, our own place as experts. So, the thing about reconciliation, it does take capacity building, it takes relationship building to get there. So, it is time for us to really dwell in this truth. So, one of the things that, you know, as an indigenous educator, I often have to think about what my own truth is. And my own truth is that most spaces in the institution still don't have space for me. While we are creating great changes, we are creating great, you know, commitments statements that hard work of unpacking and creating safe spaces is not always there. It is a constant push back battle to say, hang on a second, let's step back and, and spend some time in the truth and listening to what is needed. And I struggle with that myself. We can go to my next slide.

So, and if we can drop my lists or drop my links in the chat. I want to share with you some things that I recently learned on a research project that I did. So, I did a research project with JSBC and BC cap and we looked at pathway partnerships between indigenous adult higher learning institutes and BC public post secondary. And I have been part of some of those transfer programs. I've worked in part of those transfer programs.

And, you know, I thought in the beginning that this was, what I was going to learn was what I thought I knew. You know, that there was these were good, we just needed more support from the institutions that, you know, we needed a clearer understanding more money, things like that. What I learned was that what was in place was often failing. And it was often failing because of some really specific things. And that was the lack of relationships, that was the lack of safety, of connection. That was the lack of communication and it was a result of siloed work. So, these different departments within our institutions, all having indigenous agendas, or indigenous protocols for students, policies. But there was no connection, there was no relationships, there was no understanding between all of these different departments that were supporting students. And the people in these departments were feeling siloed, they were feeling like there was nobody to speak to, that they didn't have that safe space to unpack what they needed to unpack, to ask questions that they needed to. That they weren't able to ask the questions that they needed to ask of each other, and that they needed space to create relationships. So, each one of these participants worked in an institution that had a number of indigenous programming, the indigenous focus programming, and indigenous students support all of these different areas. But the

consensus was, there was no relationship building, there was no space to create that relationships. And when they did find the time to nurture those relationships, people moved on, and there was no space to rebuild them. And that information was lost. And this really spoke to me, because I'm part of this, I'm out there, and I'm working in these partnerships, and really thinking about, you know, how am I working to create relationships? And what are the barriers to relationships? And that's often time and safe space. So, how do we create these safe spaces? And what do we do to create these safe spaces? So, for me, I've really incorporated the four R's of respect, responsibility, relevance and reciprocity in all the work that I do, and I really send to this around relationship. And those are the four R's of that I've learned from Dr. Jo-ann Archibald. So, I try to think about these in in that idea of creating safe spaces. Sorry, I was just looking at the chat. And how do we create that? So, in some of the consulting work I do, I hold a drop in space called kitchen table talks. And kitchen table talks or a variation of kitchen table talks. kitchen table talks, comes from some work done by a meaty academic, around kitchen table talks, but really comes from this idea of what I've learned from my aunties, from being around the table, from being held accountable at the kitchen table. What is the work that I'm doing? What am I How am I doing it? Am I doing it in a good way? What are the questions that I have that I can safely ask at kitchen table talks. And that's what I hope to do in these spaces, is to create a safe space for colleagues from all different areas to come together to talk about those questions that maybe are lingering on for them. Those questions that weigh heavily on us that we don't have anybody to ask. My mom used to tell me the racist you know is better than the racist you don't. And by no means am I saying that racists are coming to the table and having this conversation. But we know that systemic racism is weaved into our education. For all of us that are here, we went through an education system that taught us how to be an expert in our field, that was laden with systemic racism, it was built on untruths. It was built on all of these things that we are now responsible for unpacking and unlearning. So, kitchen table talks is supposed to be a safe space for people to come together and ask questions, to ask those questions that we don't have anybody else to ask. And it also provides a place for this silos of work that are being done. Because of all of our institutions. There's these silos of work being done. We don't know we don't have anybody to talk to. And if we're feeling unsafe, we don't have that space to ask questions that maybe weigh heavily on us. So, kitchen table talks, brings up questions and possibilities to share things like, I'm really uncomfortable doing this because I'm not an expert. Or I don't want to get things wrong, because you know, I want to do this in a good way. And it allows us to start to look at things that are important, it allows us to start unpacking those big questions. So, I see two main ideas or two main focuses, come back over and over again. And the first one is, I don't know how to do this, within the institution's parameters. I don't know how to do this in a good way. When I have things like outcomes to make, I have things like reporting to do, I have things like all of these things that come up with working in the institution. And the second thing that comes up is fear and uncomfortableness. It is hard work to unpack our own stories, it is hard work to say, I don't know, as leaders, as educators, if so we're working in post secondary Institute's, we've been taught that we have to know. That is our job, we are there because we are, you know, the best in our field. So, to say, I don't know, becomes really uncomfortable, and challenging. Can we go to my next slide.

So, I like to dwell in the in between. I'm going to talk a little bit about this specific in between, but for me, I realized this as I was on my journey of curriculum learning in my master's degree, and I came across Ted Aoki. And some of you may know, Ted Aoki, he's a curriculum, Guru expert, whatever you want to

call. And he talks about Miss O, who lives in the between the curriculum is lived in the curriculum is planned. And it lives in that errant and for me, it didn't put a light bulb went on, and it didn't go on because of the curriculum is lived in curriculum plans. Although that's also important, it went on because I realized that's what I have to do as an indigenous person. I have to live in the in between and sometimes is very uncomfortable between embracing my indigeneity and my Indigenous ways of knowing and what school education wherever I am expect of me. So, there's this celebration of, oh, yes, we want Indigenous students or we want Indigenous learners or we want indigenous faculty.

But we have to leave that behind to do this, or you have to leave that behind to do that. So, at first living in that, in between was really difficult for me because I felt pulled in both directions, while I don't want to leave my indigeneity before. And in my writing, in my research that I do I dwell in the in between. I dwell in the in between, in a virtual space of discussion with Coyote who's become a friend of mine. And I've learned so much in that space. So, I've learned to embrace this in between. This uncomfortableness. The need to unpack the uncomfortableness, why do I feel uncomfortable? Because there's still not a place, because there's still pushback. Or why am I starting to feel more comfortable in the in between, because these spaces are opening up. Because during things like kitchen table talks, I'm able to have those conversations that unpack really difficult questions, and unpack things like, well, we have these resources, but we don't know what to do with them. How do I use them?

Or to ask people to cycle back to what am I doing with these resources? Because often, the first thing that I hear is, oh, we'd like a resource for this. And then he said, Well, you know, how are you going to use that. And it comes back to that, you know, to that idea of, we're just going to add it on here, we're just going to do this because of institutional expectations. So, there's this space and tension in between institutional expectations and engaging with Indigenous ways of knowing. And I don't, there is no way of saying that this is going to be comfortable, that if you dwell in this in between, that things are going to be fixed. What I hope happens is that uncomfortableness, that this uncomfortableness moves us forward into a way that we can make space. This uncomfortableness drives us to find safe spaces to unpack our questions. And dwelling in the in between helps us look at ways of weaving, what we're doing with Indigenous ways of knowing indigenization along with the institutional expectations, as opposed to looking at Indigenous ways of knowing as an add on. So, we really want to dwell in that space that overlap space. So, by add on, we mean things like having a resource that we slap into what we're doing and saying, OK, I'm good, I've added this, I often refer to it as a dream catcher assignment. And that comes from my K to 12, kind of educational background, where often we see instructors adding on a dream catcher and saying, OK, I'm good. But we want to look at how could we weave that through in a meaningful way. What are the stories that go with the dream catcher? What are the importance of it? What are the misappropriations? With things like that. What questions do I ask to understand how to do this in a good way. So, it requires us to have really difficult conversations together of how to balance, how to deal with outcomes for reporting, etc, in a good way. Thank you for sharing that. Yeah. And in thinking about really looking within and unpacking. Where do we have room to be growing? And I think that applies to us all. And I really do that on a regular basis. Having those difficult conversations together, having those difficult conversations for ourselves, that asks ourselves, how do we make space? And the second thing that comes up is the discuss the discussion of discomfort and fear. Can we go to my next slide, please?

So, the discussion of discomfort and fear is one that I used to try to fix for people, people would say I feel really bad or this makes me feel uncomfortable or guilty or, you know, I don't like thinking about it. And now I say Good. Good. I'm glad you feel bad. Not that I want anybody to stay there. But I'm glad you feel discomfort because that means that you're ready to say I recognize this. I recognize that when I think about this topic, when I think about what I'm doing, there's some avoidance, that's a good if we feel our natural kind of response as humans that when we feel uncomfortable, we try to avoid that or we get away with it. We don't really want to dwell in that uncomfortableness, but it's important. We want to sit in those spaces of discomfort. But not by ourselves, we need to seek out and our institutions need to provide spaces for us to safely unpack that discomfort. So, it becomes important to think about this. So, I'm going to ask you, well, what are you doing to return to the truth and then thinking about returning to the truth, is means that we have to unpack that discomfort. But I'm also going to ask you to think about things you're fearful about or feel discomfort and aspects of indigenization. What comes up for you when you think about this? And then secondly, do you have spaces where you can unpack this in a safe place within your workplace? Is there somewhere that you can go to have the safe conversations to unpack? And have you even had a chance to think about unpacking it? I know there is a lot of questions. Feel free to throw some answers in the chat, if you have some answers and thinking about your discomfort or want to share. And then thinking about safe places. Do you have a safe place to engage in these conversations? And not just within your own department, but across your crasher institution. So, what are you doing to return to the truth? And the first thing I would say is understanding that discomfort is good. Understanding that, it is needed. So, can I give you five steps on how to do this? Absolutely not. Much like my Kokum bannock recipe, I hope you spend the rest of your life trying to figure this out, because this is the beautiful part of the journey is trying to figure that out. I asked some really important things. So, that idea of, I've seen or doing something wrong, of abusing her privilege, or the guilt that privilege kind of has. And I say, you know, I often say to acknowledge that, that there is some guilt there. But to understand why. And you know, to make it requires us humbling ourselves, and even saying, you know, I am learning and I hope not to offend anybody, I really want to do this work in a good way. And I'm going to talk a little bit about kind of a takeaway list. But I think those things are really important. And those come up over and over again. And I think having those safe spaces to have those discussions are really important to share that. Well, I am fearful of this. And then, you know, we're able to dig into those conversations and say, Well, why and how do we address that. So, engaging in the journey of finding your own recipe for Bannock. I hope that you have return, well, you can't really help but to return to the truth. You do, however, know that this work can't be done alone. It needs space. It needs comfortable space. It can sit beside and in partnership with the work that you're doing with EDI, with anti racism work that it becomes part of those conversations, but it still needs those discussions on its own. So, I always center myself in the four R's of Dr. Jo-ann Archibald. And that's part of, if you haven't I read story work. It's a book that I highly recommend. And she talks about the four R's of respect. So, thinking about respecting her own journey, respecting that discomfort and unpacking it, hearing what the discomfort the fear is saying to you. What is it saying to you? And I see, for many, it's saying that we don't have a safe place here, and we need to address that. We need to have, it needs to not be off the side of somebody's desk, it needs to not be something that is, you know, just kind of random, but really thought out and careful. We respect the students stories and truth, your colleagues stories in truth, we want to unpack, the our own biases, and the work needs its own space. So, really thinking about the respect. It's called Story work, Dr. Jo-ann Archibald. And then responsibility, so the responsibility of beginning with the truth is ours. We must start with building that capacity within

ourselves to build those relationships. It's the only way to get to reconciliation. And thanks so much, Jonathan. We think about, when I think about reconciliation, I often think about, if you grew up with siblings, or cousins, you know, that fight with you, and then your parents would force you to apologize. But you weren't ready to apologize, we're still like, hey, they still, they haven't changed.

They're still doing whatever they're doing. I had a cousin that was really mean to me growing up, and our parents would force us to apologize. But I always still felt angry, like he hurt me. And he's not taking responsibility for our actions. So, that responsibility, while colonization in contact wasn't our fault. It is our responsibility to repair those relationships, it's our responsibility to create a good relationship, and unpacking our own truth comes with that. And then reciprocity, so we have to share, we have to unpack we have to unlearn we have to be willing to share. We have to be willing to share and creating those spaces and saying, you know, these are some of the things I'm working on. These are what I feel, these are the things that come up for me. Indigenous people have been asked to unlearn since contact, it's time to share that unlearning. It's time to share that discomfort, it's time to share that space of feeling like we're not sure what's going on. And then relevance, is what we're doing relevant?

Let's ask is it needed? Is it valuable? Is it wanted? And that's something I really learned from the project with with JDBC. Is that what we thought we knew, what we thought was wanted, was not actually what was wanted. What was wanted was a space to develop relationships. What was wanted was a space to let the students voice be heard, to have people understand the questions that were being asked. And to have people that were open to shifting and understanding the changing needs as they happened. And I often remember, in relevance, I often remember a story very early in my career that a student shared and that they were doing some volunteer work in another country. And they said they were there to do something. And they said, you know, when we started to talk to the women, they said, We don't want that at all, but we want it streetlights. So, it's safe for us to go out at night and get the things that we need, it's safe for us to go get water. And in that moment that really changed what I thought about relevance. What I think people know, need is not necessarily what they need and that really takes us back to that importance of listening. That importance of, that I learned at nine years old and my Kookums kitchen, that it wouldn't be the recipe that I had in mind that mattered. What would matter was the stories and the feedback listening to the needs of those around me. So, learning is hard. It requires us to be humble, to relinquish the role of expert. And this is hard to do, especially when we spent our whole career working towards being an expert. It requires us acknowledging, we may not know, we may get it wrong. And that's OK. Can we go to my last slide, please.

So, I want to close with just the relocation of myself, I'm definitely not an expert. I am reminded of that everyday. And if I'm not reminded, my auntie does a good job to remind me that I know nothing. And that I'm still learning and that I should be learning my entire life. I have been really blessed and honored with wonderful mentors along the way with those that have worked in this field much longer than me with the work of my grandparents. My grandfather did so much great work. And Indigenous education, even though he didn't know that's what he was doing. So, I am still in learning and pleased with that challenge. Everyday I have to relocate myself and say, what is it important in the work that I'm doing today? And I hope that I never know the answers. So, I want to leave you with a takeaway question. And thinking about how will you get to know your discomfort and I just open, I see all of the chats. And thank you for sharing with me and sharing the resources. That's fantastic. And all of the questions, I see one



that's really important how exploring, how we can correct the mistakes. And I think this is an important thing to think about. For me, I make mistakes all the time. And I often just have to humble myself and say, hey, I got this wrong and it feels really uncomfortable. But what it does is create space for those that you're learning with to say, I get it, it's OK to make a mistake, as long as we acknowledge that, and that's part of our journey as learners. So, I really encourage everybody to sit in this discomfort, in this unlearning and that requires us to make mistakes. We are not going to get there without making mistakes. But hopefully, you can find those safe places to make mistakes together and to learn from that. So, thank you very much, everybody. It's just been a pleasure to be here with you today. And to share some of my stories and my own thoughts.