

## **Transcript for Keynote Presentation 1: A Resilient Village Around Every Learner (November 1, 2023)**

**Studio23, November 1, 2023**

**Keynote Presenter: Kathi Hemphill Camilleri**

AMANDA COOLIDGE:

All right. Hi everyone. Great to see you now in this room. It is my pleasure to introduce you to our first keynote of Studio23, Kathi Hemphill Camilleri. [Applause] Yes. Kathi, Spotted Doe, is of Métis Cree ancestry. She holds a Masters of Arts and Leadership, and certificates in CPT and DBT. She's a cultural safety consultant and facilitator of the village workshop series. She facilitates strategic planning sessions, keynotes, and leads experiential village workshops about Canada's policies of assimilation and colonization with all levels of government, students, and educators, and frontline workers in communities across the country. Kathi and her husband Chris have a blended family with six boys and one (brave, tough) girl.

KATHI HEMPHILL CAMILLERI:

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Can you hear me all right? Good. Yeah. One brave, tough girl. Whenever I hear an introduction of me, I think, gosh, I'm getting old to be able to have done all that in my life, and I'm so grateful for that. It's good to be here with all of you today. And I wish we were sitting in circle, but it's nice to see your faces too. 'Gilakas'la' is a Kwakwaka'wakw word. And people say it like hello. Jody Wilson-Raybould opened with it when she did her testimony and closed with a similar word. And they use it like hello, but actually there's, of course, more to that word. And it actually means to share breath with one another. Because when we gather together, that's what's happening. And through our breath comes the stories that we've been left to share by our ancestors, and our spirit and our values come through our breath. We represent those ancestors that are with us all the time. Whenever I facilitate, I like to tell people if you were worried that you were going to be shamed about your ancestors, I hope you'll let that go. There's no two people here that look exactly the same, who have the same path that they're taking through life, or even have the same ancestry. Probably, hey, we're all so uniquely made, Everybody here will have come from a place that has undergone the trauma of colonization. It's a time in history where we come together as relatives, like my Elders teach me, "All my relations," they say. We're all connected somehow. When we take the time to hear each other's stories, we find that connection. We come together as relatives now to heal and make a better future for the ones that are going to come after us. It's good to meet you, and I wish we could pass the stone and take the time to meet everybody.

I'd like to thank the hosts for inviting me to come and talk today. My passion is decolonization. Oops, wrong way. I am going to be touching on residential school and certainly colonization, because we're talking about decolonizing. By decolonizing, I basically mean to make a village around ourselves. And I'll show you what I mean by that throughout the presentation. But there's a 1-800 number there if anybody would like. If you feel triggered through this talk today, also be sure to reach out to me if you like. And on the last slide, my email address, and I love to hear from people. We're in the same canoe together doing this work. Tansi. Spotted

Doe, nitisiyihkâson. Gila'kasla. Nugwa'am Kathi Hemphill Camilleri. That's two languages. That was Cree, and that was Kwakwaka'wakw. I'll tell you why I'm introducing myself in two languages.

My Cree ancestors were from Northern Manitoba up near York factory. Very cold there, hey? And lots of big mosquitoes. Yeah. They were really resilient people too. My Métis ancestors moved south, settled in St. Boniface. And those of you that know Winnipeg, you go down to the Forks, right where the two rivers meet, that's where my ancestors' land was. Those were the Marion family and the Laderoute family. When the battles and rebellion started to happen for the Métis people, and they were being put off of their land, and really a reign of terror was placed on them. Their homes were being burnt down. They weren't safe to go out at night. They could get beat up or worse. Some of my family, the Laderoute side, moved down to North Dakota, and the Marion side of the family moved into a Treaty 4 territory, Saskatchewan. They fought in the Battle of Atosh. After that really brutal battle, they scattered. I was born around Saskatchewan, mostly. I was born on Treaty 4 territory in Saskatchewan. And I'm really grateful because my family continued to move west, ultimately settling as uninvited guests on the territory of the Wei Wai Kum people. The settler name for that is Campbell River.

When I introduce myself as an uninvited guest, often people will say to me, doesn't that make you feel a bit uncomfortable, Uninvited guest? But actually it has quite the opposite effect. It feels really good because I'm stating the truth up front. Nobody invited my family to come and live on that territory. And what I know about myself is that I want to be a good guest wherever I go, especially if I'm not invited. Territorial acknowledgments are nothing new. We would have done them even 500 years ago. Had my Cree ancestors come here, they would have said who they are and where they're from. They would have asked permission to come onto this territory. And they would have asked really explicit permission to do whatever it was they were here to do. It's nothing new we do. What I learned about myself when I stayed in a bed and breakfast one time is that I like being a good guest. When I left the bed and breakfast in the morning, I wanted to make it look like nobody had been there. I didn't want to help myself to things that weren't mine. I wanted to ask permission before I did things, and I wanted to be very gentle with things. That's how I want to walk wherever I go and I'm often on different territories that sometimes I don't know the name of. I ask, somebody will tell me something and then I'll get corrected or somebody will tell me something else. But what I know is that I want to walk like a good guest wherever I go. Remembering that I'm a guest.

I also want to walk humbly, with a willingness to be taught and corrected. I have been sometimes very publicly and firmly, and actually I welcome that because I'm not going to forget again. Cultures are different from place to place. We're not all the same as Indigenous People by any means. There's such diversity in Indigenous cultures across Turtle Island and North America. I would never dare to dream that I know it all wherever I go, so I want to walk humbly wherever I go. Yeah. When I was five I lived in Moose Jaw. Any Saskatchewanites? Yay. I won't say "Go Riders," though in this group, I know. So I lived in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan with my four older brothers. So you caught that I have four older brothers and six sons, right? I like to

tell people that so you know, nothing you do today will shock me. We've really seen it all before. So I lived there with my four older brothers and my dog named Duffy. And my Mom and my Dad and Dad went off to work every day and Mom stayed home with us kids. And Mom developed tuberculosis. And in those days, if you were even suspected of being Indigenous and you developed tuberculosis, they would come and take you. And that's what happened. They came and they took my Mom, and they put her in the Fort Qu'Appelle San. for a very long time, leaving me a five-year-old girl with four older brothers, a dog named Duffy, and a Dad who didn't cook much. But you can see I didn't starve. And Dad knew you know, he knew how to cook and he did his very, very best, but he was a real busy guy. The reason I didn't starve is because brother Bob, he'd spent more time for some reason in the kitchen with Mom than the other boys had. He could kind of find his way around. He was only six years older than me, so he was only 11. And we probably had way too many peanut butter sandwiches and baloney sandwiches than were on the Canada Food Guide. But I don't, I don't recall it ever being an issue. I don't even think we thought about it. We were just grateful.

But once a week, my Cree Métis Granny would come over. Now, she lived six blocks away from us. She lived in a boarding house, rented a room in somebody's house. And she worked two jobs. She was a chambermaid in one hotel in Moose Jaw, and a short order cook in the other hotel in Moose Jaw. I think she only got one day off a week. And on that one day off a week, she would come to our house. And I think we must have needed her very badly. I kind of picture her with a mountain of dirty clothes beside the old ringer washer. To give up her day off to come over, I was always so excited. I would wait for her, and it always seemed to be blizzarding in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan when I was there. And she would be dressed head to toe very warmly, and for some reason, she would be bringing her mixing bowl with her. Now, I have no idea why my Granny would bring her mixing bowl to our house. We had cupboards with mixing bowls in them. I like to think it was a magic mixing bowl. I would sit in the kitchen watching the snow fly outside, ever so grateful for female company, I would watch my Granny put things into that mixing bowl. Because I was only five, I didn't know what those things were. But what I knew was when those things came together, that something amazing would come out of that bowl. And it always, always, always did. When I'm in circle like this, I think about Granny's mixing bowl, and actually I think about Creator's mixing bowl. I don't think it's an accident when we're all brought together across each other's paths. The Elders that have mentored me, they say we're all so unique. Each of us have also been imbued with unique gifts. Nobody shines in the world the way that you shine in the world. When we all are brought together, and we relax and we allow ourselves to be our authentic selves with each other, and we look for those gifts. And those gifts come and they come together, like the things in my Granny's mixing bowl. Something amazing comes of our time together. It's an honour to be in the mixing bowl with you today.

I want to introduce you to Alberta Billy, the late Alberta Billy. She passed away about, oh, just over a year ago. She had been my mentor for the last 28 years. She was a really big part of making the village work what it is. I'll mention the teachers as I go through the day, by the way, because we always mention that, and I do want to say I'm grateful to be on this territory today,

if I haven't said that. Tsleil-Waututh, Musqueam, and Squamish. Yeah? Am I saying those right? And I like asking, by the way. Am I saying that right? Please correct me if I'm not. Yeah. So Alberta. She was from We Wai Kai territory. She's... Cape Mudge is the settler name for that. She was the woman who asked the United Church for an apology 35, 40 years ago, and they gave it. It was the first of all of the historic apologies. She remembered before she got up to that microphone, she remembered that when she was a little girl, her grandfather said to her. She was little, but her grandfather said to her, "There's a purpose for you. We just don't know it yet." She remembered those words. And she got up to that microphone and addressed the upper hierarchy of the United Church and said, "You need to apologize for your part in running residential schools." And they ultimately did.

It was the first of all of the historic apologies. I don't think had she asked for that apology and had they not given it, I don't think the others would have come the way that they came. It was a big moment. When she was sick, I used to phone her every night at eight and she'd ask, "Are you working with anybody who's working with kids, who has kids?" She'd say, "You remember to remind them to tell the children that there's a purpose for them, a sacred purpose for them. Just remember to tell them that because it'll make a difference in their lives."

Berta was invited by the United Church to speak to the upper hierarchy from her little village, and people who are in her village. And they were saying, "Who do you think you are? You don't go talk to the upper hierarchy of the United Church." But she remembered those words. She went and she was nervous. She was coming to the city, to speak to the upper hierarchy of the United Church. She invited a mentor of hers to come with her to this meeting. And that just happened to be Chief Dan George. If you don't know who he is, because I meet people who don't know who he is, so if you don't know who he is, just Google him or get one of his books. Yeah, he came to this meeting with her and this is a story that he told that day and he gave Berta permission to tell the story and Berta's has given me permission to tell the story. He said, "In the olden days when our people wanted to make one of our big canoes," he said, "We could go into the forest. And we could find one perfect cedar tree in order to make one of our big canoes." That had to be a pretty amazing tree, like it couldn't be a leaner, and it had to be huge because those canoes could hold so many people. He said, "Nowadays, when our people want to make one of our big canoes," he said, "We go into the forest and we look for one perfect cedar tree. We can't find them." He said, "They've been logged or they're protected. Protected is good." He said, "Nowadays when we want to make one of our big canoes, we go into the forest and we look for two perfect cedar trees, two trees that will come together perfectly, seamlessly." Berta used to hold her hands up. She'd say, "We shouldn't even be able to see the seam, we need to come together so tightly."

Do you know what Chief Dan, George, and Berta are encouraging us to do? It's to come together. People that have an Indigenous connection to the lands here. Because this is where Creator placed their original peoples. People that have Indigenous connection to lands elsewhere. But because of oppression and colonization and war and famine, they came here to make a better life. Often not even knowing the whole truth. They weren't told the whole truth

and shaped by an educational system that was hierarchical, and competitive, and thought that some people were less than others. It's time now. But they came here. Often being put on a rocky bit of frozen land and told to survive somehow. Gosh, we all come from amazingly resilient people, don't we? All of us do.

Think a minute about your ancestors. Gosh, I've heard some amazing stories about ancestors. One woman said her great grandfather ended up in Winnipeg in December with no winter coat at age 15 by himself and not speaking the language. And somehow he managed to leave a good life for his family. I heard a story about an 11 year old coming over by himself the other day. We all come from tremendously resilient people. Your ancestors, resilience lives inside of you. The choices and decisions that they made gave you the life that you have today. And the Elders that have mentored me say that our ancestors are with us all the time. Phil Umpherville, my Cree ancestor, he says, "It's a little bit like a United Nations meeting when we all gather together." We represent them when we come into a room, and they're with us all the time. Yeah. The canoe. So people that have had an indigenous connection to elsewhere, but because of a whole lot of reasons, came here to make a better life. And people that have an indigenous connection to the lands here, because this is where Creator placed their original peoples. It's time for us to come together to make this canoe. I think the canoe is called "reconciliation." And together as relatives, we're going to make that canoe called reconciliation. Together as relatives, we're going to come up with a vision about where that canoe called reconciliation is going to go. And as individuals who choose to get into that canoe. You see, we never force anybody into the canoe, that wouldn't work.

Have you ever tried paddling with somebody who doesn't want to be there? Yeah. People choose to get in that canoe and they'll pick up a paddle of responsibility to the generations that are going to follow us. We will figure out as relatives, how we're going to move that canoe forward. If you've seen the inside of a canoe, you see that there's not a lot of room. We don't pack things in our canoe that are going to get in our way. That would be silly. We couldn't move together if things were in our way. One of the things I think that gets in our way is shame. I know when I was packing my shame, because my mom walked with a lot of shame about being an Indigenous woman. Inadvertently, she didn't mean to, but inadvertently she passed that shame on down to me. She never said here, Kathi, I'd like to give you this and be sure to share it generously with your children as well. She didn't say that. But I watched how she walked in the world as a little girl. And because she walked in the world that way, in the world that way as well. It took healing and ceremony to actually let go of that shame. I did. I let go of the shame. Because I understood where that shame that she walked with came from and I actually refused to pack it. There was nothing for her to be ashamed of. So I let the shame go. So there's no room for yours either in there.

Years ago, we ran a residential school healing program in the non-profit Indigenous Serving Organization that I worked in. We ended up in the mid '90s getting five years' worth of funding from the federal government to heal from residential school. I'm not ungrateful, but bye. We asked some residential school survivors to come and. And to be our advisory circle. I'm not a



survivor. I'm an intergenerational survivor, so we asked survivors to come in and our advisory circle. If we're going to create a program for them, we sure needed their input. In those days, not very many people were talking about residential school. Such a good time to be alive now, hey, because so many people are. It's safer now. There's counselling and there's books, there's firsthand stories, there's movies, there's documentaries.

Yeah, it's a good time to be alive. But few people were talking about it in the mid-90s. And these survivors, they agreed to come and be our advisory circle. And I would go out and talk about all of the programs where I was working in the mid-90s. I'd get around to talking about the Residential School Healing Circle. In those days, inevitably, an educated person would put up their hand and say, "Stop, what's a residential school?" Because it wasn't being talked about, it wasn't being included in the educational system. I went back and I told the Advisory Circle that and they said, well then we want you to go out and educate people. How helpful will it be for anybody who works with our people to know what happened? That way they can stop making up stories about us. I said to them right away, I said, "Okay, well that means I'm going to have a lot of people." I was doing this with residential school survivors. "That means I'm going to have a lot of people that have Indigenous connection to lands elsewhere around the world, but have come here to make a better life for themselves." What do you want me to tell them?" Without even skipping a beat, they said, "Oh, tell them if they come to those workshops with open hearts and open minds, tell them that if shame comes up for them, remind them that it's not their shame to carry." You see you didn't do this. You came because you want to know what you can do to be a part of that canoe. Not your shame to carry, but it'll get in our way. And when I was packing my shame, it made me act in a lot of destructive, toxic ways sometimes. It held me back from joining in things. I always walked with a feeling like I didn't belong. If shame comes up for you, name it, that'll be really helpful. Gosh, it was helpful to have that word. It was like a container that I could put all the feelings and behaviours I'd walked with all my life. I could put them into that word, shame. And then I was invited to let it go. Well, you're invited to let it go. And I've been doing this work for 28 years. I've even had people that worked in residential schools come to the workshop. Shame comes up for them, and they've got their own healing to do. I met some really good people who were part of a bad system. Are there some systems that we're going to look back on 20 years from now and go, what were we doing in keeping that system going the way it was going? What we know is that there was still good people in there trying to bring positive change. There were also lots of people hurting children there. And I don't want to not talk about that, but not everybody was. But it was a bad system. I'm glad it's in our wake and I'm glad you come together to figure out how you can help in the healing that's happening now. And decolonize systems and build villages around people and build villages around yourself. I'll get more into that soon. If shame comes up for you while I'm talking today, please remind yourself, it's not your shame to carry. There's no room in that canoe for shame. It'll keep us stuck. How can we look each other in the eye in that canoe and work together? Figure out how we're going to pull together if we've got shame getting in the way. All my relations remember the Elders say.

The Elders remind us that we are here to make the world a better place for our children, grandchildren, and great great grandchildren to come. The choices and decisions that we make today will impact generations to come. Berta was with me before she passed. She patted my knee. She said, "Kathi, you know, we love all children, don't you?" I said, "Oh yeah." Child comes in the room, everybody stops what they're doing. Of course, we love children. She said, "A lot of our children have mixed ancestry." I said, "I know." She said, "Plus, we love everybody's children." Everybody's children. Doesn't matter what ancestry. That's why we make the canoe to leave a better future for the ones that are going to come after us. To create equitable systems because they haven't been very equitable so far. To change that, to decolonize, to change those systems. Justice Sinclair, he said, when we talk about systemic racism, he said, people think we're saying everybody that works in those systems are racist. He said, but that's not the case at all, he says it's when a system has been founded on racist ways of being that now have become the policies and procedures in that organization, the way they do things that make even the non-racist people that work in those organizations have to act like racists. That's why we're being called to decolonize systems. To make them more like a village. To make them more equitable for everybody. And we can all use our voices to make those changes Berta always used to say, "Break their rules." She said, "Take down systems that have oppressed our people." Break their rules, she would say. And her eyes would twinkle, and she'd say "And have fun doing it." She did it. She was always respectful about it. But she also had a truth that needed to be shared sometimes. And she used her voice in a respectful way, but she changed systems that had been rooted in racist ways of being.

Yeah, so on the left- hand side, that slide. On the right-hand side, well, you know, on that side the line ups, that represents a colonized system. It's a military, hierarchical, competitive system. People compete with each other to get to the front there, and the communication goes one way. The people at the front say, you all do this and it works really well in the military. Please understand, I'm not saying hierarchy is all bad. If my house was on fire, I'd want the fire chief to know who had what training, and to tell them to do what they needed to do. I think there's a place for hierarchy, but I don't know, I don't know that we need to be in this system all the time. If we could use it when we need it, but not all the time. And on the other side is a circle system. And I'm going to build it here in a little while, so you get a chance to actually see it and maybe sit in it a little bit. But we're all facing towards our purpose, which is in the centre. And communications going all ways. We're taking the time to communicate with each other properly. We hear every voice. We take the time to work collaboratively together. That's the difference: collaboratively.

"Many Aboriginal young people know and believe that programs and services must be rooted in the values of our teachings and traditions; in a safe, positive, and nurturing environment for our children where they know that they are cared for and loved. They have an opportunity, we have an opportunity to go back to our cultural teachings, that are the strength of our communities, and the strength of our children's development." Don't we all have a child inside of our hearts? How can we make those things happen? How can we become a village?

Well, I'm going to ask you to think village with me now. Think decolonized system. We were taught the importance of looking after our spirit. I've got a medicine wheel with me. It's Plains teachings actually. But this was given to me by the Mi'kmaq when I was in New Brunswick. It's been adopted by a whole lot of people and there's a lot of teachings on the medicine wheel. But for the sake of this one, it's physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. Those four quadrants. We often, when you go places to learn, you bring yourself somewhere physically. And you stay upstairs up in your brain and you learn a lot of numbers and facts and that kind of thing. But the learning when we do it experientially also involves emotion and our spirit. We can't talk about what happened in this country's history without us feeling sad, and so we would honour that emotion. We actually view tears as a sign of strength, not a sign of weakness. "We were taught the importance of looking after ourselves so that we could care for others and that was inclusive of our spirit."

The Elders say, "We awoke in the morning and started right away to prepare ourselves to come together with others in a good way." Berta says, "We were a praying people." We didn't call it that. She said, "We just talked to Creator all the time." She actually used to say it was a bit like the father on Fiddler on the Roof. She said, we just talked all the time. Leonard Ward, he's an Elder that came in... the late Leonard Ward. Gosh, I'm saying that a lot. It makes me a little panicky because lots of our learned Elders are going to the other side, and we have to stop procrastinating about inviting them and including them. Anyway, he came into my life after doing that work, letting go of shame. And the first thing that Leonard taught me to do was talk to Creator the way my people have talked to Creator for thousands of years. I consider myself to be Christian, but this meshed ever so beautifully with anything I'd ever believed. If you get an email from me on the bottom, it'll say something like, "It doesn't have to be either/or. It can be 'and' and 'with'."

Our Creator is so creative. Anyway, I'm going to describe it to you. I'm not trying to impose anything on anybody. I'll just describe what Leonard taught me to do. He lit sage and a shell and smoke comes from it. By the way, people do this differently, there isn't one way to do this. Jane Middleton-Moz was a great teacher of mine. And she'd say, "When we say there's only one way to do something, who does that sound like?" Anyway, smoke comes from it. He taught me to put my hands through the smoke. And when I do that, I ask that my hands do good work in my life. If all of us are here to change the world to make it a better place, then I want to use these hands in a good and helpful way. I take the smoke, I put it over my head, and I ask that I remember the things I need to remember to keep me on my sacred journey while I have breath on this side. I take the smoke, I put it over my eyes, and I ask that when I meet new people, that I'll focus on how they shine in the world. Why on Earth would I care what you're wearing or if you're having a bad hair day or a good hair day? I should just get this out of the way. This isn't a good one for me. You want to say that. So anyway. Help me to look for the right things when I meet people and not the wrong things. Yeah. I take the smoke, I put it over my ears. I ask that I hear the words I meant to hear when I meant to hear them as I meant to hear them. Leonard said, "Have you ever said something to somebody and had them hear it totally differently?" Yeah. He said, "That's because people hear you through the filter of their life experience." I



asked for help with that. Help me to hear what I'm meant to hear, when I'm meant to hear it as I'm meant to hear it. I take the smoke, I put it over my mouth. I ask that the words that come out of my mouth would be good words, kind words, words that would never close the spirit of another person, but actually might help to open their spirit. Leonard said, "Our words are like bullets. Once they're out, you can't take them back." And they can hurt somebody forever so that they don't shine as brightly as they were meant to shine. We paid attention when I do this work with teachers of young kids, I'll say even your facial expression and your body language will impact the very tender spirit of those sensitive children that are watching our every move. They're like sponges. We looked after ourselves. It says there, "We looked after ourselves before we went out in the world." We could be careful we weren't bringing our woundedness out to wound other people with. Yeah, I'm going to be talking a lot today. I'm human. I come from a family, you can guess, where we teased each other a lot and I go out in the world sometimes and I tease people, but they don't come from families where they teased, and then I could inadvertently close their spirit.

The Elders that have mentored me are actually very comfortable with silence because they know the power of their words. They choose them so carefully. One traditional Elder will say something and the other ones will go [long silent pause.] Isn't that beautiful? What they're saying is you've chosen those words carefully. We're going to take some time to digest them. We're also going to leave you a space in case you want to add more to your story. Somebody asked me how do you know when an Elder has finished talking? They let you know. They'll say Gila'kasla or hay čx<sup>w</sup> qə or thank you or čuu or over to you. But they'll let you know. If you jump in, they'll probably be very gracious with you, but you'll miss a teaching that might just be life changing for you. We take the time to listen. But I'm going to be talking a lot because I want to get you out on time. If I do or say anything today that closes your spirit in any way, would you mind coming to me? On the break or something or emailing me and saying, Kathi, when you did or said that I felt this way, could you tell me what your intention was? Because my intention today is that canoe and I would never want to close your spirit but that just might happen. Would you mind doing that? That'll help me to feel comfortable being a human in front of you. Yeah, I'll do it with you too. We could do it with each other, we could go out in the world, and we could do it with each other all the time. Healthy teams and organizations, that's what we do. Yeah.

What I've learned about myself is somebody does or says something and it closes my spirit. I'm a counsellor, very healthy. No, I don't go directly to them. I go to anybody and everybody else who will listen to me talk about them and that. What I've learned from doing that is that that creates a whole lot of toxicity. I've come to the conclusion in my old age that the world doesn't need another drop of toxicity. I've been practising going directly to somebody. When I do that, I wait till I'm ready until I feel safe. I won't go if I don't feel safe, just so you know. What I've learned about myself is that I should write fiction. I have made up some kind story about that person, about why they did what they did. The longer I leave it without going to check it out, really, the more married to the story I get. Have you heard of the ladder of inference? Yeah. When you have that wrong belief and then you start picking things out of the air to prove your

wrong belief right. I've been up there on my high horse, sometimes and it is a long way down. Thank you for agreeing to come and check it out with me. Such a good practice. And we did it in our village. Sometimes very publicly, we just check things out. I take the smoke, I put it over all of me. When I do that, there was a big teaching with that part. Leonard said, "Ask for protection. Physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual as you walk your sacred journey through this life." But he also said, "When you do that part, ask for the courage to allow yourself to be vulnerable." He said, "It's in your vulnerability that you're going to find healing from the things that have wounded you in your life." He said, "You want to take care of those things." He said, "Because wounded people wound other people." That was sure the case.

Early on in my healing journey, I'd get triggered. It would land all over everybody around me. Usually the people I love, but it could be total strangers too. I needed to take care of those places in me. It was allowing myself to be vulnerable. Letting myself cry, telling my story, asking for help, letting people help me. That took courage and vulnerability. I found healing there. Leonard was right. The other way that teaching has been helpful for me is I don't know about you, but I make up stories about people all the time. Hey, I don't know if it's a survival thing or something. You meet somebody, start making up a story about them. Well, sometimes a story I'll make up about somebody is, oh, that person's really mean. But I say that anymore, thanks to Leonard Ward. Now what I say is that person's wounded and they're feeling so wounded right now that they're wounding those around them. The last thing I needed when I was walking so wounded I was wounding others willy nilly was somebody to get into dualism with me. Right/wrong, black/white thinking. Somebody to read me the riot act, to read me the rules. I didn't need that, that would have escalated that wounded wounding behaviour. What I needed was people to listen, people to be kind, and people to validate my feelings. That's what shifted that wounded energy. I'm telling you that because I think it'll be helpful for you. I want to share that. Leonard taught me to take the smoke and put it behind me. He said, "That's so you remember where you're from. those resilient ancestors that must be so proud of you. Because you have breath on this side. And you'll use that breath to change the world, to make it a better place for the ones that are going to come after you."

Lastly, I take the smoke and I put it over my heart and ask that everything I do in my life would be motivated by the medicine of love. Because love, the Elders say, is the most powerful medicine. We all need it. It's what heals us. And yet in the culture we live in nowadays, we're uncomfortable even saying the word. We'll say I love hockey, or I love your shoes. But we don't talk about love. Imagine if all of us woke up in the morning and started right away to prepare ourselves to go out into the world, treating each other with love. We wouldn't have wars. We wouldn't have homelessness. The Elders are right. Love is the most powerful medicine, and I'm human, I don't feel like being loving all the time, especially when I drive in Vancouver. I'm so embarrassed sometimes. I think this is the woman that talks about love, respect, kindness, and generosity. And I just called that person a bad name. So I'm human. I need all the help I can get. I need all the help I can get with all of those things 'cause I'm human. So but like Berta says, "We prepared ourselves to come together with others in a good way."

Those values, we had these values in our village. Back east they have the seven sacred teachings. David Somerville, my Mohawk Elder, he says he didn't think his people had a number for the values that they lived. But he said the thing is, is that they lived them. They weren't just words framed on the wall that we didn't even look at anymore. He said, we lived those values. Learn the seven sacred teachings. Grandfather teachings, for sure. But I'm just going to start you out by helping you to remember these four words. Okay? And I'll give you a little pop quizzes because I know everybody loves those.

The four words I'm going to ask you to remember are like the law of our village. We don't step outside of those village. I'm going to ask you now to imagine yourself being in a village, a pre-colonial village. No ships have come up yet. We haven't met anybody of European ancestry. People lived in different kinds of homes. When I've gone to work with the Inuit in northern Quebec, their traditional people lived in igloos. Back east they have longhouses. They look really different from the longhouses here. There's teepees, there's pit houses. There's big houses and longhouses. One fire in a big house. We live together here in a village. And how it is pre-contact, how we get along is we have our spirituality. We prepare ourselves to come together with others in a good way. We also have these values. I've talked about love a lot. Respect. We're careful even about where we put our feet because we don't want to hurt our plant relatives. Kindness. If somebody in our village is struggling, instead of judging them and shaming them for not being perfect, instead we come alongside them and we give them kindness, because that's what people need when they're struggling. They don't need to be judged or shamed. Then we have generosity. In our village, we actually measure the greatness of people by what they give, not by what they keep. I still hear stories of great leaders who during times of little food, for whatever reason, they would take the stores of food that were meant for them. And they would give that food out to their people. They might starve, but their people would live. And it's not just a generosity of things, it's also a generosity of spirit that we have with one another. So those are the four words I'm going to ask you to remember. Do you want to say them with me? Because that'll help you to remember them. Okay, Let's do it. Love, respect, kindness, generosity. Awesome. So those are the values of our village. We don't step outside of those values. If we did, it would be noticed. Chances are you'd have to spend some time with an Elder, helping you work through whatever would be wounding you so badly you wouldn't live those values. And if you continue to not live those values, you might be asked to leave for a short while until you were ready to come back and live those values. And if you continue to not live those values, you might be asked to leave for good. Those are the laws of our village. We don't step outside of those. It's how we survive. Because if we let things get in the way of our relationships with each other, we're not going to be able to survive. It's our values and it's also paying attention to relationships. How we impact the people around us.

We had our identity. Relationship to the lands and the water. Relationship. Berta always said it was a spiritual relationship we had to the lands because it's where Creator placed our people. Has anybody here ever walked where their ancestors walked? Something happens in just a kind of a homecoming in our spirit. Berta said it was a spiritual relationship we had with the land and the waters. It's a reciprocal relationship. We look after the lands and the waters because we're

looked after by the lands and the waters. We don't take more than we need, just what we need. So we're in relationship to the lands and the waters. We had our language. It's all connected to the land. When people used to say, well, our culture is connected to the land, I wasn't quite sure what they meant until I heard my dad tell a story one time. Now he was from Weyburn, Saskatchewan. It's very flat there. The trees are really tiny if you can find one. He moved to Port Hardy, the north tip of the island, and you used to have logger friends over for dinner. And he'd say to those logger friends, "You know, in Weyburn, Saskatchewan, we had trees as big around as your wrist." It wasn't impressive to the Port Hardy loggers. Those little trees that my dad was talking about. They wouldn't have been good for making big houses or longhouses, but they were really good for tipi peoples. You see where Creator has placed your people, you're going to use the resources of that land and that becomes a part of your cultural identity. That's why we say where we're from when you meet us because it tells you a whole lot about who we are. So relationship to the lands and the waters. Language, so many different languages and different dialects off those. Regalia, how we dressed. Our art, the type of homes that we lived in. Food, food's an identifying factor. If I say pizza, what country do you think of? You know, you know your home when you're eating food that's indigenous to the lands and the waters. But it's also prepared with recipes that have been passed down generation to generation. And our ceremonies were different from place to place. And very important those ceremonies. We knew who you were and you knew who you were because of those ceremonies. And I want to talk about governance. Berta was after me for a long time to put something out on the bundle to represent how we governed ourselves. And I'm going to talk about this because I think it's helpful to everybody. This was given to me after my Aha moment about what the heck Berta meant. It's carved from the hull of the boat, the fish boat that was on the old \$5 bill. It's such a special gift representing governance. In healing circles. We often use a feather. Somebody gets the feather and they just hold it. Residential school survivors would get the feather and they would just hold it. They wouldn't talk. Sometimes tears would run down their face and they would say, "That's the first time in my life that anybody's actually listened to me." Leonard says, "The most important gift we can give to somebody is to listen." So the feather is about listening. She was after me to put something out on the bundle to represent how we governed ourselves. And I didn't really know what she meant and I didn't do anything about it for a long time. But then I left the Family Life Society to go work for the government, creating an Indigenous child and youth mental health program. Right away I was invited to meet with the Minister of Children and Families. I had lots to say, but I was heard, which was really lovely. Afterwards, I was invited to go sit in the balcony place, you know, called the gallery. And I was looking down where the politicians sit in the house. And the Elders and ancestors were with me that day in my heart, in my head. Because when I looked down, I went, "Oh, I get it." They're not seated in a circle. They're not passing a speaking stone. They're not passing a feather. They're not passing a talking stick. They're not dialoguing. You know, dialogue means to listen to learn. There wasn't a lot of listening going on down there. They're all lovely people. Hey, but it's a system, a way of being, I knew what I was going to see because I'd seen it on TV before. But it was like this Aha moment. How do they communicate with each other in the B.C. ledge? They debate. Anybody know... so debate to me speaks of dualism. Right/wrong. Black/white thinking. And I want you to know, I've been stuck in dualism before in my life. And

the operative word there was stuck. I'm right, they're wrong. And I missed an opportunity to learn because I didn't take the time to listen. Anybody know how they measure the distance between the two sides in the B.C. ledge? Sword. Yeah, I heard it's 2.5. Because whenever I hear 2.5 I think, bet the half is really important because the red carpet that goes down the centre, it represents spilled blood. And I'm not putting the system down, it's fine. But it's an interesting culture there, isn't it? Of dualism. Black/white, wrong/right thinking. So I got the difference. So here in our village, when we have a problem, let's say there's a problem and it's right there. We aren't ruled by one of these. We take the time to get everybody's perspective on the problem. Have you ever been in a conflict with somebody? And when you actually sit down with them and say, can you tell me what you think the problem is? And then you'll go, "I didn't know you thought that." And you're able to take care of it. Just like that because now you know what they think the problem is. In the culture we live in nowadays, we do this drive- by communication, and we're making up stories about what that look meant, or you hear people not correctly. So in decolonizing, we make things more like a village. We take the time to listen. We take the time, we listen to everybody's perspective on the problem and then we work together to solve the problem. We don't get stuck in dualism wrong/right, black/white thinking.

Everywhere I go, there is a word or a sentence that reminds us that we are one. We're not doing this alone; we work together. Nuu-chah-nulth is Hikshuk-ish-tsawalk. Kwakwaka'wakw is Nanwakolas or Namwayut. Territory Chief Ian Campbell, he says NCH'7MUT. Everywhere you go, there is going to be a word or a sentence that reminds us that we are one, and we can work together as one to solve problems, rather than getting stuck in dualism with one another. Is anybody else as excited about this as I am? Imagine if there were a conflict in your organization and somebody said, "Well, let's get together. We'll take the time needed because it's important down the line." It'll save us time if we can work collaboratively and work through this. We'll take the time needed and we'll hear what everybody thinks the problem is, and together we'll work together to solve the problem, rather than getting stuck in dualism. I'm right, you're wrong, thinking, I think that's exciting. Before you send out invitations though, here's your first pop quiz. Before you send out invitations, you have to make sure that everybody that comes to that meeting is going to be willing to commit to treating others there with love, respect, kindness, and generosity. Just because you have a different perspective on something than somebody else doesn't mean you have the right to stomp all over their spirits. In the hierarchical competitive systems that you and I have been raised in, we've been taught to see each other as competition from the time that we're little. What would happen if we let that go? And we started to see each other as collaborators for positive change. And we come together with love, respect, kindness, and generosity. And we work as one to solve problems rather than getting stuck in dualism. Oh, I'm so excited. Governance is a word that used to put me to sleep almost, but I'm excited about this. I think we could change the world this way.

The village. I want to make one of these with you if that's okay. I put these chairs here for a reason. Let's say we have our cultural identity. We know we're home by all of these things I described, you know, language, how we dress our art, our songs. And I'm going to need volunteers. And I don't mean to put the pressure on anyone, I could just use the chairs too, but



kind of feels good to sit in, so it might be good medicine if you want to. But I need somebody to come and sit in this chair. And I want to tell you, nothing's going to get taken away today.

So anybody who's done the workshop with me before, this gets taken apart and that really hurts, so nothing's going to get taken away. Let's just sit in the medicine and the wisdom of being in a village together. A village is a decolonized system, and we're being called to decolonize. Let's sit in it. It's experiential, this workshop, If I could get one brave person to come and sit in this chair for me. Okay, come on up. Thanks, Britt. Thank you. It takes a lot of courage to be the first person out, but it feels good. You're going to like this, thank you so much. You represent the children in our village. We all view her like she's a sacred gift. What does the word "sacred" mean to you? Precious, holy, revered, fresh from Creators, spirit. Can you imagine walking through your whole life being treated like you're a sacred gift? Your whole life being treated like you're a sacred gift. Well, I tell this to every group. You are. You are. Do you know right from the beginning of time, the right people had to be in the right place to make you you. All the things that took place where you were in your mother's womb that made you you. You are a sacred gift to the world. You should be treated that way.

I tell everybody, you go home tonight, you say to the people around your dinner table, I'm a sacred gift to the world, and I want to be treated that way. Let me know how that goes for you, because it could go sideways unless you do the second part. The second part is of course. I also recognize that everybody else around this dinner table is a sacred gift as well, and I'll commit to treating you that way. Can you imagine what the world would be like if all of us were walking through the world, seeing the sacredness in each other. Wow. It might take a long time to walk down the street in Vancouver. I think people think I'm odd anyway because I walk down and I smile at people and say hello. In Campbell River we do that. But imagine if we were in the hallways of our workplaces. We wouldn't need to have team days because we would be seeing the sacredness in each other. Yeah, she walks through the village, and we all tell her from our own perspective about the gifts that she carries inside of herself. She's having those affirmed in her over and over and over again. Our children. Golden thread to the future is what Elder Sophia Hansen says. Golden thread to the future. When I met with the Minister of Children and Families, I said that thread should never be cut because that thread connects us right back to the beginning of time. And what that golden thread carries is our cultural identity. Children need to know who they are and where they're from. That'll help them to walk strong in the world if they know that. The children are the closest ones to this cultural identity. We all keep them safe.

About this part, I want to say that my work has been inspired greatly by the work of Jann Derrick, who's done the Circle in the Box. And also Jane Middleton-Moz, who I did a lot of training with. I want to be sure to mention teachers' names. Our children, I need to come and sit in this chair to represent the parents in our village. Somebody to come and sit in that chair, to be our aunties and uncles. Somebody here and somebody there. We didn't raise our children alone. You would take her everywhere with you. We don't have a building in the middle of our village that we drop our kids off to like we do now. Yeah, they're right there. We leave this one

empty because this one is for our ancestors that are with us all the time. And the Elders will say they'll come and sit here and they'll visit with us and encourage us. You take her everywhere with you. Aunties and uncles, you help in the raising of kids. Foster care and adoption are nothing new. We did it all the time here only there was no shame attached to it, nor should there be, hey. We let people help us to raise our kids.

When each of our kids reached about 14, we really saw the wisdom in that because they weren't listening to us anymore. But somebody else way cooler than us would come along and they'd say just what was said a million times to them and they'd go, "I didn't know that. What changed my life." Our Elders. Hey, they're our counsellors and our teachers and our wise ones, and our consultants, and our experts and our leaders. You're involved in everything we do. And when there's a conflict in our village, you show us, the ones that are involved in the conflict. You would help them to work through anything that was wounding them and then we'd come together as one. And you show us how to have oneness on our face when we're at one of these meetings. Now, this is a Wedlidi Speck teaching. I was with a 2/3 group, and I said to them, if you were in an argument with somebody and you were told you had to go to a meeting with them, but you weren't hurting anymore, and you had oneness on your face, what would that look like? Grade 2/3 did this. I was just reading a book about emotional intelligence right then, and I thought, "I wonder if we forget it when we get older?" Do they understand that, that our facial expression and body language is going to impact everything? I tested them. I asked them if you weren't ready, what would that look like? They crossed their arms and looked down, so they knew the difference. You help us to get a different perspective on things and do ceremony with us so that we can come together to one of those meetings where we hear everybody's perspective, and we can come with oneness on our face. Aware that we could keep our whole community stuck if we can't have oneness on our face. I mean, I've been to meetings where we shouldn't even be there because we don't feel safe because somebody's not ready. You're our counsellor and our teacher, and you spend a lot of time with them. This is the village. This is a decolonized way of being. Looks different from place to place, but there's a lot of similarities, and you know, we all come from a village, right? We go far enough back to anybody's ancestors, we're going to come back to a village just like this one. The only thing that would look different are the identity items. We know how to do village; we know how to decolonize. We do. It's in our bones and in our blood. A snowstorm hits, we go shovel the driveways of our elderly neighbours. If you've got electricity, you make a big pot of soup and you take it to the neighbours. We know how to do village. It's been passed down to us. So how can we make our systems and organizations more like a village? That would be decolonization. How can we do that? How can we honour the cultures, unique cultures of people? How can we be like village? That's how we decolonize. I used to read that word and go, gosh, that's a big word. What does it mean and how do you do it? But it just means go out and make villages. Go build villages around yourself. Go build villages around others that need it. And I'll leave it. I know I'm running a little behind and I want to make sure you have a chance to ask any questions about this. Are you okay sitting here? You can answer the questions.

HELENA PRINS:

Thank you, Kathi. We have time for one question. Is there anyone that has a question? Lots of pressure on the one question. Well, if you do have a question, Kathi was so generous with her time. She told us when we invited her for the keynote. Since I'm with you anyway, I may as well do a workshop. So this afternoon, if you want to spend more time with Kathi, she will be doing a workshop after lunch as well. So you will have an opportunity to do that then. So Kathi, I want to thank you. Come up here. We have a small little thank you for you. Yes. Let's keep the villagers a hand. If we take those four values that you were talking about into our conference, it's going to be a very good time together. Thank you, Kathi.