

Working in Respectful Relationship to Engage Indigenous Peoples and

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TALK AND RECEPTION: KELLOGG HOTEL & CONFERENCE CENTER, 219 S. HARRISON ROAD, EAST LANSING, MI 4882

Part 1:

Alright, so I may just wander around while I'm talking because I don't like standing still. So let me know if you can't hear me and I'll use the microphone, but otherwise I won't. So I just want to talk about working in relationship and I guess offer some ideas for how to do that and also offer some traditional wisdom about what happens when you don't. So I hope that you can get a lesson out of this at least that how things work. So I think for me that it's important that when we're talking about working in relationships, we're talking about working in respectful relationships, so it's not like an abusive relationship, it's respectful. Because they haven't always been that way and especially with indigenous people that we've, you know, had a long history of not being in respectful relationships, but being abused by our relationships with Western institutions, so there's a fair bit of work that needs to get done at an institutional level in order to overcome some of the historical injustices that have taken place. And so I'll maybe talk a little bit about that as well, but I think to me it's important to recognize that things need to change because we are at a place where, well, historically we've faced everyone knows about colonization so we've that's been our history as a history of colonization, but the place where we're at now, unfortunately, is a place because colonization was so successful we're at a place where it's almost like we've been mentally enslaved, so it's a place now where mental slavery and we're you know so the sort of psychology of dependency is take taken over in a lot of indigenous communities. So I'm, the work that I do is I try to envision so how what do we do for me or where do we go from here and a lot of that stuff is around getting retaining that respect getting back to a place where we are in a respect for ourselves, have respect in our relationships, so it that is to me that's the important important stuff in what we need to do. So it's hard to know like when I'm talking with people what sort of what background information is they have, but I'm hoping most of you know like sort of a bit of the history of colonization and how that's impacted on indigenous people, so there's been whether it was in United States and Canada or South America or Australia or Africa, a lot of places around the world, the colonization has really taken sort of similar steps and how it has happened. So a lot of times you know colonization really becomes like looking at like an exploitation of resources, so people from outside coming in hoping to exploit the resources in an area so that resources often can be like the land itself so

taking minerals or fur or oil that was a lot of the time these days or diamonds is a big one these days taking resources out of land, but the next big thing that often happens great or in conjunction with that is the exploitation of the people so we're all aware of you know the slave trade how that was you know started in North America taking slaves back taking the Native Americans back to Europe as slaves and then it really expanded to bringing African people over to work in plantations here so it was the exploitation of the people was the next step in the colonization, but then that wasn't really enough because you can't just take people without basically the next thing that happened has been the removal of the children and that sort of the next stage of colonization was around forced assimilation. Excuse me, talking about this stuff chokes me up. So that's been something that's been ongoing for a long time is the forced removal of indigenous peoples and the desire to make them or remake them in the image of the colonizers and unfortunately that has been extremely successful, so we're at a place where you know that assimilation has taken place a lot and it's become the whole subjugation of a whole groups of people and whole landscapes is a big part of the colonial process, so we have to really think about well what are the impacts of that subjugation and that forced assimilation and what does that mean, what has that done, what has that done to people. You know, for example, a big thing that has happened in every country as well is that they outlaw the the local religions and the local spiritual practices. So, hmm, all of this stuff has happened in our past right and it's like we have to be aware of how this colonial history, it's not like you know America is great because you know we did all this stuff. It's great because you stole all this stuff and you stole the labor of the people and you stole people from Africa and brought them here to make it, stole the resources from the people that we're living here already. So it's like you have to recognize that that's kind of the history were coming from so if if you want two things to change you gotta be in recognition of that, but I think that a lot of people realize that right okay and I think I yeah okay we can recognize that you know slavery happened we recognize the forced removal of children, but I think what people haven't gotten to yet is the point where they recognize how part of that subjugation of people has been the systemic denial of their ways of thinking so it's been a systemic isle of indigenous science and indigenous knowledge so it's like the it's become to a place where indigenous science has been really denigrated and it's here you get called witch doctors or you they get called shaman's if they're a traditional healer that's sort of if that has been part of the colonial process we have to recognize that when we come to institutions of research and learning that there has been also a history of that learning has been at the expense of traditional knowledge and has been at the expense of indigenous ways of teaching pedagogy and all those sort of things, so we have to think remember that when we're trying to change the things the way things are. Alright, so I would say that you know there's been a history of physical violence and and resource exploitation, but there's also been a real history of and current today epistemic violence or ontological violence, violence against the ways of thinking of different indigenous peoples around the world. So you know obviously that means that there's a lot of distrust, as a researcher, you can't just go into any indigenous community and say oh you know I come from MSU and I want to do some research it'll be like yeah right okay there is distrust of the system because there is that knowledge that the system is not there to help you if the system is there to to to hold you down, so change is really necessary if we want to want to make things better and I guess to me there's like a sense of urgency with this because it's like, when you talk about colonization and stuff it's like well yeah that's in the past and they're never going to let it go, why can't you move on from there, but we have to recognize this is happening right now. Yes it's been ongoing for the last 500 years, but it's still happening right now. Like if we look at say like the rates of child removal right now, there's more children living in state care than there ever was when residential schools were taking

place. Okay so even though I think the 2001 census, American Indian/Alaska Native kids had actually lower rates of physical and sexual abuse than mainstream white kids and yet they were in care of the state at a much higher rate than white kids, so like obviously this is still going on today kids are still being taken and raised in foster care or raised in institutions. Today so like in Canada there's a good example is like the way education is funded for primary and secondary school is on average around four thousand dollars less funding goes towards educate per year goes towards educating indigenous kids first nation's kids that are have treaty rights then goes towards educating everyone else, so it's like well how is you said you can see so this colonial process is still taking place today and we allow it to keep happening so that's why to me there's like a real urgency we can't just sit around and say yeah okay well that was in the past let's move on it's like okay we need to recognize that this is still happening right now and we if we want something to change we have to start doing things about it. So anyway, where are those people from community psychology I was looking at this slide now it's thinking there's a slide that's how you engage in cultural competency not that you can see it whether it's just 30 years I can share that with you later if you want so like I mean why should you listen to me about this I guess is a common thing so I didn't really start this out properly as in how I should have been following protocol normally political protocol would be to introduce myself first so I just want to get y'all hyped up first obviously I've been having too much coffee. So I'm Shawn Wilson or Opaskwayak Cree from Northern Manitoba, so my people have lived in the sort of like if you imagine a map of North America and right in the center of it all the geographical center is like in northern North Dakota you look up from the geographical center straight up from there that's where I'm from. I'm probably if you went up like about five hundred miles more north so I would say you know the geographical center of North America is in the middle of North Dakota but the the center of the world really is 500 miles from an North Center of the real world. So my parents are Stan and Peggy Wilson, my grandparents have lived in on that area for a awful long time, so my family names are Wassanas (?) and Canacheech (?) and I guess that I was talking with my dad about this seeing how long we've lived there and and one of my other uncle's was saying well there's stories about it for a Sage's ago this happened and we had sense and people down south and I was like so we've got oral tradition stories of living there for four ice ages, so it's not like it's you know like we've just been there for the last thousand years or something we've been there for tens of thousands of years and stories about how of the migration south and moving back home again afterwards after that the glaciers retreat so we've been there a long time right so we've got a lot of knowledge of the land a possible explanation. Okay so that's where I'm from and it also is part of who I am so I'm as an indigenous person I identify with my home community and my home land. My grandfather was a trapper and trapper all his life and my father grew up on the trapline up until he was about 12 and went away to residential school and then so he's never really spoke English until he went away to residential school so that's sort of where I come from so now I I'm a father of three boys and that's really important to me start to think about okay yeah I'm a child and the grandchild and a great grandchild of people from that land but I'm also a father a grandfather to be a great grandfather to be a great great-great grandfather of children to be that we'll be from that land and they are indigenous to that land and we are indigenous to this land. So right now I work at them well I well I guess maybe so I've got that tradition and I was extremely fortunate in my upbringing and that even though my dad went to residential school where so we kind of lost a lot of language in our family, but he still was very careful to try and bring us up in a way that was cultural so we were always involved in community events and I've had a lot of training in, how do I put this, I've attended a lot of different ceremonies and I've had a lot of different training in our spiritual practices in my upbringing and a lot of training from a lot of different traditional elders, so that's been a

real good part of my life but also because my parents both went on and finished their PhDs, so they were I think the third and fourth or fourth and fifth ever treaty Indians to get their doctorates in Canada. I've also had that is fortunate to have that background where I've also had that a lot of come from a family that has a real knowledge of the education system and our education works, so it's having that foot in both worlds I guess I've had that traditional upbringing and traditional knowledge, but also real knowledge of how the system works and how to work in Western educational settings, so that's sort of what I bring into the work that I do is being able to sometimes translate between those two different worldviews and so that's oftentimes what I'm trying to do. So right now, I work at Gnibi College, which is Southern Cross University is a smaller University in Lismore area where it is sort of in the northeastern part of the state of New South Wales in Australia and when I tell people often times from up here with it's Southern Cross University they think oh it must be a Christian college or something but it's something crosses like, if you imagine the Big Dipper and it's a Star constellation that points towards whereas the South Pole is the Southern Cross universities actually named after a constellation in the southern sky but where I live is Bundjalung territory and the Bundjalung name for that constellation is Gnibi. Gnibi is a Black Swan, well the Black Swan flying, so they're that they're named for that constellation is because it looks like a Black Swan flying it's got the same proportions as a Black Swan when it's flying and it's kind of like one of those weird sort of coincidence like things that know if you know much about like the idea of southern knowledge and you know there's the Western knowledge of and the northern knowledge now it sort of has really been denigrating of southern knowledge, so there's we've got a whole lot of knowledge from out of africa and out of the southern parts of the world that is ignored, so this is Gnibi theories that we've been working on Gnibi theories, oh so there's a theory of like black swan theory is that there used to be an expression in england that say the lots of what is likely as a black swan because no one had ever, swans are white it was this expression but if it wasn't until they traveled to Australia and really that there are actually there are black swans that thing was saying like oh okay that doesn't really apply here right there's a whole theory built around that idea that we can only know what we know and there's going to be always things that we don't know about yet because we haven't experienced them so we have to be open to learning about new things and accept the fact that just because that's our common experience now it doesn't mean it's going to happen something's going to happen five minutes from now that big change everything right.

Part 2:

I think that to me that's a kind of interesting coincidence that I work somewhere named after Black Swan theory wasn't named after Black Swan theory, but it goes well with Black Swan Theory. Anyway, I'm getting sidetracked so I think that as indigenous people we have a whole bunch of indigenous knowledge as we've lived on the continents that we lived on since humans have been around right and we have been stayed that maintain that connection to the land that has given us knowledge systems and ways of doing things that could be a real benefit to the mainstream and I think we're at a point now where we can say that yeah Western science has given us a lot of the good stuff but Western science has also really screwed a lot of things up like what if you say look at the way the climate is changing right now like I mean that's not due to traditional knowledge that's due to Western science right so I think that we have a lot to offer as indigenous people if people start to recognize our knowledge systems. I

was going to tell you a really good story about this doctoral student what she's doing her research on and then I thought I can't actually remember her name so maybe I better not tell you her because I don't want to steal our ideas and I better not tell that but I think that you know I think that we have a lot to offer humanity in general as indigenous people because the way our knowledge systems work is built around relationships, so I think that that's something that's really lacking in Western science is that is knowledge about how to behave yourself I think that that's what we really have to offer that's a big benefit that we can that we can them that we could share with other people but I also have to recognize that there are a lot of barriers like there's the system is the way the system is and it is built to keep other knowledges out and we have to recognize also as indigenous academics like I mean we're have a vested interest in the system because it pays our salary so we're there's like okay it's you have to be careful who you're talking to you sometimes right because it's sad yeah well the feature did you in a second every foot know what I beat it's like you got to be careful you're talking to or what's talked about stuff so that there are sort of some barriers to the way these things that I'm talking about but it's hopefully if you can come in with an open mind you can see past certain things so I guess to me okay well yes thinking about indigenous knowledge then so if we're thinking about engaging with indigenous people we know that understanding there's been this history of the totaled denigration of indigenous knowledge and indigenous science as well okay but well let's start think about well what is indigenous knowledge then like we could talk about traditional indigenous knowledge which is knowledge that's based on the land and it's about the land, but we can start to also talk about okay but indigenous knowledge is an indigenous peoples are part of living cultures, so we're living, breathing. So we're not artifacts to the past we have to get beyond thinking of traditional indigenous knowledge as an artifact of the past and how things used to be and indigenous knowledge is what allows us to live as indigenous people in the world today. So what is it about indigenous knowledge okay and to me it's all about relationships so I can use a lot of big words but if you think about the nature of reality itself like Western science is really based on a whole idea that there is one true reality and it's like you can objectively study that one reality, whereas indigenous ontology or epistemology ways of thinking about reality is based on ideas not that there's one true external reality but that reality is the relationships that we're in, so we aren't just in relationships, we are relationships, everything is relationships everything is relation so that's not just relations between people we are that but we're also relationship with the land and our environment around us. We're relationships with our ancestors and our descendants, we are the relationships that we hold with the cosmos we are but we have to expend that even further and think about we are the relationships that we hold with ideas and with abstractions that makes us who we are that guides how we think those relationships so to me the relationship is if you just keep that in mind it's all about relationships and everything else falls into place. Okay so if that is the nature of reality then it becomes a lot more important to think about other relationships oh okay well then how do you behave to me that is a really important question how am I going to behave myself how do I behave in a manner that is like entering into respectful relationships. Because that's how you getting the truth if reality is relationships then a good relationship is going to lead to the truth a bad relationship is going to lead to abusive place that's going to be abusing the truth okay so you have to really think about how you behave but I think that ethics and protocols are really important for indigenous people but in a different way, not in that sort of universalistic these are laws of behavior but in a way of how do you behave as a nice person okay so that becomes the fundamental thing to think about we're just talking thinking about engagements how do I behave myself and then how do we teach? how do we teach other people how to behave? how do we teach other people to recognize that they're in relationships? how do we teach

other people how to learn new stuff? okay so it's all about how do we engage in relationships? To me, that's a crucial key point to understanding how to engage with indigenous people is to think about how do I engage in the relationship. If you can think about that, then everything else will kind of fall into place. Okay so I think okay well what are some examples of that so I'll see y'all man okay so that makes it a bit harder. So I thought maybe I could tell you about four different little stories about engagement and about relationships about teaching so in relationships in educational settings. So I was racking my brain about this and I know okay what are some good examples and so I thought okay well the first example I could think of is okay I can remember the name of my kindergarten teacher Mrs. Taylor I can remember but the first teacher that really stands in my experience is being an exceptional teacher was when I was in third grade and Mrs. Curran and I was thinking oh well thank Mrs. Curran but I think whether I know what her name is so I actually e-mailed the school can you look back in your record to see who Mrs. Curran was, Betty Norah Curran or Norah Betty I can't remember now. I should have written it down. So she taught that Hope School in California that when my parents were working on their doctorates we had gone to California. I took third grade there. Mrs. Curran in her classroom she was a third grade teacher but she also owned a nursery, so every week she would take a group of some of the students from the classroom with her to the nursery so I would like it in a van full of students to the nursery and we had our own little garden plot there so every week we do something different so like you know we went right through from planting seedlings and you know getting seedlings going in the nursery and then transfer planting them out into the our little garden plot and then growing them up and people that every week would have to go and we either enough they need watering we do watering so learning about that hands-on relationship with earth was really important to her and it was that for me that was a really exciting thing to learn and then at the end of the year when, well it wasn't at the end of the year, but was partway through the year when the things started to ripen it was time to harvest things then she got let us take those things that you know we as third graders are really proud of growing these things and then we got to take them home and give them back to our families and to me that was a really important thing and it was a really good lesson that I think a lot of teachers could learn from is it's like for indigenous students it's not just about learning because learning is in itself is meh whatever, but if you can learn how to provide for your family I think that that is one thing that every indigenous student I've ever talked to they don't go to university to make things better for themselves, they go to make things better for their children they go to make things better for their grandchildren or their community. So okay that was a good lesson for me and when I think back on it now about how do we make an education so that we're encouraging students and giving them the tools to give things back to their family give things back to their community that needs to be part of our how we engage with education. okay so that was one example then the next person so you know go for third grade and I can't remember any of my teachers names again it's like Oh hmm okay I must not have had that big of impact the next teacher's name I can remember was when I was in 11th grade and his name was Rod Johnson and so what was it about him that was memorable? what made his lessons stand out? and that wasn't the lessons that he taught I can't remember anything I learned in year 11 I doubt if you can either write but what was memorable from what I learned from him is he opened up his classroom at lunchtime and after school and there was always just like a group of kids that came there and hung out now by the time I was in 11th grade there wasn't any other Aboriginal students around other than the ones that were in like the vocational stream at school so because I was in sort of more academic stream I was like usually the only indigenous kid in most of my classes so it was really important for me to have this place where I went at lunchtime and went after school sometimes to build that sense of community,

so what he was able to do through opening his class anyway didn't like do anything in particular like it mostly like mean like marking papers or something but he'd always make little wisecracks with us and stuff what he did was he allowed us to build a sense of community in the school because it was a massive school and to have like this one little place that I felt like I could go and belong and felt the sense of belonging was really important for me so that sense of building up community within often well looks like I know there was like 1,500 kids at the high school or whatever but so I didn't feel connected to the high school I've been I was played on some of the sports team and come up a little bit connected there but for me it was that one classroom or he built sense of community that to me was the most important thing I remembered out of high school okay so what what can we learn about engagement from that and in summary on the importance of giving our students a sense of community in our institutions? so like yeah you can identify with MSU as a wholen but it's like yeah but yeah really how many students are there here and do you feel a sense of community with individuals and it's like probably nothing so how can we create a sense of community with students in smaller groups so they can actually they're like real people. That's something to consider. okay so then when I went through high school and so the next sort of story I was thinking about this like okay so I went did my Bachelor of Science degree I think so who stood out for me as a good teacher there and I was thinking, hmm, I cannot remember a single professor that I had but when I was doing my bachelor's degree and I think that that says a lot well I mean maybe I shouldn't say the university but I will it was University of Manitoba there I was like one of a sea of you know fifteen hundred students and mostly units that I was in and they couldn't give a shit who I was I was there the number and and so it was a for me a really good sort of it wasn't a good experience, but thinking back on it what I learned from that is what happens when there's a total lack of engagement there was no no efforts made by the university to engage with undergraduate students. I think that the year I started there there was two different programs started an engineering access program for Aboriginal kids and medical, was a pre-medical program as well but so there was some there trying to get some indigenous students in that but I wasn't in either of those programs I didn't really fit in anywhere there was certainly wasn't anything in the hard sciences that was trying to encourage sense of community amongst the students there's more like a sense of competition amongst the students try and get the best marks right so it was like there's a lessons that I gained from a bad example so and I can't remember any of my professors, so then I'll say three people always talk about stuff in fours, so I got to think of four examples. After I finished my bachelors degree, I just screwed around for a while is then people do and I went back and really didn't like the hard sciences by the time I finished my bachelor's degree it was just there was a total lack of connecting the content that we were learning into any sort of context of how that knowledge could be used anyway so I decided to do a master's degree in community psychology okay that sounds interesting how do you think about psychology in the community level to me that was exciting so the I went to University of Alaska Fairbanks and then I was thinking all right here is a really good example of engagement again because when I was at Fairbanks there was a they had a center that was called Rural Student Services because there's a lot of Alaska Natives that come in from really small communities to come into university right so there could only be two or three hundred people in their communities and so they recognized that these kids wouldn't necessarily know very many people in the big city so Fairbanks is a massive city of 70,000 people or something on the timeline so how can we how can we help these kids to build a sense of community so they had Rural Student Services and Rural Student Services every month they had a feast and they recognized that that was a traditional part of how indigenous people engage with each other is we have feasts and we sit together and we share and we

hang out and tease each other and that's what we do right so they had feasts every month and it was a really good way of building community but the other thing that it did I didn't think about this so quite a bit later was that say for example I went out to Fort Yukon one time I was talking with interviewing an elder for part of my thesis and you know we read his house and have a tea whatever you know after a couple hours of talking it was I was getting ready to go and he said he liked dried caribou and I said yeah I said okay wait a minute massage I'll get you some so I thought you know he's going to give me like a couple little pieces of dried caribou he went and got a pillowcase and he filled up the pillowcase with about you know five or six pounds of dried caribou meat I was like it's got this great big Santa Claus sack of dried caribou meat is taken home with me so I cut that down with me on the fly in flight community back down to Fairbanks and the next time there was a feast at Rural Student Services I brought along all this caribou with me and thinking about how that made me feel as you know again being able to help provide for the other students and I think it I thought back at it Oh every student usually when they went home the someone from the community would send something in so whether it was people from the coast they would send in whale meat or was people that you know lived in interior they would send in some caribou or some moose or some muskrat or beaver or whatever but how that gave the community an opportunity to give back to the students so they recognized that these students are away from home they're missing their traditional foods that it was an opportunity for this community to give back in a meaningful way like you know me you can say the community is giving by giving us your students at your tuition fees but that's not meaningful for most people that's like the opposite of meaningful but the fact that they could give some of the traditional foods and that they were really appreciated was a meaningful way of engaging and the other thing that they had there was elders and residents so they had a house on campus where every semester they brought in two different elders to come and live on campus and they were took place in love it were included in a lot of the classes but they're also there that you know anyone could go and just talk with them so they the University then I would say so they appreciated the food that the community was providing but they also really demonstrated that they appreciated indigenous knowledge and indigenous teachings as they were provided by the elders so that to me is another really good example of so like when I think back of those individual teachers that take good examples of individuals engaging with students engaging building community engaging with knowledge so that you're able to give back and use it to help your community a lack of engagement but Alaska it was like I can think of lots of different professors there too but to me it's a really good example of an institutional way of thinking about engagement.

Part 3:

So there was a way for community to engage with the institution of the university so that's was the first time I've seen that so to me that's a really important thing so there's those four different lessons about you know engagement at a personal level, building community, a lack of engagement and the results of that and engagement at an institutional level so we need to start to think about those things okay so those are is like meaningful stories lessons about engagement and lack of engagement and I think it okay hmm that's cool but then but what happens if you don't do it and this is where I was thinking ah okay hmm so I have been talking a lot about this with different people and what happens if you don't engage? What happens if you don't maintain good healthy relationships? So Jack Forbes is a Cree guy

from Saskatchewan and he wrote this book called Columbus and other cannibals and it talks about Wentiko disease or another way of describing it as a malignant egophrenia or egophrenic psychosis. I'm deliberately not going to name any names because I want to be able to travel back in and out of this country, but I want to read quote from Jack Forbes how he writes about Wetiko disease greed knows no limits, perversion knows no borders, arrogance knows no frontiers and deceit knows no edges. so he wrote this back in actually don't know when the first version came out and I think within 1970s, but the version I just came up with and I have come out in 2008, but it's pretty powerful stuff and I think so what is Wetiko disease and he is the describing colonialism as a virus okay now a wetiko is a Cree entity a lot of person to the entity that if someone through famine or whatever reason resorts to cannibalism they can contract wetiko disease okay so Ojibwa people would call it Wendigo disease there's a wendigo diseases, same thing. and what happens in once you consume human flesh, the characteristic of what happens to you is you become insatiably hungry so the more you eat the more you have to eat so it's like the more you eat you have to keep eating you have to keep eating and eating more and more and more so that it's an insatiable desire to consume so Jack Forbes is talking about this that that's like what what colonialism is it's this insatiable desire to consume so you start to consume people you consume lands you consume ideas you consume everything you can't stop eating and the more you eat, the more you have to eat, but it's contagious it's like a zombie like you get bitten by a zombie right you turn into a zombie Wetiko disease is contagious, so if you are infected by colonialism you in effect become become infected with wetiko disease okay that's worth thinking about and it's scary as hell because wetiko is a really scary guy alright it's not it's um it's scary shit anyway so that's that's a common thing that we have like with the Ojibwe and Cree people but a lot of different peoples of North America have the stories of traditional stories of this need to endlessly consume okay so I was talking with my friends about this down in Australia and they're saying oh yeah I was talking to this guy and he's a Yuan man and he's saying oh well we have a similar sort of guy down here he's called a Yowie so there's different versions of a Yowie there's a little just a little hairy guys numbers like something that's sort of like a sasquatch that's kind of a furry and they have like middle make little play toys out of it like we sort of do a sasquatch but then there's like a real Yowie which is a wetiko and he said oh so you is describing this to me and so what is what what can you tell me about a Yowie and you think well one thing about it is it just they're talking with different elders they say it just wanders around aimlessly so it doesn't have a direction or a purpose it just wanders aimlessly it's only there's only purpose is to keep eating okay that's a really good description also of colonialism right it doesn't have a direction it just ah just wanders around and it just has to keep eating the it has keep consuming doesn't have a direction of where it wants to go or what it wants to do okay I said when you say so the other thing about a Yowie is that it can't see itself so that if it looks in a lake or a river it doesn't actually see itself okay so it lacks the ability to reflect it can't self reflect it can't see what itself what it's doing and I think that that's another really good so that's part of what I do is I look at traditional stories and say oh how can we use those and fly them in modern contexts that's another really good way of thinking about colonialism it doesn't have the ability to self reflect it doesn't recognize what it's doing if you talk about white privilege or male privilege it's like most people know that is if they don't have the ability to reflect on their own privilege right okay so that's that scary stuff so I was talking about also I was talking with my dad so what else what do you do about a wetiko? how do you how do you cure wetiko disease? I mean so he was thinking about it well he was thinking like so I'm trying to read here make sure I get his words right but he is saying wetiko disease is sort of like a real mental and social and emotional and physical, but especially a spiritual collapse. That's what causes, that's what happens when wetiko diseases crash, so it

should people that when that happens that people need to pray for centering within their environment and have a get a critical consciousness of being part of their environment of being around other beings like their your other plants and other animals and being at ease in your environment and the way to overcome wetiko diseases by pure willpower so you have to have mind over fear and belief the spirits will take care of you so that there's a whole thing about a critical reflection is an important part of overcoming wetiko disease and having willpower and the power I'm going to drive to do something to change it so you can't just accept that it's an error you have to you have to have the will to change it okay that makes a lot of sense so then I was also talking to my friends about Yowie so what do you do about Yowie let me say oh well so I've talked to my friend Stuart he's the Yuan guy and he said well when he was talking to an elder once he was he was up and they actually saw a Yowie that was like down there and it's like okay really quiet so these things actually take place in our environment he said so he's talking about that with elder but how do you avoid a Yowie and he said the Yowie's are afraid of laughter so one thing you could do is wouldn't and you'll notice about Native American people like whenever we gather we laugh a lot so that's that laughter is an important part of our culture but also it would say it inoculates us against wetiko disease laughing laughter the laughter is important well I was talking to a bunch one guy who's the guy that work with anything oh yeah we have these stories of Yowie too and he said what we teach kids because we use wetiko as sort of like a boogeyman that you that you use to control their behavior like if you go out at night the Yowie you know they always going to get you so what you do to avoid the Yowie is you recognize that it is a lot stronger than you and there's a lot of power it's what you have to do is you have to be quiet you have to hide and sort of stay under the covers so sometimes we have to recognize that this wetiko disease is strong and it's powerful more powerful than us a lot of time so if you know you have to know when you have to duck and cover and just fly under the radar okay so then I was talking with another guy who's a Orogeny guy from Australia and he was saying oh yeah I guess and they said how we sort of talked about the Yowie is the Yowie has no skin and but but what he was it even means skin is in like the covering but they talk about skin as being your kinship network so like people belong to one skin or another skin it's like your clan so a Yowie has no clan, it lacks relationships, so it is also again if you think about what does this mean in the modern like the lack of relationship leads you to become a Yowie so oh okay so anyway enough talking about Yowie, I thought okay well that's there's this wetiko disease that is malignant egophrenia so your ego becomes so big that it becomes malignant and cancerous you have the everending need to consume so what can we do about it so again that's to me engaged education is a way to overcome wetiko disease okay an engaged education requires reflection so you have to encourage reflexive practice reflexive practice is think why am I doing what am I doing what is the purpose behind why I'm doing this? Alright, so we have to be encouraging of research that is reflective and is when we talk about that you know I had those four examples so it's like person is personally giving back but it's also at an institutional level it is reflexive and so one of my doctoral students learning about the whole idea of how do you encourage institutional reflection how do you encourage the whole institution to reflect on its practice so she use calls this reflectability how do you encourage institutional reflectability so we have to start to think about these things how do we how do we get these things to happen and then how do we teach how do we teach people how to engage in relationships properly how do we teach people how to reflect on their practice as they're learning so that's the whole part of indigenous pedagogy is our knowledge is about in our worldviews are around relationships so a lot of our pedagogy is how do you behave in a relationship how we teach is teaching people how to relate with each other so that's a big part of our pedagogy is how do we how do we engage in respectful relationships. So I think if we can

start to keep this in mind all of these things are teirs or ways of avoiding the wetiko so you reflect the practices teaching people how to reflect look back in a mirror that is a way to stop wetiko disease if people can see what they're doing people have a purpose so people know where they're going and they're doing something that is for the benefit of the community it's not for personal gain and it's not engaging in education so you could keep eating and eating knowledge you are in a relationship with knowledge so that you can benefit your community so to me the whole idea of respectful relationship is important and sorry I'm blathering on I'm running at a time so I was thinking okay so how do I how do we do that? right what what is how do you engage in a respectful relationship> that's why I was thinking all right so here's some traditional preteachings I'll share with you really quickly so Pastahowin is roughly translated means natural law so and natural law has natural consequences though it may be natural law might be like don't stand up in a canoe right and natural consequence is if you stand up in a canoe someone's going to fall in the water right so we teach people how to engage in relationships with natural law sort of way if you treat someone badly they'll treat you badly back right but there's a next sort of layer of law go that's called Otchinowin which is sacred law so if we use that analogy like don't stand up in a canoe or someone's going to fall in the water sacred law is more like don't disrespect water or respect water if you disrespect water there's going to be sacred consequences and you know someone may not fall in the canoe but it might be that your water system is going to get fouled up if you disrespect water it's going to have not sacred consequences aren't necessarily just on you they might be on your children and your grandchildren your great-great grandchildren your great-great-great grandchildren so if we're like say like disrespecting water by building pipelines through that are filling it with oil yeah we make that the consequences but eventually that pipeline is going to break and it's going to mean that for our grandchildren and our great great great grandchildren they're going to have water because we're disrespecting water so we have to start to think about not just natural law which I think most Western law is kind of based on natural law but they it doesn't go further and think about sacred law about respect. How do you act respectfully towards things? so the last thing I want to say is Sakihwaywin and that means love in action well more or less, so that's how you that's how you follow sacred law and natural law is you act with love so if you are loving in how you do things then you will be acting respectfully if you have love and good intentions in your heart when you engage in relationships that's going to be you know rather than control rather than consumption it's just love you're going to engage in relationships in a whole different way. So to me that's the important the takeaway message is practice love and action so part of how you practice being loving is you laugh and have fun like sharing a laugh with someone is fun I think that's love you're not making fun of people you're having fun with people so that's it that's fun and that's that's loving but also you have to reflect on how you're doing things right so you can reflect personally as a person how am I engaging this relationship am I demonstrating love and how I'm acting with other people but we have to sort of encourage more sort of like how is our society acting? is it acting in a loving manner towards members of society? is it acting as a societal level? are we acting in a loving in a loving way? and institutionally we have to start to encourage institutions to think about how are we react our we interacting how are we relating to people are we relating people in a loving way or are we just in an abusive relationship with communities where we're just taking knowledge from them all the time taking their tuition and their kids and eating them or are we in a respectful relationship with community are we you know loving so did to be a that's the main thing to think about is how just reflect on how we are acting and are we acting with love.