Exploring the Intersectionality of Settler-Ally, Reconciliation, and Indigenous Resurgence

by

Rebecca Shortt

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ABSTRACT

For the past 400 years Indigenous peoples in Canada have actively resisted colonial impositions on their way of life (Simpson, 2011). The impact of the relationship that non-Indigenous people have had with Indigenous people during these times of resistance has been both positive and negative. The commencement of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2008 prompted the wider conversation of Canada's difficult relationship with Indigenous peoples and an exploration of how to begin the process of reconciliation. However, the final report from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission left many, particularly non-Indigenous people, struggling with their roles and responsibilities to achieving reconciliation, or what steps they could take to become a settler-ally. At the same time, many scholars began to critique the concept of reconciliation, calling instead for Indigenous resurgence (Simpson, 2011). As well, the term settler-ally has been idealized and taken up by many who do not embody the necessary shift in thinking to respectfully stand in solidarity with Indigenous peoples. There is a lack of literature that explores how these three concepts are interconnected and can be used as tools to foster healthy Indigenous/non-Indigenous relationships.

Drawing on Indigenous research methodologies, the goal of the research was to explore how individuals understand and build their capacity to participate in the continually evolving relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people with specific objectives to 1) move into and understand the role of settler-ally in solidarity with reconciliation, 2) continue to work and live in relationships that promote reconciliation and resurgence; and 3) center Indigenous values and voices in the conversation through the use of Indigenous methodologies within academic work.

Interviews and a sharing circle with Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars, educators, service providers, and activists created a space where individuals shared multiple perspectives. Emerging from the stories that participants shared was that importance of understanding individual and collective responses and responsibilities to reconciliation. Working through feelings of anger, fear, shame, and guilt that act as barriers allows individuals to engage collectively in the ethical space and begin to achieve resurgence and reconciliation.

PREFACE

This thesis is an original work by Rebecca Shortt. The research project, of which this thesis is a part, received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, Project Name “Exploring the Intersectionality of Settler Ally, Reconciliation, and Indigenous Resurgence”, Pro00073280, September 22, 2017.

DEDICATION

To A.H.

For the iced coffees
For the unwavering support and advice
For showing me the impact of the quiet work

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I would like to express my gratitude to the many people who provided immense support not only to the research, but to me as I trudged through this process. I am eternally grateful to my supervisor, Dr. Fay Fletcher, without whom this research would still be ideas in my head. As well, I am also grateful to Alicia Hibbert for the lengthy and thought provoking conversations and for your endless support and understanding. Fay and Alicia, you talked me into pursuing a graduate degree and have been both my role models and my mentors throughout the process. Thank you.

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I am incredibly grateful to my family and friends. My parents - my mom who told me to be great and my Dad who grew with me along this journey – thank you for beginning these difficult conversations with me years ago and for teaching me acceptance and kindness. Thank you to my partner, Luke, for always bringing me redbull and chocolate and never passing judgement. Thank you for your support, care, and understanding. Thank you to the rest of my family and friends for your curiosity and your willingness to have these difficult conversations with me. Also, a huge thank you to the LSJ family – Fay, Alicia, Mandy, Matana, and Destiny thank you for always being so flexible, accommodating, and supportive. Brent, thank you for the encouragement and all the lengthy theoretical conversations. Kyle, thank you for listening to me and for always being so positive, it was greatly appreciated, especially in the fast few months of the process!

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Finally, I would like to express a heartfelt thank you to Edwin Yellowbird, who showed me what it truly means to build relationships in a kind and compassionate way. Thank you for the teachings, for your guidance, and for always making space for everyone.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Hands trembling, heart pounding, breath quickening. Eyes open, eyes closed, there is no difference, it is pitch black and I can't see a thing no matter how wide I make my eyes. I'm afraid. Not just fear of the pitch black engulfing the room, but fear of not knowing what's going to happen next, fear of what I can't see. And right now, I can't see a thing. This is my first experience in a night lodge, a ceremony that is not my right to explain here, except to say that the room has been completely devoid of any and all lights. I'm panicking, I could leave, no one is forcing me stay here. No, I just need to slow my breathing down, it's just darkness. My friend and colleague, Matana, sits closely next to me, we tightly hold hands. And as I hold her hand and focus on my breathing I remember what my mentor said to me earlier about the night lodge: "We're all there to support one another." I choose to stay. I need to stay. Not only am I holding Matana's hand for my own comfort, but also to support her. I'm there to experience, to listen, and to support each person that is also experiencing the ceremony for the first time. I'm sitting in a room of around 50 people, both complete strangers and close friends, but I'm there to support everyone and they are there to support me.

This story reflects the first time that I attended ceremony. Over the next year and a half, from the time of this ceremony to now, I continue to engage in ceremony in different ways and ensured the incorporation of ceremony within my research. The work of reconciliation, resurgence, and allyship can be difficult and emotional, but through the work we build strong relationships with one another. One way that I build these strong relationships and managed my way through the emotional difficulties was through ceremony. I came to know Elder Edwin Yellowbird through my supervisor. I offered Edwin protocol and he has given permission for me

to share my experiences of attending ceremony with him, although I will not share the processes or the meanings of these ceremonies, only my personal feelings and experiences.

Positioning Myself in the Research

I will begin by first positioning myself in this research, I relate the words of Eber Hampton that "In speaking today I have a narrow platform … I do not speak for my nation. I speak for myself and so my platform is narrow" (1997, p. 46). Just as it is imperative to understand that one Indigenous scholar does not speak for the entirety of Indigenous peoples, I do not speak for the entirety of non-Indigenous people in this thesis. As I began to engage with more and more Indigenous scholars, I learned the importance of situating oneself as an act of reflexivity for decolonization, as well as to emphasize the importance of relationship in Indigenous worldviews (Weber-Pillwax, 1999; Steinhauer, 2002; Wilson, 2008). Not only does this provide context for the reader, but in doing so, I practice the value of relationality, one of the key components in Indigenous Research Methodologies (IRM) (Wilson, 2008). As I discuss the importance of relationship building, it is imperative that the reader have a sense of who I am and why I have chosen to take up this research. Eber Hampton (1997) notes that people have motives for choosing to take up this work and that often these motives are emotional. In positioning myself and in sharing stories that led to me taking up this topic of research, I am sharing my motivations and justifications for taking up this work. It was through a process and deep self-reflection that led me to understand that it was because of my relationships with friends, family, and work colleagues that my motives became personal and emotion.

I am a settler Canadian, born and raised in Stony Plain, Alberta. Stony Plain began as a small farming town and is surrounded by three reserves: Enoch, Paul Band, and Alexis. I make note of this because I believe that my identity has been heavily shaped by the community I grew

up in. I have two parents, both of whom currently work for the Edmonton Public School Board. I am now living, working, and attending university in Edmonton. In my 1st or 2nd year of university (when I was 18-19 years old) I saw a poster outside the Education gym that used the words “Treaty 6 territory.” I convinced myself that I already knew that I was raised and have always lived on Treaty 6. Although at the time I assumed I knew what was meant by Treaty 6, six years later I am beginning to understand that treaty means more than a number and area of land, but I am still deepening my understanding of the agreements made by our ancestors in the signing of treaties.

My relationship and my motivations to engage with this research topic are best explained through personal stories. As a child I grew up with a foster brother from Samson Cree First Nation (one of the four nations of Maskwacis). This relationship had a huge impact on who I am today and has guided the direction of my research interests. Although it was both rewarding and challenging to grow up with a foster brother, it meant that I began having conversations with my family about the relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people from a young age. As a family, we attended many events held at Edmonton Public Schools that celebrated Indigenous cultures, and I also had long conversations with my mom about the inter-generational impact of residential school on the students in her class. When I was about 16 years old, my foster brother moved into a group home, and although I am still reconciling with our loss of contact I have chosen not be paralyzed by feelings of guilt but instead to continue a learning journey.

To focus in on the most recent events on this journey, I start in 2012 when Idle No More (INM) was gaining a public profile and following. At this time, I made a fool of myself by: 1) not knowing it was an Indigenous led movement and 2) thinking that if we don’t idle our cars in

the winter in Canada, we would damage our cars. It was my neighbour that corrected me and briefly filled me in. Around this time, I was taking undergraduate courses in Northwest Indigenous cultures and beginning to learn, in depth, the history of how Canada became a nation. A friend I had grown up with posted on Facebook in regards to INM that: “they should go protest on the roads we built for them.” I was enraged because this comment came after a person had tried to explain the true motivations behind INM on this comment chain. When I messaged my friend privately to try and explain what was really going on, it became evident to me that they simply weren’t interested in considering something that may challenge prevailing stereotypes that were supported by misinformation and incorrect assumptions. At the time, this person was studying to become an educator.

This incident was enough motivation for me to know I had to do something, but what? There are days when I think to myself, “I am a white woman. Why am I doing this work? Is it just furthering the problem? Is my voice suppressing the voice of others?” There are other days when I am motivated to continue the work full force, like when I hear a group of elderly people in McDonalds say: “if I was Prime Minister at the time I would say there was a war and we won and you need to get over it.” As I read more and, more importantly, - as I build more relationships, I am increasingly motivated to continue the work. I am hopeful because of the small victories that I see in my everyday life. For example, my Dad, who argued that the standoff at Kanehsatà:ke was an act of anarchy, at least now uses the term Indigenous instead of Indian and knows it means First Nations, Inuit, and Metis and is excited to share with me his experiences of sitting in a pipe ceremony when he was younger. Other small victories happened directly to me, like facing my discomforts and attending ceremony, or making it through a whole

sweat, or learning to make tobacco pouches all by myself, and of course, building incredibly enriching relationships throughout my journey.

Background, Purpose, and Problem

Paulette Regan's (2010) book, *Unsettling the Settler Within*, "is a call to action for non-Indigenous Canadians who do not see a need to take part in a truth-telling and reconciliation process" (17). My master's thesis, drawing heavily on Regan's work, explores the experiences and perspectives of those who are willing to begin the journey or are already on the journey of reconciliation. The research includes participants who have confronted obstacles, become unsure of how to continue down the path, or whose flame has been extinguished and needs to be rekindled. The following story captures how these individuals have struggled, and continue to struggle with, finding their way in learning truth and being part of reconciliation.

Before I began my graduate research - when all I knew was that I would explore Indigenous/non-Indigenous relationships - I was working for The Family Centre in Edmonton, Alberta as a "Culture Coach." My job was to bring students together and, through activities and games, discuss how we are all very different yet similar to one another, and how to respectfully engage with one another. I had brought in an Edmonton Public Library (EPL) employee to let the students try the new equipment and technology the library had acquired for a new program. After the students had finished up and gone home, the EPL employee asked me what I was studying in school, and I told her my go-to at the time: "Indigenous/non-Indigenous relationships." She was thrilled; the Edmonton Public Library was just in its planning phases to engage with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's (2015) Calls to Action and had asked their staff to begin incorporating "Indigenous programming". In her eyes, I was an "expert" because I had experience working with various cultures and was specifically studying Indigenous culture. She

asked for my advice on how she could incorporate Indigenous culture into her programs as she felt she did not have any resources. Although she knew she could contact an Elder that worked with the library, she had not because she was unsure of the protocols involved in the process.

In the moment, I saw this plea for help as very shallow. This library employee was asked to engage with Indigenous people, knowledge, and culture as part of her job, but I assumed she wasn't truly interested, and that it wasn't meaningful to her. As I reflect back on that moment now, 3 years later, I have come to realize that I shared the same question with many others after the commencement of the TRC in 2009: "what can I do and how can I do it?" The release of the Calls to Action in 2015 did not answer this question for the average person; rather, it addressed actions that should be taken by governments and institutions. The Edmonton Public Library as an organization understands that it has a responsibility to respond to the Calls to Action, but the individual workers, tasked with fulfilling that responsibility, are left wondering how to begin.

Research Goal and Objectives

The goal of the research is to explore how individuals understand and build their capacity to participate in the continually evolving relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples so as to promote peace, equity, respect, and justice. The specific objectives of this research are to understand how non-Indigenous people: 1) move into and understand the role of settler-ally in solidarity with reconciliation, 2) continue to work and live in relationships that promote reconciliation and resurgence; and 3) center Indigenous values and voices in the conversation through the use of Indigenous methodologies within academic work.

The research is significant to anyone engaging in relationship building between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people because of its applied approach to understanding multiple perspectives. Educators, service providers, community members, and activists who advocate for

and work with Indigenous peoples will benefit from the knowledge produced from this research. Responses gathered from talking circles and interviews will address uncertainties about steps to take to foster respectful[1] and ethical[2] relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. It is not intended to provide a step by step guide on being an ally.

This research provides an example of the application of Indigenous research methodologies - and the centering of Indigenous values and ceremonies - within academic research by a non-Indigenous graduate student. I was mentored by First Nations and Metis people, as well as self-identified settler-ally academics. In this way, the underlying basis and ongoing engagement in research - as well as the final research product - are grounded in Indigenous epistemologies. This represents a significant shift in post-secondary education for non-Indigenous graduate students in mainstream institutions.

In the book *Research is Ceremony*, Sean Wilson (2008) not only opens a conversation with the reader, he also writes directly to his sons. Wilson engages the reader on a personal level while incorporating his research and theory. I aim to take up this approach throughout my thesis and engage with the principle of relationality. It is an act of walking the talk. Coincidentally, the work I was doing while writing this thesis provided the opportunity to attend ceremony numerous times and truly 'walk the talk.' Reflecting now on these ceremonies, I was able to further my understandings of relationality and the importance of relationship building, Indigenous worldviews, and reflectivity for decolonization. At the first few ceremonies I attend, I was incredibly uncomfortable because I did not know the processes or what was expected of me. As I attended more ceremonies and gained experiences I was able to build relationships with the

[1] In using the term respectful I draw on Indigenous research methodologies and the importance of centering Indigenous voices and valuing Indigenous knowledges and worldviews.
[2] Ethical being defined in terms of Willie Ermine's "Ethical Space" (2007) in which people are held accountable to engage in meaningful and productive conversation

people I was attending with, and particularly with the Elder holding the ceremony. It was through these relationships and experiences that I moved beyond my discomfort and felt able to continue attending ceremonies. It was also through attending ceremony that I was able to increase my knowledge of Indigenous worldviews, knowledge that I would not have received through academic sources. I gained many teachings through ceremony that have influenced my choice of methods within the research.

Being that the importance of relationship building is emphasized throughout both my research and the literature, it would seem hypocritical not to approach this thesis with relationship building in mind. I will share my own experiences throughout the work as I understand myself to also be a participant of this research project.

Notes on Terminology

The words we choose to use have an impact on how we see and understand the world and in turn depict to others what our worldviews might be. Wilson (2008) speaks to the importance of shifting terminology as a means to shift understanding (p. 54). I believe it is important to clearly explain how and why I am using particular words in an attempt to avoid potential misinterpretations.

Indigenous Peoples

The term Indigenous refers to First Nations, Metis, and Inuit peoples. However, I do not proceed with the intention to generalize all First Nations, Metis, and Inuit people; I recognize that there are many different First Nations that have unique languages, traditions, government structures, worldviews, and cultures. For this reason, I pluralize 'peoples' in recognition of this diversity. The terms Indigenous and Indigenous peoples will be used throughout excluding

quotes from literature and participants, in these cases I will use terms that the authors or participants have chosen to use.

Settler and non-Indigenous

Although the term settler can sometimes be understood as a term relating to people who "settled" Canada. I use the term interchangeably with non-Indigenous people to understand that colonization is not a thing of the past. Non-Indigenous people are still settling in Canada. Interchangeably using these terms addresses the diversity of the settler population as Lowman and Barker (2015) have expressed. The use of the term does not come with negative connotation, rather one of the goals of this research is to encourage settler Canadians to understand their identity and how it has been created with the intention of moving forward on a decolonizing and transformative journey.

Settler-Ally

I use the terms settler-ally and ally as it reflects the majority of the literature and it was the first term I came across that began to explain some of the concepts I was exploring. By some, the term ally has been deemed inappropriate as non-Indigenous people have self-identified as an ally without an understanding of the accountability that is required to be in relationships with Indigenous resurgence. This research does not suggest a replacement term, rather I will use this term so that 1) a common language can be used to allow us to explore the concept in greater detail and 2) to be able to provide a greater critique of how the term has been defined and understood by individuals who are engaging in reconciliation and resurgence.

Reconciliation

The term reconciliation has many different understandings according to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015). Particularly in 2017, as I was conducting the majority of this

research, Canada celebrated its 150th birthday and people were engaging with the Truth and Reconciliations Calls to Action. Throughout this year the term reconciliation gained a great deal of public profile. However, there is critique that the engagement with the Calls to Action and reconciliation was superficial as it was used as a means for settler Canadians to move past potential feelings of shame and guilt that may arise with an understanding of history in Canada. I use the term reconciliation because of its abundance in the literature, particularly as a result of the TRC, and explore how people interpret and engage in reconciliation.

Relationships

I use the term relationship throughout my work. Specifically I am referring to interpersonal relationships that are built either through work settings, social events, ceremony, or networking. Although intimate relationships may grow from these, I focus on the building of relationships for the sake of collaborating within the fields of reconciliation and resurgence.

Many other terms may arise throughout the research that are open to different interpretations. I do my best to explain how I interpret these terms through an understanding of the literature and an analysis of what participants have shared.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review reflects a very intentional exploration of the works of Indigenous scholars as a way to represent Indigenous voice, but also to engage in Indigenous research methodologies (IRM). As I read Indigenous scholars, I begin to understand IRM in ways that would not be possible in isolation. I explore literature on reconciliation, resurgence, and allyship. I also explore literature on collaboration strategies and ethical spaces. This literature takes the focus away from an Indigenous/non-Indigenous context, highlighting the ways that people interact with each other on a very basic, humanistic level.

My initial delve into the topic of Indigenous/non-Indigenous relationships began by looking into Indigenous led social movements and the roles that non-Indigenous people play in them. This research brought me to explore resurgence. Simpson (2011) explains resurgence through sharing stories of collective action within her own community. Through this explanation, I understood that the social movements I studied were so much more than I had initially thought. These movements and marches were collective acts of resurgence and the tension between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples during these movements was due to the fact that non-Indigenous people did not understand the resurgence that was happening.

The TRC is another movement in time that created a space for resurgence to occur through the use of sharing circles, traditional languages, ceremony, and the invitation of Indigenous artisans. This is where I see reconciliation and resurgence coming together. The TRC encouraged a dialogue amongst people that explored the meaning of reconciliation. We are living in a moment where reconciliation and resurgence are happening together. This is where the concept of allyship plays a role. For both resurgence and reconciliation to occur, there needs to

be allies; people who are willing to listen and understand as best they can the importance of resurgence. To do this, reconciliation is vital.

Reconciliation

In 2009[3], Justice Murray Sinclair, with Commissioners Marie Wilson and Wilton Littlechild, led the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC). The TRC came about as a result of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. The commissioners travelled throughout Canada to hear stories from over 6000 residential school survivors. The mandate of the Commission, found in Section "N" of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, was to "put the past behind us so that we can work towards a stronger and healthier future" (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, Appendix 1). The TRC held seven national events across Canada with the goal of revealing residential school experiences and beginning to understand how Canada can move forward with reconciliation. According to the Commission, reconciliation is:

> an ongoing process of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships. A critical part of this process involves repairing damaged trust by making apologies, providing individual and collective reparations, and following through with concrete actions that demonstrate societal change. Establishing respectful relationships also requires the revitalization of Indigenous law and legal traditions. (p. 16)

Although the definition of reconciliation that the Commission provides acknowledges that reconciliation is a process that occurs on both an individual and collective level, the main focus of the Commission was to begin the process of establishing healthy relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. In the final report of the TRC, the actions laid out to begin developing these relationships attend to the collective rather than the individual.

[3] The Truth and Reconciliation Commission first began in 2008, but Justice Murray Sinclair, Commissioner Marie Wilson, and Wilton Littlechild joined in 2009 after replacing the Honourable Justice Harry Laforme, Jane Brewin-Morley and Claudette Dumont-Smith as commissioners

In June 2015, the TRC held its final event in Ottawa. At this time, the Commission released 94 Calls to Action. These Calls to Action address ways in which governments (federal, provincial, and territorial), churches, post-secondary institutions, and the corporate sector can begin to engage in reconciliation. For example, Action 65:

> We call upon the federal government, through the Social Science and Humanities Research Council, and in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, post-secondary institutions and educators, and the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and its partner institutions, so establish a national research program with multi-year funding to advance understanding of reconciliation. (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, p. 331)

Although the Calls to Action focus on institutions, organizations, and government bodies, in the final report, the Commission states that "all Canadians have a critical role to play in advancing reconciliation in ways that honour and revitalize the nation-to-nation Treaty relationship" (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, p. 183). The Commission also recognizes that reconciliation will look different for everybody (p. 6) and that it is an ongoing process that will not be achieved in the life span of the TRC (p. 8). The Commission also states:

> Reconciliation not only requires apologies, reparations, the relearning of Canada's national history, and public commemorations, but also needs real social, political, and economic change. Ongoing public education and dialogues are essential to reconciliation. Governments, churches, educational institutions, and Canadians from all walks of life are responsible for taking action on reconciliation in concrete ways, working collaboratively with Aboriginal peoples. Reconciliation begins with each and every one of us. (p. 184-185)

Here the Commission uses language inferring that reconciliation can begin with the individual, however, the Calls to Action do not reflect the individual journey of reconciliation. Rather they support the notion that reconciliation must follow a top-down approach if there is to be societal change.

Reconciliation, as Victoria Freeman (2014) understands it, is a process that is ongoing. It does not have to take the national top-down approach that the TRC presents in the Calls to

Action. In fact, critiques of the TRC and subsequent calls extend far beyond the top-down, institutional focus. Jeff Corntassel, Chaw-win-is, and T'lakwadzi (2009), David Garneau (2016), and Taiaiake Alfred (2009) argue that reconciliation is a means to help the settler population of Canada deal with potential feelings of guilt after learning about past atrocities without actually seeking to take action to support self-determination and justice for Indigenous peoples. Jennifer Henderson and Pauline Wakeham (2009) observe that "shifting the TRC model away from a justice-based focus and toward a more symbolic emphasis upon witnessing and national healing" (p. 12-13) does not develop well-being for Indigenous peoples, rather it relieves "non-Indigenous Canadians from responsibilities for knowing their history" (p. 21). The truth-telling and witnessing strategy used by the TRC created a rhetoric of pain and suffering that needed a "cure" and closure (Henderson & Wakeham, 2009, p. 7). In the final report of the TRC (2015), reconciliation is even referred to as an act of healing that must happen so "we can move forward" (p. 7-8). The notion of closure and moving beyond the history without recognition of the intergenerational trauma is also reflected in the TRC mandate in suggesting we "put our past behind us" and move forward.

The review of literature and early conversations on reconciliation and resurgence led me to the same conclusion as Freeman (2014). Reconciliation is a process and, although a top-down approach should be critically analyzed, "the concept of reconciliation is still valuable, because it underlines the emotional, psychological, and human changes that are necessary for true decolonization…" and transformation on both a personal and social level (p. 216). Freeman observes that because reconciliation is necessary for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, allyship and Indigenous resurgence are occurring at the same time as reconciliation. Reconciliation has a foundation in building stronger relationships and "the goals of current

reconciliation activists is the nurturing of stronger allies" (p. 220). It is through these alliances that Freeman sees the collapse of an "us" versus "them" rhetoric and the mobilization of larger groups of people fighting for social justice (p. 220).

Leanne Simpson (2011) and Davis et al. (2016) argue that we must critique the concept of reconciliation as one that is often not based wholly in truth from Indigenous experience and is used to "romanticize relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples," primarily from a non-Indigenous worldview (Davis et al., 2016, p. 2). In response, Freeman (2014) argues that although reconciliation cannot replace resurgence, reconciliation can aid in resurgence (p. 221). In her own work, Freeman utilizes the Sto:lo concept of *lummi*, meaning "facing ourselves" to begin her students on their individual journeys of reconciliation and transformation. Freeman suggests that true decolonization "involves experiencing and recognizing the validity of Indigenous worldviews and philosophy" and having what Rauna Kuokkanen refers to as "multi-epistemic" literacy (p. 221). Both reconciliation and resurgence are important for transformative shifts in thinking, but they do not happen independently of one another. When non-Indigenous people engage in a meaningful way with Indigenous epistemologies, culture, and knowledge, they are also engaging in acts of reconciliation.

Throughout my research, I understood reconciliation in this way; as a process that requires both allyship and resurgence. Even though the TRC has focused predominantly on a top-down approach to reconciliation that is not the only approach. This research is based upon the assumption that reconciliation is a journey that individuals may choose to embark on and, in doing so, become part of a collective change in thinking. All individuals, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, have something that they may need to reconcile. For example, Freeman suggests that Indigenous people must reconcile with the fact that non-Indigenous people now and forever will

occupy stolen land on Turtle Island[4], or reconcile that their ancestors made a decision to sign the treaties (Freeman, 2014, p. 218). Non-Indigenous people must reconcile with their history, the colonial actions of their ancestors and their present way of living, and how they currently benefit from these colonial practices (Freeman, 2014, p. 218). Throughout this individual journey of reconciliation, how we understand our identity may change, relationships may develop, and transformative learning[5] can occur.

Resurgence

The TRC was not the first time mainstream Canadians came face to face with the very real tensions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. Although these tensions have manifest themselves through events over 400 years, an examination of more recent social movements; the 1990 standoff at Kanehsatà:ke[6], the 2012 Idle No More (INM) movement, and the 2016 Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) protests provides insight into the current tensions that individuals, apart from organizations and institutions, experience. Each movement was heavily covered by the media, creating a profile of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples that ultimately contributes to ongoing biases and stereotypes. Ermine (2007) notes that:

> The danger for Indigenous peoples is that because their image is created through Western systems and institutions, this same image can also be controlled and manipulated to suit Western interests. As Indigenous peoples, we have lost our most precious of all human rights - the freedom to be ourselves. (p. 199)

[4] Turtle Island is a term used by some Indigenous peoples that identifies the lands that make up North America

[5] Patricia Cranton (2016) draws from Jack Mezirow to define transformative learning as "a process by which previously uncritically assimilated assumptions, beliefs, values, and perspectives are questioned and thereby become more open, permeable, and better validated" (p. 2).

[6] The standoff at Kanehsatà:ke in 1990 is commonly referred to as the "Oka Crisis," however as Simpson and Ladner (2010) note, Oka is the name of the town located near Kanehsatà:ke and occupied by mostly white residence, it is not where the standoff took place. Also, to use the term 'crisis' is to dismiss the fact that the resistance began as a peaceful blockade on a small road (p. 1-2).

Media has the power to influence peoples' perceptions of not only what was happening in regards to protests and acts of resistance, but also their perception of Indigenous people. For example, during the standoff at Kanehsatà:ke, the media portrayed the Kanien'kehaka warriors as anarchists and criminals (Monture, 2010).

The language that emerged in the literature around these social movements; allyship, resurgence, and reconciliation provide the framework for my research. I chose to explore these terms in order to understand how individuals can move forward in creating healthier relationships than those documented in the history of these social movements. My increased understanding and awareness of the history and these movements prepared me for the complexity of Indigenous/non-Indigenous relationships and the questions that needed to be considered.

Taiaiake Alfred (2015) argues that reconciliation is "erasing support for real resistance on collective, nationalistic terms in which people are oriented and organized to defend their land" and their rights (p. 8). Alfred states that resurgence is in opposition to the reconciliation paradigm (p. 8) because where reconciliation, as understood through the TRC, focuses on economics and politics, resurgence explores identity, spirituality, and culture. It is through acts of resurgence that transformation happens (Simpson, 2011, p. 11). Both Simpson (2011) and Alfred (2015) note the impact that colonization and western theoretical constructs have had in shaping people's identity and the way they understand the world. Simpson (2011) states that "[t]hrough the lens of colonial thought and cognitive imperialism, we are often unable to *see* our Ancestors. We are unable to *see* their philosophies and their strategies of mobilization and the complexities of their plan for resurgence" (p. 15-16). Kanehsatà:ke, INM, and DAPL were acts

of resistance against imposed colonial ways of life, each using acts of cultural resurgence to create moments that reinvigorated culture, traditions, language, teachings, and worldviews.

Kanehsatà:ke

The acts of resistance that occurred in Kanehsatà:ke and Kahnawà:ke in the summer of 1990, also known as the Oka crisis, were about Indigenous sovereignty, resurgence, and the right to be the stewards of their traditional land. The mayor of Oka, Jean Ouellette, agreed to the expansion of a golf course onto the Pines (also known as the Commons), an ancient sacred burial site. The Kanien'kehaka[7] had planted many pine trees in the area years before to deter the sandy landscape from sliding down into the town (Oka) and the lake below (Russell, 2010, p. 34), hence giving the area the name the Pines. On the edge of the Pines is the burial grounds for the Kanehsatà:ke community. Negotiations held between Kanien'kehaka and provincial and federal government representatives ended with both parties feeling that the other was negotiating in bad faith and no peaceful resolution was met through these conversations (Obomsawin, 1993). When these negotiations did not end in a resolution, members of the Kanehsatà:ke community began a peaceful blockade that denied access to the area of the Pines and the Oka golf course.

One of the most prominent results of the resistance at Kanehsatà:ke is not the stoppage of the golf course expansion, but rather the reflection of the relationships between the state, settlers, and Indigenous peoples. The prevailing ignorance of Indigenous worldview and knowledge systems on the part of state and settlers had a serious impact on the way that the media was able to frame the Warriors[8] and the goals of the blockades. As a result of the violent actions carried out during the resistance, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and his government established the

[7] People of Kanehsatà:ke, Kahnawà:ke and Akwesasne (Ladner & Simpson, 2010).
[8] The term Warriors is used instead of protesters as a way to "disrupt colonial labels" and decolonize language (Ladner & Simpson, 2010, p.9)

Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (Russell, 2010, p. 39). Not all view the Royal Commission as successful, however it did set in motion an inquiry into the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. The resistance at Kanehsatà:ke and Kahnawà:ke in 1990 are important reminders to all of Canada that reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples can only occur when there is a much deeper understanding of the value placed on Indigenous ways of living and knowing that have been oppressed for hundreds of years.

Although the media brought attention to Indigenous peoples in Canada and highlighted their existence, Kanien'kehaka attempts at cultural resurgence through the use of Indigenous traditions and knowledge systems met resistance from neighbouring residents and the criminalization of Warriors by the media. Because Indigenous sovereignty and ways of being were not recognized as a result of the resistance, many see it as unsuccessful. However, the blockades and the constant resistance and ongoing negotiations between the Kanehsatà:ke community and the state government did eventually put a stop to the expansion of the golf course and because of this, others see the events of 1990 as a success. As Ladner and Simpson (2010) state, "this was about 400 years of colonial injustice…this really had nothing to do with Oka, a bridge or a golf course" (p. 1).

Idle No More

Idle No More (INM) is an Indigenous led, grassroots movement that began in the winter of 2012. Former Prime Minister Stephen Harper and the Conservative majority government were attempting to push through the omnibus legislation, Bill C-45[9]. Although the over 400 page bill was not an accessible read to the general public, Jessica Gordon, Sheelah Mclean, Sylvia

[9] Also known as the Jobs and Growth bill.

McAdams, and Nina Wilson believed it was important to raise awareness of the impact the bill would have on various government acts. The changes the bill proposed included ones to the *Fisheries Act, Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, National Energy Board Act, Indian Act,* and the *Navigable Waters Protection Act*. Changes to these acts reduced Indigenous involvement in consultation processes including consultation of hunting rights and use of land.

Tactics used in Idle No More focused on peaceful engagement, relationship building, and Indigenous resurgence. Activists of Idle No More utilized a variety of different tactics to encourage mobilization and raise the collective consciousness of people worldwide regarding the issues that Indigenous peoples in Canada are facing. Although it is commonly acknowledged that Sylvia McAdams, Jessica Gordon, Sheelah Mclean, and Nina Wilson were the 'founders' of Idle No More, the movement itself is actually a leaderless movement (Li Xiu Woo, 2013; Coates, 2015; Barker, 2014). This means that different community members would organize different types of events such as protests, marches, rallies, round dances, teach-ins, Facebook or Twitter groups, and/or blockades. These actions all became tactics to raise consciousness and create public dialogue (Tupper, 2014, p. 91) and counter Indigenous "invisibility in the mass media" (Keith, 2013, p. 21).

Idle No More highlighted the ongoing challenges as well as positive contributions made by Indigenous peoples and communities of Turtle Island. One of the most prominent outcomes of Idle No More was the global attention that it brought to issues that Indigenous people face every day and the knowledge to those who are unaware that colonial practices are still happening today (Li Xiu Woo, 2013; Barker, 2014; McAdams, 2014a). It is time that non-Indigenous people start listening and showing solidarity in ways that enable Indigenous people to take charge and lead. Colonial practices of the government are threatening not only Indigenous

cultures, worldviews, and sovereignty, but also the environment - something that we all share. Indigenous knowledge provides a voice for protecting the environment, however that will only remain possible if Indigenous culture, worldviews, knowledge, and sovereignty are given space to thrive in society. In the years since the winter of 2012-2013, Idle No More appears to have ended, however as some would argue (Barker, 2014; Kiino-nda-miini Collective, 2014; Coates, 2015) conversations about "the environment, treaties and Indigenous sovereignty" (McAdams, 2014a, p. 66) have shown the resounding effects the movement has had on the world.

Dakota Access Pipeline

At more than 1100 miles long, the DAPL will carry crude oil from North Dakota's Bakken oil fields to Illinois crossing North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, and Illinois (CBS News, November 13, 2016; Sisk, October 28, 2016). Thousands of Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous activists rallied together at various construction sites along the proposed route of the DAPL to resist the pipeline from running under the Missouri River. Water protectors[10] declared that the pipeline will threaten water sources to thousands of people and will destroy sacred land. They held peaceful demonstrations that became more violent at the hands of state police and enforcement.

As Brenda White Bull[11] explains, the sacred land in question, Turtle Hill, is where Native Americans' relatives and leaders are buried (Reuters, December 5, 2016). Sincere Kirabo (2017) explains that although

> "the pipeline doesn't cut directly into the reservation itself, it does cross through territory that belongs to the Sioux, which directly violates the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie[12] that

[10] The term water protectors is used for the people who are resisting the DAPL at Standing Rock Reservation (Kirabo, 2017, p. 26; Reuters, December 5, 2016).
[11] Veteran and descendant of Chief Sitting Bull (Reuters, December 5, 2016).
[12] The Treaty notes that the area is "sovereign land under the control of the Oceti Sakowin (Seven Council Fires of the Sioux)" (Reuters, December 5, 2016).

states the land is reserved for "undisturbed use and occupation" of Native inhabitants (p. 26).

The dismissal of treaty rights and Indigenous sovereignty is a colonial practice that Indigenous peoples have been resisting for hundreds of years; years of resistance that predate media coverage of Standing Rock. There is little care and understanding from police enforcement regarding Indigenous people, water protectors, or activists. Police are willing to carry out violent tactics on command with little thought to the roots of the resistance and demonstrations. Also, the economics behind the pipeline have swayed people's opinions about the DAPL; it is clear that Indigenous people are fighting against the capitalist system. Indigenous people across Turtle Island have continuously faced violence and oppression from the state and it is time that non-Indigenous people begin standing in solidarity to let the state know that their actions are no longer tolerated.

These acts of resurgence, as Simpson (2011) notes, have been occurring for over 400 years. They are a response to colonial thinking that led, for example, to Duncan Campbell Scott stating in 1920 that "the objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic, and there is no Indian question, and no Indian Department..." (House of Commons, March 12, 2012). The ultimate goal of assimilation policies was to remove all traces of Indigenous cultures and knowledges. In response to these assimilation policies, Indigenous resurgence is necessary. These assimilation policies resulted in the erasure of languages, ceremony, education, knowledge, traditions, and cultures. Resurgence is the act of revitalizing these ways of being and doing. It means using these traditions, language, knowledge, and ceremony today in ways that respond to imposed colonial ways of being. Resurgence means "re-investing in our own ways of being" (Simpson, 2011, p. 17). Corntassel, Chaw-win-is, and T'lakwadzi (2009) states that "Indigenous stories of resilience are critical to

the resurgence of our communities" (p. 139). One of the ways in which these stories of resilience are being told are within the movements of INM, DAPL, Kanehsatà:ke, and the TRC.

As Freeman (2014) has noted, reconciliation "develops in tandem with … self-determined Indigenous resurgence …the two processes are mutually reinforcing ... Reconciliation can't take the place of … autonomy and resurgence, but neither will Indigenous resurgence on its own achieve full decolonization" (p. 221). If reconciliation and resurgence are mutually reinforcing, there is a role for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, with Indigenous resurgence being Indigenous led and standing in solidarity the role of non-Indigenous people. Simpson and Regan allude to the connectedness of resurgence and reconciliation. Simpson notes this relationships when suggesting that "[t]ransforming ourselves, our communities and our nation is ultimately the first step in transforming our relationship with the state" (Simpson, 2011, p. 17). Regan (2010) notes that a part of the reconciliation process for non-Indigenous people is understanding "how a problematic mentality of benevolent paternalism became a rationale and justification for acquiring Indigenous lands and resources..." (p. 4). Regan (2010) also suggests that reconciliation provides a chance "for all Canadians to fundamentally rethink our past and its implications for our present and future relations" (p. 4). In suggesting the need to learn about the historic relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and rethink them, Regan is supporting the process of reconciliation and at the same time a type of knowledge resurgence. I propose that engaging in reconciliation and standing in solidarity with Indigenous resurgence are acts of allyship.

Allyship

Ann Bishop's *Becoming an Ally* (1994) is often the first stepping stone for many who are looking into allyship and the steps to becoming an ally. Bishop takes a broad approach to

allyship within the framework of the oppressor and the oppressed. According to Bishop, several characteristics distinguish an ally:

> their sense of connection with others, *all* other people; their grasp of the concept of collectivity and collective responsibility; their lack of an individualistic stance and ego, as opposed to a sense of self; their sense of process and change; their understanding of their own process of learning; their realistic sense of their own power - somewhere between all powerful and powerless; their grasp of "power-with" as an alternative to "power over;" their honesty, openness and lack of shame about their own limitations; their knowledge and sense of history; their acceptance of struggle; their understanding that good intentions do not matter if there is no action against oppression; their knowledge of their roots. (p. 95)

In this definition, Bishop understands that an ally is a member of the oppressor group and not a member of the oppressed group. However, in providing a "how to" list, Bishop describes roles and responsibilities that members of both parties can take up in support of each other. This is also depicted in Regan's (2010) work in which she draws on George Manuel's 1972 speech, when he stated that "we [Indigenous peoples] will steer our own canoe, but we will invite others to help with the paddling" (p. 227). Regan interprets Manuel's words to mean that Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples have separate roles to play but "both Indigenous people and settlers must take action" (p. 227). This analogy captures my understanding of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples' roles in allyship. This is also why I will use the term "settler-ally" to refer specifically to non-Indigenous allies.

Many of the guidelines that Bishop provides to those looking at "becoming an ally" (p. 96) ask the member of the oppressor group to "learn, reflect on, and understand the patterns and effect of oppression"; "help members of your own group understand oppression"; "listen, listen, listen"; and "learn everything you can about the oppression". Although there are more guidelines, these ones in particular ask people to understand and learn about oppression. The poor media coverage during the Kanehsatà:ke resistance is an example of what happens when non-Indigenous people act without understanding the history or the oppression faced by the

oppressed. Michael Orsini (2010), a settler journalist covering the resistance, notes that the media "only covered issues related to Aboriginal peoples when it affected non-Aboriginal people" (p. 255). It is evident during the Kanehsatà:ke and Kahnawà:ke resistance that members of surrounding settler communities had little to no knowledge of the Indigenous people they were neighbours with and that media coverage of the blockades did nothing to rectify this. Orsini (2010) notes that "journalists that were present at the blockades had no background on Aboriginal peoples and were not given the time to properly research the needed information to create a well-informed piece" (p. 252). This means that news reports being presented across Canada simply touched on the major events that occurred, such as the death of Corporal Marcel Lemay, who's means of death is still controversial with some believing another member of the local Quebec police shot him, that a Warrior shot him, or that his own weapon's recoil was what caused his death (Obomsawin, 1993). It would take action on individuals to either be present at the blockades or to do further research to learn that the violence was not instigated by the Warriors, but rather by settler community members, military, and police.

Although Bishop's work lays out the foundation of oppression and power dynamics, particularly between marginalized and non-marginalized groups, it does not attend to the Canadian context of Indigenous/non-Indigenous relations or engage with the concepts of reconciliation or resurgence. As Bishop (1994) herself notes, "the form that oppression takes is affected greatly by the particular history of the group in question" (p. 62). To better understand allyship in the context of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada, I turn to Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars' writing about the role of settlers during the TRC events in Canada.

In its ideal form, 'settler-ally' describes non-Indigenous people who actively take responsibility for unlearning colonial ways of knowing and beginning to better understand

Indigenous paradigms (Barker, 2010; Regan, 2010). In terms of Indigenous resistance, settler-allies would stand in solidarity with Indigenous peoples. Many authors, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, identify the mental and emotional discomfort when challenging colonialism. This discomfort occurs when non-Indigenous peoples begin to decolonize their consciousness and start on a journey of personal transformation (Irlbacher-Fox, 2014; Hiller, 2016; Davis et al., 2016). Gregory Younging (2009) states that:

> Apart from their relationship with Indigenous peoples, Canadians first need to undergo a type of micro-reconciliation within themselves. In so doing, the present generation of Canadians need to face up to what has been done in their name, and they must own it as being part of who they are. Canadians need to play catch-up in the big reconciliation game, because Indigenous people have already done that. Canadian reconciliation must begin with: 1) throwing out all the historical disassociations and denials, and 2) getting out of the prevailing generation-centric headspace. As we attempt to venture down the road toward reconciliation, Canadians would probably benefit a lot by learning from, and viewing the world like, Indigenous peoples; not vice versa. (p. 327)

Experiences rooted in Indigenous ways of knowing facilitate a shift from a colonial understanding of the world around us - characterized largely by individualism, capitalism, and patriarchy - to an Indigenous understanding of connectedness and relationships between all things (Kajner, Fletcher, & Makokis, 2011). This focus on Indigenous ways of knowing is essential to a paradigm shift from colonial to Indigenous worldviews (Davis et al., 2016; Simpson, 2011; Corntassel, 2012).

In the absence of engaging and enacting an Indigenous paradigm, settler-allies risk falling short of the ideal. The term settler-ally becomes problematic when non-Indigenous peoples identify as an ally without understanding Indigenous ways of being and knowing. The disregard for Indigenous epistemologies may mean that no personal transformation has occurred and colonial paradigms remain prevalent. The risk of allyship that is problematic (action without in-depth understanding of Indigenous epistemology) is heightened by the fact that allyship has

become popularized by current events and media coverage. It has been argued that "where struggle is commodity, allyship is a currency … [therefore] ...the term ally has been rendered ineffective and meaningless" (Indigenous Action Media, 2014, p. 1-2). This occurred during Idle No More as non-Indigenous people began "equating [INM] with the environmental movement" (Woons, 2013, p. 174). The environmental movement provided an opening for non-Indigenous activists to participate in an Indigenous led movement and served as the "movements' main attraction for non-Indigenous supporters" (Li Xiu Woo, 2013, p. 197). Environmental activists created a space for themselves within the Indigenous movement to have their own voices heard about their own concerns (Barker, 2014, p. 13). Taking centre stage at the expense of Indigenous people's voices being heard can lead to allies quickly becoming foes (Woons, 2013, p. 178). Idle No More did have a focus on environmental protection, but as Sylvia McAdams explains, deeply rooted Indigenous understandings of relationship to the environment[13] differ from those that environmental activists hold. Although the environment is an important aspect of INM, the movement is not solely about environmental protection (Woons, 2013, p. 174). Non-Indigenous activists were drawn to the movement because of environmental protection, however these 'allies' became disruptive to the overall goals of Idle No More and attempted to occupy a space that should have been left to Indigenous activists to fill.

Each case of resistance whether Kanehsatà:ke, INM, or DAPL, is exemplary of individuals forming a collective resistance against state powers (policies, military, legislations). Engaging with an Indigenous paradigm, presented by Bishop (1994) as listening and

[13] "...the Cree concept of *wakewtewin* is much more comprehensive than the English language concept of kinship. It means that we are all related to everything, not just our human relatives. So relations to the land are seen more in terms of stewardship than ownership. Thus the peace sought by Idle No More includes peace with what we in English would call "the environment" (Li Xiu Woo, 2013, p. 197).

understanding the word of the oppressed, moves non-Indigenous settler-allies away from capitalistic, and individualistic ideas of allyship (Indigenous Action Media, 2014) and towards an individual transformation that allows respectful participation within the collective. Regan (2010) refers to "Taiaiake Alfred's thoughts on personal decolonization as the place to begin the work of social and political transformation" (p. 215). Although the TRC's Calls to Action focus on government and organizations, "real socio-political change will not come from hegemonic institutional and bureaucratic structures within these societies … it will come from those people who are willing to take up, again and again, the struggle of living in truth" (Regan, 2010, p. 215). It is through unlearning colonial ways of thinking, experiencing the discomfort through those learnings (Corntassel, Chaw-win-is, & T'lakwadzi, 2009; Regan, 2010), and opening our minds and hearts to Indigenous ways of being and thinking (Kajner, Fletcher, & Makokis, 2011) that the personal transformation occurs and the journey of allyship begins.

Bishop (1994) notes the importance of individual self-reflection when beginning the journey into allyship. More recently, as a result of the TRC events in Canada, the language around self and collective reconciliation has grown. Regan (2010) states that as settler-allies "we must commit ourselves to the ongoing struggle of reconciliation as liberatory resistance" (p. 230). Reconciliation as liberatory resistance is understood as both taking responsibility for learning "the history of dispossession, racism, and oppression that is still alive … [and reflecting] upon these stories as a catalyst for action" (p. 230). It is important to note that taking responsibility does not mean taking personal responsibility, and therefore feeling guilt or shame, rather it is the understanding that settlers live in a society that was created through colonial practices and assimilation policies. Settlers benefit from this society so taking responsibility

might mean understanding the ongoing colonial practices that we benefit from in society and taking action towards social justice.

Settler Colonialism

> *Settler*. This word voices relationships to structures and processes in Canada today, to the histories of our people on this land, to Indigenous peoples, and to our own day-to-day choices and actions. *Settler*. This word turns us toward uncomfortable realizations, difficult subjects, and potential complicity in systems of dispossession and violence. *Settler*. This word represents a tool, a way of understanding and choosing to act differently. A tool we can use to confront the fundamental problems and injustices in Canada today. *Settler*. It is analytical, personal, and uncomfortable. It can be an identity that we claim or deny, but that we inevitably live and embody. It is who we are, as people, on these lands. (Lowman & Barker, 2015, p. 2)

The term settler is used throughout this research intentionally to highlight the relationships, particularly with ownership of land, between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Settler Canadians hold a wide range of identifiers including race, gender, socioeconomic status, and sexuality, they are not solely white, middle class citizens. Although "being white, presenting as middle class, [and] speaking English … bring relatively high levels of privilege … this does not mean that only white, middle-class English speakers should be understood as being Settler" (Lowman & Barker, 2015, p. 70). The term settler does carry a level of privilege and power as settlers are the "primary beneficiaries of settler colonial structures … and discourses that reflect settler colonial ontological understandings of land and place" (Lowman & Barker, 2015, p. 28). Settler Canadians have grown into a distinctive society based on two factors. The first, identifying their new homelands as "unique". And second, "by committing violent or displacing acts against Indigenous people who have competing claims to these unique, special places" (Lowman & Barker, p. 28). Both these factors, at their core, represent the relationship that settlers have to land. In Canada we use terms such as vast wilderness, the harsh winters, the steep snow covered mountains, the long flat plains, and the

abundant waterways to describe the "unique" geography. Canada's history is also laden with violence and acts of displacement against Indigenous people, from the spread of the smallpox virus, reserve lands, Residential schools, the Sixties Scoop, and ongoing laws and policies that infringe on Indigenous rights to land.

Beyond these relationships to land that create a settler identity, myths perpetuate a national identity. In the Canadian context, the myth of the peacemaker or the helper is ingrained within settler identity (Regan, 2010; Davis et al., 2016; Lowman & Barker, 2015). These myths reinforce the Canadian self-image (Davis, et al., 2016, p. 2) that nationalism can grow from and "justifies the settler community in gatekeeping the special settler homeland" (Lowman & Barker, 2015, p. 28). Regan (2010) also notes that these myths of the hero, helper, and peace-maker work to "deflect attention from the settler problem" (p. 34); the settler problem being the inability to recognize these myths as untrue due to feelings of fear, guilt, denial, and empathy which all "act as barriers to transformative socio-political change" (Regan, 2010, p. 11). As settler Canadians begin to understand the settler identity "there is a deep well of anxiety and even terror of what it might mean to be cut off from the structures of invasion that define us" (Lowman & Barker, 2015, p. 90). Settlers experience feelings of fear and guilt when faced with the truth about settler colonization and the violence it entails, and the "uncertainty of imagining life without our settler benefits" (Lowman & Barker, 2015, p. 94). Kevin Fitzmaurice (2010) states that when a person, "who only previously understood [themselves] as an individual," is "named as white" they can "experience a marked loss of power and the corresponding feelings of insecurity and discomfort" (p. 354). Essentially, these feelings arise when settlers have been unsettled (Lowman & Barker, 2015; Regan, 2010) and the privilege and power of the colonial status quo, including the myths that inform settler identity, have been brought to light. Feeling unsettled and uncomfortable is

due to our otherwise "willful ignorance and selective denial of those aspects of our relationship that threaten our privilege and power - the colonial status quo" (Regan, 2010, p. 25). However, if settlers remain ignorant and silent when faced with the reality of settler identity, then transformative change can never happen.

Fitzmaurice (2010) argues that although he has "actively challenged many aspects of colonization in Canada, Aboriginal nations are not [his] nations and their struggle for liberation and decolonization is not fully [his] struggle" (p. 360). As we have seen in social movements such as Idle No More and Dakota Access Pipeline, it is important for settlers to understand their power, privilege, and place within Indigenous resurgence, or liberation and decolonization as Fitzmaurice uses. However, returning to Regan (2010), there is a settler problem that is a struggle of decolonization that settlers must face. Davis et al. (2016) note that Indigenous activists, community leaders and scholars have often commented on the need for non-Indigenous people to confront the racism and ignorance that flow out of the narrative, economic, political, and geo-spatial structures of Canadian settler colonial society (p. 3). For change within society to happen "...critical self-reflection must be paired with action or else settlers risk never moving beyond guilt and shame, and settler consciousness and all it entails will continue to be perpetuated" (Davis, et al., 2015, p. 5). Settler consciousness must be addressed and transformed to be able to move forward with healthier Indigenous/non-Indigenous relationships. One of the ways that this transformation will occur is by engaging in lifelong relationship building with Indigenous peoples, their knowledges, the land, spiritual practices, and all beings (Fitzmaurice, 2010, p. 364; Davis et al., 2016, p. 5). It is not enough to provide "education and information to settler Canadians to shift the relationship between Indigenous peoples and settler colonial

society" (Davis et al., 2016, p. 2), we must begin to engage with one another and get to know each other.

Beyond the Individual: Ripples, Ethical Space, and Stretch Collaboration

> In politics and at work and at home, collaboration is both necessary and difficult. We want to get something done that is important to us, but to do so, we need to work with people who view things differently than us. And the more important the issue and different the views, the more necessary and difficult the collaboration. (Kahane, 2017, p. 9)

Part of the journey of allyship is engaging with those around us in the conversations about reconciliation, colonization and decolonization, and dealing with the discomfort of unlearning one way of thinking while opening up to new ways. The TRC was an event that began to spurr these conversations. However, as Richard Harwood (2015) states, "there is no "big bang" notion of change" (p. 6). Change can only occur through engaging in the uncomfortable process of learning and unlearning. This process happens through collaboration and relationship building between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Walter C. Lightning (1992) notes that "collaboration is in fact 'the Indigenous mind in action'. In Cree terms, this may be expressed 'maskikiw mâmtonehicikan,' which reflects that in thinking, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts" (p. 228). It is essential in moving forward with relationship building that collaboration occur between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. However, Willie Ermine (2007) asks "how can we reconcile worldviews?" and notes that this "is the fundamental problem of cultural encounters" (p. 201). This reconciliation is difficult because of what Adam Kahane (2017) refers to as "enemyfying: thinking and acting as if people we are dealing with are our enemies" (p. 7). The act of enemyfying was evident during the standoff at Kanehsatà:ke and Kahnawà:ke in 1990. Images of Warriors showed them in bandanas covering their faces and carrying automatic weapons, often referring to them as terrorists or insurgents.

This framing successfully gained “the support of the Canadian public” (Winegard, 2008, p. 154). The images and new reports that came out of Kanehsatà:ke and Kahnawà:ke aimed to show that the Canadian military was acting in a restrained and peaceful manner while the Warriors of Kanehsatà:ke and Kahnawà:ke were acting violent and militant.

Figure 1: Image collected from Montreal Times, August 14, 2017. (Wurst, 2017).

Ermine (2007), in his mention that “Indigenous peoples are not the enemies of Canadian civilization, but are, and have always been, essential to its very possibility” (p. 201), makes Kahane’s work important to consider in reconciling relationships. Through what Ermine (2007) calls the ethical space, Harwood (2015) calls the ripple effect, and Kahane (2017) calls stretch collaboration, we can begin to see how it might be possible to reconcile worldviews, unlearn false stereotypes, and learn how Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples can work together to create healthier possibilities.

In 2009 when the TRC first launched national events, it began a conversation within Canada around historical and current relationships between Indigenous and settler peoples and around reconciliation. In this way, the TRC played a pivotal role in beginning what Harwood (2015) calls the ripple effect. The ripple effect is simply a different way of thinking about how change occurs within communities (Harwood, 2015, p. 6) and suggests that "progress is more likely to come at the community level than it is nationally (p. 5). According to the ripple effect then, the Calls to Action released by the TRC that call government and institutions to take action may be less effective at creating change than if we look at the actions that individuals within communities can take. Harwood (2015) notes that the ripple effect "is rooted in people hearing about the approach, experiencing it, and then wanting to learn more" (p. 43). The public listening events of the TRC had people hearing, often for the first time, experiences of residential school survivors and the impacts of intergenerational trauma. The key to the ripple effect is getting others to join in the conversations. Drawing from his own community research, Harwood (2015) notes that "sharing the emerging narrative with others became a pivotal way by which people shared what was being learned in the community and it invited others to join" (p. 42). Although inviting others to join is vital to the success of the ripple effect, it is important to only invite those who are ready to face the discomfort of these transformative conversations.

Fear, shame, and guilt, as we have seen, can cause paralysis in individuals and hinder their ability to engage in the conversation. Constantly trying to get people who are unready to engage can create feelings of frustration, anger, and burnout in those who are doing the inviting. If we believe that "everyone needs to be at the table at the outset … [then] scarce time and resources can be soaked up by trying to convince resisters and naysayers to join the cause" (Harwood, 2015, p. 41). In response to this, Harwood (2015) notes that the approach of the

ripple effect is to identify "those who were ready, able, and willing to take action...the strategic choice to start where they could create 'wins' and not take on the most intractable or wicked problems" (p. 39). This is not to say that we cannot engage with resistors and naysayers, as Bishop (1994) suggests we must "try to help members of your own group understand oppression and make the links among different forms of oppression" (p. 97). As we engage with the ripple effect and invite others to join in conversations, we must meet people where they are at in their learning and unlearning journey because having "the wrong expectations can drive people to operate out of fear" (Harwood, 2015, p. 44). However, if we approach people in a compassionate and understanding way, we can grow our collective group and engage in conversations that have a more "common orientation … [and] share purpose, action, and accountability" (Harwood, 2015, p. 43). These collectives form our support networks that serve "to catalyse and spread learning and innovation" (Harwood, 2015, p. 38). However, these groups and the people we invite into these conversation still hold varying worldviews, so I look to Ermine's concept of the ethical space to understand how we can engage in conversations that lead to progress and change.

The ethical space is "produced by contrasting perspectives of the world, [it] entertains the notion of a meeting place, or initial thinking about a neutral zone between entities or cultures" (Ermine, 2007, p. 202). When these contrasting perspectives come face to face, we often try to "focus on working harmoniously with our team … we talk rather than fight" (Kahane, 2017, p. 49). When we talk harmoniously, we are interacting at a "superficial level … [and] there is a clear lack of substance or depth to the encounter" (Ermine, 2007, p. 195). As these conversations occur, it is the "enfolded dimension that needs to be acknowledged" (Ermine, 2007, p. 195). However, to get to the enfolded dimensions, we must overcome the fear and paralysis that might

arise through learning, particularly about settler colonialism. Henderson and Wakeham (2009) note that "unveiling secrets can work productively in pedagogical spaces to transmit knowledge in a way that mobilize decolonizing efforts rather than defensiveness and hostility" (p. 21). It becomes essential in these conversations to "confront the hidden interest, attitudes, and bedrock assumptions that animate Western dealings with Indigenous peoples" (Ermine, 2007, p. 197). Getting to these enfolded dimensions and unveiling secrets cannot happen while trying to maintain a harmonious conversation. Kahane (2017) suggests that "in complex, uncontrolled situations where our perspectives and interests are at odds," also known as the ethical space, "we need to fight as well as talk" (p. 49). Fighting as well as talking relates to what Ermine is suggesting needs to happen in order to reveal that enfolded dimension. "Fighting" though does not suggest rudeness or yelling be the strategy. Rather, Kahane is noting the importance of having difficult conversations in order to unveil secrets and the enfolded dimension.

Engaging in ethical spaces for reconciliation begins when Indigenous and non-Indigenous people participate in conversations that start to decolonize. Settler-allies, in particular, have a responsibility to overcome their discomfort in engaging in those conversations (Kajner, Fletcher, & Makokis, 2011; Davis et al., 2016; Barker, 2010; Regan, 2010; Walia, 2014) if sustainable change is to occur. This sustainable change is a shift from a hegemonic and colonial way of thinking to an acceptance of multiple ways of knowing (Little Bear, 2000). The shift away from colonial and oppressive epistemologies is an act of moving from thinking only with one's head to feeling with one's heart (Kajner, Fletcher, & Makokis, 2011) when engaging in the ethical space. Engagement in these conversations includes personal reflection of motives and in doing so, the realization that motives are emotional (Hampton, 1997). Engaging as a settler-ally, one must "commit to the emotional work...in order to have transformational experiences" (Hampton,

1997, p. 54). Kahane (2017) speaks to the importance of personal reflection within collaboration as well, noting that "in complex, uncontrolled situations, we need to shift our focus onto what we ourselves are doing; how are we contributing to things being the way they are and what we need to do differently to change the way things are..." (p. 89). We must "be willing to sacrifice some of what feels known, familiar, comfortable, and safe" (p. 96-97) when we engage in these conversations and transformative processes.

Kahane (2017) sets up a framework for what he calls "stretch collaboration"; the iterative process of collaborating with people who hold different worldviews from one another. It is through the process of stretch collaboration that these difficult, uncomfortable conversations can not only occur, but can also lead to successful change. Paralleling the language that Regan (2010) uses, Kahane (2017) states that "for most people, stretch collaboration is unfamiliar and uncomfortable" (p. 39). Unlike conventional collaboration where people work towards the same end goal, in stretch collaboration it is more valuable to have a "shared sense of the challenge or problematic situation" (p. 77) and allow people to walk their own paths towards that vision. In conventional collaboration, we focus on having control, a goal, and a clear plan to reach that goal. In stretch collaboration, to see progress, we must "move forward without being in control" (Kahane, 2017, p. 46). Kahane (2017) also notes that in stretch collaboration it is more important to take action and return to the discussion if the action is not successful. This trial and error allows for constant action, which keeps the momentum going rather than getting held up in the discussion period and arguing for everyone to constantly be in agreement (p. 77). Not all of the actions taken will be successful. Kahane (2017) states that "success in collaborating does not mean that the participants agree with or like or trust one another...Success means that they are able to get unstuck and take a next step" (p. 76). Like Ermine's ethical space, the concept of

stretch collaboration encourages individuals within a collective group to take risks, be vulnerable, build relationships, and persevere through the discomfort in order to make progress.

In conclusion, the literature review, and the terms I have chosen to research in depth all play a vital role in moving forward in creating healthier, more respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Reconciliation, resurgence, and allyship must all be understood as a whole because of the ways that they interact with one another. Currently in Canada, there is an abundant use of the language around reconciliation as a result of the TRC. There are conversations taking place about how to move forward with relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, however, these conversations often do not address the ongoing acts of resurgence by Indigenous peoples. Non-Indigenous people have a role to play in both reconciliation and resurgence, but they must understand the historic and current relationships that impact what positions they can take up. To understand this, I looked at settler colonialism and the influence it has on settler-allies readiness to engage in conversations about reconciliation and acting as support during acts of resurgence. In order to engage in both reconciliation and resurgence, settlers must act through self-reflection to engage in an uncomfortable transformative process of unlearning and learning different ways of understanding the world. However, to see sustainable societal change, we must engage others in this process, which is where I turn to the ripple effect, ethical space, and stretch collaboration; all three provide ways in which we as a collective can engage with one another in these difficult and complex situations. As Ermine (2007) states: “Philosophically, there is an expectation from our children and grandchildren that we resolve these issues and to leave them a better world than the one we found” (p. 200).

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGIES

I approach this research as a co-creation of knowledge. Drawing upon the works of Ermine (2007), Harwood (2015), and Kahane (2017), it is evident that working collaboratively - to have complex and often difficult conversations that dig to the root of issues - is what will allow us to collectively uncover strategies for moving forward. I know that I do not have the same understandings or experiences that Indigenous peoples do regarding reconciliation; in fact, everyone has their own understanding, experiences, and meaning of reconciliation. All of these varying understandings and meanings lend to different knowledges that, when brought together in dialogue, can create a new understanding of what it means to be involved in Indigenous/non-Indigenous relationships. The methodological approach I use was driven by the desire to create a space where people could learn and share together in an attempt to co-create knowledge around the concepts of reconciliation, resurgence, and allyship.

Indigenous Research Methodologies

The methods used in this research were informed by Indigenous research methodologies (IRM) and processes that center Indigenous knowledge systems and epistemologies as core values. I took an Indigenous research methodologies course in the last semester of my course work and, although I learned a lot about the methodology itself, I constantly wondered if, as a non-Indigenous person, I could use IRM in my research. A large part of IRM is Indigenous worldview. I found it difficult to engage in IRM on a personal level, as I constantly told myself "I'm too white to do this." I feel I have very limited knowledge and experience of Indigenous worldviews. IRM is a framework for research that emphasizes the importance of Indigenous worldviews and how they impact the researcher and their work. However, throughout the course I was also constantly supported by my peers and professors to take up IRM in any way that I

could. They stated that an IRM would be an appropriate approach to the research because I was engaging with the principles and values that IRM asks researchers to take up in their work. This is because IRM is flexible in its framework in that it sets out principles that the researcher can apply and become a more conscientious researcher. Three of the values from IRM that resonate with this research are: 1) relationality, 2) the co-creation of knowledge through collaboration, and 3) reflexivity for decolonization. The flexibility of IRM and support from peers and mentors opened the door to methods that would minimize the risk of doing "parachute research", engaging in unethical research, with the unconscious irresponsibility (Weber-Pillwax, 1999) that many researchers fall prey to.

Kovach (2005) explains that IRM is grounded in an Indigenous philosophy. Integral to an Indigenous philosophy is the concept of relationality and importance of the collective, meaning that because knowledge is relational, the creation of new knowledge must also be relational and benefit the collective. Wilson (2008), another Indigenous scholar, writes that "relationality seems to sum up the whole Indigenous research paradigm" (p. 70). Working collectively is part of an Indigenous epistemology (Lightning, 1992); therefore, research conducted with Indigenous peoples needs to reflect these worldviews. IRM calls upon the researcher to be reflexive about their roles and responsibilities, both within their work and to the community. As a reflexive tool, Steinhauer (2002) states that researchers must ask questions of themselves to ensure ethical work. These questions include: What is my role as a researcher and what are my obligations?; whose research is it and who owns it?; whose interest does it serve and who will benefit from it? Kovach (2005) has called IRM an emancipatory model (p. 21) that works to strengthen the voices of marginalized groups and their participation in an ethical space.

Indigenous research methodology is appropriate to the goal and objectives of the proposed research for several reasons. First, it accommodates the diverse experience of the participants, including Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, mentors and mentees, and multiple geographical locations (including British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Ontario). Second, it fosters a process of knowledge co-creation on the concepts of settler-ally, reconciliation and resurgence, addressing the lack of understanding of interconnectedness between these terms. Finally, centering Indigenous voices and knowledge through IRM actively engages participants in the process of decolonization and relationship building. As a means of centering Indigenous ways of knowing and being, talking circles were held with Elders, Knowledge Keepers, scholars, and activists. I chose to invite people to participate in ways I felt were respectful and true to IRM.

I learned from scholars, mentors, and Elder about the importance of offering protocol and gift giving. Before we began, I offered tobacco pouches to every participant and asked if they would be willing to share their knowledge and experiences regarding Indigenous/non-Indigenous relationships. Although I was required to have participants sign a consent form to fulfill University of Alberta research ethics, participants were giving their consent when they accepted my offer of protocol. This consent creates a reciprocal relationship between the person offering and the person accepting. The person accepting the protocol was agreeing to take time and share with me their knowledge on the topic, while I was also agreeing to be respectful of their worldview and to be courteous and ethical with what they shared. As the researcher, I took on a responsibility when I offered protocol to go about my research in an ethical and respectful way. This responsibility made me think about how I would continue to engage with the participants

after they had shared with me, to keep them involved as much as my limitations would allow, and to treat their knowledge with the utmost respect.

Methods

Ethics

I am grateful for the encouragement of others to use IRM. As I write now, I see the importance and relevance of this methodology in my work. However, ensuring that I remained true to the values of the methodology sometimes created discomfort for me as I was venturing into processes that my university courses had not prepared me for. I decided that the gifts I gave participants would be Indigenous made and support Indigenous artisans. I also chose to purchase tobacco and make my own tobacco pouches as it was important to me that I go through the process of making the pouches. As I made these pouches I took the time to reflect on the importance of offering tobacco. However, I had never bought tobacco before and had to call upon my work colleague - who frequently purchases tobacco for ceremonies we attend - and ask for advice: what tobacco to buy, where to buy it, how much to get. After I had made the pouches and bought the gifts, my first interview was with an Elder, whom I had attended ceremony with. I realized that maybe a pouch of tobacco wasn't enough. What was I asking of them? Should I offer more? Thankfully, this time I was able to ask a dear friend of mine and engage in a lengthy conversation that further explored the meaning and significance of offering tobacco. I share these stories of being unaware of what to do because I have found, in talking with others, that it is all too common to not know. I share these stories of not knowing and discomfort as a means to relate to others who may have faced the same experiences. It is okay to not know everything and as I reflect on these seemingly small events, it dawned on me that using IRM meant that while I conducted the research I was constantly learning new processes, new ethics, and new knowledge

while simultaneously trying to understand them in relation to what I was learning about research methods, ethics, and consent in my university course.

Beyond ensuring that my research was conducted ethically through the use of IRM, the research was reviewed and approved by the University of Alberta ethics board.

Participants

In total there were 11 participants. Although I am the researcher, I include myself as a participant within the sharing circle. Among the participants, six self-identified as settler Canadians; three participants were male, three female. Of the five Indigenous participants there were four Cree women from Saddle Lake, and one Metis woman. All of the participants work directly within the realm of Indigenous/non-Indigenous relationship building. Participants were given the option to either attend the sharing circle or sit down for a one-on-one interview. Of the 11 participants, six chose to participate in the sharing circle (myself included) and five opted to be interviewed.

Sharing Circle

As a means of continuing to engage in IRM, I chose to hold a sharing circle (also described as a talking circle) with the participants. The sharing circle, rather than a focus group, upholds the values of IRM. It allowed people to come together in a space that began with a smudge and was conducive to speaking and listening to one another. Smudging is traditional to many Indigenous peoples. The process and meaning of smudging is described by Sylvia McAdam (2014b):

> When you smudge you use sage or sweetgrass. When you go to smudge you put your hands forward and you bring the smoke towards you and when you smudge your hands you're smudging your hands for greeting people in a kind way, in a good way. When you touch their hands to greet them, to shake hands with them, you're greeting them in friendship, in kinship, and in respect. When you smudge your hands you bring that smoke forward to you face and you smudge your face and you smudge your mind so that your

> mind is prayerful and prepared for the information and the teachings you're about to hear. And then you smudge your eyes so you can hear the teachings in a good way. Then you smudge your eyes so you can view people with kindness,compassion, and respect, and in kinship. And you also smudge your body so that your soul flame is cleansed and nurtured with the sweetgrass that we use so our connection to the Creator is that much stronger. And this is why we smudge before we go into these teachings and it's preparing our bodies and all of our four gifts so that those teachings tay with us even after we leave.

The circle created a safe space for people to share their own truths. It was important for me to understand as best I could the circle process because not following circle protocol actually creates a very unsafe space when you're asking people to be vulnerable but not creating the support necessary for people to be that open.

Talking circles provide a ceremonial space in which participants can share their stories and experiences (Pranis, 2005). The circle reflects values of connectedness, acknowledges that wisdom is "accessed through personal stories" (p. 13), and encourages self-reflection (Pranis, 2005). These values are essential to creating a space in which everyone feels comfortable to speak from their own truthful experience and perspective. The talking circle is not meant to seek consensus amongst participants, rather it facilitates a discussion on particular topics in which people feel they are free to share their opinions.

Everyone in the circle, including the facilitators (in this case, myself), participated. It was made clear that everyone had the option to give silence or to pass any question they would prefer not to answer. A smudge began the circle and helped build a foundation of mutual respect and support amongst participants. This aligned with Shawn Wilson's (2008) explanation of ceremony as an integral part of Indigenous research methods and is foundational to the creation of respectful and sustainable relationships. During the first round of questions, the grounding circle, participants were asked to introduce themselves, talk about their relationship to the topic of Indigenous/non-Indigenous relations, and how they felt about this relationship. The grounding

circle allowed participants to begin building relationships through sharing their stories and actively listening to others.

During the second round of the sharing circle, participants were asked to speak from their own experiences about individual and collective roles and responsibilities to fostering healthy relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. The process and the guiding questions for the talking circles were intentionally designed in response to the following critique by Shawn Wilson (2008):

> Many studies in psychology, human services and other social sciences conducted *on* Indigenous people - as opposed to those conducted *by* or *with* Indigenous people - focus on negative aspects of life, as identified by outside researchers. In many of their conclusions, the studies identify "problems" that are in need of further study...One consequence of such studies, even though their intentions may have been good, has been the proliferation of negative stereotypes about Indigenous communities. (p. 16-17)

A rock was passed from participant to participant. Lana Whiskeyjack, a participants in the sharing circle shared with us during her turn that the rock helps to ground the person and ensures that the person speaking is sharing their truth. I was once in a sharing circle with an Elder who explained that the grandfather rock knows what is in your heart and even if you choose to share silence, the grandfather rock knows and hears what is in your heart. Although other objects, such as feathers, are often chosen to be passed around, because of this teaching, I chose to use a rock. I was once asked by a professor, when I chose to use a sharing circle in my class research project, how I would know that the participants were telling the truth. And although I believe this question could be asked of any research tool, the teachings I received around the tobacco and the grandfather rock answered the question for me. The process of facilitating the sharing circle was one aspect, but understanding Indigenous worldview regarding the spirit and respect of sharing circle work is another, more meaningful and sacred aspect of using ceremony and IRM in research.

Interviews

I chose to offer participants the option to either attend the sharing circle or to sit down for a one-on-one interview for two reasons. One, I understand that people are very busy and often have hectic schedules. The interviews allowed us to find a time and place that worked for both of us. Two, in following the principles of relationality, I understood that not everyone I was asking to participate would be comfortable in participating in a circle and I did not want their discomfort to be the reason they chose not to participate. Although, as I will discuss, personal discomfort is a piece of the journey in beginning to work together, for research purposes it was more important to provide a comfortable environment for people to share their experiences than to have them experience discomfort.

The interviews lasted 45-120 minutes, often dependent upon how close the relationship was between myself and the participant. The longest lasted over 2 hours and included a delicious meal, while the shortest was over the phone with someone I have never met in person, lasting 45 minutes. Interview participants had either equivalent or more time to speak as the participants did in the sharing circle, although it was clear the dynamic between researcher and participant was different as the interviews allowed more of a back and forth dialogue while the circle required more patience and strong listening skills. The interviews also allowed me to ask more specific clarifying questions directly of the interviewee and occasionally explore additional themes.

Analysis

The audio recordings of the sharing circle interviews were sent in for transcription to Rev Transcription. Once the transcriptions were complete, I analyzed them for any common themes. I then sent all transcriptions and a list of the themes back to participants. This gave participants the

opportunity to change anonymity if they wanted, to redact sections, expand on anything they had said and to add additional comments relating to the initial questions and proposed themes. Participants were given two weeks to review the transcript and themes.

Once transcripts were returned, I revisited the initial themes and made adjustments based on feedback from participants. I then re-read the transcripts and pulled quotes that related to these new themes and grouped them accordingly. This led to an overabundance of information. Each group of quotes was then reviewed and I chose quotes that most clearly highlighted the theme while still providing the most diversity from all participants. Initially I identified two major themes: individual and the collective; with a variety of underlying themes. As my analysis progressed and I amalgamated the themes, new themes emerged. These new themes included 1) how non-Indigenous people understand their role of settler-ally and 2) how people continue to live and work in relationships that promote reconciliation and resurgence. Questioning roles, reflecting on personal experiences, and understanding our own identity emerged as sub themes in understanding the role of settler-ally. Relationship building, self-care, and motivation emerged as sub themes in understanding how people continue to live and work in relationships that promote reconciliation and resurgence.

Positionality and the literature framed my analysis of the transcriptions from the sharing circles and interviews. Throughout my research I was highly cognizant of my position, my identity, and my role in relation to the work. This reflection led to trepidation in using Indigenous research methodologies and speaking for Indigenous peoples rather than with them. Therefore, the themes speak more to the role and understanding that settler Canadians have in regards to relationship building. I felt my role and my gifts that I can bring to the field of Indigenous/non-Indigenous relationship building are working with other settler Canadians to

understand: 1) what their role is in supporting reconciliation and resurgence, and 2) how to maintain complex relationships to seek long term reconciliation. It is through the methodologies and methods used that I garner support, voices, and knowledges from Indigenous mentors, role model, and scholars. The literature also framed my analysis. It is evident throughout the pivotal works of Regan (2010), Davis et al. (2016), Bishop (1994), Lowman and Barker (2015) that settler Canadians must engage in a personal transformation in which they are open to unlearning colonial ways of being while also learning a variety of differing worldviews. That being said, my themes focus on the experiences that people have had while either engaging in this transformative process or have faced while trying to engage others to begin this journey.

Limitations

The time frame for the research proved to be the most limiting factor. Two years for my thesis, with only one year of data collection, was not enough time to create the relationships needed to conduct this kind of sharing circle. To work around this limitation, I asked people with whom I had a pre-existing relationship. Some participants, those that I had not met yet, were recruited through a contact that I did know and were referred to me as someone to ask to participate. Most of the participants also knew each other, again mostly through work.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Over the past three years of research on relationship building between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, I have come to learn that most people, regardless of their job, knowledge, or experiences, have an opinion regarding the topic. Although at times I find myself not wanting to engage in the conversation as it can be mentally and emotionally draining, particularly when on a 7:00 am flight from Edmonton to Buffalo, I realize the importance of opening the space for people to share their voices and experiences. These conversations, often informal, may be the stepping stone that people need in order to feel they can engage with the complex topic of Indigenous/non-Indigenous relationships. It is also through many of the informal conversations, the sharing circle, and interviews conducted, that this theme of understanding our roles in solidarity with reconciliation emerged. I noticed that people who are willing to share will use personal experiences to communicate how they understand their own role within these relationships.

Throughout the analysis, I explore both the individual and the collective aspects of reconciliation, allyship, and working together across various worldviews. Engaging in reconciliation beginning a life-long journey of allyship begins as an individual self-decolonization and a process of transforming the way people understand their identity and worldviews. If we, as a collective, have a goal of moving forward in respectful ways that strive for sustainable reconciliation, then it is the goal of the individual to find ways to maintain these complex and continually changing relationships. As I explore the collective, themes emerge regarding motives, relationship building, the ripple effect, and boundaries. These themes led to a more in depth look at the ways in which individuals can begin to work together to not only foster

respectful and ethical relationships, but ways in which people maintain these relationships as well.

"That moment", identity, and understanding the role of settler-ally

In this section, I briefly outline phases in the journey of allyship that many participants identified. The journey of allyship is not a linear process, rather, as Kahane (2017) states about working collaboratively, it is an iterative process. The first phase is "that moment" when strongly held beliefs and assumptions are challenged. The second phase is a new reckoning of identity. The third phase is struggling with understanding the settler role in reconciliation.

That moment

> *"All the settlers here kind of had our "ah-ha," because you can almost like trace it back to an individual, or a situation you were in where that's …. It's like ...not a conversion, but that type of spark, where you get it. When you hear it from somebody."* (Lewis Carter)

Part of the transformation process, different for Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, is the moment in their lives that sparks the interest, curiosity, and motivation to engage in the learning process. Through colonization, western worldviews and understandings of history have become dominant, and this dominance has overshadowed and silenced other accounts of history. Because Indigenous knowledge and experiences have been hidden and silenced, non-Indigenous people experience this "ah-ha" moment when they learn about it for the first time. This learning experience often serves as that moment that motivates people to want to learn more (Harwood, 2015). Although we may not often think about the moment that inspired our curiosity to learn more, it can often be quite memorable and impactful:

> Taiaiake Alfred … he came in and gave a presentation to our class. Actually, I can remember that moment. He's so powerful. It actually made me - what you're talking about, that resistance and that personal understanding about the history I think had been - I was reading textbooks. I was having group discussions in my undergrad, but it was all

> disconnected. He was an incredible speaker, and I still remember it. It was 20 years ago now. (Lewis Carter)

Those who experience these moments of inspiration become engaged in the learning and unlearning process (Regan, 2010). Unlearning myths and stereotypes imposed through a settler colonial narrative allows space to understand that there are a multitude of different worldviews. As settlers within this work of relationship building "we are constantly in processes; just like there's no static Indian, there's no static settler in this and we have to see that we're constantly in this process of learning and growth" (Steve Heinrichs). Those who engage in a process of transformative learning are in constant change. Both Steve Heinrichs and Fay Fletcher reflected on this constant state of change:

> Sometimes we're in a better place a few years ago than we are now in these relationships. But it's just to have that kind of, that deep sense of humility as we engage, which I think it doesn't cover up all wrongdoing, but it's certainly, um, it will give sustenance not only for yourself but for others in continuing this work. (Steve Heinrichs)

> I recorded a story of what it means to be an ally. I said "20 years ago, I did this and I thought that meant I was an ally; 15 years ago I did this….I said in the end, "I'm sure that I'll look back one day and say I thought I was an ally then but really, I didn't understand it then." … That's who I am in this work. (Fay Fletcher)

Through engagement in an unlearning/learning process, we as individuals are transformed. The norm of seeing the world through a settler colonial perspective is challenged and we are open to learning and understanding new worldviews. This transformation, as Steve Andreas notes, becomes a life-long journey:

> Then another rebirth happened so to speak. I don't know if it's a rebirth, but something happened in my life for the next 30 years that was like becoming a child in terms of entering into a world that I knew nothing about. I had no background knowledge, I had met no Indigenous people in my life the first 30 years. That's the journey I'm currently on, of being in a world where I'm growing like a child, and growing, and learning, and eager to learn more, and discovering realities I didn't know existed.

As a researcher myself, I reflect on the transformation process and its importance not only in challenging the way I understand the world around me, but also in challenging the way I conduct my research. I reflect on what Evelyn Steinhauer highlighted from Wilson (2008) in my Indigenous research methodologies course, that if we as researchers aren't transformed then we aren't doing the work properly. When the personal transformation we experience impacts the actions we carry out (Davis et al., 2016), in my case the way I conduct and think about research, then we can engage in reconciliation in our everyday lives.

Identity

Transformation, the decolonization of a settler worldview, begins as a personal journey. The journey may begin with learning about other worldviews, other ways of being, but the personal transformation happens when we understand how our own identities have been shaped and through the journey can be reshaped. Transformation begins with understanding how individuals' worldviews form *and* change. Settler identities have been shaped by settler colonialism and this in turn has shaped how we understand the world around us (Davis et al., 2016; Lowman & Barker, 2015; Regan, 2010). Steve Heinrichs shared his knowledge of how we shape the world around us based on the stories we tell ourselves:

> The world around you is shaped by stories. What are the stories that we're telling ourselves? Not that we abide in our actions by the the basic stories that we tell ourselves, but they certainly do shape a good chunk of our behavior, our action in relationships. So, to start *telling* different narratives, *discovering* different narratives is really key.

As Davis et al. (2016), Lowman and Barker (2015), and Regan (2010) all observe, the stories that create the settler identity are formed out of myths that describe relationships to the land and other people. Unlearning these myths as an act of decolonizing is an uncomfortable process (Regan, 2010), however, it is an essential process in order to transform and to understand others' worldviews:

> You have to understand who you are within this settler colonial story that continues and how you've - we have - been deeply impacted by settler colonialism. (Steve Heinrichs)

> I started to learn about my history. I think I was reading Thomas King's *Inconvenient Indian*, yeah. He talks about where I grew up in that book, I was shocked because I never knew and suddenly everything made sense, the stereotypes that people have of other people. It's like, "oh, well, this is because these people were relocated to this reservation, and this is probably why they have these problems going on. People from there just don't get that, the settlers. I started learning a lot about that, and I spent my undergrad figuring out my history and places of settlers in Canada I guess. (Mabel LeBlanc)

Learning the history of Canada is vital to not only understanding the settler colonial identity, but also to understanding the tensions that can come up in relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Regan (2010) refers to learning this history as learning the truth and refers to those that are willing to challenge hegemonic structures as "living in truth" (p. 215). The importance of learning and understanding the history between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples was brought up in both interviews and the sharing circle, specifically by Indigenous participants:

> We still have our voice, and people need to know these stories that are going on right now … All I'm talking about here is revealing the truth, and revealing the truth of what happened in history, and right now. (kise kwe)

> The reconciliation is problematic, and there's an onus of responsibility for people to know the truth. Who's going to tell them the truth? Because people only see things from one side, one lens, and that's the big liberal lens. There is a worldview that belongs to us, and unfortunately it's not heard often enough. We don't have that voice, and our populations actually don't understand the strength of their voice even. (kise kwe)

> Now we're having conversations that were really news to people and really today, they're still news because people don't know the history. Because they startle people, they shock people, they horrify people. Going forward, what is that going to mean for people? Where are they going to sit with this? (Lynn)

The relationship that has been created through this history between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people was also an important theme that arose. This relationship is created through treaty:

> In 1876 when our ancestors made that treaty with the crown, they made it with the intention of sharing the land, because we are the land. We're sharing ourselves for as long as the sun shines, as long as the waters flow, for as long as the grass grows, and as long as we are here as Cree people. That's forever, and there was no agreement or any type of international instrument that has that same type of longevity. It's forever. (kise kwe)

> The relationship we made with the crown was a nation to nation relationship. That is the truth, and a lot of people don't realize that. That we are fully entitled and fully deserving of the lands that we shared, and everything that comes off of these lands. Yet we are the poorest of and live in the worst social conditions, where Canada enjoys number two in the world on the human social index. (kise kwe)

These relationships also impact how Indigenous people are treated within hegemonic, settler colonial systems:

> If anything, those statistics that the government love to use so much to create these systems … stereotyping us continues. Especially in the media, they should use it in helping to inform their work around reconciliation, which of course the TRC recommends or even RCAP. They created so much, did so much work around this. To me, I don't believe it because there's a historical mistrust on relationships because of the constant renaming of assimilating us. (Lana Whiskeyjack)

Leanne Simpson (2011) asks how we "can reconcile when the majority of Canadians do not understand the historic or contemporary injustices of dispossession and occupation" (p. 21). Indigenous participants spoke to both the role they have as educators of "the truth" as well as the responsibility that non-Indigenous people have in taking action to learn about the history:

> For the non-Indigenous end it's about taking the opportunity, every opportunity you can to actually learn about Indigenous people. I always say 'how can you not know this stuff in this age when technology is out there. How you not know about Residential schools?' (Evelyn Steinhauer)

> There's lots that we need to teach the newcomers, and the settlers, and those who we shared our lands with. (kise kwe)

The process of understanding our own identities does not end with learning about the history in which both the settler identity and the complex relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people have been created. A part of the discomfort in learning about our identity may come when we face the current biases and stereotypes that we continue to carry. As Evelyn

Steinhauer shared, it is an important step in transforming our thinking, to at least recognize and acknowledge when the stereotypes and biases arise:

> So if I admit that I'm a racist then that's something, that's the beginning or maybe you don't even use the word racist. If I admit to myself that I have really strong stereotypes about a certain group, then I need to confront that and I need to somehow deal with it. I need to reflect on it and I need to be more conscious of it every time I do it … it's always acknowledging that we carry those stereotypes.

As Steve Andreas shared, our identity may be "unconscious" to us until a moment when we are faced with something that challenges our identity. This challenge is a learning opportunity, rather than a moment to be paralyzed in the discomfort:

> ...so often who we are is so unconscious until we meet someone who is different than us, on the outside at least. Could be on the inside. It's in [that experience] that we begin to realize that there's so much to learn. (Steve Andreas)

The discomfort that is faced as a result of beginning a transformative process can be overwhelming, but as Steve Andreas and Steve Heinrichs mention, both of whom are non-Indigenous, it is important not to be stopped by these feelings. Steve Heinrichs shares that he feels the discomfort while engaging in these conversations and learnings, but he also emphasizes the importance of not getting caught up in those feelings and the benefits he gets as a result:

> ...my body hurts engaging and learning these conversations. But I also find no greater joy than um, being a part of these relationships just as I find with my kids, like the gift and the beauty and the knowledge they think about engaging Indigenous peers and communities in conversation. (Steve Heinrichs)

> I have a responsibility to humbly learn and act and not be caught up in the paralysis, that fear, the anxieties that are part of this messy conversation and joyous conversation. (Steve Heinrichs)

Understanding our own identity is key to working in healthy, ethical relationship. As settlers, and particularly as researchers, we must place ourselves in the work that we do. This means understanding who we are, how we identify, and what our relationship is to the work. All of these self-reflective questions are a step toward avoiding the unconscious irresponsibility

(Weber-Pillwax, 1999) that so many researchers fall prey to. Both Lana Whiskeyjack and Lynn spoke to the importance of placing yourself and understanding your relationship to the work:

> So, I think when it comes to coming to this ally-ship is, even working in the community it is really important to constantly place yourself as it relates to who you are, and your relationship to the work. (Lana Whiskeyjack)

> They [Elders] invite all of us, but the journey is an individual journey. Whether you're a native person or a white person … you're still going to have to go to your own spirit to figure out "what is my relationship in this work?" Then, you have to figure out colonization, an ongoing colonization. (Lynn)

Kahane (2017) suggests that "in complex, uncontrolled situations, we need to shift our focus onto what we ourselves are doing; how are we contributing to things being the way they are and what we need to do differently to change the way things are" (p. 89). Reflecting on our own identity, as either settler or Indigenous, is important to not only the first steps in the personal journey of self-decolonization and transformation, but also to relationship building. Relationship building demands that we understand our ethical responsibility and accountability to each other as well as our respective roles.

Understanding our Role

> *We have this ceremonial teaching space and Indigenous led programs and we have things happening, but I just wonder whether I will ever stop questioning who I am in this work and in the relationships. (Fay Fletcher)*

Research within the social sciences has a history of being oppressive (Wilson, 2008) and researchers have conducted their work with unconscious irresponsibility: the notion that the work they are doing is good and helpful as long as their intentions are meaningful (Weber-Pillwax, 1999). Indigenous scholars have suggested methods of self-reflection (Wilson, 2008; Steinhauer, 2002; Hampton, 1997) in which researchers evaluate and come to understand their identity, motivation, role, and responsibilities in working with Indigenous communities. This self-reflection however, can lead to settlers questioning their role within the work with the potential

of causing paralysis, fearful that they may perpetuate oppressive methods (Fitzmaurice, 2010). Settler participants shared their own experiences of questioning their role while working with Indigenous peoples and communities:

> I need to think about every single space I go in, ... is someone going to be offended because I have some knowledge that they rightly should have and I've gained because I do this work or I've ... Right, it's like ... everything has a question mark attached to it … even with having been doing this work for 25 years, I have the same concerns that [others have], in terms of the ethics and the relationships and how do we know for sure whether we're doing good work or we're contributing to the ongoing oppression? (Fay Fletcher)

> I really want to hear from everybody in the group what my role is in this work … I honestly approach it as "I'm going to screw up again and again" … I may be adding to the problem. Just trying to work with the partners who are so patient and so … I keep looking over at Pat because I know you've been doing this work for so long and within the university too, where it's a sudden rush to do this stuff. (Lewis Carter)

> As a settler, I'm always thinking about who I am to be doing this work. What is my role in doing this work? I'm really interested in looking at the federal government and intervening in those areas because that's where I see my role. (Mabel LeBlanc)

Questioning our role and asking ourselves the questions is a step in combating potential unconscious irresponsibility, as it brings forward and demands that we reconcile with our conscious and unconscious biases. However, having these questions cannot be an excuse to not continue in the work; "we must commit ourselves to the ongoing struggle of reconciliation" (Regan, 2010, p. 230). This importance of continuing to work through the fear and paralysis and towards reconciliation is captured in the following::

> You know, [people here in our Faculty say], "What do we do? What do we do?" [They] want to do something, and that's exciting. You know, it's exciting to see that ... to see people stepping in, not sure, but not being paralyzed. You know. Let's not be paralyzed. Let's not. Let's work if there's anger and guilt and shame and whatever. Let's work through that to come to that place of, "Yes, we are all related. Yes, we have collective responsibilities. (Lynn)

As settler people, it can be difficult and uncomfortable to learn about settler colonialism and face our own biases and stereotypes. However, as shared in the circle and interviews,

Indigenous people have faced, and continue to face, tensions, racism, and acts of settler colonialism:

> The other thing I think that causes tension is as soon as you identify [as an Indigenous] faculty member in the Indigenous Peoples Education [program], then a certain label seems to be placed on your forehead immediately. So then it's almost like people put up their guard and they don't want to speak as openly to you. (Evelyn Steinhauer)

> We need to grow and be mindful of the multiple ways that Indigenous peoples have both been impacted and resisted and continue to be impacted and resist settler colonialism. And then we need to do a similar kind of work just to be more conscious of who we are in this relationship. (Steve Heinrichs)

Bishop explains that "understanding one's own position as an oppressor, without being completely immobilized, also requires a balance between understanding oneself as an individual and as part of a collective reality. This balance is rare in the culture we live in" (Bishop, 1994, p. 96). Settlers must strive to understand the impact that settler colonialism has had on not only the way they understand the world, but how it has impacted the way others are treated in a settler colonial society. Within this society dominated by settler colonialism, settlers have certain privileges that members of the oppressed group are not granted. Understanding our role as settlers in solidarity with Indigenous peoples includes understanding our privilege because we "have a responsibility because of that privilege" (Bridgette Clark). Taking responsibility through the use of settler privilege may take many different forms, but as was shared by participants, it involves taking up space within conversation and challenging settler colonial narratives:

> What does it mean to be an ally? I've always believed that it's using your privilege, using the places that you can to open and challenge the systems and change the systems. (Fay Fletcher)

> Connecting to this other idea of the role of settlers is taking responsibility for our own people and really stepping up to the plate to do the work that people in our communities or Indigenous relations are asking us to do. I see a lot of my friends and my partner and the experiences that they have in the classrooms in that they're always so exhausted by the work that they do in these spaces because they're always in that position of needing to change the conversation, that kind of thing. Some experiences that I've had this semester

> is just talking with people about settlers' self-indigenization, I don't know if anyone is familiar with this, and claims to Metis citizenship from people who are not Metis. There's been lots of that going in the classroom, and I've been trying to take a more active role. (Mabel LeBlanc)

Reflecting on our identity, privilege, and roles within the work of reconciliation is essential. This process of self-reflection not only encourages settler people to learn about the history and what has impacted their personal identity, it also engages us in self-decolonization and a transformative process. As both scholars and participants have noted, this process is difficult and uncomfortable, but necessary to be able to begin a journey of allyship. Once this journey has started, we move into a collective space of relationship building. These relationships can be difficult, but as we engage in conversation with people who have different worldviews than ourselves this is the ethical space.

Continuing to work and live in collective relationships

In the first section I looked at the different phases that began a journey of self-decolonization and allyship. In this section I explore what participants identified as ways that they continue to work within these complex relationships. First, I look at the responsibility that participants feel they have to the collective. This includes understanding the motives that drive people to engage in the collective as well as the actions they take to form a collective of like-minded people, or, how they engage in the ripple effect (Harwood, 2015). Second, I explore the importance of relationship building and engaging in the ethical space (Ermine, 2007). Finally, I look at the ways participants spoke about continuing to work and live in these complex relationships through the use of clear expectations and boundaries.

Responsibility to the collective

One of the themes presented by the participants was that of their responsibilities not only to the work of reconciliation but to working with and for others. Steinhauer (2002) writes that

there is motive in research and that motive is emotional and that "we do what we do for reasons, emotional reasons [and] that is the engine that drives us" (p. 79-80). For many participants, the motive for working towards reconciliation was a responsibility they felt for others:

> I agreed to participate in this because it's about relationships, and in the future I want to see a place for my great-grandchildren where they are fully recognized as being the human beings they are, and not subject to marginalization of any sort. (kise kwe)

> I think my responsibility as an Indigenous person is to listen more. Even though it's really really difficult, especially if you've been a wounded person is to put aside those wounds for a little while and actually really listen. So I have that responsibility. I've been practicing it for a while really really carefully… (Evelyn Steinhauer)

> It's interesting because I'm coming to a point now where I feel like I have a responsibility back to my family now. (Bridgette Clark)

> I choose to stay focused on my grandson and always thinking about him and always thinking, "What can I do to change his life?" because if I start to look at globalism and everything else, I would go crazy. (Lynn)

However, this work can be demanding and trying to maneuver through these complex relationships with our own identities and with people who have differing worldviews can be difficult. As Lynn mentioned, if we lose focus of our motivations we "would go crazy."

Understanding the importance of engaging in these conversations on a collective level also motivates us to engage in the ripple effect by inviting others to join in these conversations. By inviting others not only are we "spread[ing] learning and innovation" (Harwood, 2015, p. 38), but we are also building a support network. This network becomes filled with people that we can comfortably engage in meaningful conversation with and share our knowledge. Participants that spoke about inviting others to join in this reconciliation work also mentioned the importance of inviting people in a supportive and compassionate way:

> the support networks and engaging people I think the support networks are really important. So, the people who are here and are the support networks for family. And I would never do anything to jeopardize that. But, first and foremost in my life is my

> family. So, yes, I will bring them into the conversations and share, but wouldn't jeopardize that. (Fay Fletcher)
>
> ...need to take people on this journey and love and kindness and honesty is because we need those people. We need them to step in to this relationship, because when they step in and they get it ... then is there a chance that they might see why we have to work together beyond ourselves into the bigger picture for all of us. (Lynn)
>
> And so, doing this work in this way, building those relationships and actually putting value on the relationships, I think is something that as a researcher is incredibly important. But, because of those relationships, everything becomes very personal and it becomes very emotional, so without support networks, I don't think that it would be possible. And I wanted to say that because it reflected back on the point that I had made about inviting as a role and responsibility I have invited other non-Indigenous people to come to ceremony to engage in this dialog and doing that in a way that is supportive and loving. (Rebecca Shortt)

Knowledge sharing, even unintentionally on a daily basis through conversations with friends and family is an act of engagement in the ripple effect. As both Kahane (2017) and Harwood (2015) mention, it is important to recognize the small victories. Encouraging the recognition of small victories within the ripple effect means that we should not discount the daily conversations we have as these are still moments of knowledge sharing. The people we share our knowledge with now have the ability to share that knowledge again with others, and the knowledge, the truth, the learning, the reconciliation all ripples out into the collective:

> I'm someone with a large group of close friends who literally my role is making people wake up to what's happening around them, caring about issues, getting new perspectives, that kind of stuff. (Bridgette Clark)
>
> The reason I said yes to this is that maybe it's an opportunity for you as a non-Indigenous person, I'm non-Indigenous, to really stretch yourself and the changes you make in your life will affect the people that you hang around with. (Steve Andreas)
>
> Also, on the personal, because this one we talk about why we do this work and I talk about my life is better because I've been able to learn. And I think my children are the way they are because I have the teachings and then I share those teachings. (Fay Fletcher)

Knowing that the conversations are complex and difficult and that the journey of transformation is uncomfortable, many participants spoke to the importance of inviting people into this work through a supportive and compassionate approach.

> I think we need a lot of compassion as being engaged in these conversations. It doesn't mean that we can't hold urgency and patience together and compassion and at times anger together. (Steve Heinrichs)

> So everything is is - requires negotiation everything requires careful consideration. Everything of course requires compassion. (Evelyn Steinhauer)

This compassionate approach is what Harwood (2015) argues is how we can grow our collective groups and support networks. As participants identified, taking a supportive approach means meeting people where they are at in their journey of self-decolonization and reconciliation. Recognizing that everyone is on their own path (Kahane, 2017) and at different stages in this process allows us to meet them where they are at and invite them into the conversation with compassion:

> ...we have to seek to enter into the spaces where people are at. We can be more strategic, I think to speak the language where they're at so that they can understand, so they can make the next step. That doesn't mean barring down anything. Sometimes it means you don't address certain parts of the conversation because they're finding this is turning their world upside down. So we take it slow. (Steve Heinrichs)

> You're supportive to them, of what they're going through and it's often hard. Often they're angry, and sometimes at you, and you're not like, "Get over it." It's the same idea, which to me is just human decency, I don't know what the word is other than just being a supportive human and a friend. (Bridgette Clark)

> I think a lot about my parents, the background that they're coming from the knowledge system that they're coming from and their worldviews really. How do I engage them in a supportive way without off-putting them to it I guess? Because one of the things that keeps coming up is that this is very uncomfortable. (Rebecca Shortt)

> Being an ally involves being an ally to everyone; from a white person who thinks "just get over it" to an Indigenous person harbouring anger due to past trauma. You're an ally in different ways to different groups. (Bridgette Clark)

Although it is important to self-reflect as individuals on the process of reconciliation and decolonization, participants expressed a responsibility to engage in the collective. Inviting people into these complex conversations grows our collective groups so that we can have these conversations about next steps and actions, but as participants identified, we have to do this in a kind and compassionate way. The approach of meeting people where they are at and doing so in a supportive way, help those who experience feelings of guilt or shame overcome the paralysis.

Engaging in the Collective

> *There are changes that are coming in with the TRC, with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. People, I think, are going through the motions but they don't really know what that is. But I really think it's simple, it's about relationship building and it's about getting to know each other. (Evelyn Steinhauer)*

As individuals, we can begin a journey of self-decolonization and transformation, but as we move into the collective and begin building relationships and working collaboratively, we can have an impact on the hegemonic systems of oppression. As individuals, we collectively make up and create these systems through settler colonialism, but as Freeman (2014) states, "a dance on its own does not transform the state, but the experience for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people of dancing together can transform consciousness, and that is one of the places where decolonization begins" (p. 223). In order to work collectively and build these relationships, we have to begin to get to know one another. As participants identified, not only do we have to work together, but we have to get to know one another so that we can have the difficult conversations that Kahane (2017) and Ermine (2007) argue are essential to moving forward. By getting to know one another, we are also actively participating in the ripple effect and growing our support network of like-minded thinkers:

> I need to be able to have a conversation with them … So they get to know who I am because when they get to know me they're going to get to know other Aboriginal people as well. (Evelyn Steinhauer)

> I look at St. Paul, which is surrounded by reserves and settlements. In my lifetime, I never would have thought that they are embarking on a journey. They're talking about racism, but that racist conversation is going to take them to coming to understand a little bit about the history, the history that Blue Quills as a residential school is five kilometers from St. Paul, and the very fact that these communities traverse each other. French people, Ukrainian people, native people, they live in that area, but they really don't know each other. (Lynn)
>
> It's really important that our non-Indigenous allies take up some of this work. And that you always should find Indigenous people to work with. I've seen people take this work up and they've never consulted with an Indigenous person or they've talked to them in passing right and they think that's all there is to it. But there's got to be more to it. And I always think that you need to be involved in ceremony, and depending on what that ceremony looks like maybe it's not going into a sweat or going to communities. I always say to our students 'you don't know the people that live there. You've lived that many years by the Reserve and you don't know anything about them. Visit the reserve, take some time to actually visit go to weddings or go to a hockey game.' (Evelyn Steinhauer)
>
> Relationships, if you're persistent and often it requires persistence like in any kind of relationship you just have to show up repeatedly, are often born in [repeatedly showing up] at the vigils that are happening for missing and murdered Indigenous women. Relationships can be formed because they see your face all the time there and you're offering help and saying you're not trying to take the leadership, but you're saying, 'Where can I be a gift?' or 'Where would it make sense for me to pitch in…?' (Steve Heinrichs)
>
> It's about relationships. When people throw around the word relationship, what does it really mean? It's just getting to know me, it's talking to me, it is sitting across from me on the train and having a conversation. (Evelyn Steinhauer)

What Lynn, Evelyn, and Steve all mention is the importance of building a relationship through actively participating in events, in community, in vigils, and in conversation. Actively participating and 'showing up' is how trust is built between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people who have a history of "being in a relationship that wasn't filled with any of that trust" (Evelyn Steinhauer). If the trust is not built, then we cannot participate in the ethical space in a way that seeks to move the conversations forward and look at the next steps in these relationships. However, as Kahane (2017) and Ermine (2007) note, these conversations are

difficult and complex to both start and maintain as contrasting worldviews collide with one another. Participants identified the barriers in having these conversations:

> I think there are people that are seeing that there needs to be some type of relationship building that happen. There are people that recognise that there's tensions between Indigenous people and non-Indigenous people. They recognise that tension but they don't know what to do with it. It's like so then you're tiptoeing around each other or you avoid each other. (Evelyn Steinhauer)

> I think we're too afraid, we I mean Canadians in general, in particular the federal government, too afraid to really make the changes that are needed and maybe make, this is just a guess, but maybe Indigenous people are too, a little bit. Maybe there isn't a collective hive mind and especially where people are in poverty. Potentially with a whole new system, you might be asked to give up certain things, certain elements of power or resources or whatever, so I think possibly on both sides on the whole neither side is quite ready to really put it on the table and really talk about it, what the next steps would be. (Bridgette Clark)

> There are all kinds of other pressures that indirectly stop this kind, and maybe unconsciously or not, different barriers from having this type of really honest discussion. (Lewis Carter)

> I think that tensions start when we start talking anything Indigenous because people don't have the history they don't have that understanding of why Indigenous people have certain rights. So I think that's probably where much of the tensions start as soon as you're asking for something that's different than what's offered here at the University of Alberta where you're not conforming to the policies and the rules according to what they've got outlined, then tension starts. (Evelyn Steinhauer)

These conversations are difficult and, as participants identified, there are obstacles that prevent meaningful conversations not only between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, but also conversations about those relationships. However, participants also spoke about the importance of "find[ing] a way to communicate without shutting each other down with silence" (Evelyn Steinhauer). Beyond these obstacles that are preventing meaningful conversations, participants shared the potential and the possibilities for these conversations to happen:

> We have the imagination and the brilliance to come up with many diverse ways of relating to one another that both see and honor each other and can relate in flexible life giving ways where we can be true to ourselves in these conversations and relationships. (Steve Heinrichs)

> I think all the work that was done in the past by everybody has gone to a place where at least we can have conversations. (Lewis Carter)

> I've seen the transformations between not only Native people who come in [to sacred space], but potential allies, whether they'd be white, yellow, red, black, that when we come into that sacred space together and we move positional power and you come as this person coming into ceremony to learn and to learn together, taking the hierarchies away, leaving those positions at the door when you come in and you come as this person to learn. Then, that's where I see that we can foster good relationships. (Lynn)

> There's no greater joy for me than being in diverse circles where we see and recognize and honor one another in both our diversity and unity and we're struggling together, bearing different responsibilities in the relationship for the well-being of the collective circle we're in. We're in this together. (Steven Heinrichs)

Engaging in the collective, as participants have noted, means truly getting to know one another in order to participate in meaningful conversations that go beyond surface level dialogue (Ermine, 2007). Although these conversations are difficult and there are multiple obstacles that hinder meaningful conversation, there are benefits of transformation and creative ways of thinking and collaborating. It is through these collaborations and engaging in difficult conversations that a collective shift in thinking starts to happen.

Boundaries

As we have seen, engaging in the ethical space means having difficult conversations and collaboratively working with people who understand the world in different ways. Ermine (2007) states that engaging in the ethical space requires a "serious reflection of those crucial lines we draw to delineate our personal autonomous zones and demarcations of boundaries others should not cross", which is crucial to being able to have ethical conversations. He goes on to state that "each of us knows our boundaries, the contours of our sacred spaces that we claim for ourselves as autonomous actors in the universe" (p. 195). Maintaining boundaries while working collaboratively in the ethical space is necessary for two reasons. First, clearly stating our boundaries and expectations with one another helps to maintain respectful and ethical

relationships. Knowing what we can and cannot do within a relationship means others will not place expectations upon us that we cannot uphold. Mabel LeBlanc shared her experience of living up to her own ethics when it comes to the Indigenous/non-Indigenous research relationships she built through her work in northern Canada:

> I guess as much as I would have liked to continue working with the community that I had worked with, I [had a] responsibility to step out of that because there was no long-term way that I could do that as a student. It's different obviously for professors who have different funding opportunities. I think that was just the most responsible way to handle that relationship. I still have relationships in that community, and I'm still very attached to them, and I'm still obviously producing work for my thesis. That's where I'm at, just always thinking about these things and how to do things ethically and care for the people that you work with … Now I'm starting my PhD but not in the same community because I also have very big concerns about working in places where you can't support those relationships to the best of your ability, especially financially as a student and how that can often be quite unethical. I'm trying to work closer to home and also just trying to do work on understanding my role now as somebody who's living in Treaty 6 for the past five or six years.

In the sharing circle, Lana Whiskeyjack shared a story that captures the complex relationships that occur when working collaboratively in the ethical space. She speaks about a friend of hers who asked for guidance in doing community work in Saddle Lake Cree Nation. Lana speaks about first building a relationship that led to working equitably together and the benefits that came from that collaboration. However, she also speaks about her boundaries and expectations of her friend as a researcher to build capacity within the community. Lana states that by doing so she was acting as a 'gatekeeper' to her community and ensuring that the relationship her friend had in the community remained ethical and respectful:

> I often think of one of my closest allies, she works at a university. I did research work with her for over seven years in my community. When she first came to wanting to do research in Saddle Lake, I got tons of red alerts because I'm like, here are these non-Indigenous scholars who are coming in and I'm so afraid of appropriation. I've been in some really unethical, bad, the old ethics of them coming into my community, taking the knowledge, treating us badly, saying our ceremonies, our spirituality, our language isn't good for their research, taking it, patenting it, all of that other stuff, especially around

> medicines. I was afraid of all of that, and so I volunteered to help with being that bridge of helping her get into the community, but I was also purposefully going to gate-keep her.
>
> Once I developed a relationship with her, she totally helped in giving me lead and to be of equal level with her with regards to the research work … For me, it was the first time having this doctor, scholarly western doctor acknowledge our knowledge systems, acknowledge my voice as an Indigenous community member. It was weird. Just the fact of acknowledging our intelligence was a really big deal for me. She believed in that wholeheartedly and she participated in our ceremonies.
>
> There was a point where she wanted to come in and do more and she wanted to use … my contacts, my auntie especially. I told her that I loved her and I appreciated her, but I didn't think that was a good idea, unless she at least had five youth to pay … 'If you really want to help my community, you will mentor, work, and take those youth so that you are expanding our capacity and our knowledge base in my community' … She ended up not going through with it. That was again my gatekeeping.
>
> … As non-Indigenous scholars, researchers, educators, if you're going to come into the community, build the capacity within the community. The system took away a lot of our rights, including our belief in ourselves that we have the medicine we need to take care of ourselves ... It took a lot of mentoring for me to come in to my voice and to speak up … There's so much work to do to normalize our voices in the same space as non-Indigenous people in a sense.

This story that Lana shared is an example of the iterative process of collaborating in the ethical space. Building relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples can lead to beneficial work, but we are constantly in the process of having difficult conversations. In the story Lana shared, she had to have a difficult conversation about her expectations of her friend as a researcher. When Lana's friend decided not to continue with the research, it did not mean the relationship was over. Rather it provided an opportunity for the researcher to go back to their research methods and reflect on the ways she could continue her work while maintaining ethical and respectful relationships.

Maintaining boundaries emerged as a dominant theme again when people spoke about reflecting on what it is they bring to this work and their focus on doing work that draws on those strengths. Some participants referred to this focus as 'doing the quiet work.' While the work may have less profile, it nonetheless contributes to relationship building and reconciliation between individuals. Susan Cain (2012) notes that "we have a belief system right now that [she] call[s]

'New Group Think' which holds that all creativity and all productivity comes from an oddly gregarious place (4:50-5:05). Cain argues that although our current society places value on collaborative thinking, we should not disregard those who work better in solitude, or take on the quiet work. The quiet work is different for everyone, but it is as important to the work of reconciliation as the most charismatic individual. For some it might be attending a ceremony, courses, or rallies; for others, it is honing in on their strengths in other ways. Focusing on our strengths, and doing the quiet work, allows people to choose how they are best able to engage with the collective. This choice allows people to maintain their boundaries:

> I made it a clear boundary for me. I will not get involved with projects that won't do systemic change. (Lana Whiskeyjack)

> Maybe it's not about changing people's expectations but by being like, I won't meet those...it's the idea of you have healthy boundaries yourself … This is where it has to come down to being strong internally. I'm one person. I can only do so much. (Bridgette Clark)

Choosing work that is meaningful to us personally is an important boundary. We, as individuals may not be able to change the whole system, but we do have the capability to choose the work we partake in. Quiet work, and strengths-based work provide more opportunities for small victories. These victories in turn motivate us to continue in the work (Harwood, 2015; Kahane, 2017). Some participants, including myself, are still on a journey of realizing that we do bring something to this work, that we have something to offer:

> We all have our own gifts and we need to find out what those gifts are and so then when I asked this questions my answer was my responsibility is to know what my gifts are and utilize those gifts. (Rebecca Shortt)

> For me my commitment would be to start actually having conversations with people so that they get to know who I am. You know not necessarily to talk about myself but sometimes people are really astonished when they hear about you. You know I always think I have nothing to offer people when I'm sitting with them and I have to get over that. You know I do have something to offer and I think a lot of it has to do with years and years of being oppressed so you always think that you're not worthy. So we need to

> get into a place where we're thinking to ourselves we are worthy of these conversations. (Evelyn Steinhauer)

Other participants shared how their strengths define what their role is within this work. In both the stories shared, the participants emphasize the inspiration and motivation they receive from carrying out the work in places they feel they have the capability to occupy:

> As an Indigenous person, educator, artist, I'm always using my art to educate, create awareness. Again, looking at that visual language to help … Coming from a really strength-based methodology, even with the right and education. For me, I am tired of contributing to the discourses of fear. If I'm in that, it will drain me. It will depress me. (Lana Whiskeyjack)

> I know that there are people like Taiaiake and other academics that do that work. That for me isn't my place. My place is to stay grounded in the community. On that more personal basis, it's to bring people, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, into sacred space together. In bringing them into the sacred space, then to see the potential for heartfelt transformation, to see that possibility. (Lynn)

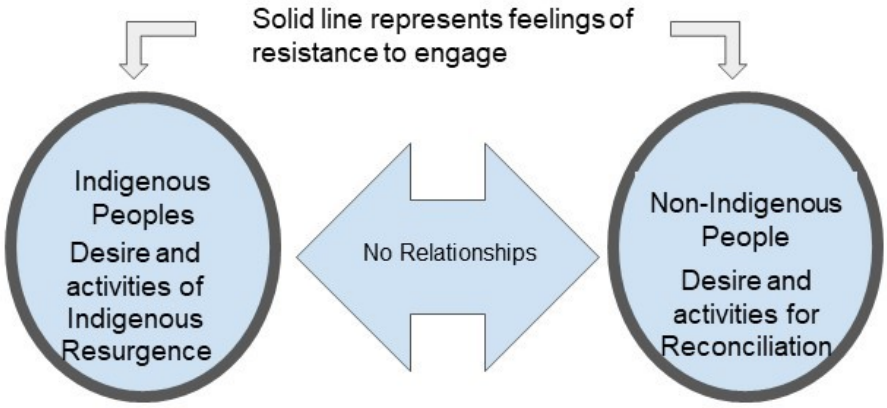
> ...I'm not stomping on Parliament grounds, but it's more like exploring identity either with family that people haven't done it with before, focus on women that people haven't necessarily done too much of that. And then the Metis, Inuit, I don't know. It's some of the quiet work (Bridgette Clark)

Reflecting on the personal strengths and gifts one can bring to the work of reconciliation helps individuals see how they can engage in the collective while still maintaining healthy boundaries. Taking on roles and responsibilities that align with our strengths sets people up to for small victories that in turn cultivates motivations and encourages people to continue reconciliation work.

Although the personal journey of self-decolonization is an important step in the reconciliation process, as Mabel mentioned in the sharing circle, "there's so many people that come together to make this kind of work happen." Participants spoke about the importance of engaging in the collective and the responsibility that they felt not only to those that they are working with now, but also to future generations. Working collaboratively means that people

need to be willing to engage in the ethical space and have difficult and meaningful conversations that strive to make progress. Building relationships to have these conversations is essential and this means truly getting to know one another, to reflect on once-held myths and stereotypes and be willing to talk to people with opposing worldviews. The benefits of engaging in the collective and of building support networks encourages people to invite friends, families, and colleagues into these conversations and reconciliation work. Inviting others into this work and finding motivation in personal responsibility to the collective, are ways that participants continue to engage in reconciliation. However, maintaining these relationships and collaborative work is important in achieving sustainable, systemic change. Participants discussed the importance of clear expectations and boundaries to avoid burnout and maintain healthy, respectful, and ethical relationships.

The figure below illustrates the relationship between key concepts identified throughout the research. Individuals, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, face barriers that hinder relationship building. These barriers, represented by bold lines encircling “Indigenous Peoples” and “Non-Indigenous People”, are feelings such as anger, fear, and paralysis. People may or may not experience these feelings, but if they do then there is the potential to avoid relationship building. The separate spheres represent the potential for individuals to identify with a particular role and responsibility: Indigenous peoples in resurgence and non-Indigenous people in reconciliation. Through a process of self-reflection, individuals can begin breaking down the barriers that prevent relationship building, overcoming feelings of anger, resistance, fear, and paralysis. Understanding our own boundaries we can begin to understand our shared roles in achieving reconciliation and resurgence, coming together within the ethical space and practicing stretch collaboration.


Solid line represents feelings of resistance to engage
Indigenous Peoples
Desire and activities of Indigenous Resurgence
No Relationships
Non-Indigenous People
Desire and activities for Reconciliation


Foster achievement of reconciliation and resurgence
Indigenous/non-Indigenous Relationships
Ethical space and Stretch collaboration
Indgenous people
non-Indigenous people
Knowing boundaries, respect, and ethics

Figure 2

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

The Calls to Action that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission released began a widespread conversation regarding reconciliation. The reconciliation that the Calls to Action addressed were at an institutional and organizational level. With the conversation started, individuals began asking what their role in reconciliation was and how they might go about implementing the Calls to Action in their workplaces. Through conversations with Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, I gained a deeper understanding of the complexity of our relationships and the challenging work of reconciliation. It is this deeper understanding of both that provides insight into how individuals understand and build their capacity to participate in the continually evolving relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Before we can even begin to attempt reconciliation on a social level, we must begin by building relationships. This research has shown the journey taken and required by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people as well as the complexity of remaining in relationship for long term reconciliation. The research moves from understanding individuals within separate spheres to exploring how individuals come together to collaborate within the ethical space. Collaboration within the ethical space is possible when individuals understand their own boundaries and engage in meaningful conversations about reconciliation and resurgence.

Contributions to the field

This research contributes to the academic literature on Indigenous/non-Indigenous engagement in numerous ways. First, it is fitting and appropriate for non-Indigenous people within academia to use IRM in their research. Indigenous research methodology values of 1) relationality, 2) the co-creation of knowledge through collaboration, and 3) reflexivity for decolonization required that I, as the researcher, practiced self-reflection to understand my own

motives and identity within the research. Holding true to the values of IRM also encouraged me to not only attend ceremony, but to use the learning that I gathered through ceremony within my own research methods. Being actively involved in ceremonies with people who participated in my research helped to both develop personal relationships and my own relationship to the topic. Overall, using IRM meant that I constantly merged Indigenous worldviews with my own settler worldviews, always centering Indigenous voices and knowledges.

Second, the research speaks to the roles and responsibilities of both the individual and the collective in achieving reconciliation. The individual process of self-decolonization and transformation is highlighted as an important step in the journey of becoming a lifelong ally. Engaging in this individual process is necessary to be able to then engage in collective conversations regarding sustainable reconciliation.

Finally, the research juxtaposes the ideas that anger, resistance, fear, and paralysis inhibit collaboration while creating clear boundaries allows for ethical and respectful collaboration to occur. The importance of moving beyond individual spheres and into a collective sphere is where allyship, stretch collaboration, and the ethical space all work cohesively to foster reconciliation and resurgence.

Recommendations for future research

I recognize that my interpretation of the results are framed within my own biases and understandings that have been created within a western worldview. I addressed these concerns by positioning myself in the sharing circle as a participant and researcher, and engaging with IRM. Even with setting these as priorities in terms of personal process and method, framing the analysis outside of my own biases and experiences will always exist as a challenge and should be

acknowledged. I encourage future researchers to read the works of Steinhauer (2002) and Wilson (2008) to understand and reflect on these biases.

The voices represented in this research included Cree, Metis, and settlers. Using an IRM framework meant it was important that there were pre-existing relationships with participants. Therefore, under the time constraint, I was unable to ask any Inuit or immigrant participants to join in the conversation. Building relationships is essential to being able to ask participants to share their stories, but the process of relationship building is never exhausted. I acknowledge that there are always more relationships to build and more voices to hear. Specifically, my research focused on a Canadian context and therefore involved only participants from within Canada with a majority living and working within Alberta. Future research could examine similar questions regarding roles in the reconciliation process within broader contexts. This research would involve including a variety of different voices in the conversation as well as expanding across Canada and outside of Canada. Ideally, IRM would be utilized to conduct this research, privileging minority and oppressed voices through the creation of a safe space.

Perhaps the most challenging recommendation for future research is to understand how Ermine's ethical space and Kahane's stretch collaboration may bring groups of individuals together to achieve resurgence and reconciliation and, in doing so, create social change. In using the term social change, I mean large changes in paradigms, epistemologies, and ways of being. It would take a complete societal shift in thinking to make these types of changes. In both the sharing circle and the interviews I conducted, this theme of paradigm shift and behaviour change was brought up twice:

> Yeah, it's like an awareness change, and then some behavior change, and then perhaps behavior change leads to a worldview change. (Bridgette Clark)

> There's so much we can do to work on just to normalize our voices and our concerns. I think the real paradigm shift comes into those values of getting rid of those capitalistic values of individualism and personal property in that sense and try to find that bridge between those systems so that we are conscious of creating better ally relationships. (Lana Whiskeyjack)

Additional research could explore the impact of a paradigm shift on ally relationships. This research would involve an in-depth exploration of capitalism and its impacts on identity creation, power dynamics, and cross-cultural relationships. A greater understanding of epistemologies, ways of being in the world, and the causation of paradigm shifts would need to be developed to fully explore the motivations of a collective paradigm shift. This further research would need to have a focus on collective behaviour rather than that of the individual. This additional research may provide greater insights into the implementation of the Calls to Action within institutions and organizations.

EPILOGUE

The goal of my research is to better understand the roles and responsibilities in this journey of reconciliation and resurgence in ever-evolving relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. My personal goal in writing this thesis however, is to represent this information and knowledge in a way that creates a positive and hopeful space for people. I have learned that the journey of reconciliation is complex and emotional, but it is possible if we move forward with an open mind, an open heart, compassion, and kindness. I experienced this open-mindedness, compassion, and kindness while attending ceremony over the past two years while I conducted my research.

Almost a year after attending my first night lodge, I attended another. I will note that I have offered protocol to Elder Edwin Yellowbird and asked for his permission to share about my experience in this lodge and in getting to know him. The feelings of discomfort I had during the first night lodge were still present, but not nearly as uncomfortable. The discomfort and unease I felt going into the first night lodge had the potential to scare me away from attending another night lodge, but consciously deciding to continue attending ceremony when the opportunity arose helped me, not to eliminate the discomfort, but to acknowledge it and move forward. As the candle was blown out at this second night lodge and the room was thrust into darkness, I felt my heart start to beat faster, my eyes dodged around the room searching for any glimpse of light. And although I once again sat next to close friends, I did not need their support to be in that space anymore. I was able to engage in the moment of self-reflection that the ceremony created. I was there to receive a name and I needed to think about myself and my motivations for being there and engaging in this work.

I received the name White Rock Woman. Although I am still attending ceremony and offering protocol to Edwin to learn more about the meaning and responsibilities that go with this name, the acceptance, compassion, and responsibility I felt when I received this name have motivated me to continue in this work. Over the past two years while conducting my research, I have faced many ups and downs in terms of motivation and preparedness to continue the work. However, as I built a relationship with Edwin and with the people with whom I attended ceremony, I am brought back to my initial feelings from my first night lodge of the reciprocal support that these enriching relationships bring.

I have shared many personal stories and stories from those who participated in the sharing circle and interviews. To quote Thomas King (2003), take these stories, they're yours. "Do with it what you will. Tell friends … Forget it. But don't say in the years to come that you would have lived your life differently if only you had heard this story. You've heard it now" (p. 29).

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