Protecting the Sacred Cycle:
Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni
and
Leadership

by

Qwul'sih'yah'maht
Robina Anne Thomas
B.S.W., University of Victoria, 1993
M.S.W., University of Victoria, 2000

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in Indigenous Governance,
Faculty of Human and Social Development

Your file Votre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-80352-3

Our file Notre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-80352-3

SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE

Protecting the Sacred Cycle:
Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni and Leadership

by

Qwul'sih'yah'maht Robina Anne Thomas
B.S.W., University of Victoria, 1993
M.S.W., University of Victoria, 2000

Supervisory Committee

Dr. Jeff Corntassel, Supervisor
(Indigenous Governance)

Dr. Taiaiake Alfred, Departmental Member
(Indigenous Governance)

Dr. Laura Parisi, Outside Member
(Women's Studies)

Dr. Budd Hall, Outside Member
(Public Administration)

Abstract

Supervisory Committee

Dr. Jeff Corntassel, Supervisor
(Indigenous Governance)

Dr. Taiaiake Alfred, Departmental Member
(Indigenous Governance)

Dr. Laura Parisi, Outside Member
(Women's Studies)

Dr. Budd Hall, Outside Member
(Public Administration)

Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni (Indigenous Women) have, since time immemorial, played critical leadership roles in Indigenous communities. However, with the imposition of racist/sexist colonial policies, indigenous women's roles were systematically displaced. As a result of these policies, which formalized colonial governance systems, the vital informal leadership roles the Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni play rarely get recognized. This dissertation strives to honour (or stand up) the women in our communities who continue to embrace their important roles as givers of life and carriers of culture. Through storytelling as a methodology, new ways of Indigenous women's leadership are revealed. I interviewed thirteen women from various Hul'qumi'num communities on Vancouver Island and the Mainland, asking them to share their thoughts on leadership. What emerged from the interviews was the importance of living our cultural and traditional teachings. This central theme emphasized the importance of keeping the past, present and future connected. Every one of the women discussed the importance of our teachings and the necessity to bring those forward for the future generations. What emerged was a

model that I have coined Sacred Cycle, a model that focuses on living our values. More importantly, the Sacred Cycle can be used as a valuable tool to resolve governance problems and as a tool of decolonization.

Contents

List of Figures

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I must begin my acknowledging the Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni who made this work possible by sharing their time, energy, knowledge and teachings. My hands go up to each of them with respect: (listed in the order I interviewed them) Mavis Henry, Rachel Flowers, Amelia Bob, Lydia Hwitsum, Josephine August, Jodi August, Jennifer Sam, Sarah Modeste, Susan Point, Late Viola Wyse, Emmy Manson, Shana Manson, and Ellen White - Hychka Slhunlheni Siem.

I would also like to acknowledge the Indigenous Governance program for supporting critical indigenous inquiry that allowed me to focus my dissertation in way that brought me back in touch with the Ta't Mustimuxw (olden day's people). Specifically, to Dr. Jeff Corntassel, my supervisor, for your guidance, direction and continual support over the past few years – my hands go up to you - Hychka. Special thanks to my other supervisory committee members: Dr. Taiaiake Alfred, Dr. Laura Parisi, Dr. Budd Hall – for your continued support. To Mick Scow - for your amazing administrative support – many thanks. And finally, to Angela Polifroni for being my critical eyes and mind when I was too weary, for your shoulders to cry on, and for getting me through these final few months – many hychkas!

To the many University of Victoria faculty and staff who have played various roles in the creation of this document: Cheryl Aro, Donna Barker, Dr. Leslie Brown, Dr. Jeannine Carriere, Trevor Good, Jacquie Green, Todd Ormiston, Dr. Mary Ellen Purkis, Dr. Cathy Richardson, Dr. Barb Waterfall – thank you for all of your support.

To the four most important people in my life: Pahyahutssen, Gigalis, Qwul'the'lum, and Thi'ya'lat'sih – for your continued love, support and patience – Hy'chka. Last, but not least, to my Nation, Lyackson, for your continued support.

My hands go up to each of you! Hy'ckha!

Dedication

To two of the wisest women in my life:

Doris Mae Josephson (nee Prest)
May 10, 1935 – August 26, 2006

And

Lavina Mae Prest (nee Wyse)
May 4, 1904 – March 24, 1991

Preface

Recently I had a dream where I was sitting with my late Aunty. I was crying and telling her how much I missed her. I told her how, at a recent cultural event, our family needed her guidance and direction around the teachings. She asked me why I had not come to her. In my dream I was trying to tell her that I could not talk to her because she was now in the Spirit World. Again, she asked, "why didn't you come to me?" Then, she reminded me that she is still with me and always will be. When I awoke, I was overwhelmed with sadness but renewed with optimism. Even from the Spirit World, Aunty Helen continues to pass along teachings. It is not always easy for me to remember that those who have gone to the other side are always with me. Grief can be immobilizing. As I tried to complete this doctoral journey, many times I became overwhelmed with grief. The irony of it is, while I was totally immersed in researching Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni and leadership, five very influential Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni went to the Spirit World. Typically this piece would be included in a dedication, but because of the enormity of their losses on my life, I have opted to begin with a preface. Following our traditions, I wish to "stand up" the Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni and truly honour the role they played in shaping my thinking about indigenous women and leadership. I feel blessed by the number of indigenous women leaders I have in my life. My Grandmother, my Aunties and my Mother have always been the strength and backbone of our family. These women are totally committed to our family and in fact, are the glue that holds our families together. I know the importance of these women and the many women in our communities. However, at this time I am gravely concerned because we are quickly

losing our wise women. This is especially true with many of our s'ulxwen (our old women). These wise women carry cultural and traditional teachings, as well as community knowledge and history, much of which has not yet been passed onto the next generation of Xwulmuxw Mustimuxw (Indigenous People).

Since I began my doctoral studies, I have lost the following significant Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni: Delilia Helen Kamai (my aunt), Doris Mae Josephson (my mother), Pam Williams (my cousin), Viola Wyse (Chief of Snuy'ney'muxw), and most recently Marie Underwood (my aunty). Each of these women were exemplary leaders for various reasons. But what they all had in common was that they lived their values and beliefs. To me, this is the epitome of leadership – those who live their culture and tradition. This reminds me of Dr. Taiaiake Alfred's (2005) words; he says behaving "indigenously" is a personal attribute which is noticeable (p.25). This is true for these women: they lived "indigenously."

When I think about the magnitude of these losses, I know it is time to finish my work before we lose any more women and their teachings. As a tribute to the leadership roles these women have played in my life (and the lives of so many others) I hold my hands up to them – Hych'ka Siem (Thank you respected ones) for the teachings you have laid down for all of us. These women truly demonstrated leadership by how they lived their lives embracing the teachings. Because I had the great fortune to interview the late Chief Wyse for this research, her words and teachings will be woven throughout this dissertation and will thus not appear in this preface.

Delilia Helen Kamai

Delilia Helen Kamai (aka Aunty Helen) was born May 8, 1927 on Valdez Island – the traditional home of the Lyackson Mustimuxw. Aunty Helen not only believed in the importance of culture and tradition, she lived it. Aunty Helen role modeled to all of her family what it was to live our teachings. Aunty Helen was our family matriarch and thus, carried the rights to names, songs, dances, places, land, etc. As a family, it was Aunty Helen who gave us guidance and direction when we were involved in cultural and traditional events. For example, in 1998 I was given my traditional name – Qwul'sih'yah'maht. This was my Grandmother's name and it originated from the Snuy'ney'muxw people. It was at a winter dance that Aunty Helen was hosting that I received my name. Aunt Helen wanted me to have a traditional name because she knew I was working at the University of Victoria and said she never wanted me to forget who I was and where I was from. Because of her strong teachings, I will never forget who I am and I carry my name with the pride and the responsibility it deserves. Aunty Helen worked endlessly to ensure our cultural and traditional teachings remained strong in our family. Sadly Aunty Helen left us and went to the Spirit World on June 7, 2007. At every cultural event that I attend I miss her. Every time I need guidance and direction pertaining to culture I miss her. As I write this dissertation I miss her. She rooted me as a Lyackson Mustimuxw (person) and I will always be thankful to her for these teachings. She truly was a carrier of culture; she was our matriarch.

Doris Mae Josephson

My Mother – Doris Mae Josephson (nee Prest) happily joined her Mother, Father, Brother, and many other relations in the Spirit World on August 26, 2006. I remember

sitting with my eldest son one day and he was telling me of a conversation he had with his father. They were discussing how ironic it is that often when someone dies, they become more idolized in death than they were in life. I wondered if this is what I was doing with my Mother. But it was not – she was simply amazing.

My Mother was a simple woman; she had little, wanted little, and loved what she had. She especially loved her children and grandchildren. Anyone that would listen to Mom knew all about each of us – whether they wanted to know or not. Even up to her dying moments, she was telling the nurses my daughter is going to be a doctor. Then she would giggle and say, hopefully she never operates on anyone, and she would laugh. She loved to laugh and watched the silliest programs on television. Mom was also an avid reader – you would never see her without a book tucked under her arm.

The one thing I remember so clearly about Mom is her encouragement. She believed we could do anything we wanted if we put our minds to it. She believed in us all. Mom would gear up and be the goalie for my Son when he was practicing hockey. She would throw the ball to my other sons when they would practice lacrosse. She even tried to pay for the window the boys broke when the lacrosse ball 'accidentally' went over the back fence and through the neighbor's window. She was known for telling the odd little fib to keep my boys out of trouble.

It was not just my children that she protected. When growing up, our house was always Grand Central Station because Mom welcomed everyone with open arms. If you were hungry or needed a place to sleep – you knew you could come to our place – in fact I think Mom loved to look after people.

But her health was poor. Mom struggled with addiction all of her life. This was perhaps the hardest issue for me – how to accept her life style. Then one day I was at a fetal alcohol spectrum disorder conference and a speaker told the story of a poor family struggling to make ends meet. I do not remember the whole story, nor do I have time to tell it all here, but what I remember, was at the end the speaker said, "but she did the best she could every day of her life. She never did anything intentionally to harm her children. She loved her children more than life itself". I sat breathless, was she talking to me about my Mother? Obviously not, but at that moment I knew I would forgive Mom because she too loved her children more than life itself. I would love her unconditionally the way she loved us. Mom taught me a lot once I was open to her teachings.

Two of the most important lessons Mom taught me were how to love and how to laugh. But in that loving, she never taught me how to let go. I miss her everyday and wonder how you let go, but I am learning to move forward. I know that given Mom's leadership - how she lived her teachings - I will move through my grief in the best way possible. My Mother's ancestral family name is Wyse and beyond a doubt she was also a wise woman. I say, Mom truly was a Wise/Wyse woman. Throughout this paper, in other instances where women carry the ancestral family name Wyse, I may refer to them as Wise/Wyse women.

Pam Williams

My Grandmother had a sister named Ruth. Aunty Ruth was married to Uncle Ed Williams from Cowichan. I used to go with Grama to visit Aunty Ruth and Uncle Ed just about every summer. She always reminded me – this is your family. Through these visits and over the years, I became very close to my cousin Pam – Aunty Ruth's grand-

daughter. Pam was the social organizer of our close group of family and friends. It did not matter what the event or occasion, Pammy would be busy getting us altogether. Pam and I married cousins and when we had our sons Nicholas and Dylan, Pam used to make us all smile when she would say, “they’re kissin’ cousins cause they’re related on both sides”. Pam had a knack at always being able to make you giggle. But mostly what I will always remember about Pam is how deeply she loved her children. She taught much about loving, laughing and being. Tragically, Pam died of a rare liver disease on August 12, 2006. Through her ability to unconditionally love, Pam too showed us how to love and how to be strong loving leaders.

Marie Underwood

Aunt Marie, too, was a carrier of culture. However, she brought her skills out in a more public way. She was an activist. On May 11, 2010, I was out in the Tsawout community for a family meeting. The night before, Aunty Marie went to the Spirit World. Aunty Marie was a lifelong advocate for indigenous issues. She was known for her advocacy with the United Native Nations where she relentlessly fought for education and housing. Aunty Marie was extensively involved with the preliminary development of the First Nations Education division in the Greater Victoria School District.

In our family, Aunt Marie was known as the one who had a mind like an iron trap. Once Aunt Marie knew something, she never forgot it. Aunt Marie was our family historian; if you wanted to know any family history you always started by asking her. I used to sit in awe when she started telling stories because she remembered so much, but particularly traditional names from generations back.

Aunty Marie was known to fight for issues she believed in – she would not back down from anyone. Aunt Marie taught us how to be strong women leaders by speaking out and encouraged us all to fight for the things we believed in. A part of our teaching of nutsa maat (we are all one) is speaking out especially if it concerns the safety or well being of our family. Aunt Marie always role modeled this teaching and as such was an amazing leader.

As I sat and listened to her family and friends share stories and reminisce about her life, I felt this sense of sadness – tears welled up in my eyes – another significant indigenous woman gone to the Spirit World. While I am so excited that all of these powerful women will be together, I cannot help but fear for our future – especially the future of the young ones and the ones yet unborn. Do we have the "thousands of years of unique knowledge" necessary to pass onto the future generations (LaFontaine, 2004, p.44)? Are we prepared to raise the next generation of strong women leaders?

Kwulasulwut (Aunty Ellen White) (2006) asks, "Are we teaching our young people what they need to know in order to survive and thrive" (p.46)? The above mentioned Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni all played pivotal roles in their respective families; they definitely taught the young people what they needed to know to not only survive but thrive. They were knowledge carriers and epitomized the kind of women I wanted to interview for my research. While not necessarily renowned doctors, lawyers or Indian chiefs, they were the backbones of our families. All played pivotal leadership roles in our families, communities and nations. When you needed something, these were the women you went to because you could always count on them to be there and willing to help. They were always there for support. These women were the ones you went to for cultural

and traditional advice, guidance and direction. Especially at cultural events such as feasts and funerals, these would be the women you could count on to ensure you did the work with a good mind and spirit. All of these women lived the teachings and through this demonstrated leadership.

Chapter one – Introduction

'I' ce:p'uw'eli'al Siem
Antha Qwul'sih'yah'maht
Te ne sun Lyackson, Snux'ney'muxw, Sto:lo
Hay chq a Lekwungun Mustimuxw
Hay chq a Ta't Mustimuxw

In Hul'qumi'num I have said "welcome" and asked "how are you all doing?" My name is Qwul'sih'yah'maht and I am Lyackson, Snux'ney'muxw and Sto:lo. I also acknowledged and thanked the Lekwungun people for allowing me to live, learn and laugh on their traditional territory. Lastly, for all of the teachings, I give thanks to the Ancestors – the olden day's people. Following the teachings of our people, the Hul'qumi'num Mustimuxw, I introduce myself this way because I carry a traditional name. The day I received that name, my Aunty Helen told me that from now on, I must introduce myself so that people know who I am and where I am from.

I am the oldest child of Kris and Doris Josephson (nee Prest). I was born in Chilliwack, but was raised most of young life in the small community of Zeballos which is on the West Coast of Vancouver Island. Zeballos feels as much like home as anywhere, because this is where I developed the core of who I am as a Xwulmuxw Mustimuxw. Both of my parents have moved to the other side and now join their parents – my grandparents – they are now all Ta't Mustimuxw (olden day's people). I miss them immensely and am reminded daily of the teachings they laid down for our family.

I am married to Pahyahutssen (Clifford Paul Thomas) of Lyackson. I have three sons: Gigalis, Qwul'the'lum and Thi'ya'lat'sih. These four men give me guidance, direction, encouragement, support, and love every single day of my life. As we were our Grandmother's and Mother's purpose, in many ways these men are mine.

My Great Grandmother was Jenny Wyse of Snuy'ney'muxw (Nanaimo). Through this matrilineal line are my Grandmother, my Mother and all my Aunties. As you see, I truly come from a line of Wise/Wyse women. My grandmother was Qwul'sih'yah (Lavina Prest – nee Wyse) of Snuy'ney'muxw, and she was the backbone of our family. Grama was the youngest child of nine. Her parents were Sugnuston (Joe Wyse) and Tl'utasiye (Jenny Wyse). They were a traditional family and grew up speaking Hul'qumi'num and participating in traditional ceremonies. When Beryl Cryer, a part-time journalist, was recruiting stories for the Daily Colonist's Sunday Magazine, Mary Rice of Penelakut directed her "to visit two very knowledgeable Snuy'ney'muxw elders, Joe and Jennie Wyse" who "were authorized bearers of oral traditions" (Arnet, 2007, p. 186). According to Mary Rice, "You can't find anyone better. They are a splendid old couple, and anything they tell you will be authentic, and what Joez doesn't know isn't worth knowing" (Arnet, 2007, p.193). Definitely, Grama was raised in a knowledgeable strong family that was very rooted in Xwulmuxw ways of knowing and being.

At a young age, Grama met Grampa (Charles Prest) who was from Skwah while picking hops in Chilliwack. They were soon married and began a family of their own. My mother, Doris, is the fourth of their seven children. On New Year's Eve of 1960, Grampa died of a massive heart-attack. My grandmother dedicated the rest of her life to raising her grandchildren.

I watched my grandmother in amazement as she unconditionally loved each and every family member. She lived for her children and grandchildren. Our family was a logging family and consequently we moved frequently from community to community. Grama would just up and move right along with us, never batting an eye; up-rooting

herself and her few belongings each time. We, her twenty-seven grandchildren, all remember her ways. She is my inspiration and it is she who gives me the strength to do the work I do. Because of the way she lived as a human being, she was our leader and our hero. In our language, we have a teaching – uy'skwuluwun – to be of a good mind and spirit. I watched my Grandmother live the teaching uy'skwuluwun everyday of her life.

PhD Journey

All that I once thought was important changed the day I had my first child. For the first time in my life I truly understood what the saying "our children are sacred" meant. I believe that mothering has been the most important role I have ever played in my life. I wanted my children to have a better life than I had. I wanted to protect them from harm. I wanted them to be strong Xwulmuxw Mustimuxw. Perhaps what I wanted was somewhat unrealistic. Despite that, I dedicated my life to mothering those three young men. I truly believed if I raised them knowing who and what they were as Xwulmuxw Mustimuxw, they would live a different life than I. They would not experience the racism that our family had. Unfortunately, my plan failed horribly. Even though I raised them knowing they were indigenous and tried to instill as many teachings as I could, they were often the targets of racism. This was the impetus to further my education. I found myself defenseless, not having the words to speak out, powerless and angry. I decided at that moment that I would further my education and learn new skills that would help me protect my children.

Naively, my education was not what protected my children. Teaching them how to speak out in defense of themselves was. However, this is where my educational journey began. I did a bachelor's degree in social work and then returned a few years

later to pursue a Masters of Social Work. When I was finishing off my Master's degree, I applied for a one year visiting lecturer position in the School of Social Work. To be honest, apparently I had given so much critical advice about the curriculum that I was respectfully asked to put my money where my mouth was. I did. That was in 1998, and I am now a tenured associate professor. I began my career at the University of Victoria (UVic) because I was concerned about the lack of Indigenous curriculum and in many ways I have never changed that focus. I continue to give "advice" to those who will listen, especially if it pertains to indigenous students. While I began my university journey for my young sons, now I dedicate my work at UVic to indigenous students, staff and faculty.

I always knew if I remained teaching at UVic I would one day enter a PhD program. However, I also knew that my doctoral journey would have to be carefully planned as my spirit had been so wounded doing the painful but necessary Master of Social Work thesis research on the Kuper Island Residential School (Thomas, 2000). As I always do, in a quiet prayerful moment, I asked my Grandmother for guidance and direction. In the same moment my thoughts changed. I wondered why, after all these years am I still seeking my Grama's approval? She has been in the Spirit World since 1991. I began reminiscing about her wonderfulness – how incredibly special she was. It was then I knew my research topic: Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni and leadership. What makes a leader like my Grandmother was to me? She was not a stereotypical formally recognized leader such as a chief, councilor or political leader, but one of those women who is always there to support you. She was gentle, kind and caring. She loved unconditionally. But what I remember most about my Grandmother was that she lived her values and

beliefs. Her life was rooted in her teachings. And, above all else, she was the backbone of our family.

As I delved further into indigenous women and leadership as a possible research topic, I started thinking about all the other women in our communities that also play strong leadership roles. As a result of an imposed foreign governance structure that favoured male leadership, these women often go completely unrecognized despite the fundamental roles they play in family, community and nations. Like my Grandmother, not many people, other than their own family members, know who they are, but for these families, they are everything. Most often, these women are the carriers of culture and the caretakers of our next generations. Despite their lack of recognition, the Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni definitely hold critical leadership roles in our communities.

In honour of the role my grandmother played in my life, I decided to focus my research on Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni and leadership. Really, what I wanted to do was challenge the current colonially replicated model of leadership by sharing stories and teachings of women leaders in our communities. I was hoping that through the interviews, new (or different) ways of leadership would emerge. In order to achieve this goal, I wanted to honour (or stand up) a number of women leaders in our communities who hold diverse leadership roles. I wanted to explore what leadership meant to them. I interviewed thirteen women from various Hul'qumi'num communities on Vancouver Island and the Mainland. I simply asked them to share their thoughts on leadership. I began each interview by sharing the story I just shared with you about my Grandmother and the leadership role she played in our family. I absolutely expected to hear through their stories that leadership was about living our values and beliefs – or teachings. As

expected, the importance of living our teachings emerged as a central theme, but what was emphasized was the importance of keeping the past, present and future connected. Every one of the women discussed the importance of our teachings and the necessity to bring those forward for the future generations.

Coming up with names of Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni to interview was not at all difficult. I began with an initial short list of women I wanted to interview based on informal conversations I had with various family and friends. Usually the conversation began with me asking who they recognized as indigenous women leaders. From there, more strategically and planned, I asked other Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni, “If you could only interview one woman and discuss indigenous women and leadership, who would you interview?” This is how the thirteen women were chosen. Originally I was to interview ten women, then eleven and finally stopped at thirteen. Ironically, I wanted to write about Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni and leadership because nothing is written about their amazing lives, but now the list of suggested women to interview was endless. This completely validated my purpose in undertaking this research - our communities are full of absolutely remarkable women leaders.

This work is definitely a weaving of stories. I come from a tradition of orators and could not think of any other way to do this research than through storytelling. I weave stories of the women I interviewed, with my own stories, as well as teachings. This methodology is as culturally appropriate as I could make it. Storytelling is purposeful. In the past, stories were used to convey teachings. Often these teachings taught valuable lessons. This work too is very intentional and began with a need to honour the women in

our communities for the leadership roles they play and to pass along their knowledge and wisdom of leadership.

I also took the opportunity to include the story of my sister Jaye (see Chapter five). Or, should I say the opportunity took me! I struggled with my sister's lifestyle, but also realized that she, in so many ways is such a strong woman. Jaye, like so many indigenous women and children, has been systematically displaced from our communities through the racist *Indian Act* and pursuant policies. I believed if I was to embrace the teachings of nutsa maat (we are all one), then I needed to create room for all voices, including those from the margins. Jaye's story is the story of a young woman who, because of addiction, found herself living in Vancouver's infamous Downtown Eastside. I knew that those women too have stories of leadership and wanted to highlight at least one such story.

Leadership is much more complicated than the literature suggests and this is what I wanted to unsettle. Formal leadership, typically men, seem to be the only positions that receive any acknowledgement. I believe this is a result of the chief and council system which, from 1869 – 1951, forbid indigenous women from holding formal leadership positions in our communities as well as voting in our elections. Unfortunately, despite the fact that the *Indian Act* was revised and these provisions removed, for the most part our governance continues to be male dominated. However, I could see the other leadership that was taking place in our communities and it was coming from the women. I want to honour the role indigenous women play in our communities and hold them up as leaders.

In Chapter two, I begin with a section on Indigenous Women and Leadership – Past and Present, where I provide an overview, or a literature review, of indigenous

women as they are represented in academic work. This overview is mostly of indigenous women in Canada and the United States, but does include a few voices from other continents. In this section, I demonstrate how the once revered status of indigenous women was systematically stripped from them through the various writings of the *Indian Act*.

The *Indian Act* not only stripped women of their traditional roles, it imposed a form of governance that vested all power to male leadership. As a result of this, for the most part, the only type of leadership that gets recognized in our communities is colonially rooted male leadership. In this chapter, I problematize commonly held notions of leadership. When discussing formally held leadership positions we are usually talking about men. Even in our own communities, it is usually men that hold the formal positions such as chiefs and councilors, and typically only the men that get acknowledged. However, there is a large group of leaders who rarely get any recognition – they are the Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni.

Addressing the problematic male leadership and the subordination of indigenous women in our communities has led to the emerging new body of literature coined "indigenous feminism". Indigenous feminism looks to address ending sexism in our communities. However, it, too, comes with limitations. These limitations, I argue, could be addressed by returning to our traditional teachings.

Chapter three begins by introducing the Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni. I "stand up" the thirteen Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni I interviewed by sharing their biographies. These biographies share their stories of leadership. I have organized biographies of each of the women in the exact order in which I interviewed them. Thanks to each of them for

sharing their knowledge and wisdom with me and for all that follows – hychka – many thanks.

I conclude this chapter by outlining my research methodology. I share my conceptual framework, which outlines the values and beliefs that guide my research and then discuss storytelling as my research methodology. As I stated before, storytelling is what makes up this dissertation. Throughout the pages are stories and teachings woven together to create the final product.

Chapter four shares the teachings of the thirteen Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni that I interviewed. These teachings include Wise Slheni (Woman) and Tul'ti'lew Slheni (Wild Woman). Wise women gave us teachings that keep us rooted in our snuy'uy'ul (teachings) and connected to the Ta't Mustimuxw (the olden day's people). While Tul'ti'lew Slheni gave us teachings on how to protect our children. This chapter is developed around the knowledge, wisdom and teachings of the Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni I interviewed.

Chapter five discusses a particular type of colonial legacy – that of our Indigenous Sisters who have lost their ways. Often these women find themselves living in urban settings without the support of their families, communities and nations. Some of these women turn to drugs and alcohol to help them cope. Others find their ways to the streets where prostitution becomes a way to support themselves, their children and sometimes their addictions. One of these women was my sister. I share her story here.

Chapter six, the Sacred Cycle, provides a model of leadership that is rooted in the teachings. Each of the women, in their own ways, discussed the importance of keeping the past, the present and the future connected. They talked about the teachings they

received from their ancestors and the importance of bringing these forward for the future generations. This Cycle has no beginning and no end because it is always future directed – it is always for those yet to come. I have demonstrated through the words and stories of the women how each of them work to protect the Sacred Cycle.

Finally, I conclude with a chapter titled Mosquito. This chapter includes the various leadership roles I play in the academy. However, it is included here as a way to demonstrate how the Sacred Cycle leadership model can also inform academic work. I claim that the Sacred Cycle is a way of life which would necessarily include our professional lives. As such, this chapter links my professional work with my ways of knowing and being Xwulmuxw.

When I was finishing my research, momentarily I wondered, is it that simple? Can we address our leadership crisis by reclaiming our Xwulmuxw teachings? As I continued to analyse the interviews and listen really close to the words of the Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni, I realized that living our lives rooted in the teachings is very complicated. Our teachings are purposeful and inclusive. Never, is anything only about self – our traditions were quite selfless and community oriented. Each of the women, through their sharing of knowledge and wisdom, demonstrated their commitment to community and our future as Xwulmuxw Mustimuxw. I hope you enjoy what follows as much as I did working with these amazing Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni.

Chapter two – From Matrilineal to Patrilineal: Problematizing Leadership

In hindsight, it should have been obvious that my passion for researching indigenous women and leadership stemmed from the fact that I have so many women leaders in my life. Within my family there are countless women role models. It has been the same in every indigenous community I have visited; there are always these wise women, the strong ones, the ones that hold the family, community and nations together. They are often the s'ulxwen, the old ones. Despite the fact that this has been my experience, often the women in our communities get little or no recognition for the critical roles they play. Partly this is resultant of the systematic displacement of indigenous women from our families and communities.

In this chapter I will provide a brief overview of indigenous women's experiences in Canada. For this section of the chapter, I draw heavily on academic literature (written text) to discuss indigenous women in Canada – past and present. I begin by discussing our esteemed traditional roles as women and then show how, very intentionally, our high esteem was stripped away through racist/sexist colonial policies and practices. Highlighted here is how the imposition of foreign policies altered once matrilineal governance structures to that of colonially replicated patrilineal structures.

At the same time as our women were being removed from our communities, the Federal government was imposing governance systems that excluded our women from participating in community governance. Despite subsequent changes in the *Indian Act,*

indigenous women continue to be underrepresented in the governance of our communities. Predominantly, our communities continue to be guided by the antiquated *Indian Act,* and unfortunately our leadership predominately continues to be men. Our current leadership continues to be problematic in that the model it follows is foreign, with women underrepresented in the governance and leadership of our communities.

Addressing the growing concern of male dominance and patriarchal leadership is a new body of scholarship called indigenous feminism. This literature has been a welcomed addition to academic scholarship. However, indigenous feminism also has its limitations. I conclude this chapter by calling for a return to the teaching of nutsa maat and suggest that in order to address our leadership crisis, indigenous women and men must work together.

Indigenous Women Past and Present

As indigenous women, we must be very cautious and thoughtful as we move forward as there is much at risk. Presently, many of our teachings are not being passed on from generation to generation. Oklahoma Choctaw scholar Devon Mihesuah (2003) warns us how difficult it is for indigenous women to backtrack and recover our traditional ways. In fact, she cautions that, if we do not know our mothers, we risk losing many of the traditional practices (p.82). As we lose our s'ulxwen we risk losing aspects of our traditions that we do not even know we are losing. Indigenous women have a critical role to play for the future generations because traditionally we were the carriers of culture. Despite the devastating impact of colonial policies and practices, indigenous women remain the givers of life, the carriers of culture, the caretakers and healers, the protectors of language, traditions, land, and people. As Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni we have never

forgotten our traditional roles, in fact we have been fighting for what is right since time immemorial.

> It is we – contrary to those images of meekness, docility and subordination to males with which we have been typically portrayed by the dominant culture's books and movies, by anthropology, and by political ideologies of both rightist and leftist persuasion – who have formed the very core of indigenous resistance to genocide and colonization since the first moment of conflict between Indians and invaders. (Jaimes with Halsey, 1997, p.298).

Our esteemed roles and responsibilities as givers of life and carriers of culture were systematically stripped from us through foreign colonial policies and practices. This was the beginning of the outright assault on our ways of knowing and being.

Following is a brief historical summary of the abating indigenous women's roles in our communities through the sexist policies of the federal government of Canada. This is not a full account for two reasons: first, it is beyond the scope of this work; second, many folks have already done very thorough accounts of these historical issues. For example, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People (RCAP) (1996) devoted Chapter 2 of volume 4 to Women's Perspectives. Others like James Frideres (1998) have written extensively about the history of indigenous people in Canada. One piece of work that I draw on extensively for this section is *Colonialism and First Nations Women in Canada* by Winona Stevenson (1999) of Fisher River First Nation in Manitoba. This piece is an extensive history of indigenous women in Canada.

Traditional Roles

Traditionally, indigenous women were revered for the specific roles they carried. For example, women were held in high regard because of their roles as givers of life, carriers of culture and tradition, caretakers of the land, healers, and carriers of language.

According to the late Cherokee leader Wilma Mankiller (2004), being an indigenous woman includes being a good human being, being responsible for cultural survival, being responsible for our life, being responsible for our work, and being responsible for the work of the community (p 95). In other words, indigenous women were responsible for our survival as Xwulmuxw Mustimuxw.

Mohawk scholar, Dr. Dawn Martin-Hill (2003) claims, "In pre-contact culture, we were regarded as Sacred Women…" These statements reveal how crucial women were to our communities. Women enjoyed political, religious and economic autonomy (Anderson 2008, Martin-Hill 2003, Smith 1999, Smith, 2005).

> Most tribes were egalitarian, that is, Native women had religious, political and economic power – not more than men, but at least equal to men's, women's and men's roles may have been different, but neither was less important than the other (Smith, 1999, p.42).

Despite the fact that men and women often had gendered roles (Anderson, 2008, Doyle-Bedwell, 2008), the roles indigenous women carried were viewed as equal to their male counterparts. I witnessed this equality in my family. Our Grandmother decided to stay home and raise her children and then us (her grandchildren). She was respected equally to my Grandfather because she was taking on the very important role of raising the next generation. Grama was honoured for her decision and commitment to the future generations. Traditionally, communities operated more as a collective of families, and not as separate nuclear families. As family groupings, everything we did was for the communal good. We knew that if we worked together we would be a stronger healthier community. Grama kept our family strong and connected. Even today, our family gathers yearly because Grama taught us the importance of keeping our family connected.

In our communities, indigenous women often held significant roles as midwives, medicine women and traditional doctors (Anderson, 2008, p.6). Logically, indigenous women would be the health providers, as they are also the givers of life. There was nothing more essential than having healthy mothers and children. Shoshone activists Mary and Carrie Dann (2004) believe "…a woman is like the Earth: she gives and nurtures life" (p.103). Our role as givers of life was highly revered (Anderson 2006, Cull 2008, Douglas et al 2006, McGadney, 2006, Native Women's Association of Canada 2008, Schaefer 2006, Simpson, 2006). In her work with the Grandmothers, Schaefer (2006) states, "…we women have been gifted – we are all-knowing, the creators and makers of life, the seed carriers of the children of the Earth" (p.134). The ability to create life was seen as sacred because only women were seed carriers of the future. This sacred gift granted indigenous women much prestige because they were pivotal in the survival of Xwulmuxw Mustimuxw. The Native Women's Association of Canada (2008) concurs when they share that:

> Grandmother Moon provides us direction, strength, knowledge and wisdom in taking our sacred place in our families, communities and beyond. She teaches us about our sacred role as the life-givers and the heart of our nations – for without women our nations cannot go on (p.123).

I agree, without Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni, our nations will not survive. Because of our ability to give life, we were granted significant authority (Anderson, 2006, Simpson, 2006). In fact, most of our communities were matrilineal. As such, our women were the carriers of culture. They carried the rights to such things as names, songs, dances, masks, rattles, and drums. Our roles as carriers of culture granted indigenous women substantial power and status amongst our people (Cull, 2006, p.142). Carriers of culture were

responsible for ensuring the future generations had the teachings. Often the respected culture holders were the s'ulxwen. Kwulasulwut (2006), elder Ellen White of Snuyneymuxw, speaks to the importance of Elders:

> They pave our way. They carry the lessons from the past into the future. It is the job of the Elders, particularly the older women of the clan, to teach the young (p.60).

I remember as a young girl, my grandmother would bring me to visit family members on the Snuy'ney'muxw First Nation. She would point out people and places and tell me how I was connected to them. Because I was young, I wondered, why? It was years later when I realized the significance of the knowledge she was passing along – she was transmitting family teachings I would need as an adult. I often think about those stories now and realize how important they were. My grandmother laid a foundation of knowing and being that will guide and direct me through the rest of my life. Okanagan author Jeannette Armstrong (1996) states:

> In traditional Aboriginal society, it was women who shaped the thinking of all its members in a loving, nurturing atmosphere within the base family unit. In such societies, the earliest instruments of governance and law to ensure social order came from quality mothering of children (p.ix).

Indigenous women understood the importance of their interconnected roles as givers of life and carriers of culture.

Colonial history of Indigenous Women in Canada

Since the arrival of settlers in our lands in 1497, there has been an outright assault on indigenous women in what is now called Canada. McGadney-Douglass et.al. (2006) claim:

> History has not been equally generous to all people but most grievously unjust to Indigenous peoples who have been subjected to conquest,

> subjugation, marginalization, exploitation, policies that have sought assimilation, and intentional efforts that aimed at annihilation (p.105).

Certainly, history has not been equally generous. I agree that generally speaking, it has been unjust to indigenous people, but even more harmful to indigenous women specifically. Indigenous women have been displaced from positions of great authority, respect and honour to that of powerlessness. The systemic stripping of our dignity happened in a very deliberate and methodical way. At first, the setters depended on indigenous peoples to survive. Our people knew how to hunt, fish, and gather on the lands that the settlers were unfamiliar with. They relied heavily on our people to teach them survival skills. To promote indigenous/settler relationships and always keep their connection to survival strong, at one point, "marriages between French fur traders and Aboriginal women were … common practice and, for a short time, became French policy" (Stevenson, 1999, p.51). This notion of building community ties through marriage to indigenous women also took place in the Hudson's Bay era. However, regardless of unions between settlers and indigenous women, compared to their European counterparts, indigenous women were viewed as inferior. In fact, indigenous women were labeled imperfect because they were a threat to settler womanhood because of their independence. Whereas European women were mostly confined to their homes, and subordinate to their husbands or fathers, indigenous women played pivotal roles not only as givers of life and carriers of culture but also in the governance of our communities, including political decision-making processes (Stevenson, 1999, p.55). Because indigenous women were so independent, federal policies were implemented to

systematically displace indigenous women's power and force them to mirror the subordination of the mainstream settler women (Guerrero, 1997, p.207).

In 1755, the Department of Indian Affairs was officially established. By the mid 1800's, it was obvious the settlers were unable to confine indigenous women to positions of subordination through their own powers. Indigenous women continued to live autonomously despite the various attempted attacks on their womanhood by both the French and English settlers. Settlers would now rely heavily on colonial policies and the churches. Stevenson (1999) contends that:

> From 1850 on, colonial legislatures, and later the Federal Government of Canada, imposed a series of regulations intended to enforce the patriarchy and coerce Aboriginal women to conform to the regiments and edicts demanded by local missionaries and Indian agents in present-day eastern Canada (p.65).

The *Act of 1850* was the first to define an "Indian". At this time, the Act was somewhat inclusive in that it defined an "Indian" as anyone having Indian blood, their descendents, and their spouses. Over the years, this section of the various Indian policies would change and become more and more stringent, particularly as it applied to indigenous women. By 1869, Clause 6 of the *Enfranchisement Act* stated that Indian women who married non-Indian men would, along with her children, lose their status (Stevenson, 1999, p.67). However, the newly defined "Indian" now strictly followed the male lines – the father or husband must be a "registered Indian" in order for a woman to be "Indian".

With the implementation of this *Act,* our once matrilineal society had now vanished. Or, as Winona Stevenson (1999) says, "By the stroke of a pen First Nations women and their children could be denied their birth right as First Nations citizens…"

(p.67). If an indigenous woman married a non-indigenous man, she and her children would lose their status. Even if these children were born prior to the marriage, or by a father who was Indian, they still followed their mother's (non) status. Obviously, any subsequent children would not have status either. A status Indian woman, if she married a status Indian man would automatically transfer to his band (Stevenson, 1999, p.67). Now the real crazy twist, if an Indian man married a non-Indian woman, she would gain status through her marriage, as would her children and any children the mixed couple had. As is evident through this ridiculous *Act*, indigenous women were the intended target of this racist, sexist policy. It is not accidental that women were targeted. In fact, Philo Desterres (1993) of the Quebec Native Women's Association argues that this act "purely and simply legalized discrimination" (p.1).

After being systematically removed from our communities, many indigenous women were left wondering where they belonged. "Colonialism, we have seen, reshapes, often violently, physical territories, social terrains as well as human identities" (Loomba, 1998, p.185). Certainly this has been the case with indigenous women in Canada. Their ways of knowing and being were rooted in their families, communities and lands, and now that sense of belonging had been stripped from under their feet. Perhaps, had Canada not been such a fundamentally racist country, our women would have assimilated quietly into the mainstream society. However, indigenous people in general, were always viewed by the settlers as inferior. As our women were forced to relocate in mainstream communities, the reception was far from welcoming. Consequently, Canada has created a group of women who are completely marginalized on their own lands and belong nowhere.

Yet, the *Act* did not stop here; displacing women from their communities was not enough. The indigenous women who were fortunate enough to retain their status were not left unharmed or unaffected by this legislation. The *Indian Act* now excluded indigenous women from participating, in any way, with the governance of our communities. They could not run for chief or councilor, nor could they vote in band elections. Every bit of power indigenous women possessed was now legislated out of their lives. What was once a matrilineal, community centered society has now become male-dominated and colonially replicated. In a very planned and systematic way, "…the Indian Act undermined Aboriginal rights, Aboriginal identity and Aboriginal culture" (RCAP, 1996, p.3). Indigenous men continued to pass status onto non-indigenous women and their children until 1985, while at the same time, indigenous women and their children were denied the same.

In 1951 the *Indian Act* was once again revised. The Act remained effectively unchanged with the exception of defining status more strictly. Unfortunately, the Government now took more control in determining status and membership. "…the new *Act* abandoned the criterion of "Indian blood" in favour of a system of registration with strong biases in favour of descent through the male line" (RCAP, 1996, p.7).

This assault on indigenous women and children has continued despite an attempt in 1985, through Bill C-31, to correct the gender discrimination by once again amending the *Indian Act*. Through this amendment, indigenous women and children who lost their status were now entitled to apply to have their status re-instated. The Federal Government of Canada strips indigenous women of their status and then they put the onus on the women and children to re-apply. Should the onus not have been on Canada to give back

status to these women and children? Sharon McIvor (1999) of the Lower Nicola Band believes approximately 12,000 women (and 40,000 of their children) were eligible to regain their Indian status and have their band membership reinstated (p.170). When discussing the implications of Bill C-31, Stirbys (2008) claims, "In essence, First Nations women are being denied their basic human rights by not allowing them to practice their cultural matrilineal right to pass descent through the mother" (p.142). Regardless of these changes, there continues to be issues with Bill C-31. To address these issues, McIvor filed a "section 15 constitutional challenge to the status registration provisions of the *Indian Act"* (McIvor, 2010). In April 2009, the BC Court of Appeal ruled in favour of McIvor stating that the *Indian Act,* did in fact continue to discriminate between men and women and their eligibility to be registered as an Indian (INAC, 2010, p.1). On January 31, 2011, Bill C-3 came into effect. This Bill was to address McIvor's concerns. However, Bill C-3, similar to Bill C-31, will only provide eligibility to register as an Indian to a limited number of women and their descendents. This issue is very complicated and I do not have the time to thoroughly explain it here. However, it is rumoured that McIvor will file a sexual discrimination complaint with the United Nations. I hold my hands up to McIvor for fighting for her grandchildren's rights and I wonder who will take up this same fight for the next generation?

Leadership

A result of the imposed colonial policies in indigenous communities has been the masculization of leadership. Indigenous women were once forbidden from holding any formal leadership positions in our communities through the *Indian Act*. Despite changes to the *Act*, very few indigenous women presently hold formal leadership positions.

All of my adult life I have been troubled with the leadership in our communities. As a young person I always believed if we supported our leadership we would see change in our communities. Naively, I believed our leadership was in fact qualified and knowledgeable; our leaders were, despite our systemic problems, the experts. However, the only changes I have witnessed are faces. Our communities continue to struggle with a myriad of social issues. In fact, more and more I hear community members discuss how concerned they are with the state of affairs in our communities. I would be negligent not to state that the reason our communities are in chaos is directly due to the imposition of a racist and sexist policies which attempted to replace our ways of knowing and being with Christian values and beliefs. This, in turn, has created a cultural crisis. When I talk about wanting to see change in our communities, I am not implying that I wish to see a white malestream community replicated in our communities. The change I wish to see is a community rooted in our teachings, a community that reflects the teachings of nutsa maat. Nutsa maat is a critical teaching of the Hul'qumi'num Mustimuxw. Nutsa maat teaches us we are all one – we are the 2-legged, 4-legged, winged ones, those that crawl, those that swim, and all of Mother Earth.

Traditionally we had our own governing systems that were based on teachings that taught us how to be one. By believing that we were all one, collectively communities looked after each other. In contrast, the *Indian Act's* Chief and Council system is solely rooted in competitive individualist values and beliefs. Our teachings have the answers we need to solve our leadership crisis. In a community rooted in teachings, issues such as drugs, alcohol, family violence, and the myriad of other abuses would have solutions

because issues would be seen as collective problems and not viewed as individual issues. Following our teaching of nutsa maat, we would work together to find solutions.

However, I do not see our current leadership working together to find solutions. A few years ago, I served for one term as a councilor for our community. This term was eye opening. I was able to witness individuals working tirelessly to create change, but always under the Department of Indian Affairs' policies, procedures and processes. Most often these endeavors were fruitless. Through this term I also had the opportunity to sit on various other community committees. Sitting at a BC Treaty Process (BCTP) table was perhaps the most profound. One day I was attending a treaty meeting with a group of mostly indigenous men. The majority of these men had been involved in community governance structures for years. We were discussing a vision statement for our treaty group. After some time, I asked, why not write the statement in Hul'qumi'num because I think it would be more meaningful and get at some of our snuy'uy'ul (teachings)? One man giggled and started speaking Hul'qumi'num. Many of the men looked at me and started to laugh. I sat there stunned. These men felt they could laugh at me because I was a woman. I had been completely mocked by a group of men who have been discussing mission statements all their lives, but were not capable of implementing any meaningful change in their communities.

I wouldn't say my experience is unique. In most of our communities we have leadership issues. This is not a new problem. I know there are amazing leaders in our communities. There are many individuals who dedicate their lives for the betterment of our nations. However, there are too few of them. Further, it will take more than a few committed individuals to make the changes necessary in our communities to move us

forward in a good way. We need a commitment by all indigenous leaders, be they in our families, communities and/or nations. As I stated above, we have a teaching of nutsa maat. We need to figure out how to reclaim this teaching within our leadership so we can all work together for the common goal of a better way of life for all indigenous people.

So where is our leadership today? I want to problematize notions of "leadership". Leadership guru (so to speak), James MacGregor Burns, in his early work defined leadership as:

> …leaders inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and motivations – the wants and needs, the aspirations and expectations – *of both leaders and followers.* And the genius of leadership lies in the manner in which leaders see and act on their own and their follower's values and motivations (Fairholm, 2001, p.3).

This definition of leadership would support our teaching of nutsa maat because it is very inclusive and suggests leaders and followers collectively work for a common goal. It also suggests that leaders respect our values and beliefs.

However, Burns (1978) differentiates between leaders and power-wielders. Typically, power-wielders only have their own values and motives in mind. Unfortunately, I have often witnessed power-wielders in our communities. In his more recent work, Burns (2003) claims that leaders cannot lead unless they listen to and empower their followers. Further, he states, "no leader can truly lead if lacking in the ability to produce intended change through creative innovation" (p.231).

The most common leadership story is that of male-stream political leadership. Even within our own communities, the most common narrative of leadership is that of chiefs and councilors or grand chiefs. In our communities, the leadership positions that appear to have garnered all of the power are the formal elected positions such as chiefs

and councilors. I would argue that our leadership, contrary to Burn's definitions, is not necessarily working for the common good of all the individuals in our communities. In fact, our communities are in dire straits and it is obvious leadership is not responding to the motivations and aspirations of community membership because we certainly are not seeing much innovational change. We have more displaced women and children now than ever before. Nearly 60% of status Indians now live off-reserve, many of these are women and their children (Amnesty International, 2008, p. 113). Upward of 50% of all children in the care of the Ministry of Children and Family Development are First Nations (Blackstock, 2009). Violence has become a daily acceptable activity on many reserves. Amnesty International (2008) reports that,

> "… Indigenous women between the ages of 25 and 44 with status under the federal Indian Act, are five times more likely that other women of the same age to die as the result of violence" (p.14).

The prisons and youth detention centers are bursting at the seams with our people. For example, in Manitoba, 84% of the youth in custody are indigenous when they only represent 23% of the youth population (BC Representative for Child and Youth, 2010, p.6). We go farther and farther into debt trying to settle the so-called land question through the BC Treaty Commission, meanwhile, many of our houses are dilapidated and overcrowded (Assembly of First Nations, 2010, p.1). Drugs and alcohol abuse is rampant in our communities. So what exactly is our leadership up to?

From what I have witnessed, there are a whole lot of indigenous people who have figured out how to make a living doing indigenous work with no positive results to our communities. These folks, mostly men, sit on as many boards and committees as possible so they can collect their honorariums. Often the people sitting on these boards are not

even appointed based on expertise or skills. It seems like the old saying an “Indian is an Indian” is true in our own communities because anyone seems to be able to represent anything indigenous. These folks would be what Burns calls the power-wielders. I call them the “Super Indians”. For some reason, anyone in a leadership position can at any moment be chiefs, councilors, social workers, health experts, treaty experts, education experts, housing experts, you name it - they can be it. The “Super Indians” go against our teaching of nutsa maat. In the past, we banked on the collective wisdom of all to keep our communities strong. Now, it seems that our wisdom is vested in a chosen few individuals. What is most disturbing for me is there does not seem to be any ethical concern as we spin our wheels and remain at a standstill in our communities while a handful of leaders collect pay cheques and make their living off the backs of our community members and community well-being.

While all the political leadership (or lack thereof) stuff plays out, in our communities there are indigenous women who continue to do all they can to keep our families, communities and nations together. These women were once revered for their roles as givers of life and carriers of culture. Now, Lee Maracle (2008) asks:

> I need to know how it came to be that our women are the most violated human beings, the least educated, the most overworked and under loved and unprotected human beings in the history of Turtle Island (p.30).

I often wonder the same. Despite the fact that these women are no longer honored for these roles, they continue to fulfill them nonetheless. In fact, it is their commitment to our children and families that will keep our communities rooted in the teachings. The women are truly the unsung heroes in our communities.

Because my work focuses on indigenous women and leadership, I have not included a discussion of mainstream leadership literature, but have focused specifically on indigenous people and leadership. However, there is little written about this very specific topic. One of the few indigenous scholars who seriously takes up indigenous leadership is Mohawk scholar Taiaiake Alfred. This section on indigenous leadership, therefore, relies heavily on his work. When discussing leadership, Alfred (1999) acknowledges the impact of the loss of culture, tradition and language. Alfred also acknowledges the struggle that we as indigenous people have in front of us if we are to work our way out of this colonial mess and encourages us to be committed to indigenous pathways. Because of this, Alfred (1999) is:

> ...advocating a self-conscious traditionalism, an intellectual, social, and political movement that will reinvigorate those values, principles, and other cultural elements that are best suited to the larger contemporary political and economic reality (p.xviii).

Alfred's work is testament to my concerns; our leadership needs to return to the teachings and start living their lives rooted in their traditions. This is a very powerful book that asks each of us personally to think about the way we live our lives. In this work, Alfred does include women's voices. For example, he states, "one of the biggest areas of neglect in terms of responsibility concerns women" (p.93). When discussing leadership, Alfred believes "we cannot have strong nations without strong women" (p.95). But we do have strong women, they simply are not getting recognized or included in the governance of our communities.

Wasase, according to Leroy Little Bear,

> …speaks to the imperceptible way that European thought has polluted the minds of Native Americans resulting in cultural blanks. It speaks to

> reflection: reflection on the pollution. It speaks to revitalization: revitalization of the "Warrior's Way" which is the only way Native Americans will be able to find their way out of the colonizer's quagmire and embody, once again, "all my relations" (in Alfred, 2005, p. 11).

In my opinion, when discussing indigenous people and leadership, this book is a must read. We must remember what it means to embody "all my relations", or for the Hul'qumi'num what we call nutsa maat. The only way out of the conundrum we are in today, is to return to the teachings. In fact Alfred contends our lack of spirituality is the root of our problems (p.31). Alfred shares his concerns for the current state of indigenous leadership in Canada but believes the many other issues that more readily get discussed such as land and leadership are less important than the tragic state of spirituality (p.38). Absolutely, the women I interviewed would agree with Alfred - our teachings are rooted in our spiritual ways of knowing and being. Alfred urges us to live our lives rooted in our teachings. The Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni I interviewed would argue that if we lived our teachings, leadership issues would naturally resolve. Despite the fact that this book has a stronger women's voice then his past writings, the focus is not specifically on women and leadership.

Indigenous Feminism

Very little is written about indigenous women and virtually nothing on indigenous women and leadership. What is written often focuses on indigenous women and culture (Wall, 1993, Schaefer, 2006 Allen, 1992), indigenous women and the academy (Mihesuah, 1998, 2004, 2005, Brant, 1994, Graveline, 1998, 2004, Monture & McGuire, 2009, Canadian Woman Studies Journal, 2008), indigenous women and colonization (Anderson, 2000, Maracle, 1996, Smith, 2005, Anderson & Lawrence 2003), indigenous

women and formal leadership (Voyageur, 2008), and recently indigenous feminism (Green, 2007, Suzack, et al. 2010). Despite this growing body of literature, there continues to be gaps in the way indigenous women are discussed. If we look at indigenous women as "whole" people, we see the leadership they demonstrate in all aspect of their lives and in our communities. For all indigenous people, often our more romanticized cultural aspects get picked up as worthy of publishing. All indigenous women have experienced the wrath of colonization but despite this, they continue to be givers of life and carriers of culture. More and more indigenous women are becoming scholars and finding their way to the academy. Many women hold leadership positions in community agencies. However, the literature only narrowly focuses on specific aspects of our lives in very fragmentary ways.

Indigenous women have always played pivotal leadership roles not only in our families, but also in our communities and nations. Indigenous women are givers of life, carriers of culture, leaders, scholars, chiefs, academics and on and on. Indigenous women have resisted colonization and clung onto their teachings. What is missing is the recognition of the critical contributions these women make to the well-being of our people.

D. Memee Lavell-Harvard and Jeannette Corbiere Lavell (2006) edited a book that focuses on the many aspects of mothering. Specifically, this books looks at traditional ways of mothering, childbirth, and the impact of colonial policies such as the *Indian Act*, residential schools, and child welfare legislation. Anderson and Lawrence (2003) also edited a book that "takes a critical look at some core issues and demonstrates how, through hard work and ingenuity, Native women are actively shaping a better world

for the future generations" (p.11). Mihesuah (2003) offers a provocative look at indigenous women's identities as they have been constructed through academic writing, colonial disempowerment, and finally how indigenous women themselves struggle to claim their identities.

All of these books and others are very important. For sure, each of these works highlights aspects of indigenous womanhood from mothering, to activism, to practices of decolonization. However, a gap in the literature continues to exist because none of these books focus on the important informal leadership roles indigenous women hold in our families, communities or nations. In fact, I believe all of the indigenous women highlighted throughout these writings are leaders, but through the literature, their leadership roles are narrowly categorized and only formal leadership roles are recognized. Even amongst ourselves, we are falling into the trap of only recognizing the more formal mainstream type of leaders and forgetting to recognize the critical leadership roles indigenous women actually hold. For example, Dene scholar, Cora Voyageur (2008) published an insightful book that focuses on indigenous women who have taken up leadership roles as elected Chiefs of their communities. In the past, each community had their own protocol for selecting our leadership. However, the *Indian Act* imposed a colonial electoral system. By highlighting elected chiefs, we are in a sense giving credence to a system that is responsible for managing colonization. I will not downplay the role any of these women Chiefs have played. However, Voyageur's book focuses on a very specific type of leadership when in fact the leadership roles indigenous women hold are all encompassing; they are the givers of life, the carriers of culture, and most often the backbone of our families.

Indigenous feminism is an important set of literature that did not exist ten years ago. However, indigenous feminism is a subject that is hotly debated (Green, 2007, p.20). Although I have not been a part of this debate, I do feel it necessary to address this emerging body of scholarly work in the context of leadership. Recently, two edited volumes have been published that address indigenous feminism (Green, 2007, Suzack, et. al. 2010). Despite the fact that I have not been engaged in the indigenous feminism debate, there are a couple points that I do wish to make.

Métis scholar Emma LaRocque (2007) contends that "there is in Mainstream Canadian and American feminist writings a decided lack of inclusion of our experience, analysis or perspectives" (p.67). I would have hoped that this is exactly what these newest books on indigenous feminism would offer. However, despite the fact that Huhndorf and Suzack (2010) believe indigenous women must shape (politically) indigenous feminism, they also believe we need alliances and support of both indigenous and non-indigenous men and women. I too believe we need allies and support is we wish to bring indigenous women's issues to the forefront. However, their book has more non-indigenous contributors than indigenous. How is this making space for indigenous feminism? Perhaps the book should be titled Women and indigenous feminism.

There is no one definition of indigenous feminism. In fact, Suzack and Huhndorf (2010) claim this would be impossible because there is no single indigenous women's experience (p.2). So in fact, this body of scholarship should more rightfully be called indigenous feminisms. Having said this, however, what they also contend is that there is a common colonial history that all indigenous women share (p.3).

Specially, indigenous feminism takes gender and indigenous women's experiences seriously and seeks to address women's subordination to men. According to Green (2007) it "… is a body of work, a set of theoretical perspectives and a set of political positions and practices whose practitioners take a general approach, and then make it specific (p.18). LaRocque (2007) claims indigenous feminism strives to "end sexism and gender-based inequality in society" (p.56). And Anderson (2010) states:

> For me, Indigenous feminism is about creating a new world out of the best of the old. Indigenous feminism is about honouring creation in all its forms, while also fostering the kind of critical thinking that will allow us to stay true to our traditional reverence for life (p.89).

These definitions of indigenous feminism are very vague and I contend can be applied to lots of other kinds of feminism. So why then a body of literature dedicated specifically to indigenous feminism? I would have assumed it has something explicitly to do with being indigenous.

However, Green (2007) and Suzack et al (2010) believes indigenous women are reluctant to claim to be feminists because they will be criticized as being "anti-traditional" (Green, 2007, p.26). Anderson (2010), LaRocque (2007), and Suzack et al (2010) caution us to be vigilant and ensure our culture and traditions do not forego women's rights in favour of patriarchy. For me, this is the irony. We have a full body of literature – indigenous feminism – which, I would believe, is premised on our indigeneity, while at the same time we are holding this identity at arm's length. I do realize that our cultures and traditions, like all aspects of our ways of knowing and being have been impacted by colonialism. Traditionally, our culture and tradition had teachings that honoured women and men equally. Cherokee scholar Denise Henning (2007) was

raised where she saw the men and women treated equally in her family (p.196). I hold out hope that our cultures are strong enough to once again embrace more egalitarian roles for all.

Our culture and tradition has teachings that embrace very similar perspectives to indigenous feminists. For example, I have a theoretical perspective, political position and practices; however, they are rooted in Xwulmuxw ways of knowing and being. When I think about this, I am reminded of the Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni I interviewed. I think they would embrace the theoretical and political position of indigenous feminists, but they would call them "teachings".

In the academy, my constant struggle is to live my culture and tradition and to never forego my values and beliefs to "fit in". Not foregoing my teachings is a tough issue because, as a scholar, we are always forced to validate what we write against mainstream literature. We can never simply write what we know to be true because it is deemed less academic. I fundamentally oppose playing this academic game, but as a scholar you do what needs to be done in order to have your work published and therefore deemed credible. I feel the same way about identifying as a feminist. I do not need to wear a label in order to fight for indigenous women's rights. As such, I identify as a Xwulmuxw Slheni, I do not claim to be a feminist. However, if I was called a feminist, I would not be particularly offended, but it is not how I identify myself. I was raised by my grandmother and mother as an indigenous woman or woman indigenous – not sure that it matters which way. But at this time, I do know that indigenous feminism has nothing more to offer me than I already have available to me through my Xwulmuxw ways of knowing and being.

Regarding conceptualizations of leadership and/or feminism, I am not here to ascribe labels to anyone or anything. There is room for mainstream politicians and for feminists – be they indigenous or not. What I am arguing for is to make room for indigenous women and leadership in ways that have not been done since colonization. As indigenous women, we have been constantly forced to "deconstruct the Euro-Canadian master narrative with its canons and ideologies" (LaRoque, 2007, p.62) in order to fit in, be it in the academy or in feminist circles. Now, we are demanding room for our own ways of knowing being.

I need to spend a few lines here and make myself perfectly clear. Despite the fact that I am gravely concerned with the leadership in our communities, I do know a few things. First, there are many indigenous women and men working tirelessly to make a difference in our communities. I would never want to overlook the work they do. Second, while I have clearly stated my concerns about our mostly male leadership, I also know that if we are to embrace our teachings, we must do this together – indigenous women and men. To be exclusive of men would in fact go against the teachings of nutsa maat. My work upholding the unrecognized leadership in women is by no means suggesting we abandon our men, but that we all return to our teachings and together work through this leadership mess we finds ourselves in today. My belief in nutsa maat would be the fundamental difference between feminist methods and theories and that of indigenous methods. I truly believe that indigenous women and men must work together to create lasting and meaningful change.

Unfortunately our male leadership roles are currently not in line with the teachings but aligned with the colonial leadership system. In fact, I fear that our teachings

are being consumed by colonization and its' imposed system of control and governance. As we become removed from our teachings, I worry about the possibility that women, as they do take up leadership roles will also practice patriarchal leadership. From my work with the Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni, I have been taught that our teachings and protocols trump everything else. And these teachings are rooted in lived experiences playing out in indigenous communities – not books! To spend pages and pages justifying notions of mainstream leadership or feminism would in fact go against the words of Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni, whose teachings speak for themselves.

Chapter three - Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni

In this chapter, I will begin by introducing the thirteen Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni that I interviewed. Their biographies are listed in the order that I interviewed them. The biographies demonstrate the level of leadership each of these women play in their families, communities, and nations. Once I have introduced the women, I share my research methodology which explains how I went about interviewing the women and documenting/analyzing their stories and teachings. I begin by sharing my conceptual framework which identifies the ways in which I strive to work embracing the teaching of uy'skwuluwun. I identify four values (relationships, respect, reciprocity and responsibility) I believe must be present in all indigenously rooted work. Following this, I discuss storytelling which is the research methodology I used for this work. I believe storytelling is one way we can honour our tradition as orators – storytellers.

Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni

What follows is the introduction of the Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni that I interviewed. I want to first and foremost stand the women up and acknowledge the often unrecognized leadership roles they play in our families, communities and nations. Through the sharing of these stories, I will demonstrate the diversity of leadership amongst these women. Each of the women are exemplary role models. The women are from Snuy'ney'muxw, Penelakut, Lyackson, Halalt, Cowichan, Musqueum, and Pauquachin. Several of these women have held (or still hold) formal leadership positions as chiefs and councilors. Others are women who are those silent resilient unrelenting leaders in our families. Some might never be acknowledged as leaders from their very humble quiet places in the world. From what they taught me, I was able to see that in each of us there is a leader – it

is up to each of us to find that leader in our souls. They told me that it is our responsibility to speak out and stand up for all the things we believe. Never forego your values and beliefs, they said. Through the sharing of the teachings, the Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni could definitely help with our women and children who have been systematically displaced. These are the type of Xwulmuxw Mustimuxw that will get us through the onslaught of colonization to the future – they are leaders. These women deserve acknowledgement for their everyday acts of leadership.

The initial development of the biographies stemmed from the interview transcripts. Then, I sent each of the women a draft and asked them to add, delete, or edit any of the information included in the biography. Some women responded with edits, others didn't. However, I felt it was important for each women to have the opportunity to approve (or not) their biographies.

Tiwenemot - Mavis Henry

I have had the honour of working with Mavis through the child welfare system. I sit on an indigenous child welfare board and Mavis was the executive director of NIL/TU'O Child and Family Services for a number of years. I watched in amazement how dedicated and committed Mavis was. I knew when I started my research I wanted to interview Mavis. Mavis is one of sixteen children of Geraldine and George Underwood, the grand-daughter of Chuck and Evelyn Thorn and Bert and Ellen Underwood. Mavis's grandmother Evelyn and my mother were cousins, so we have a distant Wise/Wyse woman connection.

Mavis believes she must be a voice for the voiceless. This statement is validated by her actions when a group of women in her community came to her with stories of

sexual abuse. Mavis supported these women by helping them expose their stories publicly. That summer, I watched and listened in anticipation as the story slowly unfolded. Even though Mavis knew she would be criticized by many community members for going public with the abuse, she knew she needed to honour the women and their stories and the only way she could achieve this was by validating their experiences and supporting them to tell their truths.

Mavis claims, “I’m a mother until the day I die”. Well, from having the opportunity to interview her, I think she took on this role as a child. A sense of hard work was instilled early as Mavis was her Mother’s helper. Mavis was only about four or five years old when she already knew how to care for her brothers and sisters. She knew how to change diapers, make bottles, feed her brothers and sisters, clean up and even build a fire. As the babies grew, Mavis accompanied her mother and young siblings to work in berry fields picking berries. Mavis has enjoyed a unique closeness to her family. She has competed with six of her sisters on First Nations basketball, fastball and soccer teams. They travelled together to tournaments and within this context Mavis has enjoyed a sense of family, community and great pride. Her father, as well, serves as a great inspiration as he was a self-taught home-builder, boat-builder and commercial fisherman.

Mavis has taken on many leadership roles in her life. She was the first Aboriginal Deputy Superintendent for the Ministry of Children and Family Development. She was elected chief of Pauquachin in 2000. However, the following year she resigned because she truly believed she could be more helpful to her community in other capacities. As well, Mavis was the recipient of a Women of Distinction Award for Community leadership in 2001. She also was awarded a Canada 125 Medal and the Derek Thomson

Award for her contributions to social policy. In all aspects of her life, Mavis exudes the qualities of a leader.

Rachel Flowers

Long before I began interviewing, I knew I wanted to interview Rachel. She is one of my youngest nieces, and I have had the privilege of watching her, with amazement, grow into this powerful young woman. From the time she was young, Rachel has lived her life with a sense of purpose. She went to French immersion schools, always as one of the very few indigenous students. She is an amazing artist and musician. Anything she does, she does with passion and purpose. I have always seen Rachel as a leader.

Rachel was the youngest of the women I interviewed. She was 19. Rachel is the daughter of Valerie and Dave Flowers and is a member of Lyackson First Nation. I really felt it was critical to include a young woman's voice in my work on indigenous women and leadership. I was not at all disappointed. Rachel raised many issues in our interview that became central themes for the dissertation.

Rachel is a social activist and is committed to social justice. She will graduate from the University of Victoria with a bachelor degree (major in anthropology and a minor in Indigenous Studies). When discussing her education, Rachel stated, "it is not just for me". No, she sees going to university as a way to give back to her community. But more importantly, she knows it is also a way to role model to her young family members that they too can achieve an education. Even at such a young age, Rachel knows the importance of role modeling.

Rachel is a very passionate, brilliant young woman. I sat in awe throughout our interview. She is wise beyond her years and truly is a leader.

Amelia Bob

It was an honour to interview s'ulxwen – Amelia. I always knew I wanted to interview Amelia because I have had the good fortune to see her in the community in many capacities. Specifically, I have witnessed Amelia doing cultural work. So when I started to ask community members for names of women to interview and her name came up time and again I was so excited.

Amelia is a member of Cowichan Tribes. She was raised by her mother in a very traditional way. At the age of 13, she was taken to Kuper Island Residential School. Without a doubt, Amelia is a carrier of culture. She believes because she was raised with the teachings she naturally has a good memory for history such as traditional names and ceremonies. For example, Amelia can remember traditional names and their accompanying roles and responsibilities for four generations back in her family. She giggled and said her "late brother used to say the old people a long time ago they had a tape recorder in their head". I think she must have one in her head as well! Amelia always stresses how important it is to do our traditional work "in a good way" – uy'skwuluwun – with a good mind and spirit. Community members always seek out Amelia for guidance and direction because she carries the knowledge.

Years ago, Amelia used to go door to door in her community teaching the Hul'qumi'num language. She was one of four women that were taught the writing system by a university professor who would come to the day school and teach them. She continues to pass on knowledge to those around her.

When we began the interview and I talked about indigenous women and leadership, Amelia glanced over to Lydia, “what should I talk about?” She is so unassuming, modest, giving and generous and demonstrates daily what a true leader is.

Xtli’liye - Lydia Hwitsum

I have known Lydia for many years. I remember her as a young woman playing soccer. From the time she was young, you could see the leadership qualities in her. More recently, I have watched Lydia continue to take on leadership roles whenever necessary. As with her mother, Amelia, I knew I wanted to interview her for this work and was thrilled when her name came up time and again.

She, too, was raised in a traditional way by her mother. Lydia remembers how her mother was always instructing her on how to do traditional work. In her family home, Amelia only spoke Hul’qumi’num to her children. Today, Lydia speaks and understand Hul’qumi’num, but always stresses that she is still learning.

She is currently the Chief of the Cowichan Tribes. She was elected in 2007 and re-elected in 2009.She also served as Chief for two terms from 1997-2001. As Chief, her community hosted the North American Indigenous Games in 2007.

Lydia graduated from the University of Victoria with a law degree in 1997. Lydia’s incentive to pursue a law degree was the racist treatment her Mother and others endured in the past. Lydia hoped that the degree would give her the tools to fight injustices. She has attended the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in order to advocate indigenous and women’s rights. Lydia was a member of the First Nations Summit from 2002-2004, and continues to represent Cowichan Tribes at the

Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group. Lydia now sits on the University of Victoria Board of Governors.

Lydia has two children, and she always reminds them, "You know you are actually where you're at because your grandmother didn't give up". She is instructing her children as her mother did. Lydia too is a carrier of culture and is ensuring she passes on teachings. Like her Mother, Lydia is unassuming and generous – truly a leader.

Josephine August

I have sat on a Board of Directors with Josephine for years. Every time we are together, I learned something from her. So when choosing women to interview about leadership, her name came to me immediately. Josephine is originally from Tsartlip, where she was raised by the ocean and lived off all its waters had to offer. She comes from a very large family. Josephine attended Kuper Island Residential School.

Eventually Josephine married a man from Halalt, which is now her home. She is the mother to 12 children and foster mother to many more. In the end Josephine and her husband separated and she raised her children on her own. In order to do so, she often worked two jobs besides always having her doors open to those that needed a place to stay.

In the early 1970's Josephine was asked by other band members to run for Chief. She did, and became the first female Chief of the Halalt people. Josephine dedicated 32 years to politics and the betterment of her people. She has sat on many boards and committees over the years, including Hulitan Health Society, Kwumut Lelum Child and Family Services and the Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group.

Josephine is currently the eldest member of Halalt First Nation. She believes she did all the things in her life that she wanted to do. Josephine is a very passionate strong-willed person. The one thing I will always remember from her is speaking out when you truly believe in something. She taught me how to stand my ground and never forego my values and beliefs. Josephine is kind, generous, and loving. Until she could no longer get around, she continued to serve her community. She lives leadership everyday of her life.

Jodi August

Probably about the same time I met Josephine I had the privilege of meeting Jodi as well. She is Josephine's oldest granddaughter and the only child of Darlene. I have watched Jodi in admiration as she helped with her Grandmother. I always watched in "awe" how respectfully and honourably Jodi looked after her Grandmother. Like her grandmother, Jodi is a member of Halalt First Nations. Jodi was raised by her mother and grandmother, and both of these amazing women heavily influenced Jody's values and beliefs. In fact, Jodi "attributes her current standing to her mother and grandmother" and believes, "without their guidance, discipline, beliefs and value system she would not be where she is today".

Jodi's life has always been committed to children. She helped raise three of her nieces and nephews and currently is the mother of two boys. Presently, she runs an indigenous group home in Nanaimo. Over the years, she has worked for her Band as a community health representative, has been the manager of community health centers and done contract work in the health field. She graduated from high school and attended Vancouver Island University and the University College of the Fraser Valley. Jody is dedicated and committed to making a difference in the lives of those she works with. I

have watched Jodi guide and direct with a gentleness that is not often seen. She is kind, generous and loving – just like her Grandmother. Jodi too lives leadership.

Jennifer Sam

I had only met Jenny a few times, but when I was chatting about my research, so many people brought up her name. They talked about this young woman that carries the teachings in such a good way. They talked about how she makes sure these teachings get passed on to her children and grandchildren. I was so excited to interview this young wise woman. My interview with Jenny was conducted in a hotel room in Kamloops. I watched, from my place on the foot of the bed, as Jenny so lovingly and quietly settled her Grandson. Even though we have only met a few times, I immediately remembered her loving quiet demeanor. I also witnessed firsthand the passing on of teachings from Grandmother to grandson.

Jenny, a member of Penelakut First Nation, is the daughter of John Crocker and Laura Sylvester (nee James). She is the granddaughter of Alex and Rosalena (aka: Rose) James and Arthur Crocker (Fletcher) and Margaret Crocker (nee Underwood). Jenny is a mother and a grandmother. August (aka: Auggie) Sylvester is Jenny's step-father, and he helped her mother raise her. From the time she was little, Jenny was raised with the teachings. Jenny claims that if you truly believe and put your minds and hearts into everything you do, things will happen that make your life easier when you really believe in your own culture. And Jenny does believe in the strength of our culture. Her grandmother was a healer, and Jenny herself has healing hands. She claims, "I hope that someday I'm going to be a great leader like my Grama".

Jenny's mother and father are now instructing her to teach the children. I had the good fortune to witness this. I was at a cultural event and Jenny's mother Laura was working with Jenny's daughter. It was an honour to witness the passing on of teachings from a grandmother to grandchild. Jenny is wise beyond her years and – like her Grandmother, she is a great leader.

Sarah Modeste

It was a warm summer afternoon when I had the good fortune to interview s'ulxwen Sarah. Like all of the women, her name was mentioned to me time and again. However, just prior to actually meeting Sarah, I had the opportunity to hear her open up an event with a morning prayer. She blew me away. She did the Morning Prayer, but also took the opportunity to share her thoughts on mental health. I think she was allotted a few minutes, but Sarah was comfortable speaking until she was done. I sat there with a smile – I was so proud to listen to her.

Sarah is a member of Cowichan Tribes. Sarah claims, "In our culture the women, from the beginning right from the time they are born are trained to be a leader". And Sarah is no exception. Sarah was chosen by her Grandmother to pass on snuy'uy'ul teachings, so she truly is a carrier of culture. She was trained to remember names, cultural protocol, and land (particularly hunting and gathering places).

Sarah comes from a line of knitters; her Grama, her mother and her aunts all knit. When she got married and had her children, she did not knit much anymore. The demand for Cowichan sweaters increased drastically in the 1970's. However, many of the women had a difficult time getting wool and preparing the wool to knit was very labour intensive. It needed to be cleaned, carted and spun. However, one night Sarah had a dream. "I saw a

vision of my grandmother and she was leaning over next to her husband who is lying on a bed and had brass in the background. She says to him, she forgot about working with wool". When Sarah woke, she shared the dream with her husband. We need to get clean carted wool to the women. Sarah went to the bank for a loan, but they told her they could not give her a loan because she lived on reserve and had no collateral. Sarah went back to the bank and sat there until someone would talk to her. Eventually they offered her a Visa card. She began to use and pay off the credit card starting to build her credit rating. Her business was to wash and cart the wool. Sarah's wool reached far into the community. She was able to fulfill her dream of supplying clean carted wool to all the local knitters. As well, Sarah's sweaters went international – she was shipping sweaters to Japan. She kept her business opened until 2001, when her husband could no longer help with the upkeep of the machinery.

Sarah believes nothing is impossible. She certainly demonstrated her beliefs with the development of the wool business. Sarah is a very gentle kind woman who is willing to share all she knows. Sarah is a strong woman leader.

Susan Point

It was a cold windy October night when I met with Susan at her beautiful home on the Musqueam Reserve. Through community events such as basketball and soccer games, Susan and I have had the opportunity to meet in the past. From a distance I have watched her rise to this place as a world renowned Coast Salish artist. I have been so proud as she is one of the very few Coast Salish women who have taken on printmaking, carving, bronzing – to name a few. She is a busy woman, and it took us awhile to arrange a time to meet. When we began the interview she started by saying, "I don't consider

myself a leader…I started doing what I'm doing because I love it". I however, do consider her a leader and her biography speaks for itself.

Susan is a member of the Musqueam First Nation. She enrolled in a jewellery course at the Vancouver Community College in 1981. It was during this time that her husband asked her "don't you have your own art style?" From here, Susan began to research traditional Coast Salish art forms by consulting her uncle, Professor Mike Kew, an anthropologist from the University of British Columbia. In April 1981, Susan produced her first "original" limited edition print. She acknowledges Robert Davidson and Bill Reid for influencing her early work. Susan's work moved from jewellery, to prints, foil embossing, paper casting, linocut printing, lithography and three-dimensional art in materials such as glass, bronze, wood, concrete, polymer, stainless steel, and cast iron. Susan has major work in the Vancouver Airport, BC Ferries, Smithsonian Museum, Washington State, and Toronto.

Susan remembers how her mother encouraged her and told her she could be anything she wanted. Susan now encourages her children and grandchildren in the same way. All four of Susan's children are artists and two of them now work alongside her. Susan says she can see the artistic potential in all of her eleven grandchildren and we have a new generation of artists being raised with the traditions.

Viola Wyse

For many Xwulmuxw Mustimuxw in our communities, late Viola Wyse became a household name because of her leadership style. I always knew I wanted to interview Viola because she dared to be different. She was absolutely transparent about the work she wanted to do as a Chief. She believed in her goals and everyone knew what they

were. As with most of the other women, setting a time to meet with Viola was tough, but we persevered. We met in her office on the Snuy'ney'muxw First Nation. Before we began our interview, we spent some time looking at photographs and tracing back our family ties.

On February 2, 2006, Viola became the first ever female Chief of the Snuy'ney'muxw First Nation. Prior to this, Viola had worked as the band administrator from 1995-2001. She also worked for over twenty years in the Nanaimo office of Department of Indian and Northern Affairs. Viola was committed to working for her people and dedicated her life to this. As a leader, Viola strived to be inclusive and allowed everyone to have a voice. She worked endlessly to build inclusive relationships. When discussing relationship building, Viola said, "They're not going away and neither are we". To this end, she created Protocol Agreements with the City of Nanaimo, the Nanaimo Port Authority, the Regional District of Nanaimo and Islands Trust.

However, what was evident throughout our interview, that what was most important was Viola's relationship with her family. Viola raised eight children with her husband Joe Wyse. They had nineteen grandchildren and two great grandchildren. Viola claimed, we must "work hard for the young people, the innocent children…" She believed the children are our responsibility and we must ensure we are doing good for them in the future. Over and over again, Viola talked about how important it is to role-model to the young people. She said they are watching us and how we behave matters. She believed in family and encouraged us to bring our family together as much as we can.

Viola believed that we must always stand up for the things we believe in. She said we must always be professional and treat everyone the way we want to be treated. And she did this – she was very powerful, calm, honest, and respectful. Tragically, sadly and unexpectedly, Chief Viola Wyse moved to the other side on August 17, 2009. Viola was an outstanding leader.

Sa-leatunat - Emmy Manson

It truly was a privilege to interview Emmy. I met her many years ago as an undergraduate student at the University of Victoria. She is a force to be reckoned with. She is brilliant, beautiful and has a crazy sense of humour. From the time I started my studies, I knew I wanted to interview Emmy. She is a humble woman and exudes leadership. Emmy lives her values and beliefs every day and I had the honour of watching her struggle to never forego her values and beliefs as she pursued her undergraduate degree, and now her master's degree.

Emmy shares her traditional name, Sa-leatunat, with her Grandmother. She was raised by her late grandmother and her father (Dean Manson). She is married to her high school sweetheart – Al White and they have two children together Jessie and Trey. Emmy and her family live on the Snuneymuxw First Nation.

Emmy knows the importance of passing on the teachings to her children because her Grandmother passed the teachings on to her. Emmy states, "I have many great teachers in my life and I believe education to be a tool to decolonize and support First Nation people reconnect to our culture and traditions to recover from the colonization that has come into our world".

Currently, Emmy manages a Wellness and Mental Health team at Inter Tribal Health. Emmy is in process of completing her Masters Degree in Social Work at the University of Victoria. Her work is specializing in indigenous knowledge. She believes we as a people have the answers and solutions to our community issues and we must be the ones to take us forward. She states, “I am in awe of the strength of those who paved the way for my life and pray for healing for all of the communities”.

It is hard to tell which she is more passionate about – her family or being of service to her people. When discussing leadership, Emmy stated, “we must be willing to sacrifice ourselves for the betterment of the nation”. She truly is a carrier of culture and possesses the fundamental teachings of a new young leader.

Lahalawuts’aat - Shana Manson

Shana is, and always has been, a leader. She is one of my eldest nieces. Shana lives life in a very direct committed way. She always knows where she wants her life to take her. At a time in our family where we struggle to hang onto our culture and tradition, Shana is determined that we will not let these teachings go.

Shana carries the name of a Lyackson war chief and takes up that responsibility very seriously. She knows that all of her actions and behaviours are being watched because of the significance of her name. She explains, “…because Lahalawuts was a great war chief of our people, and was often a speaker, I have to make sure that I don’t do anything to offend that or disrespect that”. She is a member of Lyackson First Nation, and is the daughter of Laurie Robinson, granddaughter of late Clifford Thomas and Joyce Thomas (nee Moody). She is married to Jerome Manson of Snuy’ney’muxw and they have three children.

Shana is very committed and passionate about all she does. Shana believes she was blessed to have a strong relationship with her Grandfather who was a very intelligent, strong, articulate man who stood up for all he believed in. Despite her overwhelming work schedule, Shana also believes she needs to stand up for what she believes in. Especially if what she needs to stand up for impacts her children, her family or her community.

Because of her strong leadership, in November of 2009, Shana was elected as a commissioner for the BC Treaty Commission. Prior to this, Shana has worked as a treaty negotiator for Hupacasath First Nation, as Communication Director and Senior Negotiation support for Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group, and was an elected councilor for Lyackson First Nation for a number of terms.

Shana has a Bachelors of Arts in Political Science and Masters Degree in Indigenous Governance, both from the University of Victoria. Recently, she was employed as a sessional instructor at Vancouver Island University.

Shana is very concerned with the future of our culture and tradition. Further, Shana believes we as Xwulmuxw Mustimuxw have a huge responsibility to ensure we pass on the teachings. And, she adds, it is the women that are taking this on. Definitely, Shana is taking this on. She is absolutely devoted and committed to ensuring the culture and tradition is passed along to the future generations. Shana, like her namesake, is a warrior and a leader.

Kwulasulwut - Ellen White

Everyone in our communities knows Aunty Ellen. She is out there. She is called upon to speak at cultural events, at conferences. She is a storyteller. She is a leader. I

knew I would interview Aunty Ellen because she is the backbone of her family. I do not only mean her immediate family – she is always there for any family member who needs support.

Aunty Ellen is a s'ulxwen from Snuy'ney'muxw First Nation. She was married to my mother's cousin late Doug White senior who was the Chief of Snuy'ney'muxw for years. Aunty Ellen is the daughter of Charles and Hilda (Bob) Rice. From the time she was little, she was raised with the teachings. She said she was one of about fourteen young people, who at the time, that were chosen to be trained in Thi'Lelum (Big House) and healing work. She knows traditional medicines and has worked with the likes of Dr. Nancy Turner from the University of Victoria. She is a healer and a medicine woman. Years ago she was a mid-wife and delivered countless babies in the community. All of this, she shares so matter of fact.

In 2007, Aunty Ellen received an Honorary PhD. from Vancouver Island University acknowledging her life's work. When you think about it, this is quite an achievement considering she went back to university and started linguistic classes at the age of 52. She has written three children's books and has shared her knowledge with many others.

Every moment we spent together was filled with teachings, not necessarily about leadership, but more about how to live a good life. She continued to stress, how our actions today will impact the future. If we are careless or carefree, most likely our misbehavior will impact someone in the future – someone innocent like a child.

Aunty Ellen is a mother, grandmother and great grandmother. But she is still hard to keep up with. We scheduled and rescheduled our interview so many times because she

was always being called away to share her wisdom and knowledge. I could go on and on about how wonderful Aunty Ellen is. Beyond a doubt she epitomizes leadership.

Conceptual Framework

Making the decision to interview women rooted in the teachings really forced me to look at myself. How I was going to proceed and do this work became critically important. In other words, doing this work rooted in my Xwulmuxw ways of knowing became paramount because what the women were sharing was their ways of knowing leadership which was, in many ways, the sharing of their teachings. For this reason, I share a conceptual framework which positions me in my research. I do this for a number of reasons. In Chapter 1, I started to share some of my lineage which begins to share who I am as a Xwulmuxw Slheni, but this does not include how my scholarship is rooted in indigenous ways of knowing and being. I believe, as an indigenous scholar, I must make visible what it is in my scholarship that distinguishes my work from non-indigenous scholars. Partly, this entails what Plains Cree scholar Maggie Kovach (2009) calls the "thinking behind the doing" (p.41). How does my way of knowing and being influence the work that I do? Or, more specifically, what is it about my knowing and being that makes my work rooted in an indigenous epistemology? A conceptual framework indentifies the values and beliefs that I uphold. In other words, it outlines how I see the world.

In this conceptual framework, what is most important to me is to identify the values and beliefs that I try to embrace every day of my life. These are the values that distinguish my indigenously rooted research from mainstream research frameworks. I firmly believe if we are going to claim to do research rooted in indigenous ways of

knowing and being, we must articulate these ways. By doing this, I am holding myself accountable and opening myself up to criticism if in fact the work I do does not reflect these teachings. For whatever reason, at this time in academia, all things indigenous are very popular. But what does it mean for us to claim to write from our ways of knowing and being if we never have to disclose how they are different from mainstream ways of knowing and being? By presenting my conceptual framework, I am making visible the teachings my work is rooted in.

Second, what I know for sure is my framework has something to do with – not only indigenously rooted research or practice – but living. African American feminist and scholar bell hooks (1995), discusses Martin Luther King's dream of a "beloved community". In King's "beloved community" race would be transcended, forgotten and "no one would see skin color" (p. 263). The only way this "beloved community" would be possible, hooks (1995) argues, is if we all lived anti-racism. In other words, our commitment to anti-racism would be so genuinely rooted in our souls; we would not see skin colour, nor would we need to judge people based on skin colour. A beloved community is only possible when we create relationships based on "loving ties of care" (hooks, 1995, p. 264) where we embrace the worthiness of all human beings.

I believe our personal frameworks need to be based on "loving ties of care". In the past, I have written about research ethics, arguing that all research we undertake should stand the test of our cultural and traditional teachings (Thomas, 2005). Can you see our traditional values and beliefs embedded in the research? Taiaiake Alfred (2005) encourages us to "recreate a life worth living and principles worth dying for" (p.25). Further, he believes we can actually observe people who live their teachings. Nishnaabeg

scholar Leanne Simpson (2006) encourages us, as indigenous people, to "…undergo a re-traditionalization of thinking and of *living* based on our individual Indigenous cultural and intellectual traditions" (p.25). In other words, we must live what we claim to believe. If I claim to be indigenous, can I then oscillate in and out of this identity? I think not. I am Qwul'sih'yah'maht – now and always.

Many traditional teachings tell us that we are whole human beings and our lives are not separated and categorized. We are always all things. I am spiritual, emotional, physical and intellectual. I am a mother, partner, daughter, sister, granddaughter, aunt, niece, friend, student, colleague, and teacher (to name a few). When in community, I am all of these things. In the classroom I am all of these things. When I do my research, I am all of these things, and right now I am all of these things. Because of my teachings, my research too must reflect my Xwulmuxw ways of knowing and being. Even when our academic work takes us away from our communities, we must always be mindful of our ways of knowing and being. For those of us who do not live in our communities, embracing our ways of knowing and being is often more complicated. As scholars we must often take extra precautions to ensure that the work we do does actually reflect our teachings. For this reason, I believe articulating our conceptual framework holds us accountable to working in a good way. It is difficult, but absolutely essential to write from the places we claim to.

Not only is it necessary to write from the places we claim but it is also ethical. If I claim to be an indigenous scholar, what makes me any different than a non-indigenous scholar? For sure it will be how my work is rooted in my ways of knowing and being. If we do not hold ourselves accountable, our work is no better than the myriad of

indigenous books written by non-indigenous scholars. Further, there is a growing demand for indigenous scholarship and I am truly concerned that we have no accountability to our work except by ourselves and the limited number of other indigenous scholars. Having said this, what follows are some of the values I believe guide and direct the work I do. These values include relationships, respect, reciprocity, and responsibility. I will discuss each of them separately, but acknowledge that the values are interrelated and often the ideas I discuss under one value is equally valid and important under another. While I discuss these values here under my framework, please know these values are very universal and have been discussed in other works such as the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People (1996). Even though these values are often discussed as critical to research, I believe they need to be stated because they are principles that often are not followed when researching in indigenous communities.

Relationships

> Through community, Indian people come to understand their "personhood" and their connection to the communal soul of their people (Cajete, 1999, p.86).

Our teaching of nutsa maat roots all that we do in relationships because we are all one. If we embrace this teaching, we must begin all of our work by building relationships with all those who will be involved. As Cajete (1999) states above, relationships are our "communal soul".

If our research brings us into an indigenous community, relationships become even more significant. We cannot exploit folks by wanting their knowledge, but not being willing to spend the time necessary to build relationships. Our work must begin by

building relationships with our research participants. Relationship building is the beginning of what makes our work rooted in traditional ways of knowing and being.

Shawn Wilson (2008), an Opaskwayak Cree from northern Manitoba, goes as far as to say "...relationships do not merely shape reality, they *are* reality". He argues that our ways of knowing (our epistemologies) are "built upon relationships between things, rather than on things themselves" (p.74). Our relationships with all living things are what keeps us rooted in our traditional ways of knowing and being.

As well as these relationships with all living things, we have unique relationships with place. When anthropologist Keith Basso (1996) asked Dudley Patterson, a Western Apache Elder, what is wisdom, he responded, "It's in the places,"…"Wisdom sits in places".

Te ne sun Lyackson, Snux'ney'muxw, Sto:lo

I am Lyackson, Snux'ney'muxw and Sto:lo. The places that give me wisdom are all located in territories that fall into the anthropolocial/linguistical area known as the Coast Salish people – specifically, Valdez Island, Nanaimo and Chilliwack. I share this because, by carrying a traditional name, I also carry the teachings of my Grandmother and the Ta't Mustimuxw. As such, I must acknowledge and respect them and their teachings. My ancestors have roots far and wide in Coast Salish country; I, too, have roots far and wide. I have a responsibility to my ancestral relations and especially my Grandmother whose name I carry.

Relationships were cornerstones of my research. Many of the Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni I interviewed, I knew. However, there were a few I had never met. Regardless, every time I met one of the women, I began by sharing who I was, including

my Xwulmuxw name. Consequently, I was carrying the teachings of my Grandmother and needed to ensure my work honoured her as well. Not only are our relationships in the here and now important, but also our soul relationships with the Ta't Mustimuxw. I was once told to always remember, when we build relationships with other folks, build them believing they will be lifelong relationships. This way, we always treat everyone we meet with dignity and respect. When we travel in indigenous circles, it is inevitable that we always run into people we have met before so how we work (with a good mind and spirit) matters.

What I know is the relationships I built throughout this work are lifelong. I have more admiration and respect for these women than ever because they shared their knowledge and wisdom with me. I will always hold my hands up to them with respect – I will always honour our relationships.

Respect

> Our ancestors call to be remembered and recovered into our present. Cultural traditions, ceremonies, stories, songs, dances, and rituals are our responsibility to learn. Because colonization has attempted to erase our roots, ancestors, and traditions, we must work hard to recover all that we can (Absolon & Willett, 2006, p.121).

Claiming my work is rooted in Xwulmuxw ways of knowing and being necessitates my research respect the Ta't Mustimuxw, for it is they who have forged a path for us to follow. The Ta't Mustimuxw have left us instructions (teachings) on how to move forward in a good way. However, some of our teachings are being lost.

In our communities one teaching that colonization has nearly erased and which now needs to be recovered and respected is following protocol which outlines how to respect particular community traditional teachings. We must learn the specific protocol

for every community that we work with and for. It is told that in the old days we knew these protocols and they were strictly adhered to. For sure you can see these teachings in certain places such as the thi'lelum (big house). When you enter a thi'lelum, especially someone else's lelum, you know how to behave and you respect all of the teachings. However, in our everyday lives and in our academic realms particularly, we do not necessarily respect protocols. In every community we enter and with every person we work with, we must follow and respect their cultural protocols.

When cultural protocol is adhered to, there is little room to be unethical because the teachings are grounded in respect for each other. In fact, by being positioned in our work and following protocol, we will always produce ethical work because it is done with a good mind and spirit. It is precisely our position in and connection to our research that holds us accountable to our communities if we follow protocols and embrace the value of respect.

Indigenous Governance at the University of Victoria has produced *Protocols & Principles for Conducting Research in an Indigenous Context* (2003). These protocols outline a rationale, implications for research on/with indigenous peoples, ethical issues, accountability, and approach. These principles ensure that indigenous communities are major stakeholders in all research that is conducted within their communities. For example, they suggest that all intellectual property rights of the research should first and foremost lie with the community. As Dakokta scholar Waziyatawin (2005) claims, indigenous scholars and researchers, have "…a commitment to return the gift of stories and education by giving in a more difficult and profound way; that is, to use the information in a good way to make research materials and skills available to the

community" (p.38). Having respect for protocols such as these would ensure all indigenous research would be beneficial and supportive of communities – not just meet the needs of the researcher – this is the type of respect we are looking for.

In all the things I do, I strive to be respectful. In this work, I offered each of the Xwulmuxw Slheni a gift to thank them for their willingness to share their knowledge and wisdom. I hope that my work offers something back to each of the women as well as our communities. While there is a small amount written about indigenous women, virtually nothing is written about Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni and leadership. I hope my work honestly and respectfully represents the words, stories and teachings of the women.

Reciprocity

Of all the teachings we receive
This one is the most important:

Nothing belongs to you
Of what there is,

Of what you take,
You must share.
(Chief Dan George, 1974, p.25).

Over the years, time and again, we have heard our community members say they have been researched to death. It is a common story to hear our s'ulxwen (old people) tell us how so and so came to their door and asked them to share something and then they never saw that person again. We know this is unacceptable and we need to protect our communities as best we can. We need to follow Chief Dan George's advice and share. We need to ensure our work gives back to our communities in culturally relevant ways. At the same time, we must also ensure that knowledge is passed on from generation to generation in a good way.

For many reasons we must give back. Betty Bastien (2004), a Blackfoot scholar from the University of Alberta, knows it is our responsibility because "it is not the way of the people to sit with or keep the knowledge, wisdom, and blessings that have been given to you" (p.62). Passing on knowledge, wisdom and blessings is how we perpetuate the cycle of teachings from generation to generation as it was passed onto us. If reciprocity is a critical indigenous value, then so too is purpose. Our work must be purposeful and give something meaningful back to our communities.

Having engaged in this process for so many years, the ability to give something back "in a good way" (uy'skwuluwun) really mattered to me. I hope that my work is meaningful and adds to the limited resources available about Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni. I believe the words of these women are very powerful and everyone can learn something from them. I also believe my conceptual framework offers something back to our communities by highlighting specific ways that research can be conducted in our communities respecting our ways of knowing and being Xwulmuxw.

Responsibility

> Travel in your mind to a point from which to view the places whose name has just been spoken. Imagine standing there, as if in the tracks of your ancestors, and recall stories of events that occurred at that place long ago. Picture these events that occurred at that place long ago. Picture these events in your mind and appreciate, as if the ancestors were speaking to you directly, the knowledge the stories contain. Bring this knowledge to bear on your disturbing situations. Allow the past to inform your understanding of the present. You will feel better if you do (Basso, 1996, p.91).

This quote speaks to the responsibility we have to remember, not only our Ta't Mustimuxw, but our land, stories, and events. We are encouraged to learn from the past

and not recreate the same devastation many of our Ta't Mustimuxw experienced. He knows we have much to learn, but more importantly, knows we are capable of learning.

It is not only the Ta't Mustimuxw we are responsible to, it is the young ones and those yet to come. This is a huge responsibility, but if we truly believe the children are our future, we know this is what we must do. We have the teachings to protect our children because our Ta't Mustimuxw protected us. Despite years of attempts at genocide through governmental policies, our Ta't Mustimuxw never gave up. We too will never give up. As Emerance Baker (2008) so movingly asserts, "We need to write from our hearts and minds as Indigenous writers, because our youth, our contemporaries, and our Elders need to see themselves in the loving light our words cast". May we always cast loving words of care because of our Ta't Mustimuxw and for the next generations.

I hope my work casts loving words of care. I worked endlessly to ensure the work reflects my responsibility to the Ta't Mustimuxw, the Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni, and to the future generations. I hope I never forget who I am truly responsible and accountable to – to all Xwulmuxw Mustimuxw. I know what I write is mine, but I also know that despite the number of times I say this, there will always be people who generalize my work and believe it represents all things Xwulmuxw. As such, I hope my work has not caused other Xwulmuxw Mustimuxw any grief.

As much as I resisted articulating my personal framework, I know as researchers, we are knowledge carriers. What we do with our work matters. As well, how we do our work matters – we have a responsibility to produce work that is genuinely rooted in our ways of knowing and being, which will also be accessible and beneficial to our communities. Our work is not simply about getting degrees or finishing off projects, our

work is tied to our Ta't Mustimuxw and the future generations. Oklahoma Choctaw scholar Devon Abbott Mihesuah (2003) nicely sums up the importance of our work when she says, "My personal standards – gut feelings, actually – are that I should not produce a manuscript about my tribe or another tribe unless it is useful to them, and I will not write about historic native women unless the project benefits their descendants" (p.6). I believe all the work I have done will benefit the descendents of all of the women I interviewed. Further, I believe it will benefit all who take the time to read it.

Uy'skwuluwun is the Hul'qumi'num word, which roughly translates to be of a good mind and a good spirit. However in the Hul'qumi'num sense, the mind and spirit are not actually separate. But, definitely uy'skwuluwun is about integrity and being in a good way. I hope that all of the work I have done follows the principles of uy'skwuluwun.

Storytelling

Having articulated my connection to the work (the thinking behind the doing) I will now discuss my methodology. I have actually spent plenty of time thinking and writing about storytelling as a research methodology. In fact, I used storytelling as the primary research methodology for my Master's thesis which resulted in a chapter, *Honoring the Oral Traditions of my Ancestors Through Storytelling* (2006). I will not re-write or try to re-create that chapter here, but will highlight the major points and add anything new or different that has emerged from subsequent research. Specifically, I will discuss storytelling as it relates to Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni.

Previously I discussed the importance of storytelling as a research methodology. Mihesuah (2003) believes that "Truthful, honest and complete storytelling should be the

goal for all of us" (p.25). Storytelling is and always has been purposeful and intentional. Traditionally, storytelling played an essential role in nurturing and educating our young people. Aunty Ellen White (2006) reminded me "…that in traditional teaching, these stories were spoken, not written. So the storyteller had the opportunity to focus on different aspects of the story as needed" (p.64). This is the beauty of storytelling; the storyteller can stress different aspects of the same story a number of times depending on the circumstances. Despite colonization, I believe storytelling continues to play very important roles in the lives of Xwulmuxw Mustimuxw. I argue that storytelling is essential to the survival of indigenous people because stories pass on culture, tradition, historical facts, and life lessons. Stories have always, and continue, to do this.

> Our stories have served and continue to serve very important functions: both the historical and mythical stories provide moral guidelines by which one should live; they teach the young and remind the old what appropriate and inappropriate behavior consists of in our cultures; they provide a sense of identity and belonging, situating community members within their lineage and establishing their relationship to the natural world… (Waziyatawin, 2005, p.35).

As people from a storytelling tradition, our language, histories and all our teachings are passed down from generation to generation through the stories. Stories tell us where we are from and even how we came to be here. Stories are very complex.

Late Mohawk scholar Patricia Monture (2008) states, "In the way of my people, the Haudenosaunee, I tell stories" (p.154). The same is true for the Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni I interviewed – they told stories and shared teachings. And who better to discuss indigenous women and leadership than the women themselves (Mihesuah, 2003, p.29). Further, bell hooks (1990) reminds us that:

> For us, true speaking is not solely an expression of creative power, it is an act of resistance, a political gesture that challenges politics of domination that would rather render us nameless and voiceless. As such, it is a courageous act – as such, it represents a threat (p.210).

"True" speaking is an act of resistance. The Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni I interviewed would call this "speaking out". Because of the teaching of nutsa maat, speaking out for those we love and care for is a natural reaction. One of the reasons I wanted to interview indigenous women and ask them about leadership was to challenge the politics of colonial domination. For indigenous women this act of resistance is not only to mainstream politics, but to the politics of domination by our own men. Many of our women are rendered nameless and voiceless. However, we have strong women and strong women's voices that I wanted to seek out and share. Indigenous women's lives are very complicated, and through all of the colonial bullshit, we have managed to hold our heads high and continue to embrace our roles as carriers of culture and givers of life. This is exactly what I wanted to share – who we are as Xwulmuxw Slhunlehni.

Gail Small (2004), a member of the Northern Cheyenne Nation, believes "We have a lot of stories. These stories give us the strength and wisdom to make the right decisions" (p.54). The Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni shared so many stories that instruct how to make the right decisions and move forward with our lives as individuals, communities and nations embracing the teaching of uy'skwuluwun.

As I proceeded with this work, what became paramount was getting it right. This is a different kind of right decision, but critical. As story writer, I have the ultimate power to write the story to serve my own purposes. I can even dig through the interviews and find words from the women to justify my arguments. I know in the past, words of our

people have been taken out of context and used to justify another's opinion. I will not do this kind of unethical work. So, what did the Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni say? I want to make the right decision and truly reflect their knowledge and wisdom. I relied heavily on my teachings and understanding of cultural protocols to guide and direct my understanding of the teachings the women shared. As time went on, I also relied on Prayer and the Ta't Mustimuxw to guide and direct this work. This reminded me of Basso's story. I will share it here. After Basso (1996) has mispronounced an Apache word three times, he says,

> I'm sorry, Charles, I can't get it. I'll work on it later, it's in the machine. It doesn't matter.
>
> It's matter," Charles says softly to me in English. And then turning to speak to Morley, he addressed him in Western Apache.
>
> What he's doing isn't right. It's not good. He seems to be in a hurry. Why is he in a hurry? It's disrespectful. Our ancestors made this name. They made it just as it is… Tell him he's repeating the speech of our ancestors! (p.10).

It is critical to get the stories right. Consequently, I have always had a fear of documenting our stories, because once our words are out there, we can never get them back. Sto:lo author and activist, Lee Maracle (1993) advises us, "…everything you do and every word you speak, either empowers or disempowers" (p.168). In other words, we must be very mindful of every word we speak. In the same way, we must think about every word we write down. I know my intentions are good and believe my work is empowering, but how can I guarantee that someone will not misinterpret my words – or more importantly – the words of the storytellers? Even though Devon Abbott Mihesuah (2003) believes personal narratives are necessary, she urges us to do the work in a good

way with a good mind and spirit and not forego too much of the story or its original intent or meaning (p.30).

The beauty of storytelling is it allows the storytellers to use their own voices and words. The storyteller always holds the power in this research methodology because they are in control of their narrative. Consequently, the "researcher" becomes more of a facilitator. Now, having completed this research, I will add that as the researcher I became the student. I learned so much from every single interview I conducted. I was not the expert; I was first and foremost the learner. I was given teachings that will help me move forward in a good way, but equally as important, is that I now have teachings to pass onto the future generations.

In fact, when I was sitting with Aunty Ellen, she very gently instructed me. She said that now that she had shared her words, wisdom and knowledge with me, that it was my responsibility to stop and listen. She urged me to be patient and sit with her words. She told me, this is how teachings work; you must sit with them for three or more months. Then, you make sense of the teachings and what they mean to you. Then, they become your teachings. I believe this point is critical to my work – it is rooted in Xwulmuxw ways of knowing and being. Yes, I was conducting research as a doctoral student. Yes, I was collecting data, using interviews as my primary research method. And, yes, I was calling my research methodology storytelling. But despite what the methodology is called – what is most important is that it is rooted in my traditional ways of knowing and being. Even as I write this, I wonder if I'm getting it right. What are the Ta't Mustimuxw thinking?

Long before I started interviewing the women, I started to think about who I wanted to interview. I knew I wanted to interview women from young to old so that I could have a broad age representation. Prior to determining who I would actually interview I asked community members: if you had to choose one women to interview to discuss indigenous women and leadership, who would you pick? From here my list started. Some call this the snowball method of selection; I call this community-centered or an indigenous method of selection. From there, my interview list was formalized. In the end, I interviewed thirteen Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni. I could still be interviewing women because every time I conducted an interview, the storyteller would say "you should be speaking to so and so". As I continued to work through the interviews and receive more suggestions of women to interview the irony hit me. I was writing about Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni and leadership because nothing is written about their amazing lives, and now the list of suggested women to interview was endless – this completely validated my purpose in undertaking this research – our communities are full of absolutely remarkable women leaders.

To try to authentically share the wisdom of the storytellers, I conducted unstructured interviews. Prior to each interview, following cultural protocol, I presented the storytellers with a gift to thank them, respectfully and culturally, for sharing their knowledge and wisdom. I then explained the project, read through the informed consent form and had them sign it. With each storyteller, I would begin by sharing where my interest in the research topic came from. From there, I would simply ask them "what are your thoughts on indigenous women and leadership?" Each interview was conducted at a time and place chosen by the Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni. The interviews ran anywhere from

1 ½ hours to 2 ½ hours. As the interviews were transcribed, I sent them back to the Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni and gave each of the women a chance to edit the transcript prior to my analysis. I also provided the women with draft copies of their biographies so they had an opportunity to edit and approve them prior to their inclusion. With both the transcripts and the biographies, some women made edits, others did not. One of the Xwulmuxw Slheni told me at the time of the interview that she would not make any changes and would support whatever I wrote. But what was most important was the women were given the opportunity to make any changes they wished.

After conducting all of the interviews, I truly feel like I have been privileged to have had opportunities to hear multiple voices. First, I was honoured by each of the Xwulmuxw Slheni through the sharing of their wisdom, knowledge and teachings about leadership. Second, I was honoured to hear the voices of our ancestors through the sharing of the women's teachings. What a privilege! For me, respecting and honouring these voices is the most important point of my research methodology. Regardless of what I call what I have done – storytelling – what is most important is getting it right because it was our Ta't Mustimuxw who made these teachings.

Waziyatawin (2005) says:

> While most academic historians examine oral tradition and look for written evidence to validate it, for us, we knew a written story actually had merit if we had heard the same stories from our elders (p.36).

Much of what follows will probably not be new and profoundly shocking. It will be familiar and you will remember your Ta't Mustimuxw sharing these teachings. It will, perhaps, be organized differently than you would expect. This is work women in our communities are doing and have always done – but I am writing about it and honouring

their roles as givers of life and carriers of culture. I am honouring women as leaders – as the matriarchs of our families, communities and nations. I am suggesting that our mostly male leadership listen carefully to these women. The Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni know how to get it right. Let's stop and listen to their teachings.

Mostly what I hope is that you enjoy this work as much as I have. When I finished my thesis I said that I learned more than I ever dreamed of learning. I will say the same again. I truly am blessed to have had the opportunity to sit with powerful indigenous women and hear their stories and teachings.

Chapter four – Remembering Wise Slheni and Tul'ti'lew Slheni

Wise Woman, they told us, is the wise woman spirit that lives in all people. She is our Mother. She is our Grandmother. She is a healer. She is the giver of life. She is the carrier of culture and tradition. Wise Woman is all of the wonderful women in our life. Wise Woman is always with us and has many gifts to offer.

Wise Woman teaches us about balance and reminds us that we are only a small part of something much larger. Wise Woman teaches us that we are all connected – the two-legged, the four-legged, the winged-ones, those that crawl, those that swim and everything in the universe.

Wise Woman gave us all the teachings we need to survive as Xwulmuxw Mustimuxw. She gave us our snuy'ul'ul. She taught us about Wild Woman, the small creatures and tricksters such as Raven. Wise Woman kept the children safe and had an uncanny way of keeping the children laughing while at the same time teaching them.

It is told that before the Great Flood, Wise Woman warned all the people of the flood and told them they would have to pick the strongest, healthiest and wisest to endure their journey and be there to allow our People to live once the waters subsided. And, it was Wise Woman who was there after the Great Flood to teach the children how to survive. She also reminded them to remember the Ta't Mustimuxw and how they wanted the Children to live. Wise Woman reminded them of their snuy'uy'ul. It was the strength of the Ancestors, culture, tradition, roles, connection to land and such that allowed the Xwulmuxw to survive.

The teachings of Wise Woman are infinite. These pieces of this story were shared with me by Seletze (Delmar Johnnie). What is most important about this story is it speaks to the honour and respect indigenous women have always had. It highlights the important roles women have played in our communities since time immemorial.

Wise woman continues to live on in each of us. Some of us see her, others don't. But she is there. The Mohawk people have a similar Woman, she is sky woman. Mohawk writer, Janet Marie Rogers (2005) reminds us that "…sky woman is more than fiction, legend and myth; she is real" (p.67). Wise Slheni too is real and is a part of every one of

us. In this chapter, I use the story of Wise Slheni to discuss our snuy'uy'ul – our teachings. Wise Woman instructed the people how to survive the great flood. Without her guidance and direction, we would not have survived. Similar to how we get our teachings from the Ta't Mustimuxw, Wise Woman too continues to pass on teachings. Because of the impact of colonization on indigenous women's lives, I have included the teachings of Tul'ti'lew Slheni because she was the teacher and protector of our children. Colonization, very specifically aimed at breaking our ways of knowing and being – our snuy'uy'ul. As such, we might need to learn how to reinstate Wild Woman teachings and learn new ways to protect ourselves, our children and the future generations. Wild Woman may well have the teachings we need to again embrace snuy'uy'ul and live our lives in a good way following the teachings of uy'skwuluwun.

The themes that emerge in this chapter are derived from the interviews with the thirteen Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni. There may have been other themes, but these ones were mentioned time and again, and as such, are the core of this chapter. This chapter begins by discussing our sacred snuy'uy'ul teachings and how residential schools and other *Indian Act* policies attacked our ways of knowing and being. From there, I focus on indigenous women's roles and responsibilities as carriers of culture, givers of life and to our Ta't Mustimuxw. The discussion of the themes includes how things were in the past as well as concerns the women have in the present day. This chapter concludes by discussing aspects of the teachings of nutsa maat (sharing and speaking out) and uy'skwuluwun.

Snuy'uy'ul

Wise Woman taught us our connection to our Ta't Mustimuxw – our grandmothers, grandfathers, mothers and fathers in the Spirit World. This connection is a central theme because our teachings have been brought forward from our ancestors. As I did not have specific interview questions, the women were free to share their own views on leadership, but most definitely this sacred connection to the ancestors and our snuy'uy'ul was first and foremost in everyone's thoughts.

It was absolutely amazing to listen and learn how, in the past, we were taught that we, as human beings, are simply a part of something much larger. S'ulxwen, Sarah Modeste, said she was raised knowing,

> We were connected to the Spirit World, all that lives on our Mother the Earth and in the skies. In the past, spirituality was our life, looking after the earth, looking after the water, looking after the trees, animals….

Our people were raised with strong teachings that taught us not only how to be as human beings, but also how to be on Mother Earth. Jenny Sam says teachings had a life – they were not simply words. When we had the teachings, we naturally lived in a cultural and traditional way, because that is what teachings are – they are our way of life.

For the Hul'qumi'num' Mustimuxw our way of life is our snuy'uy'ul. In fact, I have heard snuy'uy'ul referred to as the truths of life (Paige, 2009, p.1). Snuy'uy'ul roughly translates into English as our sacred teachings. Snuy'uy'ul is our language, our forms of governance, our culture and tradition, our sacred bathing hole, sacred burial sites, it is our spirituality and all of our teachings – it is how Xwulmuxw Mustimuxw live. In other words snuy'uy'ul is a way of life based on and rooted in our teachings. Snuy'uy'ul teaches us how to get through difficult times and situations, how to take care

of ourselves when we are pregnant, how to raise our children, how to transition through the various life stages, how to live and how to die. The teachings provide family and community structure. Snuy'uy'ul had all the teachings necessary to live a good life.

In the past, all Hul'qumi'num' Mustimuxw were raised with the snuy'uy'ul teachings; the four s'ulxwen I interviewed – Josephine August, Amelia Bob, Sarah Modeste and Ellen White - were all raised with these teachings. These S'ulxwen know we, as Xwulmuxw Mustimuxw, are where we are today because our Ta't Mustimuxw laid down strong teachings for us. Having said this, the women also know it is critical that we pass on the teachings to the future generations. Each of the S'ulxwen was very concerned that the teachings are not being passed along as they should.

The younger women I interviewed also knew the importance of the teachings their mothers and grandmothers gave them. Emmy's Grandmother told her, "We knew who we were and where we were from [because] we had our own very sophisticated ways of looking after ourselves based on teachings that we were all connected". And, because we are all connected, we were taught the importance of the teachings and the necessity to pass them on again (Emmy). Shana was taught that "…in the past, knowledge and teachings were passed on from generation to generation" and everyone knew the teachings.

Living our lives based on snuy'uy'ul was complicated. Sarah articulated how every aspect of our lives was planned. Before a woman was married, she was given the teachings of how to take care for herself and her future children. Once she was pregnant, she was given strict rules about how to look after herself and the unborn baby. The S'ulxwen would speak to the unborn child and start giving them teachings. Our old

people knew babies came into this world with the purest of mind and spirits and were thus considered sacred. Because of their sacredness, the S'ulxwen spent lots of time passing on the sacred teachings of snuy'uy'ul.

Regardless of the process, our Ta't Mustimuxw and S'ulxwen knew the snuy'uy'ul had to be passed on. Susan remembers her Mother warning her "don't embarrass the family, do everything proper". When her Mother went to the other side, Susan knew exactly what she meant, know the teachings and protocol. We were always taught that we must know how to behave especially at cultural events. There is always specific protocol that must be strictly adhered to. If we did not follow protocol there would be consequences. Aunty Ellen said if you were careless or carefree, it might not be you who would bear the brunt of your behavior. It might be the innocent young people who feel the impact. Aunty Ellen warned that "our actions of today will impact the future, we must always be very careful". She said, if you act tough and do something wrong, the badness will bounce off of you and harm the weaker ones around you. These statements signify the importance of understanding our snuy'uy'ul. Everything we do and every word we say can have an impact on someone around us, probably a young person we love dearly.

The Ta't Mustimuxw were selfless people. They knew everything we did involved more than just ourselves, we were a part of something much larger. Aunty Ellen cautioned me that because our thoughts have energy we must be very careful and always try carry around good energy and not let bad energy consume our ways of knowing and being, she said "we must always be positive". Aunty Ellen said that we have the ability to be positive because we can always learn new things; we are never too old to learn. She

said the teachings are all around us, we must look and listen to everything – everywhere we go. What I have taken from her teachings is we need to remember Wise Woman because she will keep us all living a good life rooted in the snuy'uy'ul teachings.

However, as we know, many things – particularly colonial policies and practices – have attempted to take away our ways of knowing and being. Traditionally, we had teachings that protected us from danger and harm. We passed these teachings on through the stories of Tul'ti'lew Slheni.

> *Tul'ti'lew Slheni was a very repulsive, hairy and smelly woman who lived in the mountains. She could fly, and as dusk set in, she would soar by the outskirts of the villages searching for children who were still wandering about. She was smart. Tul'ti'lew Slheni stalked young vulnerable children who had not safely returned home. Once Tul'ti'lew Slheni spotted the children, she would very deviously sneak up behind them, snatch them, and throw them in a cedar bark basket she carried on her back. If she could not catch the children, she was said to have been known to bribe the children with smoked salmon or any food the young children enjoyed. When her basket was full, she would fly far far away to her mountain home and feast on the young ones she had captured.*

Because Tul'ti'lew Slheni was attacking the sacred ones – the children - the Hul'qumi'num Mustimuxw, taught their children from very young ages how to protect themselves from her. The children knew to be safely home with their families before dusk when Tul'ti'lew Slheni came out. They were taught to pay particular attention to signs and signals that indicated dusk was approaching. They were taught to watch the sun and see when it started to set. They were taught to listen for the hoot of the owl as they only come out at dusk. They were also taught to never stray too far from the village so they could always return home quickly. These are a few of the lessons children were taught to protect themselves from Tul'ti'lew Slheni.

> *As Tul'ti'lew Slheni was persistent and ever so greedy, she kept returning to the villages looking for more stray children. Despite all the teachings the children received, Tul'ti'lew Slheni continued to capture young vulnerable children. As our children were sacred, the Hul'qumi'num Mustimuxw realized they would have to take drastic measures to stop her from stealing any more children. The men devised a plan. One evening, the men followed her home. Tul'ti'lew Slheni had her cedar bark basket bulging with their children. The men knew that after she ate all the children she would be so stuffed, that she would fall into a deep sleep. As she slept, the Hul'qumi'num Mustimuxw sneaked up on her and covered her eyes and her filthy body with pitch they collected from the trees. When she woke she was at first startled, and then became very agitated because her vision was blurred from the pitch. She was so frightened she attempted flying away, but because she had gorged herself, she could barely get her body off the ground. As she tried to flee, the Hul'qumi'num Mustimuxw shot her with burning arrows and the pitch caught fire. And that was the last they ever saw of Tul'ti'lew Slheni. Now, the sacred children were safely home with their families.*

Most indigenous cultures have some version of a wild woman legend, this one is ours and it was shared with me by s'ulxwen Auggie Sylvester of Penelakut and Seletze (Delmar Johnnie) from Khenipsen. When discussing the importance of our snuy'uy'ul, I find myself thinking about Tul'ti'lew Slheni because she was the protector of children and more now than ever, we need to protect our women and children. Had we brought forward Tul'ti'lew Slheni stories with a colonial twist, perhaps our young people would have had the teachings to maneuver through the onslaught of issues that are colonization. As horrific as the Tul'ti'lew Slheni story is, it does not compare to some of the tragedies that are our Xwulmuxw lives today. Tul'ti'lew Slheni, always knew what we needed.

Colonization definitely attacked our snuy'uy'ul. As I write this I can hear Lydia, choking back tears, telling me she got the incentive to pursue a law degree from listening to her Mother reminisce about the racist treatment she received in the past. Amelia was telling Lydia how she, and all indigenous people, were forced to ride with the animals on

the ferries because there were policies forbidding indigenous people from riding on the main deck. Lydia states, “I couldn’t believe my mom could be treated so badly”. But Amelia was treated that badly, as were all indigenous people. Lydia hoped a law degree would give her the tools she needs to fight against injustices both past and present. Issues such as racism, as tragic and unjust as they are, are familiar to me. My own family has a litany of stories. I know racism is not a thing of the past, but as I struggled to write this chapter, I realize that somehow I have differentiated between bigger racist policy issues and our day-to-day lived experiences of colonization. Unfortunately, the more colonization played out, the more our snuy’uy’ul was attacked.

My young niece, Rachel, discussed at length how tragic it was that she began to learn about Xwulmuxw Mustimuxw and our history through her post-secondary education. Somehow, between our family and her K-12 education, she had not learned this history. Nor had Rachel learned what it means to be a Xwulmuxw Mustimuxw. She had learned, or more specifically been the target of racism, but even there, as her identity as a Xwulmuxw Mustimuxw was vague, she could not fully comprehend why. And I know, in my heart of hearts, that both our family and our education system are living examples of how insidious the daily impact of colonization can be. I am not trying to make excuses here, but I feel inclined to share that the three generations of our family before Rachel’s all attended Kuper Island Residential School. As I interviewed Rachel, I was feeling uneasy – sick in fact – how had we missed seeing her struggle? I now know that Rachel is not the only one in our family who had this experience.

As a family we have worked hard just to survive. We talk about how important our culture is. We discuss what needs to be done. Some of us are more cultural and

traditional than others. All of us in my small family have Xwulmuxw names. Some of us have post-secondary education. Some of us teach. And on and on. In all of these somes and some nots, we are failing to pass on important snuy'uy'ul teachings to our next generations. We have forgotten about Wise Slheni and Tul'ti'lew Slheni. I am heavy hearted as I type this and realize how uncertain our culture and tradition has become and how quietly and thoroughly colonization has seeped into our thoughts. I want to say obviously we have not been aware of the impact, but what I realize is that for myself, I have focused very much on my own little family in the hopes that they would be stronger Xwulmuxw Mustimuxw. This is not our way - nutsa maat tells us we are all one. As an Aunty, I must pass on the teachings and speak out to our young ones. This is heartbreaking. I struggle to write this section because it is so personal and heavy on my heart. But more specifically, it speaks to how tentative the snuy'uy'ul teachings have become within our family.

My niece Shana has similar concerns. Shana discussed, at length, how concerned she was that so many of our family members do not actually even participate in cultural and traditional ways. Shana contends that this is a serious problem and is a direct impact of colonization – specifically, internalized racism. When discussing racism, Lee Maracle (1993), a Coast Salish scholar, claims:

> For you to become a racist was painless. For you to un-become and become something new is going to be excruciating. Just like for me to become self-racist is painless. The shame part was easy to learn, easy to internalize. The un-becoming is very, very difficult and very painful. But it's healing and there's no other way to heal (p.168).

And it is true, that the only way out is to heal. However, internalized racism most often goes unrecognized while at the same time is deeply damaging and wrecks havoc on

the indigenous soul. I believe internalized racism has a whole lot to do with why so many of our Xwulmuxw Mustimuxw do not wish to participate in our ways of knowing and being. What makes this situation more tenuous is those who have internalized racism are often unaware of it. For years I worked in a public school system where I witnessed firsthand, how so many of our young people have internalized racism. They would ask me why family members were like they were – why they were addicted to drugs and alcohol. Why their grandparents didn't love them? Why no one in their family graduated from high school? Why, why, why? I would spend most of my "counseling" time sharing history lessons and trying to explain to these young people that a whole lot of shit has happened to indigenous people in Canada and perhaps it was not the fault of their family members that they were struggling. Some of these young folks heard me and wanted to learn more, but for others it was too late. They had found a way to either make peace with being ashamed of being Xwulmuxw or they were on the road to self-destruction. Their internalized-racism was so entrenched that they no longer had any self-esteem.

Perhaps the most devastating impact of colonization has been on the teachings. We have become very disconnected from many of our teachings which traditionally kept us grounded in what it means to be Xwulmuxw. When Lydia and Amelia were discussing teachings, they both acknowledged that many of the teachings are being lost and many folks do not even have teachings. Residential schools policy makers knew, if they had any chance of successfully assimilating indigenous people, they would have to attack our ways of knowing and being. After the 150+ years of indoctrination into Christianity, our Xwulmuxw ways of knowing and being have become very fragile.

As residential schools were beginning to close down, the provincial government (in 1951) was given jurisdiction to provide child welfare services on reserves. Since this time, we have more children in care than ever before. Our children were most often placed in non-indigenous foster homes with no mandatory commitment on the part of the foster families to provide any cultural care. So while the foster care system was not necessarily mandated to assimilate our children, in reality, assimilation has been the practice. Many indigenous children raised in foster care suffer from internalized racism similar to those children who attended residential schools. As with residential school children, foster care children do not even know they have internalized racism, but certainly many are not proud to be indigenous.

We know this is our reality and Amelia, Lydia, Mavis, and Jenny all encourage us to take up our responsibility to pass on the teachings to the children. Jenny knows if it was not for her Grandmother, she would not be where she is today – this, she says is the power of the teachings. It is our responsibility as grandmothers, mothers, aunties and sisters to ensure we pass the teachings on to the young ones. And, as Jenny reminds us, we must begin by teaching our family first. Amelia is a fine example of this; she has always and continues to pass along teachings so that all the work that is done is done in a good way – uy'skwuluwun – with a good mind and spirit.

Integrated throughout the conversations about culture and tradition, the Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni also identified language. They clearly expressed that language is a part of our ways of knowing and being and cautioned us not to overlook the need to revitalize our languages. Language, like our culture and tradition was very systematically taken from us, especially through the residential school system where children were

forced to speak English. Lydia reminds us that, “We didn’t lose our language, it was taken from us”. Andrea Bear Nicholas (2008) claims:

> …and herein lies the true reason for the all-out assault on oral traditions. For Indigenous Peoples, language is not just a form of communication, but also a priceless archive in which the knowledge necessary for survival is embedded. It is oral traditions that connect Indigenous Peoples to their lands and it is oral traditions that, therefore, need to be destroyed if Indigenous people are to be effectively disconnected from their lands (p.19).

And it is true, so much of our ways of knowing and being are integrated throughout the language. S’ulxwen are always trying to determine how to translate what they want to say from their first language to English. We now ask, in this constant translation, what is being lost? What we do know is language revitalization must become a priority on all governing tables – from chief and council tables on up.

Residential Schools – Living Legacies

The final goal of residential schools was assimilation. As such, obviously replacing our ways of knowing and being (our snuy’uy’ul) was the supreme ends. We cannot downplay the impact of residential schools. Every woman I interviewed brought up how residential schools have impacted the way we are today as indigenous people. Josephine passionately stated that our children were not prepared to be taken away and placed in those institutions because they only knew what it meant to be Xwulmuxw and being Xwulmuxw was exactly what residential schools intended to attack. The Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni discussed how those institutions have contributed to the abuse of drugs and alcohol, the levels of violence in our communities, the loss of culture and tradition, and the loss of our languages. Lydia asserts that many of our women are lost because we have lost our ways. Viola really believed we need to teach our young people

the history of indigenous people in Canada because our young people do not know how we got to where we are today. S'ulxwen, Sarah, explained "because of residential schools, many of our people have cast off their hearts, spirits and emotions". Aunty Ellen concurs, she claims colonization and residential schools have folks carrying around a whole lot of bad energy that they struggle to let go of. All of these women know that residential schools continue to wreck havoc in our lives today.

However, as quickly as they discuss residential schools and colonization, they also say "we must quit blaming and start healing from the impact of residential schools" (Josephine). In fact, late Chief Viola Wyse believes it is because of the recent history (residential schools) that we need time to heal. She asserts, "it will take time, but we must be committed to and focus on the youth". Jody believes we need to move away from victimhood and get on with living what we believe in. But what do we believe in?

Perhaps we need new Tul'ti'lew Slheni stories now. Perhaps she never disappeared she merely shape shifted – like a trickster – and now we do not recognize her. Because we did not know she had returned, we were not prepared for her, nor did we prepare our children for her. Tul'ti'lew Slheni returned with the onslaught of colonization. She came back in the form of legislation and policies. Of those policies, the most detrimental blow has been forced assimilation or genocide. Not only was our snuy'uy'ul taken from us, so were our children. Generations of our young people have been taken from us and placed in residential schools, foster homes and adoptive homes. We have not been able to give these young people the teachings they needed to survive. We nearly lost our roots – our Xwulmuxw ways of knowing and being.

Indian Act – Living Legacies

Along with having our traditional ways of knowing and being directly attacked through assimilation tactics such as residential schools, the *Indian Act* also imposed other policies that systematically divided our communities. I will mention a few examples here, but they are discussed more fully in chapter two. Section 12(1)b of the 1951 *Indian Act* systematically displaced many of our women and children from our communities by creating the categories of status and non-status or what has resulted in the on/off reserve binary. This binary was created when women and their children who lost their status were forced to move off reserve. Through policies and legislation we can see how methodically our women and children were displaced from our communities. However, when you look at the development of residential schools, you also see how deliberately this displacement was constructed, as is evident in the following statement:

> "To kill the Indian in the child," the department aimed at severing the artery of culture that ran between generations and was the profound connection between parent and child sustaining family and community. In the end, at the point of final assimilation "all the Indian there is in the race should be dead" (RCAP, 1996, p.365).

While severing the connection between parent and child would necessarily mean both parents (mothers and fathers), as givers of life, the unspoken critical connection would directly be at mothers. Be it section 12(1)b of the *Indian Act* or the compulsory attendance of residential schools, these policies directly attacked our women's roles as giver of life.

As discussed before, in 1985, Bill C-31 was implemented. The overarching intent of this Bill was to allow indigenous women and children to apply to have their membership to their original Band re-instated. However, regardless of the intent of the

policy changes, land and resources continue to be problematic for our communities. Although we know our women and children should be re-instated, our communities were not adequately prepared.

First, our communities were not given adequate time nor resources to determine how best to create space (land, houses, resources) or policies on how to bring our women and children back into our communities following the principals of uy'skwuluwun. Instead our community leadership was left to figure out how to best meet the needs of all the community members both on and off-reserve. Each community was left to make its own decision how to include (or not) the women and children who successfully had their Indian status reinstated. At a time when resources are scarce, our leadership was left trying to determine how best to meet the needs of two very conflicting issues. The leadership knew our communities would be rightfully inundated with requests from Bill C-31 applicants to have their membership reinstated and be allowed to return home. While at the same time, members who have lived in the community all of their lives would demand their issues be addressed prior to anyone perceived to be an outsider receiving any resources. What a disaster in the making. Some communities created space for their reinstated band members, other didn't. Consequently, many indigenous women and their children were never able to return home.

Second, many of our community members, including our leaders, have what I call internalized colonization/*Indian Act* mentality. Similar to internalized racism, internalized colonization happens thoughtlessly, painlessly and unknowingly. We just begin to believe in and use the tools of colonization and the *Indian Act* to justify bad decision making. Our leadership often justify why off reserve folks are not entitled to on reserve resources

or why our women and children should not be entitled to land in our communities. We make sense of the nonsensical by justifying our decision making using the same racist colonial policies we loathe. Even though our leadership continues to fight against the *Indian Act*, when push comes to shove, some of our community members including our leadership use the *Act* to their advantage.

Above I suggest that colonial policies have created the on/off reserve binary. However, it is our leadership that is now upholding the divide. Shana claims that the *Indian Act* has created this on/off reserve duality where "we rank each other based on where we live". Further, she contents this duality is very harmful for the future of our people. In other words, the *Indian Act* has created a sort of cultural elitism amongst our own people. We judge based on where people live, but now also on how "cultural" they are or are not. As time has gone by (since Bill C-31 in 1985) we now hear our own folks rank how cultural or traditional others are. This judgment is often done as a way to justify whether or not off reserve folks should be entitled to return home, or entitled to on-reserve community resources. How can we possibly make these judgments against our women and children when they were systematically displaced without any choice of their own? I wish there were easy answers to this on-off reserve binary, but there are not. This is highly contentious, emotional and extremely difficult. For me, the hardest part is as Xwulmuxw Mustimuxw we are left to resolve this catastrophe that was created by the stroke of a pen through the *Indian Act*. We really need to rely heavily on Tul'ti'lew Slheni and our snuy'uy'ul to guide us through these very difficult times.

Women's Roles and Responsibilities

Carriers of Culture

As women, one of the most important roles we played was passing on the teachings to the future generations. Women were the carriers of culture. Late Chief Viola Wyse says we were taught to remember for the next generations. Women were raised, from the time they were babies to know their roles. Sarah says,

> Women were trained right from the time they were born to be leaders. Often the trainers were the Grandmothers because they were the best leaders. These women remember names, family names, passed on oral traditions, knew hunting, fishing and gathering areas, were the carriers of law, the carriers of culture.

From the time Sarah was little, her Aunt would visit her a couple times a week and on the weekends to pass on teachings. Passing on the teachings was a process that involved time and commitment from the s'ulxwen. Always the women, like Wise Woman, knew what we needed to do for the children.

Lydia was given instructions from her Mother from the time she was a young woman because Amelia knew the importance of passing on the teachings. Amelia's mother was a knowledge carrier and had an uncanny memory. Because her mother was so knowledgeable, she knew she must share the wisdom with Amelia for the future generations. In turn, as our wise elders always do, Amelia ensured she passed on the teachings to Lydia who is now passing the teachings on to her children.

Jenny too was raised with the teachings. Both her Mother and her Grandmother were amazing role models and choose Jenny to carry forward the cultural teachings. Jenny remembers being told that our women were strong and each of us had a gift. One of Jenny's many gifts was her healing hands. Her Grandmother too had healing powers

and knew Jenny carried the same gift. Since Jenny was gifted with teachings from her Mother and Grandmother she knows the importance of the teachings and now passes them on to her children and grandchildren.

Emmy remembers her Grandmother always sharing the teachings and the importance of them. She knows her Grandmother did the things she did because of her grandchildren. As women, our role was to ensure our children had all the teachings they needed to lead good healthy lives.

Givers of Life

As we saw above, the majority of important work the Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni did revolved around the wellbeing of the children. Babies were particularly sacred as they were born innocent without preconceived notions of how to live. Infancy was seen as a sacred time. The sacredness of infancy stemmed from the fact that babies are closer to the Spirit World than adults. As such, babies needed to be protected and looked after in a good way. Particularly when our young ones were at a sacred event (such as events in the Thi'Lelum), children were watched very closely. Jenny remembers being instructed that,

> Children were to be protected at all times. We were taught to care for them especially at cultural events [because] children are close to the Spirit World and we need to protect them from bad spirits.

Because we believe all things are connected, which includes the Spirit World, we cannot guarantee only interaction with good spirits. As such, the young ones were seen as particularly vulnerable and needing of constant care and attention. It was believed that bad spirits could cause harm to young people because the young ones are weaker they are more vulnerable than adults. As we would never know the consequences of bad spirits fiercely protecting the young was our only solution.

We were always taught that if we loved someone, it was our responsibility to protect them. Protection took on many forms. For example, as parents and older relatives, we were always there to guide and direct our children and younger relatives. If a child was doing something dangerous, or behaving inappropriately, or causing harm to another person/thing it was our responsibility to speak to them. Speaking out to correct (or protect) a child was common practice.

> The *Sul-hween/Elders* of yester-year took great care to prevent accidents and to secure the life of their children. The parents of yester-year needed to be keenly aware of environmental influences and hazards; one mistake could cause the child's life. In some families, children would have been disciplined for reckless action (Paige, 2009,p.56).

However, this discipline was always done in a caring way, a way that showed love and respect, a way that wished them well, not a putdown disrespectful condescending way; and, definitely not in an abusive or violent way. In fact, S'ulxwen, Willie Seymour says that violence "…was frowned upon and corrected…" (Paige, 2009, p.66).

Children were raised with the teachings from birth. Consequently, Amelia believes that, "Because children were taught from an early age to remember, they had such good memories. It was the oral way, and they had 'tape recorders' in their heads". These "tape recorders" were actually well-trained minds. Children were taught traditional names, places, stories, etc. Their knowledge and ability to remember carried on into their adult years, where the process of witnessing was an integral part of our governance.

In traditional ceremonies, when sacred work is being conducted, our Xwulmuxw Mustimuxw call witnesses to observe the work being conducted. Witnessing is a significant responsibility because you are being asked to take notice of every detail of the evening. For example, when I was given my name, the witnesses were expected to know

what my name was, where the name came from, ensure that I had followed protocol, remember the date, as well as everything else that was taking place. In the Thi'lelum, visitors are seated in sections according to what community they are from. Witnesses are selected from every community that is present. This way, when the witnesses return to their home communities, the details of the sacred event was shared throughout Coast Salish territory. If ever there were concerns or questions about what took place, what my name was, or where it was from, we could ask any of the witnesses. They will know this information because it was their responsibility, as witnesses, to pay attention to all the details. This highly sophisticated process of witnessing continues to be central to our traditional ceremonies. These events are our Department of Vital Statistics – they record births, marriages, deaths and memorials to name a few.

Children raised with the teachings naturally learned to listen in a good way. The Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni talked about how important it was to listen to everything and how in the past, because children were raised with the teachings they were good listeners. For example, Jenny remembers how her Grandmother would keep sharing teachings as long as Jenny was listening. As the teachings were a way of life, the S'ulxwen cherished their time sharing the teachings to the young ones.

Through the various stages of their lives, children were supported. "In the past" Mavis claims, "we were given rites of passage; they taught us how to be good young women and men and how to take care of themselves". Further, Paige (2009), claims,

> This rite of passage is important to acknowledge because it is an opportunity for the young adult to begin this stage of his or her life; with the right intention and with the *Snuy'uyulh* that can help set the young adult on the right and resilient path" (p.72).

Sarah said that through these rites of passage, children were given the instructions they needed to transition from being a child to becoming a young adult. Often, children learned by watching and trying. Children were an integral part of the community and were encouraged to participate in activities because contributing was the greatest way for them to learn. Sarah said children were encouraged to watch the adults around them and then imitate them. Through this process, children were praised and never scorned. It is through making mistakes that children will learn, but if they are not allowed to make mistakes, they will always be afraid to learn (Sarah).

Snuy'uy'ul teaches you how to live a good life. As such, children were always encouraged to be the best Xwulmuxw Mustimuxw possible. Susan remembers her Mother always told her she could be whatever she dreamed of being. Susan dreamed big and today is a world renowned Coast Salish Artist. Because of her Mother's encouragement, Susan in turn, encourages her children and grandchildren.

Despite the tragedy residential schools were, many of our S'ulxwen recognized the importance of education and encouraged our young people to get a formal education. Mavis's father, George always believed education was important. When it was time for his children to attend school, officials told George his children had to go to the day school on the reserve, but George insisted his children were going to the local public school just down the road. He never gave up this fight and all of his children attended public school. George also encouraged his children to pursue post-secondary degrees. Mavis went on to become a teacher.

Rachel too acknowledges the role her parents played in encouraging her to pursue post-secondary education. Rachel will graduate from the University of Victoria with a

major in Anthropology and a minor in Indigenous Studies. Our snuy'uy'ul teachings taught us to support and encourage the young ones because they will be the next generation to pass on teachings. "As mothers – givers of life – it is harder to turn our backs on what is happening" (Shana). I think this quote sums up the sentiments of all the women I interviewed. We know our children need our guidance and direction more now than ever. In the past weeks I have been having this conversation with family and friends, and the overwhelming feedback is that folks are more concerned today than ever before. We see how many of our children are in care, how many of our children have been adopted out and do not even know where they are from. We know that nearly 600 indigenous women across Canada are missing and assumed dead (Amnesty International, 2008). We know upward of 50% of the women on the downtown Eastside of Vancouver are indigenous (Welsh, 2006).

As indigenous women, now is the time to do whatever is necessary to ensure our young people have the necessary teachings to lead good strong healthy Xwulmuxw lives. Jenny acknowledged the amount of important work that Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni do (and always have done), but also reminds us that this work needs to be done now. We must, as Shana encourages us, create opportunities for our family to participate in cultural and traditional events.

Interestingly enough, each of the women I interviewed, has gone out of their way to pass teachings on to their children and family members. Amelia emphasized the need to pass teachings on from the time children are born so they always know what it means to be Xwulmuxw. Viola asks us, "If we do not do this work, who will?" Good question. In our communities we can see children that really need support. We can see this lack of

support, guidance and direction reflected in our graduation rates. The Assembly of First Nations (2010) claim that annually, only 28.9%-32.1% of the on-reserve population will ever graduate from high school (p.1). The off-reserve sector is not doing much better and our children-in-care are doing even worse.

As I write this section of the paper, I can distinctly hear Cindy Blackstock, a Gitksan woman, passionately share her concerns about the current state of indigenous child welfare. Cindy has worked endlessly as an indigenous children's social justice advocate. In 2010, she received the Canadian Association of Social Workers' National Award for Outstanding Service. The opening statement in her speaking notes at a child welfare tribunal claims:

> First Nations children are drastically over represented in child welfare care. As of May of 2005, 0.67% of non Aboriginal children were in child welfare care…as compared to 10.23% of status Indian children (Blackstock, 2009, p.1).

Further she states, "…there are more First Nations children in child welfare care in Canada than at the height of residential schools" (Blackstock, 2009, p.1). What this translates to in our communities, is that over 50% of all children in the care of the Ministry for Children and Family Development are indigenous. Tragically, these statements confirm the concerns the Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni share – all of our children (on and off reserve) need our support now more than ever.

Late Chief Viola Wyse encouraged us to work hard for the children because they are innocent; she says they never asked to be involved in this colonial reality that they find themselves in. We need to show them other ways. We need to role model how to walk in a good way with a good spirit – uy'skwuluwun. Our young people need the

teachings beginning with the basics, how to sit and listen. We need to learn how to pass on teachings in a way where the young folks want to listen and learn. We have become so removed from our eagerness to learn our ways. Emmy remembers how passionate her Gram was about the teachings – we need to (re)learn that passion so that the next generation remembers our passion the same way Emmy remembers her Grandmother's.

"We must put good memories in the children's memory bank" stated Viola. This reminded me of one of my mentors – Seletze – he too said a part of healing is creating enough good memories that they overshadow the bad ones. What I really liked about this was it meant that it is never too late to start this healing process – we just might have to work really hard at being happy! Our culture and tradition can bring much peace and happiness to our lives.

Ta't Mustimuxw (Names, Spirituality)

Traditional names are one way we remain directly connected to the Ta't Mustimuxw. For example, my name is Qwul'sih'yah'maht which was my Grandmother's name. This is a Snuy'ney'muxw name and immediately identifies me with that Nation. Amelia says names are important because with my name - Qwul'sih'yah'maht – comes my family lineage and rights to such things as land, fish, sacred sites, songs, dances, masks and/or rattles. This name demands a responsibility to my Grandmother because I am expected to uphold her name with the honour and respect she deserves. We are taught that when the person we share our name with has gone to the other side, you carry that person in your soul. It is through our souls that we remain eternally connected to our ancestors. We must always be thoughtful of our actions because they too reflect on all

who share the same name – even if they are in the Spirit World. Mavis discusses the importance of names, or more precisely, whose name we carry, and states:

> … I have an Indian name from my great grandmother. I carry that. It's from my mother and she has the same name and my daughter has the same name,Tiwenemot. Tiwenemot to me is important because of who carried it before.

Shana, as well, acknowledges the privilege and responsibility she carries with her name - Lahalawuts'aat:

> I was gifted that name and I take it very seriously. I take it very seriously because we don't have a lot of names recorded in our family and a lot of people would appreciate having a name and the fact that I was offered the opportunity to accept a name is in itself a huge honor. But the name that I was given is also part of that sense of responsibility because Lahalawuts was a Great War chief of our people. And Lahalawuts was often a speaker so I have to make sure that I don't do anything to offend that or disrespect that.

Through names we are always linked to the Spirit World. Another way we are linked to the Spirit World is through prayer. Prayers are seen as good medicine for our spirits, and it was common place to begin the day with a prayer asking for guidance and direction to have a good day. We are also told to pay attention to dreams, messages and visions because they give us guidance and direction. Sarah remembers after her children were born, having a dream. In this dream she saw her Grandmother and Grandfather, they were having a conversation and her Grandmother said, "She forgot about working with wool". Sarah was so excited to share this dream with her husband and soon thereafter Sarah embarked on what would become a lifelong commitment to wool and the wool industry.

Aunty Ellen remembers when her Grandpa Tommy shared his vision of the future. She was very young, but vividly remembers what her Grandpa said.

> Grandpa Tommy told me I'll be old, I'll be little, barely walk and my hair will be all white. It's almost all white if I didn't color it hey. But he said, the world will be coming and you'll be different, that's what he said. The world will be coming really different. The world will become angry. The water, the volcanoes under there will say we better stop all this. We better tell them you've got to behave yourselves sort of thing hey.

And then, Aunty Ellen slowly turns to me and says, you know the wild fires in California (and now here in BC), the tsunamis, earth quakes, and such are not accidental. No, they are the Creator's way of telling us we are not taking care of Mother Earth. If we look after Her, she will look after us. Aunty Ellen says people are getting greedy and taking all they can, this is not the way of the past; we only took what we needed and shared anything we had left over. "Grandpa Tommy warned me this would happen and I am not surprised". This is the power of vision.

As we sat there having this very intense conversation, a Crow sat on the porch – cawing and cawing – Aunty Ellen glances at the Crow and then turns to me and says, "He knows what we are talking about [is important]. Energy, see the energy? Really, energy is oozing out of this house when we talk and he can see it". This is the magic of the teachings, to sit with this S'ulxwen and have her acknowledge her Grandfather's vision and the Crow all at the same moment.

Lydia's last name Hwitsum – is her great-grandfather's name. This name keeps her connected not only to the past, but to the land where she lives today. She explains, "Through this name, I am forever connected to my ancestors". Sarah reminds us, "it is very important to keep our names alive so we keep these instructions and never forget who we are connected to". As names become fewer and farther between, both Amelia and Aunty Ellen said we must be willing to share our names. Amelia does not believe this

is a bad thing, just a necessary thing so all Xwulmuxw have the opportunity to carry a name. However, if we do carry a name, we must be willing to accept our responsibility to carry our names in a good way because we now are carriers of our Ta't Mustimuxw – soul carriers.

Nutsa Maat

As described above, our snuy'uy'ul teachings are the fundamental rules of our life. One of the many teachings of snuy'uy'ul is nutsa maat. Nutsa maat teaches us that we are all one. This teaching was critical to family and community structure. If we were all one, we necessarily contributed to our family and community in whatever way necessary. Every Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni I interviewed, in one way or another, talked about the importance of this teaching. In fact, each of the Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni lived this teaching.

Nutsa maat teaches us that we are all connected because we are all one. This teaching tells us to look after our Mother Earth as we would look after our own Mother. Aunty Ellen told me that years ago when we took anything from our Mother Earth, we thanked her. When we built canoes, we were thankful for the log and all of the tools to carve the log. Once the log was transformed into a canoe, we gave thanks to the waters and asked them to be gentle with us as we travelled from place to place. We did these things because we respected the log, the canoe and the water as we would respect our family members and we were thankful to our Mother Earth for generously sharing with us.

Nutsa maat teaches us to be selfless and more collectively oriented. I believe all of the S'ulxwen in my work role modeled this teaching. As we were all one, we did

whatever was necessary to keep our communities strong. When her community needed anything she could provide or help with, Amelia was there. When they needed language, Amelia went door to door teaching the language. Still today, Amelia is called upon to ensure sacred ceremonies are conducted following all of the cultural protocols. For example, she is often asked to guide and direct families to ensure they follow cultural protocol. She drums. She sings. She writes songs. She is an integral part of sacred teachings in the Cowichan territory and she shares her knowledge willingly.

Aunty Ellen has been a mid-wife, a medicine person, a drummer, a singer, a teacher, and a storyteller. Not only does she tell stories, she has written three children's books so we will always have the legends. Aunty Ellen is an activist and worked endlessly for her community of Snuy'ney'muxw. However, what Aunty Ellen wants most is to share all the knowledge and wisdom she can.

Josephine was asked by community members to run for Chief. She did and was successful in winning the election. Through this, Josephine dedicated her life to the betterment of the Halalt Mustimuxw. Through her unrelenting commitment to Halalt, Josephine taught her children and grandchildren the true meaning to nutsa maat. Even though Josephine was often taken away from home to fulfill her chiefly duties, she did this hoping to make a difference in her community.

Sarah was raised with the snuy'uy'ul teachings because her Grandmother chose her to be the one to take on those ways. Sarah learned from a young age the meaning of nutsa maat. When the knitters on Vancouver Island were being ripped off by local businesses through the exorbitant prices of wool, Sarah fought to create a business so she could supply wool to the local knitters at a more reasonable price. Sarah and her husband

worked so hard to keep the business running, but more importantly, to keep up with the demand for wool from the local knitters.

Each of these S'ulxwen did whatever was necessary because we are all one – nutsa maat. Emmy's Grandmother told her that we must know how to sacrifice for the betterment of the Nation. Never did any of these women do what they did only for themselves. Don't get me wrong here, yes, of course many of them got recognition for their contributions, but that was not the motivating factor, they simply did what was necessary.

Another fine example of nutsa maat is evident at almost any event that takes place in the Thi'lelum. It is unquestioned protocol, to pitch in and do what needs to be done. This protocol is particularly visible during our times of grief. I have witnessed the community come together in a way unseen in mainstream communities. From the moment of the death of a loved one, the immediate family is surrounded by extended family and community. From planning through to the burial, everyone contributes in whatever way they can to support the grieving family.

Sharing

Sharing is an aspect of nutsa maat. If we are all one, we naturally share and support each other. Funerals have an uncanny way of bringing family, friends and communities together. It was a common belief that what goes around comes around, so if we shared and contributed at a funeral, our generosity would come around to us or our family when we were in a time of need. Sharing could be in the form of material items, teachings, or support.

During funerals, you will witness the sharing of material items from beginning to end. For example, when my Father passed on, the house was flooded with family and friends to help me prepare for the onslaught of visitors stopping by to share their condolences. As we are taught to never send a guest home hungry, with each visitor, you must have food, coffee and tea. I had someone there all the time helping our family look after our guests in a good way.

Throughout the funeral process, we were always accompanied by a mother, grandmother or aunty for emotional and spiritual support. These women had the teachings and knew how to look after us. As well, at the family meetings, S'ulxwen took turns speaking to our family and sharing the teachings of death. They told us how to look after our spirits and asked us to please follow their instructions. The S'ulxwen stated they knew the teachings and assured us they were for our own good not meant as any form of punishment. They asked us to believe – we did and the teachings were simply amazing. I felt completely and utterly supported from beginning to end.

Family and friends also brought over items we would need at the funeral such as blankets, scarves and money pouches. Others contributed financially. In our way, we keep track of all the contributions folks made and we are responsible to reciprocate when they are in need. The process you witness at a funeral is very sophisticated albeit completely supportive.

I must stress that the sharing of teachings, support and material items did not only happen at funerals, it was a way of life – it is an essential part of the snuy'uy'ul teachings. When discussing her Grandparents, Mavis remembered how they shared all the teachings because they knew we needed them. The Ta't Mustimuxw knew how to

observe us and see what teachings we needed. And they shared because that was our way – nutsa maat. Everyone took care of each other. I can remember as a young girl, people would show up at Grama's door with fish, crabs, clams, bread, or jam because she was a S'ulxwen and they were taught to take care of the elders. I would question Grama, "Why did they drop off that stuff?" Grama would simply state, "That is our way". I used to wonder – hum, our way? What is our way? Well, definitely I am now getting a glimpse of what our way was/is.

Another aspect of sharing that had me in awe was how giving the Ta't Mustimuxw and the S'ulxwen are. Josephine, Amelia, Sarah and Aunty Ellen were not only willing, they were eager, to share teachings with me. Both Emmy and Jenny reminisced about how their Grandmothers shared snuy'uy'ul teachings with them and instructed them to pass the teachings on. If you had the teachings, you knew they were to be shared because they were for the benefit of all Xwulmuxw Mustimuxw, not a chosen few. I find myself thinking about the teachings of nutsa maat and about sharing and I wonder how difficult it must be to live these teachings every moment of your life. Today, we live in a very individualistic society where everyone is out for themselves. We no longer function as a collective which is in complete opposition to the teachings of nutsa maat. And then, I am even more amazed with the generosity of each of the Xwulmuxw Shlunlheni. They exemplified the teachings, I was truly blessed that each of them was willing to share with me, but more importantly everyone around them.

Speaking Out

I have to admit; I was taken aback by how consistently "speaking out" came across as a theme. I should not have been so surprised, because the teachings of nutsa

maat would have required us to speak out when we thought it was necessary. However, being from this newer generation, when we are often told to mind our own business, I had lost sight of the original intentions and meanings of speaking out. Under the theme of speaking out, a number of sub-themes emerged.

First, in the past, we were taught to always speak out for those who could no longer speak for themselves. This might include someone who has gone to the other side and we might need to share their thoughts, views, or teachings on an issue. This would be particularly important if it was a person we shared a name with. For example, if I was not embracing a teaching properly, one that my Grandmother would have, then one of my grandparents, aunties or uncles would come to me and point out how I was to carry the teaching in a good way. We owe it those who have gone before us to always speak out.

Another aspect of speaking out is for those who cannot speak; this could be the young ones, hurt or injured ones. Why the young ones cannot speak out is a bit more obvious, but I will share a bit about what I learned. In the past we were taught that if we loved someone – really cared about them – it was our responsibility to speak out if they were doing something wrong, or needed guidance and direction. This was particularly true in the case of young people because they were sacred, more vulnerable and had their whole lives in front of them. How could we claim to love someone if we were not willing to speak out and protect them from harm? Sarah told me if someone was hurting, we needed to help them; it was our responsibility to correct whatever was wrong, because they must always be surrounded by positive energy because negative energy will bring more bad things on them. So speaking out was not about controlling children, it was

about keeping them safe at all times. We knew we were connected to all things, as such, safety was paramount and if safety meant simply speaking out, we did.

We were also taught to speak out for those who could not speak out for themselves. I, for one, learned this lesson the hard way. I was asked to speak on a residential school panel a number of years ago. Because I had done my master's thesis on Kuper Island, this particular group invited me to participate and share my expertise. I looked at the list of other folks who were invited and declined because one of them was my late cousin Art Thompson. Art had attended Port Alberni Residential School and had become a prominent outspoken critic of residential schools (as well as an advocate for survivors of the same system). Later Art called me and asked me why I had declined the offer to sit on this panel. I told him, "I never went to residential schools, I do not have firsthand experience, my knowledge is through my research and because you are speaking from firsthand experience on the panel I thought it only appropriate that I decline". Art laughed, "Chicken shit" he said. I asked, "why?" He said, "Robina you were given those stories for a reason, it is now your responsibility to speak for those who are either voiceless or have gone on to the other side". I presented on the panel with my Cousin and have never forgotten his words. I needed to speak out for those people who could not speak out for themselves. This is a teaching of nutsa maat.

Another example of speaking out is when Mavis had the courage to publicly speak out against community members when she was approached by a number of women who were victims of sexual assault. Even though Mavis knew this would cause much hostility in the community when she named perpetrators and disclosed their indecent behavior, she too knew she was given those stories for a reason. It was her responsibility

to reveal the stories and honour the women and their truth. Because of her action Mavis was threatened, yelled at, and basically humiliated, by many community members, for speaking out. But when I asked her if she would speak out again, she frankly answered, “I would have no choice and I would do it all the same way again”. Mavis truly lived the teaching of nutsa maat – she would have no choice – because she believes we are all one.

These are a few examples and there are more. Shana always had the courage to speak out in support of her family and community. Even when she knew her position was not popular, if it negatively impacted her family, Shana always held her position. Rachel, unfortunately, needed to find the courage to speak out when she became the target of racist comments in one of her university classes. Rachel knew she was speaking out against “power” (her professors), but she did so because she said it was her responsibility to try protect other indigenous students who were to follow. All of these examples of “speaking out” really speak to unquestionable acts of resistance. We may call them resistance or activism, but I know for a fact these women would say it was simply the teachings – nutsa maat – we are all one and as such, these women had no choice but to speak out for the things they believed in. In fact, all the words the thirteen Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni have shared are an act of speaking out.

Now more than ever before, we must speak out. All of the Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni warn us that if we lose much more of the teachings, we are at grave risk of never being able to regain what we have lost. Even as such, there are probably teachings we have lost that we never had an opportunity to learn. But we must believe that with the fundamental teachings of snuy’uy’ul we have enough to rebuild and become stronger independent

striving communities once again. We must be the voices for the voiceless – particularly our children.

Our leadership needs to "speak out" and fight for the policy changes necessary to keep our children in our communities and safe. We must also be willing to make the necessary changes in our communities to keep our children at home. Are we fighting to keep our children safe? Are we fighting for children's programming? When will there be a zero tolerance for violence in our communities? Are we fighting to keep our children in school? These are big changes, but if we truly believe our children are sacred, these changes are necessary.

The same is true for our women. We must "speak out" for their rights. Even though I never had the opportunity to be raised in my traditional territory, everywhere I go folks ask me who I am and where I am from. When I tell them, they start telling me who I am related to, how I am related to them, and often launch into reminiscing about my Gram or Grampa. I have a sense of belonging because of my Ta't Mustimuxw's roots. I often wonder about the women who never get this sense of belonging. How are some of our women disposable and others not? They too are givers of life and carriers of culture. Who makes this decision?

Since the BC Treaty Process began, communities are going deeply into debt trying to negotiate a treaty despite the fact that the process is "effectively dead" (Alfred, 2000, p.2). Very few communities have been successful in negotiating a treaty and the majority of communities are at a stalemate at the negotiating table. Meanwhile, communities are going millions of dollars into debt. How many years will it be before we even know if any of the signed treaties are actually benefitting our communities? I

wonder how much prevention work we could have done with children and families with the millions of dollars that have not proven to get many communities any closer to a treaty settlement. I wonder how better this money could have been used in our communities to create space for all our women and children who have been displaced. I will not get into a debate about whether or not I support the BC Treaty process, but I believe that fighting for land, fishing rights, hunting rights, or gathering rights are not more important than fighting for women and children's rights. We must never forego human lives for material matters. We need both – the balance between human lives and how we can sustain life (land and rights).

All the Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni passionately discussed the importance of being willing to take risks and speak out. Shana believes we must fight for what we believe in even if the issues are unpopular. Josephine remembers when speaking out was an expression of love because to speak out showed how much we cared. However, Josephine says, "Now we are afraid to speak out about each other if we disagree, we must take back our responsibility". When I think about indigenous women, often we are told that addressing our issues only gets in the way of addressing treaty. We believe it is not an either/or issue, and that both must be addressed simultaneously.

As quickly as the Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni directed us to start speaking out they qualified their statements by articulating, "We need to see action with the words" (Jenny). Everyone discussed the old adage – we need to walk our talk. Each of the women are exemplary role models for action and discussed why they needed to do the things they did. For example, Mavis spoke out for the women in her community when they disclosed the sexual abuse they had experienced. She knew that simply listening to

their stories would not have been respectful. She knew what happened and she needed to expose their abuse. Regardless of the backlash, Mavis stepped out.

The women warned me that now is the time for action. We have had enough idle chat about what needs to be done, it is time for doing. If we respect our women, it is time to show this respect and fight for the inherent right our women have as givers of life and carriers of culture. If our children are "sacred" and are the future, let's protect them and give them the teachings they need to live a good life. For each and every one of us it is time to put our words into action.

Jody believes, now more than ever, "we need to be selfless and sacrifice for the greater good". Time and again the notion of being selfless came into the conversation. The Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni remarked that "our leadership must be strong and speak their truth, what they believe in even though they might get criticized for what they say" (Shana). At the same time, we must ensure that women and children's issues are what they believe in. Amelia believes we must always fight for the children and the land. We all know of leaders who are only there for the pay cheques, hopefully they will know when it is time to step aside. The *Indian Act* has divided so many of us, "It is time", Viola claimed, "to realize we are all on the same side and work together". I truly believe the hardest work we need to do is exactly this, realize we are all on the same side and figure out how to work together.

We must remember Tul'ti'lew Slheni – she gave us the teachings we needed to protect our children. We must re-write her story so that it fits our current day situation. We must start telling our children this story so they too have the teachings to be safe in all situations.

Uy'skwuluwun

Uy'skwuluwun is the teaching to be of a good mind and spirit. This is one aspect of our snuy'uy'ul and it too is a way of life. I often wonder how hard it would be to live this teaching as well. I remember my Grandmother telling me from the time I was a young girl that I could say anything I wanted as long as I was honourable and respectful. I wasn't sure exactly what she meant by this, but I am beginning to understand. And, I am also beginning to understand how difficult this can be, but how amazing it would be if we were all truly rooted in being of a good mind and spirit. Most definitely this would require that we embrace snuy'uy'ul and truly learn the teachings. It would allow us to negotiate through some very difficult times – like Mavis exemplified above – and speak out with a good mind and spirit. Mavis was not there to destroy her community or particular community members; she was there to honour these women and allow them to share the hurt that had come to them, she was there to share the truth, she was there for justice, and fundamentally for the good of the whole community.

Late Chief Viola Wyse stressed the need to build good strong relationships with their neighboring communities. Uy'skwuluwun had taught her to build this relationship with a good mind and spirit because she knew the Snuy'ney'muxw Mustimuxw and their neighbors would need to learn to co-habitat. This notion of building good relationships was also stressed by Aunty Ellen, Sarah and Emmy's Grandmother. They all believed that we need to learn to live together. As Emmy's Grandmother said, "we are not going away and neither are they". I believe these women thought that through strong relationships, our communities could negotiate through the myriad of colonial policies and move forward in the best way possible. I do not think for a minutes that these women

were being fatalistic in their thinking and surrendering any of our ways of knowing and being.

Throughout this chapter, I can feel the teachings of uy'skwuluwun. In order for us to pass on our snuy'uy'ul, we must know how to do this with a good mind and spirit. The Ta't Mustimuxw did everything they did living the concept of uy'skwuluwun. We have much responsibility, but as this chapter highlights, we have had the opportunity to have amazing Wise Women to lay down instructions for us.

All of the Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni I interviewed shared everything following the teachings of uy'skwuluwun. I would go as far as to say this whole dissertation is an example of uy'skwuluwun. This work is meant to provide an alternative model of leadership for all Xwulmuxw Mustimuxw – it is meant to provide us with hope. As such, it is put forward with the teachings of uy'skwuluwun.

Chapter five – Indigenous Sisters

So what exactly has happened to the thousands of indigenous women who never returned home? Many of them remain in urban settings where they have found a place to call home. Despite where these women reside, they too are leaders and have stories worthy of being told. These women continue to look after their children, only now without the roots of a community, and often without their culture and tradition to guide and direct them. Some women now belong to, or reside in, other indigenous communities (not their home community) because of marriage or relationships. For them, there is at least a possibility they can retain some of their ways of knowing and being. And yet others, as a consequence of the sexist *Indian Act* policies, have not fared as well. Oneida scholar Lina Sunseri (2008) claims:

> The social and economic marginalization of Indigenous women, along with a history of government policies that have torn apart Indigenous families and communities, have pushed a disproportionate number of Indigenous women into dangerous situations that include extreme poverty, homelessness and prostitution (p.105).

Many indigenous women, who are missing and assumed dead, share a common story which includes loss of family, community and cultural ties (Doyle-Bedwell, 2010, p.113). Unfortunately, as a means to support themselves and their families, these women often turned to prostitution. Tragically, in many cases, addiction went hand in hand with prostitution, another devastating consequence of being displaced and losing their sense of belonging. All of which are a result of being systematically displaced from their homes and homelands.

I would be remiss if I didn't discuss the hundreds of missing and presumed dead indigenous women in Canada. With numbers approaching 600 (Amnesty International, 2008), you would think that this constitutes an epidemic, but many activists believe that because most of the women are indigenous, those in authority are indifferent to the crisis (Amnesty International, 2002, p.119). And, I would add, if anyone in authority is concerned, why is this not a national catastrophe? Serial killer, Robert Pickton, a pig farmer from Port Coquitlam, has been convicted of the second-degree murders of six women and charged in the deaths of upward of twenty women from the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver, BC (Vancouver Sun, 2007). More than half of the missing and presumed dead women from Vancouver are indigenous (Welsh, 2006). Why the lack of publicity and concern, because the women were "Indian hookers"? In the early 1990s serial killer John Martin Crawford, went virtually unnoticed by the media (and the Canadian public) despite the fact that he raped and murdered four indigenous women (Goulding, 2001). Again, in 1996, Pamela George, a mother of two young daughters, was brutally raped and killed by two young white men. No public outcry. Now, there is the Highway of Tears. It is unknown exactly how many women have disappeared from the 720 kilometer section of Highway 16 which runs from Prince George to Prince Rupert. However, of the known missing women, all but one was indigenous (Welsh, 2006). If all of these women were white, would the same silence prevail? I believe not. As we speak, indigenous women continue to disappear. On Vancouver's infamous Downtown Eastside, there are still over 30 indigenous women missing. Where is the outrage?

My Sister used to live in the Downtown Eastside. Her lifestyle posed a huge dilemma for me when I was doing this research. In many ways, she highlighted the

contradictions in research – whose stories get included and whose do not? Where do we look for our stories of leadership? Was my sister's story not a story of leadership, albeit in a totally different way? Jaye is not disposable, nor are the missing and presumed dead women. They are our mothers, sisters, grandmothers, aunts, nieces, and cousins – they are our family members. How then am I to include the stories of the women who are lost or displaced?

Throughout my research, I witnessed and was blessed with teachings, one of them being nutsa maat. Nutsa maat is the teaching that we are all one. Together, each and every one of us makes the whole – the collective, the community, the nation. No one person is more important than anyone else; we all have our own roles and purpose. So how then can I not include the story of my sister's leadership on the infamous Downtown East Side of Vancouver, BC?

Blackfoot scholar, Betty Bastien (2004) talks about the "new people" who are often our children. She says the grandparents do not understand the young people because they do not speak the language and do not have the teachings of the s'ulxwen or the Ta't Mustimuxw (p.37). I agree with her since there are many Xwulmuxw women who have lost their way because they do not have all the teachings, but I believe they still carry a Xwulmuxw spirit. For this reason, I strongly believe their stories need to be honoured. Every indigenous woman has a story – it is those of us who either do not know the stories, or do not want to know the stories that cannot see the leader in every indigenous woman. Jaye has a story of leadership; it was my responsibility to find it. As chance would have it, I accidentally stumbled across an experience that highlights her story of leadership.

Jaye's story

It's December 27, 2006, and I can't remember the last time I saw my sister. Her life has brought her to the infamous Downtown Eastside of Vancouver, BC. We have made arrangements to meet for lunch. The first time I call, she says tells me she is running late and will be there in 15 minutes. The next call, she will be closer to an hour late. Eventually she walks into the restaurant. I am both overjoyed and saddened as our eyes meet. I can tell that Jaye has spent hours getting ready; her perfect makeup is not quite able to hide the grayness that has become her skin tone. Her beautiful waist length hair is pulled in a pony, and she is dressed to the nines. But behind the beauty, I cannot help but notice she has at least five layers of clothing trying to hide her near skeleton frame. Her cheekbones are protruding at least half an inch from her face – at best my dear sister is 80 pounds. She tells me she has a bug and now they know what it is, she is on antibiotics and she is now able to keep food down. No doubt, she assures me, she will gain all her weight back. Don't worry she tells me. I sigh, she is telling me to not worry – yet I can't help but wonder how much she worries about herself, her safety, and just the worries that are taken up just surviving day-to-day in her new found community.

We hug. We kiss. She comments how big our children are getting and claims, "how time flies". I can't agree more. It seems like yesterday when she was a little girl, and here I am looking at this little girl, now all grown, and I barely recognize her. Again, she reminds me not to worry about her as she assures me that she is really going to be fine.

Jaye really wants to know how Dad is doing because it is just over a year since mom died. I begin to tell her Christmas was really hard for Dad and he just wanted the

holidays over. I am mid sentence when she interrupts me and reaches over and grabs my hand and says, “Robina, I am so sorry. I keep forgetting that Mom and Dad lived with you. How are you?” I cry. Again, she tells me not to worry. Jaye then goes on to say that she is going to “get well” so that she can come and help me out and spend time with Dad. By this time we are both crying, and it is Jaye who is comforting me.

Randy, Jaye’s boyfriend, has made his way to the restaurant and joined us. We do some brief introductions. As soon as he could, Randy goes on to tell me that Jaye is the most beautiful person he has ever met. “I wish I had met her years ago” he continues. “Everyone loves Jaye because she takes care of us all”. Randy mentions this not once or twice, but every opportunity he had. I can see how much they love each other. I needed to see how much they loved each other.

“She loves you too,” Randy tells me. He continues, “You don’t know what it is like down here, you have never been here. But, Jaye tells everyone about her family and how much she loves them and how proud she is of all of you. In fact, she cries about you just about every day”. At this time Jaye tells Randy to stop and reminds me that her goal this year is get healthy enough to spend more time with us all.

As I leave I can hear Eric Clapton’s singing “you look wonderful tonight”. Jaye loved that song. I know this brief visit was not easy for her – she never wanted us to see her on the Skids. She always believed the Downtown Eastside was a temporary home. As we leave, I realized, in that short visit, how much I need her in my life. She is my sister. Jaye has now been clean and sober for over a year – the transition has been very difficult, but she is committed to her healing journey. She is not the only sister down there and

each and every one of them also has a story. I pray every day that they find the courage they need to live the life they want.

I have struggled over these past years since I began my research on women and leadership because of all the contradictions. For example, how does Jaye's story on indigenous women and leadership fit into this work? If I truly believe in the teachings – specifically nutsa maat - we are all one – then Jaye's story is worthy of inclusion for many reasons. First, she is the closest woman in my life since we lost our Mother. As a family, we have always taken care of each other. Our Mother taught us unconditional love – so how now, can my love for my sister be based on her living a certain kind of life – a life I deem to be good or important? Anyway, as all these questions swirl around in my mind, we meet for lunch. And all the questions are answered. There are no questions to be asked or answered – only the unconditional love of a sister – my sister – Jaye. Jaye showed me, in those brief minutes how much of a leader she was. While we may argue about where leaders live or don't, she showed us that on the Downtown Eastside, there are women who take up those leadership roles and look after all those around them. Jaye walked into my world with her head up even though she carried the immobilizing shame of her addiction. She talked about how difficult it is to heal when you cannot go back and right the wrongs. Even though she never wanted to meet me downtown, she did. She showed me an important value of leadership – unconditional love. Thank you, my Sister.

I never anticipated all of the contradictions that researching indigenous women and leadership would pose. Including my Sister's story was one contradiction. The stories of our women who are lost; the other was including the stories of loss – the women who have moved on to the Spirit World. Over the years of my research, there have been so

many deaths in our communities. There was a time when our culture and tradition was nearly lost due to the onslaught of colonial policies and practices. Now, we are in an even more tenuous time, as our language, culture and traditions are fragile. It is now that we need to ensure that we spend time with the carriers of our culture, tradition, and languages so our sacred ways of knowing and being are not lost forever.

And, indigenous women will continue to be pivotal in this movement. Unfortunately, not only do indigenous women have to fight the mainstream settler society to claim our rightful place, we also have to struggle with indigenous men. Family violence, or more appropriately, violence against women, has reached epidemic highs in our communities. When trying to reach out for support, our women are often forced to leave our communities because there are so few community services to support them. Women's issues are not a priority. In fact, I believe the struggle indigenous women have to claim our rightful places in our families and communities would be much easier if we, in fact, had the support of the indigenous men in our communities.

Our leadership – mostly male – have become comfortably entrenched in the colonially-rooted governance systems, including chief and council. "Within these systems, our leadership has internalized colonization – or become assimilated – and does not wish to give up the inherent patriarchal power that is vested in the *Indian Act* and Indian policies" (Thomas, 2010, p8). In *Wasase: indigenous pathways of action and freedom*, Taiaiake Alfred (2005) claims, "The majority of band chiefs don't care about community accountability and questions of integrity because the colonial gravy train keeps dropping loads of cash into their coffers" (p.23). Apparently, corruption and greed have become daily governing principles for many of our leader (Alfred, 2005, p21).

These corrupt principles have left our communities in a mess. My concern here is that if our women do not have strong teachings, as they take up leadership roles, they too are capable to embracing corrupt principles.

Paulo Friere (1984) cautioned us not to become the colonizers/oppressors we despise. We have not listened. I have witnessed, in our communities, the in-fighting. Come election time, we have family members fighting against each other. Why, for a seat on chief and council? Since when has a seat on any governing body trumped family and teachings? We do not elect members for chief and council based on their expertise; we set up family rivalries where the family who can get the most members out to vote wins. Is this the best we can do for our communities? Sto:lo author Lee Maracle (2008) wonders, or more correctly doubts, if our leaders have been elected because of their knowledge of the past and present and vision for the future (p.30)?

Further, are our chief and councils putting the best interests of the women and children on the table? Looking at the on/off reserve strife, I believe not. I have heard comments at meetings where individuals are ridiculed because they live off reserve. I wonder, do all band members who live off reserve do so by choice? No, most of them are women, or descendents of, who have been displaced systematically from our communities. I guess the purpose of this section is to highlight the lip service paid to indigenous women. Really we are no longer revered as the givers of life or carriers of culture. In fact, Patti Doyle-Bedwell (2008) believes:

> Colonialism, which has had a profoundly negative impact on Indigenous communities as a whole, has also affected the relations between Indigenous women and Indigenous men, and pushed many Indigenous women to the margins of their own cultures and Canadian society as a whole (p.110).

This is the tragedy that has become the day to day life of Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni. I will probably get criticized for generalizing. I do realize some indigenous women live in their communities, are respected, honoured, and supported. These Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni are revered for their traditional roles. I do not want to take anything away from these women, their families or communities. My point here is that we cannot claim to respect indigenous women when in fact it is only a very small portion of indigenous women we whole-heartedly support. This is not our way and many of our Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni know this.

The real contradiction many indigenous women find themselves in is, when we speak out, we are somehow in defiance of community solidarity. In other words, we are damned if we do and damned if we don't. When we raise concerns and demand our leadership address issues such as housing and the ability to return to our tradition territory, we are normally dismissed because our concerns are seen as individual concerns – not a concern for the betterment of the nation as a whole. "Often, gendered struggles against colonialism have been reduced to "women's issues" by formal male leadership and then presented as a wholesale threat to Aboriginal sovereignty… (Altamirano-Jimenez, 2008, p.129). I am perplexed, how can the indigenous women - the givers of life – be seen as a threat to sovereignty? I think Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni are the core of sovereignty. This is one of those arguments that can go on and on – but my point is, without Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni, there will be no more Xwulmuxw Mustimuxw. So how can women threaten sovereignty? Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni are, in fact the core of true sovereign nations because they are the givers of life.

Activist and scholar, Andrea Smith (2005) asks:

> …regardless of its origins in Native communities, sexism operates with full force today and required strategies that directly address it. Before Native peoples fight for the future of their nations, they must ask themselves, who is included in the nation (p.137)?

And this becomes the real question – who is a part of the nation and who is not? Andrea Smith (2005) warns us, "No amount or type of reparation will "decolonize" us if we do not address the oppressive behaviors that we have internalized" (p.51). Where are the teachings of nutsa maat? Or does nutsa maat only apply to on-reserve status Indians? I know my Grandmother taught me where I belong – I am Snuy'ney'muxw – this is where my roots begin. My Grandmother is a fine example of many of our Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni – they have never given up regardless of the circumstances. They know they will always be the sacred givers of life and carriers of culture. When discussing Mohawk traditional midwife, Katsi Cook, Leanne Simpson (2006) states:

> …women are the base of the generations, the carriers of the culture. So when we find ourselves in a crisis, like the one colonialism has created, it is our responsibility as the base of the generations to lead the resurgence by bringing forth a generation of children that are strong, healthy and properly prepared to live their traditions (p.29).

In fact, McGadney-Douglass et al (2006) know this will happen because "…Native women, whose ability to reproduce continues to stand in the way of the continuing conquest of Native lands, endangering the continued success of colonization" (p.79). Our nations need the Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni if they are to heal and move forward in a good way.

If we are to undo years of colonial violence, our communities must rely on the indigenous women to lead us forward. In spite of years of attempts to force indigenous

women to forego their ways of knowing and being Xwulmuxw, they have never wavered. We know we must pay attention to the lessons the Ta't Mustimuxw gave us. We were given teachings, ceremonies, language – all to ensure our survival – we must now return to these teachings for our survival now and into the future.

Paula Gunn Allen (1992) reminds us of strength as warrior women when she states:

> We survive war and conquest; we survive colonization, acculturation, assimilation; we survive beating, rape, starvation, mutilation, sterilization, abandonment, neglect, death of our children, our loved ones, destruction of our land, our homes, our past, and our future. We survive, and we do more than just survive. We bond, we care, we fight, we teach, we nurse, we bear, we feed, we earn, we laugh, we love, we hang in there not matter what (p.190).

Unquestionably, we have hung in there. Not only have the women hung in there, they remain committed to passing along knowledge, wisdom and teachings. The women I interviewed as well as the women whose stories I share in this chapter, all know what we need to do to survive. They know the impact of colonization and the teachings we need to embrace to survive as Xwulmuxw Mustimuxw. Definitely, we need to begin by keeping the past, present and future connected.

Chapter six - Sacred Cycle Leadership

Figure 1.0 Sacred Cycle by Dylan Thomas

The notion of keeping the past, present and future connected emerged as a theme from the words of the thirteen Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni I interviewed. In fact, the theme of keeping the past, present and future connected was so prevalent that I decided to call this a Sacred Cycle. The term Sacred Cycle is not mine; my son Qwul'the'lum's (Dylan) first print was titled Sacred Cycle (reproduced above). The above print is of three salmon cycling around with their pectoral fins meeting at the centre. Sacred Cycle is a tribute to the artistic mentors in Dylan's life. He dedicated the Sacred Cycle to the artists who inspired him in the past and present and to those artists yet to come – a cycle of the past, present, and future.

This chapter shares the teachings of the Sacred Cycle. It demonstrates how we, as leaders, can embrace our ways of knowing and being. This chapter includes a section on "Protecting the Sacred Cycle", which shares how each of the thirteen Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni are committed to the Sacred Cycle.

Sacred Cycle

Given that my research focuses on leadership, I believed the Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni would provide me with a list of attributes (values and beliefs) that they believe create strong leaders. However, the women I interviewed focused more on the importance of keeping the past, present and future connected. In other words, leadership is about living a life rooted in the teachings, not about political behavior or posturing. Through the interviews, a model of leadership rooted in the teachings emerged – a Sacred Cycle. Our Ta't Mustimuxw (past) gave us (present) teachings that demonstrated how to live a good life. In turn, we are meant to pass the teachings on to those behind us and those yet to come (future). Through these teachings, leaders who embrace the Sacred Cycle become futuristic thinkers. They know their behavior of today will reflect on those yet to come. The Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni know we have strong teachings that can guide and direct us in living a good life. Because each of the Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni had strong women passing teachings on to them, they know the importance of passing teachings to the future generations. As carriers of culture, it is not surprising that the Sacred Cycle teachings emerged from the interviews. However, as nutsa maat reminds us, these teachings are for all Xwulmuxw Mustimuxw – children, women and men.

The Sacred Cycle is perpetuated through the teachings. Each of the women shared stories that could demonstrate the passing on of teachings, but what sticks out for me is

Emmy's story. Emmy Manson is from Snuy'ney'muxw and was raised by her Father and Grandmother. Like me, Emmy still looks to her Grandmother, now in the Spirit World, for guidance and direction. When talking about teachings and mentorship, Emmy states: "there's so many stories in communities and so many grandmothers and granddaughters who may never think of the strength base that they have of taking care of one another". Further, Emmy states she is committed to passing on teachings to her children because she sees how much strength she got from the words of her Grandmother.

All the women I interviewed had incredible Ta't Mustimuxw pass teachings on to them, yet they all worried about the future and the lack of teachings being passed on. These Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni live the teachings – for them, leadership is not about skills or a skill set. Rather, leadership is how we live our lives every day. In other words, the Sacred Cycle is a way of life rooted in the teachings of the past, lived in the present for the future. Collectively, the teachings can provide us with all the necessary skills and tools we need to be strong leaders.

Wise Slheni (woman) is a carrier of culture and tradition. She tells us how things were in the past. She reminds us of our roles and responsibilities as women and particularly to our children. Wise Slheni reminds us of our Ta't Mustimuxw and how they passed the teachings onto us so we could, in turn, pass them on to the future generations. Wise Slheni gave us our our snuy'uy'ul. Snuy'uy'ul is our way of life including all of our teachings. One of the snuy'uy'ul teachings is nutsa maat. In fact, I believe it is because of this teaching, which taught us how to all be as one and work together, that Xwulmuxw Mustimuxw survived. Through this teaching we were taught to share all we had and only keep what we needed. We were taught first and foremost to

share the teachings. As well, through sharing, we were taught to always support one another. Another important teaching of nutsa maat was speaking out. We were trained to always speak out for the things we believed in. We would never sit quiet if we saw things happening around that would one day bring us harm. This dissertation from beginning to end is a sort of "speaking out". The women are speaking out and sharing, not for themselves, but for the future generations. The Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni share how things were in the past, the sadness they see with where we are today as Xwulmuxw Mustimuxw and then how we can move forward embracing the teaching of uy'skwuluwun – to be of a good mind and spirit.

From the lesson of Wise Woman, we need to bring the teachings forward and then pass them on. This way, we will have generations of Xwulmuxw Mustimuxw rooted in our ways of knowing and being – this is leadership and this is where our strong healthy leaders will rise. Our current band council system is replicating mainstream colonial governance systems based on competitive individualist notions of power. Our teachings are absolutely opposed to these ways because we believe that we are all one.

Keeping the past, present and future connected necessarily forces us to always have a vision for the future. I truly believe many of our communities would benefit from searching for a vision and believing in change. The Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni truly believe that if we do not honour the Sacred Cycle, we are at risk of losing what it means to be Xwulmuxw Mustimuxw.

It is not surprising that indigenous women understand the importance of the Sacred Cycle because we are the givers of life. The ability to give life is seen as sacred – we are the sacred seed carriers. We were also taught that children are sacred – gifts of the

creator. From conception to birth, the ability to bring a child into the world is an honoured and revered role that only women can play. Women are natural protectors, because before a baby is born, we are protecting their lives. It is only natural that, as givers of life, it is our responsibility to protect the children, present and future. If we do not do this, we risk losing all that it means to be Xwulmuxw because it is the past, our Ta't Mustimuxw who have given us the teachings to pass on to the future generations.

Because of our belief in nutsa maat, Slheni who either could not, or opted to not, have children were still a part of the Sacred Cycle because they were raised with the teachings. These Aunties still belong to our communities and carried the responsibilities similarly to all Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni.

The most profound example of the Sacred Cycle revealed itself through the women themselves. Even though this work focused on Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni and leadership, only a rare few times did the word leadership ever get mentioned. What these women thought was most significant was to remember what our ancestors did and to pass on these teachings. The women shared how leadership is about living our values and beliefs which keeps the Sacred Cycle alive. Leadership is how we live, how we embrace teachings and how we pass on those teachings. In the past, Wise Slheni Woman taught us how to live, Tul'ti'lew Slheni taught how to protect our teachings.

As I near the end of this work, I wonder, what are we, as leaders, willing to give up to protect the Sacred Cycle? The easy thing to do here would be to discuss leadership as distant from myself. I could point the finger at our current leadership, indigenous and mainstream, mostly male, and say they have failed. However, our wise elders used to tell us that when you point your finger, look closely at your hand, you are pointing only one

finger, but you have three fingers pointing back at you. You better make sure you have all you own ducks in a row before you make accusations. I am convinced that laying blame solely on our men would achieve nothing and if I do so, it would mean my work has near meaningless. What about the Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni who shared their knowledge and wisdom? They know the necessary teachings to get us out of this leadership crisis we are in. Further, I believe by laying blame directly and only at male leadership, I am somehow implying that our women are not only helpless, but voiceless as well. This in and of itself would go against the sole reason I undertook this research which was to highlight the Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni and the leadership roles they play in our families, communities and nations.

Throughout this work, one thing became apparent; we all have the ability to be leaders because our Ta't Mustimuxw have given us the necessary teachings. However, only a rare few let those qualities shine through. We need to search deep into our souls and find those abilities. Leaders live their values and beliefs. For example, leaders embrace the teachings of uy'skwuluwun and do all their work with a good mind and spirit. As such, the teachings of nutsa maat naturally fall into place. All our various community roles and responsibilities matter, but usually it is only the Chiefs who get acknowledged for their leadership even when our leaders are not necessarily making any meaningful change in our communities. Our leadership needs to step up and become leaders – more than Chief and Councils, BC Summit, or AFN representatives. First and foremost, we need to become the leaders in our families, in our communities and in our nations. From here, we need to take on those leadership roles that ensure all of our women and children are protected.

Traditionally women took on leadership roles in the family. Despite the fact that women are no longer recognized and acknowledged for their roles as givers of life and carriers of culture, they continue to take on these roles. Even outside the home, indigenous women are doing whatever is necessary to protect and provide for the children the future generations. When you look at the post-secondary statistics, it is mostly indigenous women that are returning to further their education. Upon closer examination, you will see that often these women are in social work, child and youth care, nursing, and teachings; all fields where women and children and their well-being is central to the work.

We need to know that our leaders believe in the same teachings we do. Earlier on I talked about living indigenously – where we could see the teachings being lived out moment by moment. Our leadership needs to live indigenously. We need to see the snuy'uy'ul teachings. If we are nutsa maat, let's see this; if we believe in uy'skwuluwun, let's see this too. I have faith that our leadership is capable, but we must all take huge leaps of faith and believe in the teachings. It will be the teachings that guide and direct us through tough decision making times. It is time to let go of the internalized colonial mentality and once again claim our Xwulmuxw ways of knowing and being.

Everyone of the Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni discussed at length the importance of our children. Mavis claims that our children are the future and every decision we make should be based on the best interest of the future, not for ourselves, not for the moment, but for the next generations. Josephine reminds us that if our children are not prepared, we know what can happen to them. We will repeat what is occurring now where upwards of 50% of the children-in-care are indigenous (Blackstock, 2009). Rachel cautions us not

to let the next generations also be systematically displaced by the *Indian Act* or other racist policies. Following the teachings of nutsa maat, we must be prepared to fight for all indigenous women and children, especially those who have been taken from our families and communities through the *Indian Act*, residential schools, child welfare, and adoption. We have had these colonial experiences, what a tragedy it will be if we have not learned from the past for the future. Our leadership needs to make children and children's rights a priority, be it at the treaty table or with our own chief and council governing tables.

One lesson we have learned from the past, is that we must share everything we know especially the teachings. We need our young people to be solidly rooted in their Xwulmuxw ways of knowing and being. We have seen how heart-wrenchingly hard it is when our young people internalize racism and then are faced with unbecoming and learning what it means to be indigenous. Often our young folks, who do not have the privilege of growing up with their families or in their communities, learn who they are as Xwulmuxw Mustimuxw in mainstream educational institutions like universities and colleges. This is very risky considering mainstream educational institutions are rooted in colonial ways of knowing and being. S'ulxwen, Amelia, said they always knew the importance of passing on teachings in a good way, and now we must continue this good work. Jenny believes that it is through the teachings that we will continue our Sacred Cycle. Because she believes in the importance of passing on the teachings, Jenny ensures her children and grandchildren have the teachings.

As I have stated in previous chapters, our languages are in danger. We are losing language speakers quicker than we are training new language teachers. Tragically, much of our culture and tradition is tied up in the language. Lydia encourages us to

systematically rebuild our language the way it was stripped from us. As well, Jenny believes we need to ensure we record our family stories the same way our Ta't Mustimuxw did for us. She says, "It is our responsibility to teach the next generation". We must stop paying lip service to language; it must become a priority in our communities and with our leadership.

As the Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni have done in the past, our leaders need to speak out for our women and children. Even when what they are saying is not popular, we must believe that we all truly have the same goals. Late Chief Viola Wyse, Josephine, Jodi, and Shana all insist that leaders need to be courageous and speak out when it is necessary. We need our young people to see us stand up for their rights the same way our Ta't Mustimuxw stood up for us. The young ones are watching us and in turn will learn from us. This is a part of the Sacred Cycle – our young ones are being passed on teachings the same way we were when we were young. Speaking out for the future is our responsibility.

Even though I am not a fan of the term "role-modeling" it was a consistent theme through all of the interviews. However, when discussing leadership, role-modeling was deemed critical. Everyone discussed the importance of having strong healthy role models that look out for all of our people, children, women and men alike. Whether we wish to be role models or not is not the issue because if you are in positions of leadership, you are a role model. People are watching you. We need to always remember that our actions of today will impact the future. We need to ensure, that as leaders, we all do what is necessary to protect the Sacred Cycle. What better way to do this then leading by

example. We are accountable to our future generations. We must do all we do with a good mind and spirit for all Xwulmuxw Mustimuxw.

I am not naive; I know there are folks out there who are not at all invested in the Sacred Cycle. They may even be card holding, status Indians. But really all they want is to reap the monetary benefits. These people may purchase cheap gas and cigarettes, make purchases on reserve to save paying taxes, and accept any band revenues that might come their way. But they do not give a damn about our governance structures, our leaders or our future as Xwulmuxw Mustimuxw. This is very difficult and complicated, but we must not let them get in our way of protecting the Sacred Cycle. We must move forward in the best way possible.

I also believe I will be criticized for my position with the on/off reserve duality. Some community members and leaders truly believe that off reserve community members have no rights. While others are willing to create space and necessary changes to embrace our off reserve populations back into their communities. I think this might be one of those never ending debates. Now more than ever, we must remember that the on/off reserve split was entirely created by the Federal Government. In the past, as Xwulmuxw Mustimuxw, we never kicked those women and children off of their homelands. The more work I do with the teachings, the more I am convinced there are no other options than to work to bring all our people home. However, if we believe in the teachings, we can reclaim our ways of knowing and being and find ways to create space for all of our women and children.

Like Emmy, our leaders need to “dream of a better life for our people”. Leaders must dream and have a clear vision for our future as Xwulmuxw Mustimuxw. As Jodi

states, “Communities that consciously work together do better”. Definitely doing better is a common goal for all indigenous people. Viola reminded us that the only thing we can ever count on is that there will always be change. Let’s believe in change and dream of a better life.

What are we willing to sacrifice for the future of our Sacred Cycle? Lydia says “we must be prepared to give back, as those before us have done”. Leaders must know that we are all one and work to that end. Leaders need to know what people have gone through and be understanding. For example, Mavis believes we need to ensure all we do is for the whole and move away from our individualistic mind frames. This follows the teachings of nutsa maat – we look after each other.

For indigenous women, the significance of the Sacred Cycle cannot be downplayed. As givers of life, we cannot walk away from our responsibility to the future. The Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni reminded us that we must always fight for our children and our land. But what exactly are we willing to do? This is a huge question that we must critically ask of ourselves and honestly answer, especially when considering that our children’s future is bleak. As stated earlier, we have more children in care of the B.C. Provincial Government now than ever in our history. We need to fight even harder if we are to protect our future.

As we can see, living a life rooted in teachings and embracing the Sacred Cycle will not be an easy feat. In fact, for many of us, it will mean drastic changes in our individualistically rooted lives if we believe in nutsa maat. But if we believe in the teachings these changes are possible. Uy’skwuluwun teaches how to do this with a good mind and heart. We have all the snuy’uy’ul teachings to guide and direct us.

Listen for the messages our Ta't Mustimuxw are sending us. Listen for Wise Woman and Tul'ti'lew Slheni because they are always there to guide and direct you. Now we have heard from the Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni, are we ready to take on the guidance of Wise Woman and the wisdom of Tul'ti'lew for our Sacred Cycle?

Protecting the Sacred Cycle

I have come to realize, that in protecting the Sacred Cycle, each of the women are demonstrating acts of resistance. For one, the speaking out that informs the pages of this work is in and of itself an act of resistance. The Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni know the critical situation in our communities, but they are not giving up. They are ready to fight even harder for our future generations and our ways of knowing and being.

Amelia and Lydia discussed how important it is to teach our young people cultural and traditional protocol. A part of protocol is learning to do our work properly, or as Amelia would say, doing it right. When she discusses doing things right, she is talking about how we conduct our cultural and traditional work. Amelia is a carrier of culture, and as such, she is called upon often to ensure others are following proper protocol when they conduct their work. Amelia believes "you've got to start telling them how to be right from the time they're little…" The reason this is so important is to protect the young ones and to ensure they always know our ways as Xwulmuxw Mustimuxw. Further, Lydia adds, "I've done this with my kids you know that sense of staying grounded about where you're from…don't lose track of where you're from because your grandmother didn't give up". Amelia knew the importance of our cultural and traditional work and passed this on to Lydia who in turn is doing the same with her children.

Aunty Ellen didn't give up either. She too was raised with very strong teachings about how we do our cultural and traditional work. One thing that Aunty Ellen really stressed was how important it is to always behave. What she means by behave is similar to how Amelia discusses getting it right. Aunty Ellen says if our behavior is unfavourable it might not be us who feels the impact, but those around us, perhaps those younger and more vulnerable. She says, "You're going to get it back in another way. Maybe one of your children or one of your grandchildren". Aunty Ellen always stresses the importance of knowing the teachings because they will tell you how behave and live a good life; we in turn will pass these on to those who follow us.

Emmy, Jenny and Jodi all talked about the roles their grandmothers have played in passing on the teachings to them. They referred to their grandmothers as heroes, leaders, and role-models. In fact, Jodi says, "I would like to be able to articulate for you and define leadership, but every time I think about leadership and being a leader I think of my Gram. It's just hard to put in words". Similarly, Jenny said, "…the first person that comes to my mind as a leader in my family is my grandmother – Rose James". Emmy knows she "learned about being a woman and being in a family and being in the community … through her grandmother and through her teachings…" Emmy adds:

> …I think it's really interesting that we have an opportunity to share the stories of our grandmothers and to share that we look up to them as leaders because I really believe this isn't a unique story. This is a story of a granddaughter and a grandmother who've been able to have a connection...

And this is critical to the Sacred Cycle, that we all have a connection to those who have gone before us.

It isn't by chance that these grandmothers have played pivotal roles in the raising of their granddaughters. "In our culture the women, from the beginning, right from the time they're born are trained to be leaders" (Sarah). Further, Sarah claims, "…the raising of children is the reason for women being the leaders". Late Chief Viola Wyse concurs, "Somebody in the family is always singled out to be the carrier of that information for the family. Most often it's a woman" The old people always knew the women would protect the Sacred Cycle because they are the givers of life.

Susan says it was her mother who "…instilled whatever it is within me to be who I am". And she must have instilled some awesome teachings because Susan knew as soon as she became an artist; she must be willing to work incessantly to revive traditional Coast Salish art. Our art form was nearly lost and Susan is one of the Coast Salish artists who helped revive our traditional styles and forms. Further, now, as a mother and grandmother, Susan is passing these teachings on to her children and grandchildren.

Shana and Mavis both take their roles as mothers seriously. They know the responsibility they carry by being givers of life. Mavis claims, "I'm a mom until the day I die". For sure we never stop caring and worrying about our children (and then our grandchildren and yet unborn grandchildren) because this is how we have been raised. In fact, Shana knows that "…if there's stuff that affects my family, my children, my grandchildren, my nieces, nephews, I have to protect them". This is another part of the Sacred Cycle – we will always protect the young ones in our lives, even when those young ones grow up, we still protect them because they are our children.

One thing that always kept Josephine strong when she tired of the politics was her children. She "always wanted to make things better for her kids". She knew the impact of

residential schools and all those other colonial practices and wanted to protect her children from that as best she could. She worked for over 30 years hoping to make a difference for all children and grandchildren. And we can make a difference. Rachel was the youngest of the Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni I interviewed. However, I was struck by her absolute commitment to the Sacred Cycle. At nineteen she claimed, “I’m going to provide a role for my younger cousins and I’m going to go to university and show them that they can do that too”. Amazing, from such a young age, she is already committed to protecting the Sacred Cycle.

In all of these stories are stories of resistance or activism. All of the women I interviewed are activists even though I bet none of them would identify as such. However, activists work to bring about change and dare to challenge the status quo. Every one of these women are committed to social justice and will never back down from a challenge, especially if it impacts their children or families. At a time when so many of our women and children have been systematically displaced, we see these women fighting to hold onto our teachings. Not only are they fighting to hold onto the teachings, they are passing them onto the next generations. I know that if it was not for the women leaders we have in our communities we would be far worse. These women have stood up for us when we needed them to. I think about Sarah. I cannot imagine what it must have felt like for her to return to that bank day after day and sit there until they would speak to her about a loan. What a trooper. She stood her ground because she had a vision of supplying wool to the knitters. When there was fear of losing our languages, both Aunty Ellen and Amelia learned to write Hul’qumi’num so it would always be preserved. And Josephine standing up to the other Chiefs and telling them she would not partake in their

plan to refuse funding because her first and foremost concern was for her own community and their needs. These s'ulxwen all demonstrate acts of resistance. In the face of possible repercussions, these women never backed down because they knew what they had to do.

As Jodi asks, "…if I give in today can I live with myself tomorrow?" All of this work is selfless and for the better of our collective communities. The day I interviewed Late Chief Viola Wyse she said:

> There isn't anything else I want to do but work for our people. There isn't anything else in this whole wide world that I would want to be doing right now then lead our people to better places in our lives today.

This statement and these acts of resistance all speak to leadership. These women and their lived experiences show a commitment to the Sacred Cycle, which is what leadership should be all about – protecting the Sacred Cycle rooted in teachings from the past for the present and future.

Chapter seven - Mosquitoes

A long long time ago, Raven was sitting on the bank of the Cowichan River. It was a very hot summer day and Raven knew there would be no place more refreshing than the ice cold river. However, Mosquito had different plans. He had just arrived in the Valley from the South. Mosquito was buzzing around and just being a total nuisance. Raven was getting very irritated. He kept swiping at Mosquito and yelling, "Go away, leave me alone". But to no avail. Mosquito, being what he is, just kept bugging Raven. After some time Raven came up with a plan. I know what to do. Raven called Mosquito over. "Mosquito" he said, "Have you ever tasted the blood of the human beings?" Mosquito replied, "No". "Well," said Raven, "you do not know what you are missing. You fly over there and sting that human – on the ears if you can – and you will never want to mess with me and my feathers ever again". Sure enough, Mosquito flew over to the human stung him on the ear and was so delighted. When Mosquito returned home down South, he told all his Mosquito family – you have to sting the humans, their blood is yummy. And this how Raven tricked the Mosquito and saved so many birds and animals from being irritated by mosquitoes and their bites.

For a number of reasons I believe it would be a missed opportunity if I did not cease this moment to discuss the various leadership roles that I take in the academy. First, the Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni have shared the teaching of speaking out. They believe we must always speak out for the things we truly believe in. Definitely, my role within the academy as an indigenous scholar is something that matters immensely. I thank the women for encouraging me to dare to speak out about the issues I am passionate about and my supervisory committee, Jeff, Tai and Laura, for forcing me to include this section! And I truly mean forcing me because, as I write this, I can hear my late Nana "oh she's so big on herself". For Nana, when anyone stood themselves up she would say they were the epitome of braggarts. And including my leadership story feels somewhat like bragging. It is like what the mosquitoes were to raven, an irritant. However, I know this is the academy and if I have learned nothing else over the years, in the academy you fluff

your own feathers like Raven and always let everyone know how damned important you are. Second, as I state in my conceptual framework, as indigenous scholars it is our responsibility to make visible the way we carry our teachings with us in our academic places. What follows demonstrates how I carry my teachings with me in all of the work that I do – including at the University of Victoria. I will begin this section discussing the many academic binaries that we as indigenous scholars often find ourselves caught up in. I conclude this section with a piece of Sacred Cycle scholarship. This section highlights how the Sacred Cycle can inform our academic work and how our academic work must embrace the Sacred Cycle teachings.

Academic Binaries

Deciding how to focus this leadership piece was a challenge for a number of reasons. If I chose to focus on leadership in the academy does that somehow imply that I am not interested in leadership in my community? Absolutely not, but similar to the on/off reserve binary, we have an academy/community binary. These externally imposed binaries are absolutely ridiculous and create false dichotomies. First and foremost, I am Lyackson, Snuy'ney'muxw and Sto:lo. The work I do at the University is how I make my living, it is not my life. Community is my life. So what about these binaries?

Within the academy itself, exists a binary, I am either all or nothing. Some folks think that because I am indigenous I can represent all things indigenous. Not. Indigenous cultures and traditions are very diverse and not necessarily transferrable from culture to culture. I am a Xwulmuxw Slheni and my teachings are specifically Coast Salish. Despite my very precise location, I have been asked to open events with a prayer or if I can drum and sing traditional songs. Obviously these people who ask these romanticized

indigenous things of me are completely unaware of the protocol necessary to publicly share prayers and songs. I wonder if they ask everyone who comes to their classes these questions. It would definitely be unusual to ask a random white academic if they could sing and drum for a class. However, I have been asked these questions. Many of the teachings I embrace are similar to the majority of indigenous people on Turtle Island but we cannot fall into the trap of generalizing and promoting a pan-Indian myth. I can only ever speak from my own place and ways of knowing and being.

Having said all of this, there are definitely some things that can be shared and generalized. Particularly lessons we ourselves have learned from our involvement in mainstream institutions. For example, without generalizing about individual experiences, as an academic (and former and current student) I can speak to issues of mainstream education for indigenous students. This is very complicated, but indigenous folks who are truly rooted in their teachings will tell you when they believe you should consult with others and when they believe they can speak for community. I take very seriously my voice – I would never speak out of turn as far as community is concerned. Despite this, I have sat in meetings when someone will say; we must consult with the community before we make a decision, even though I have contributed to the conversation and possibly even made recommendations. I sit in shock, when did I cease to be a community member? At a moment in the academy I can be all things indigenous and suddenly no longer a community member. Like mosquitoes, this is irritating – deflect!

However, what many people will never know and truly comprehend is that in 1997 my Aunt Helen gave me my Xwulmuxw (Indigenous) name – Qwul'sih'yah'maht in a traditional ceremony at the Somenas Thi'lelum (Big House). One of her reasons for

naming me was because I was studying at the University of Victoria. She said, as she pointed her nose up, gesturing to what was meant to be UVic, "If she is going to keep working up there, she should have a name". She went on to say that she never wanted me to forget who I am and where I came from. I have never forgotten this. I have the blanket that I wore that day hanging in my office, so that every day as I enter my office I am reminded – *Antha Qwul'sih'yah'maht. Te ne sun Lyackson, Snuy'ney'muxw and Sto:lo*. Because of my traditional name, I am always, first and foremost, a community member.

In our communities, the academic/community binary is even more frustrating. Despite the fact that all of the research I do is generated from community, if I say something that anyone disagrees with, or feels implicated in, there is often a tendency to immediately discredit my work and claim that I have lost touch with the grassroots. For example, last year I was asked to speak at a conference about my ethical concerns regarding the processes of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Specially, because of my previous work with storytelling, I was asked to speak about the ethics of storytelling. All of the invited speakers were asked to discuss their ethical concerns with the TRC. From my perspective, my greatest concern was what the TRC was going to do with the stories of former residential school victims? Who, if anyone, is committed to be there to support storytellers when their world crumbles around them as they relive the years of abuse, guilt and shame? Why do we need to descriptively share our abuse for Canada to believe what happened in those institutions? And, most importantly, who needs to reconcile with whom? If Canada needs to do some reconciliation with former students, why is the onus being put of the victims to tell their stories? Anyway, at one point, a former grand chief launched into this tirade about how we, the invited indigenous

presenters, have completely lost touch with the grassroots and no longer know what is happening in our communities. In fact, he said, the TRC was mandated through community consultation and how dare any of us speak out against the process. In other words, do not critique the TRC and their processes. I guess our concerns and presentations were hitting too close to the truth. I assume he felt that we were attacking and critiquing his own involvement. Despite his outburst, I continue to have concerns about the TRC and continue to speak out about it whenever possible. But how have I lost touch with the grassroots? Apparently, if you speak out and act like a mosquito and bug someone you no longer belong to your community.

Equally as frustrating is to hear people say that we cannot represent the community because we are employed by the university. I do not think that employment negates my membership with my community. If it did, then we would have a whole lot of folks not able to represent the community. What about the chiefs, councilors, treaty employees? Can they have full-time employment and still be community members. If yes, then why not us? This is a ridiculous argument to engage in – deflect!

Because I carry a traditional name, I know I am necessarily committed to my community. As time has gone by, I have come to realize that my work must be guided by my ways of knowing and being. This includes the principles of uy'skwuluwun (to be of a good mind and a good heart). Uy'skwuluwun is a way of life. It is something you need to be conscious of everyday. I have been taught to pray to be a better person today than I was yesterday and a better person tomorrow that I am today. I know where I am from and I also know that we have ways embedded in our teachings that keep us rooted in our community. It is not an either/or binary. The teachings of the Sacred Cycle keep me

rooted in community first and foremost. If I am to work with a good mind and spirit and keep the past, present and future connected, I have got to be connected to the Ta't Mustimuxw (the olden day's people).

Sacred Cycle Scholarship

My biggest struggle in the academy is to never forego who and what I am as a Xwulmuxw Slheni to fit into the institution. And sometimes fitting in is easier than maintaining my ways of knowing and being. Fitting in, for me, would mean writing and researching in a mainstream acceptable way. Research and writing are not the hard part; I love learning, researching and writing. I especially love researching and exposing issues from my own ways of knowing and being. However, writing and researching from my Xwulmuxw ways is not always acceptable. I am often forced to defend why I have chosen to write or research in a particular way. For me, this speaks to my work towards decolonizing the academy.

In most academies there are very few indigenous scholars. We are expected to be all things indigenous to all people. Even given the obstacles that we face in the academy, the late Vine Deloria Jr. (2004) challenged us to be more involved. Specifically, he asked, "Why aren't we seeing Indian scholars engaged in serious debate about some of the anti-Indian articles and books being published? Why are there no responses to some of the nonsense that the anti-Indian scholars are offering?" (p.29). He posed a huge challenge for the few indigenous scholars that are in the academy. What a mosquito! I believe most indigenous scholars are speaking out against anti-Indian rhetoric; the problem is there are so few of us. However, what I do take from Vine Deloria Jr.'s challenge is whatever

work we are engaging in must be purposeful. All the work we do as indigenous scholars contributes to the available resources future students and academics will have access to.

Many indigenous scholars claim they write so they can tell their own stories, their own ways, and *re*right and *re*write history (Smith, 1990, p.28). It is critical for indigenous scholars to expose the true history of indigenous people in Canada. I teach a third year undergraduate class on indigenous people and social work. Really this particular class is more a history course than anything else. But year after year, the majority of students are shocked at how little they know about indigenous people in Canada. So yes, we need to continue to write and *re*right.

However, some of what we *re*right is not always popular. Apparently speaking the truth is not always what our seemingly peacekeeping Canadian brothers and sisters are looking for. Exposing the truth often forces people to investigate their own socialization and internalization which may not be a comfortable exercise. We must remember that the academy continues to be a place of colonization and these institutions hang on to control of knowledge production for dear life. Being in control of knowledge production is about power. Smith (1999) discusses this very poignantly:

> We believe that 'when the truth comes out' … the system … will set things right. We believe that history is also about justice, that understanding history will enlighten our decisions about the future. Wrong. History is also about power. In fact history is mostly about power. It is the story of the powerful and how they became powerful, and then how they use their power to keep them in positions in which they can continue to dominate others. It is because of this relationship with power that we have been excluded, marginalized and 'othered.'" (Smith, 1999, p.34)

In the academy we are excluded, marginalized and othered, making late Vine Deloria Jr.'s challenge ever more difficult. So what exactly is our role in the academy? I

began this story by arguing that despite where I am employed, I am always linked to my community. How, then, is my academic work community related? I see the link in making space for indigenous students to have their ways of knowing and being validated in the academy. Some might call this indigenizing the academy. Let's look at the phrase "indigenizing the academy" and what exactly that means. Mihesuah (2004) believes that indigenizing the academy begins with the assumption that the academy is worth indigenizing and that we can offer an education experience that is liberatory or freeing (p.5). Taiaiake Alfred (2004) believes,

> …it means that we are working to change universities so that they become places where the values, principles, and modes of organization and behavior of our people are respected in, and hopefully even integrated into, the larger system of structures and processes that make up the university itself (p.89).

However, Mihesuah and Alfred question whether or not indigenizing the academy is possible, or if it should even be a goal. Both scholars believe the academy plays a vital role in the ongoing process of colonization, so how then could we possibly indigenize the academy? This would be the easy end to the conversation. We cannot, and it is neither possible nor desirable to indigenize the academy.

Nonetheless, there is much work to be done in the academy. For example, working towards a decolonizing education, where indigenous space can be carved out both physically and intellectually. Indigenizing the academy, in my opinion, currently is more an exercise of beautifying the campus by displaying indigenous art and erecting more totem poles and such rather than creating real change where we are forced to work across differences. In other words, indigenizing the academy is a nice multi-cultural approach to making no changes or differences. Decolonizing the academy is about social

justice for both the oppressed and the oppressor. If decolonization is the process of reclaiming our practices, beliefs, cultures, and traditions, then we must bring these principles to our academies or we are definitely not being true to ourselves (Martin-Hill, 2003, p.111). Further, decolonization

> …entails developing a critical consciousness about the cause(s) of our oppression, the distortion of history, our own collaboration, and the degrees to which we have internalized colonialist ideas and practices. Decolonization requires auto-criticism, self-reflection, and a rejection of victimage" (Wheeler, quoted in Wilson 2004, p.71).

What I find most important here is the rejection of victimage. We must become aware and do what we need to move forward. Embracing victimhood only perpetuates the status quo and we know all too well where that has gotten us - nowhere. I cannot tell others how to engage in this process because I do not know where they start from, but what I can share is how I try work to these ends in the work that I do.

First and foremost, it is about me. It is about how I am, as an indigenous scholar, in the academy. Second, what happens in the classroom? How do I take up the necessary space to decolonize our classroom? Third, what am I doing in my writing that is decolonizing? These are huge questions.

As an indigenous scholar, I believe you must be able to see how my work is rooted in my teachings. I must carry with me my ways of knowing and being Xwulmuxw. I truly believe if I claim to be an indigenous scholar I must be able to demonstrate exactly what the "indigenous" aspect is. For example, what makes my work as an indigenous scholar different from other scholars? This entails me living my values and beliefs at all times including my time in the academy.

One of my teachings is reciprocity. I must be willing to give back to our communities. We are taught that because our Ta't Mustimuxw gave up so much to protect us, we in turn must be willing to protect the young people and those yet to come. In the present, this would mean trying to create a place that is as safe as possible for indigenous students. Many of us who have been students in the past know the loneliness and the isolation of being one of very few indigenous students on a campus.

When I think about creating a safe space for indigenous students, I cannot help but think about the First Peoples' House (FPH). In 2009, the University opened the doors to the newly built First Peoples' House. The original intent of the FPH was to create culturally specific space for indigenous students, staff and faculty. The building offers a ceremonial hall, classrooms, study space, a kitchen, and offices. Adorning the FPH, inside and out is magnificent indigenous art. The FPH is truly a stunning building.

In hind sight, it is clear to see that we should have developed mission and vision statements, policy and procedures, protocols and signage prior to ever opening the doors. We did not and what happened was dumbfounding for many of the indigenous faculty, staff and students.

In a sense of absolute entitlement, the FPH was literally taken over by non-indigenous students. We witnessed large groups of white male students doing a hockey pool in the "quiet" reading room. The ceremonial hall was being used inappropriately. One morning, when FPH staff went into the ceremonial hall, there was a table tipped over on the floor and an empty beer can on the seats. It was not unusual to hear non-indigenous students discuss how they too were allowed in this space because all space at the University must be for all students. Even though we all know there are other spaces at

the University that are exclusive. The Women's Centre, although also a contested space, is one example. I could go on with examples of ways the space was taken over, but I think this is enough. What was most disturbing for me was the indigenous students were feeling completely pushed out of their own building. I know there will be people who read this that will immediately dismiss my opinion of what transpired and say how limited student space is at the university. This may be true, but the FPH was created specifically to open up a small amount of space for indigenous students who often have no other place to go and feel comfortable.

Out of sheer frustration, indigenous students started to meet and discuss what was happening in the FPH. They shared their concerns with feeling pushed out. Feeling powerless and discouraged, the indigenous students decided to posted signs on doors and windows of the FPH simply stating, "This space is for Indigenous Students". Fair enough. Did these signs ever cause a commotion. Many of the signs were removed. Some non-indigenous students went to human rights to see if they could lodge a complaint based on having their human rights breached by feeling excluded from the FPH. Eventually a meeting was called at the FPH to discuss the signs and the indigenous students concerns. Prior to going to this meeting, I had discussions with other indigenous faculty and staff to get their perspective on the FPH concerns.

I had been involved with the development of the FPH since I began working at the University. I had dreams of what this House could offer. I remember the loneliness of being the sole indigenous student in classes. I remembered the racist comments, intentional or not, that pierce your soul. But mostly I was so disappointed because I felt like somehow I was letting down the indigenous students. My colleague Dr. Jeannine

Carriere always asks when we are dealing with controversial issues, “Is this the hill I want to die on?” Well, when I walked into that meeting I knew this is the hill I will die on. If I cannot support the indigenous students to claim space that was meant for them, then what am I doing at the University? Anyways, as time went on we have managed to address most of the issues with protecting indigenous students’ rights for space. I believe this will be an ongoing issue at the University because there will always be non-indigenous students who feel entitled to encroach on the FPH. As more indigenous students settle and take up the space of the FPH perhaps the sense of entitlement of other students will dissipate. Speaking out and supporting indigenous students is one way that I can always live my teaching of nutsa maat and embrace the Sacred Cycle.

We must also remember, as Lakota and Kiowa Apache storyteller Dovie Thomason (2001) reminds us, that indigenous students have only a 1% chance of being taught by an indigenous teacher (University of Victoria, public lecture). We must take up this opportunity whole-heartedly. We must validate their ways of knowing and being in the classroom. We must role-model this by bringing in our teachings. We must encourage indigenous students to bring their teachings into their written work as well as the classroom.

Taiaiake Alfred (2004) discusses Warrior scholarship – a way of living, researching and teaching in the academy that is about freedom and resistance. We academics, as well as the indigenous students, need to embrace this ethic. This is writing and teaching that is purposeful. It is writing that is liberating and freeing – it is the movement from victimization to liberation. It is writing that resists further colonization by being forced to write the white way. It is very exciting. I remember years ago when I

first picked up a book by bell hooks (1989), I was awe struck. I could not read enough of her work. She was like the kick in the ass that I needed to say what I wanted to say. I had worked so hard in the institution to be a successful student, but I worked for grades, for approval, to pass. I wanted so badly to go to university. But slowly I could feel the assault on my spirit. I began to speak. Quickly I became weary of being the contesting voice in all of my classes. I was always stating that what was being taught or discussed was not my experience as I went on to explain why. For example, my kindergarten to grade 12 experience was fraught with racism. So as folks talked about what they learned in school, I would always be claiming that my educational experience had been very difficult and share my racist experiences. I could feel the ice-cold glares every time I spoke, the piercing stares, and I could almost hear the thoughts in their heads – "here she goes again". I felt so isolated and lonely. And then along came hooks (1989), I was so appreciative of her words and the validation I got from her writing. Soon after, I stumbled upon Lee Maracle (1996), an indigenous sister and her work had the same effect on me.

Through encouraging Warrior scholarship and including writing from the margins, we too can be the courage and validation that indigenous students seek. I have come to see writing as a responsibility that I hold as an indigenous scholar. We have been told that of all we have, nothing is solely ours – we have the responsibility to give back. Reciprocity – giving back to our present and future indigenous students is a responsibility I take seriously – embracing the Sacred Cycle.

Conclusions

Since I arrived at the academy, my struggle has always been to live my values and beliefs as a Xwulmuxw Mustimuxw. I know the academy is a site of assimilation, but I

have chosen to stay here and resist the ongoing assault. I have become a trickster and know how to deflect all that irritates and annoys me. McGregor reminds us that:

> We are reclaiming our heritage – our spirituality, our language, our dances, our chants, our values, our knowledge of the oceans, and or traditional way of doing things. Even our history which has always been told from the colonizers perspective is finally being told from our point of view (McGregor, 2004, p.163).

As we continue with this reclamation, being in the academy becomes, in some ways, manageable. However, creating space for our different ways of knowing and being is not always easy. Chow (1994) claims that, "what confronts the Western scholar is the discomforting fact that the natives are no longer staying in their frames" (p.126). In fact, we can no longer stay in our frames if we want to engage in warrior scholarship because warrior scholarship is a way of living, researching and teaching in the academy that is about freedom and resistance (Alfred, 2004, p.96). Gloria Anzaldúa (1990) agrees and encourages us to actively engage with a process that is about freedom and resistance and decide to act and not react (p.378). Indigenous people have been reacting for far too long. It is our time to create new ways for ourselves. Taiaiake Alfred (2005) challenges us to rise to the occasion. He says,

> …a warrior makes a stand facing danger with courage and integrity. The warrior spirit is the strong medicine we need to cure the European disease. But, drawing on the old spirit, we need to create something new for ourselves and think through the reality of the present to design an appropriate strategy, use fresh tactics, and acquire new skills (Alfred, 2005, p.12).

I believe our new ways must begin with ourselves. We must live our Xwulmuxw ways of knowing and being all the time – even more so within the academy. We must

decolonize our classroom by centering our ways. And, we must continue to write as a practice of freedom and resistance.

What lessons have we learned from the Raven? First, like mosquitoes, we must always know when to deflect issues that are not ours – like false binaries. Because of my traditional name all the work I do is unavoidably rooted in my community. I can never forego my values and beliefs to fit into the academy. As well, I write embracing the teaching of uy'skwuluwun (with a good mind and spirit), so if what I write offends someone, I believe they need to personally investigate their discomfort because this is not my issue.

Further, all my academic work is committed to indigenous students, staff and faculty and aims to create decolonized spaces in the academy. This space is committed to social justice. If indigenous students need support, I must have the courage to speak out and support them. As indigenous scholars we must be grounded in ethics that ensure we never become "Indians of convenience". There is much work to be done in the academy to create decolonized spaces for indigenous students. We might never rid the academy of all of the mosquitoes, so let's become talented ravens and continue on with our decolonizing goals.

The Sacred Cycle has all the necessary teachings to support a decolonizing agenda. The Sacred Cycle encourages us to speak out for the things we believe in. Definitely, we must believe in the past, the present and our future - this is our Sacred Cycle.

Epilogue

I started off stating what a daunting task it was to determine where to begin and now I am at the end sharing the same concern – how do I end? This journey has been joyful and sad, wonderful and overwhelming, enjoyable and complicated, all in all, truly a marvelous journey. But again, like I said when I started writing, what is most important is - with a good mind and spirit - to get it right and truly honour the Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni. I will rely on the Ta't Mustimuxw (the olden day's people) to guide and direct me through these final few pages.

I have been spending much time at the Crystal Pool in the steam room – my urban sweat. I go there to make time to be thoughtful and prayerful. I ask the Ta't Mustimuxw and all the Shlunlheni who have gone to the other side to guide and direct me, not just today, but every day. As I near the end of this journey, I have asked the Creator to clear my mind, eyes, ears, mouth and heart so that I can know what needs to known, see what needs to be seen, hear what needs to heard, say what needs to be said and feel what needs to be felt. After my prayers, I go outside and cleanse with an ice cold shower (my urban river) and ask the Creator to clear my body of all bad energy (as instructed by both Aunty Ellen and Sarah) and take all my prayers to the Spirit World. As I bathe, I feel the crispness of the evening air. I look around and notice the leaves on the trees changing colour. Soon, they will fall to the earth and blanket our Mother. The rain has started to fall. All of this so our Mother the Earth will be protected and nourished. She has worked hard throughout the spring and summer months to provide us with all we will need to get

through the long winter months and it is Her time to rest. And I think about this cycle – albeit different – a Sacred Cycle.

What a perfect time of year to end this journey because the fall asks us if we are prepared for the long cold winter that lies before us. Have we done all that is necessary to prepare? I wonder if I have taken everything I need to from my journey and am I prepared for what lays in front of me? Have I learned all I need to know to protect the Sacred Cycle?

This has been a very long hard emotional journey. There have been many emotional ups and downs. The hardest thing for me was that during this time I lost both of my parents. It was so ironic to be writing about women and leadership and then lose the most important woman in my life. We had our struggles, but her love was stronger than my stubbornness. And Dad, wow, in many ways he was my rock of Gibraltar. Dad always knew what to do when things went sideways. Somehow last year we had a little family of mice decide to bunk into our kitchen. I was devastated when I spotted them. I panicked. Next thing I know I was sitting in a chair bawling my eyes out repeatedly saying, "Dad would have known what to do". He always knew what to do and I miss his guidance and direction. By the way, the mice have moved on – perhaps Dad did what he always does – take care of me when I'm falling apart. My hands go up with respect – Hychka Mom and Dad. I have lost many other loved ones and they have already been acknowledged in this work.

The highlight of this work was conducting the interviews. I interviewed thirteen women but could have interviewed many more. In fact, I could still be interviewing women if I did not have to get this dissertation finished! I am not sure that I can even

come up with words that will honour and respect them the way they deserve. I was first and foremost the student and each of the Xwulmuxw Shlunlheni taught me so much. My hands go up with respect – Hychka Siem.

Once the interviews were completed, perhaps that hardest (academic) part of this process was making sense of the thirteen interviews and 300+ pages of transcripts. It is so difficult to determine what are the most important themes? Am I sure that what I deem most important is most important to the women? Anyways, I developed themes and this is how the work is presented. All the words, in one way or another, formed a Sacred Cycle – keeping the past, present and future connected. And I loved it - protecting the Sacred Cycle.

Wise Woman is amazing. Janet Marie Rogers says she knows her Mohawk version of Wise Woman, Sky Woman is not a myth, because she sees Sky Woman in every red face she sees. Me too – I see Wise Woman everywhere – what a blessing.

Wild Woman pushed me out of my comfort zone and immobilized me. I was unable to write for a couple weeks. But through her teachings, I was able to see that I did not have all the teachings the Xwulmuxw Shlunlheni shared with me. I had heard of many of them – nutsa maat, uy'skwuluwun – but how to truly live these teachings was far from my way of knowing and being. Earlier on I criticized some of our leadership for paying lip-service to our teachings by bantering around the words but never living them. In some respects, I, too, was doing this. I thought I was fairly grounded in the teachings. I was grounded in aspects of some of the teachings, but I did not comprehensively understand all the teachings. Well, like the elders warned me, I was making accusations when I did not have my own ducks in a row! Good lesson!

Wild Woman also presented me with another dilemma: how to honour and respect all women knowing full well at the time, my sister was living on the Downtown Eastside. These experiences forced me to look at my values and beliefs. I was able to work through the losses – albeit, with a very heavy heart. In fact, on the days when I wondered if I could finish this work, it was the memory of those on the other side that gave me strength. I know how proud my Mom and Dad are right now as I write these last few words. They will always give me strength. But the contradictions that occurred as I struggled to see how to include my sister's story was nearly immobilizing. As I sat with the Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni and learned the meaning of the teachings, I could not quite figure out how to incorporate those teachings to this situation. Again, I did not fully comprehend many of the teachings. Nor, did I fully embrace the values and beliefs I thought I did.

The more I analyzed the interviews and created themes, the more the gaps between my stated values and beliefs and how I actually lived my life emerged. This was not an easy thing to sit with. Perhaps this is the reason Aunty Ellen told me when you receive teaching you must sit with them for 3 months or longer so you can then makes sense of them for yourself. I must have needed this time to sort through the teachings. As I write about Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni and leadership, I felt like I was in no position to do the work. Some folks might read this and want to rush in and rescue me "…you did the best you could…" Don't rescue me. Other might think I am seeking pity. No, I'm not. For me, this has been such an important part of my journey - of my own self-awareness. Had I not done this work, I would never have questioned my own leadership. Nor would I have had the opportunity to reflect on where I was with the Sacred Cycle and where I

want to be with it. What a gift. I have now been given teachings and instructions which will allow me to move forward with a good mind and spirit. I was blessed to have been given this opportunity – my hands go up to you Tul'ti'lew Slheni.

I know I can always give of my mind and spirit. Even in the work I do here, I hope this is giving something to the Sacred Cycle. I hope my words honour the Ta't Mustimuxw and our future generations. I hope these words give guidance and direction to those like me who struggle to see how we can protect the Sacred Cycle and raise strong Xwulmuxw Mustimuxw.

What was really encouraging was realizing that we are all leaders in some way or another. Let's gather this strength and move forward in a good way with a good spirit. I was encouraged to always be looking for the leader in my spirit and speak out for the things I believe in. I have always done this with my children – like an old mamma bear. But I have not always done this with all Xwulmuxw Mustimuxw around me. As I look around me, I am blessed to have many more opportunities to speak out and share for future generations. If we all embraced uy'skwuluwun, we could figure out how to bring all of our women and children back into our communities. We could figure out how to keep our children safe.

Another thing that really stood out for me in this work was that our real leaders live their teachings every day. At first I was a bit perplexed – can it possibly be that simple? As time went on, I realized living our teachings is anything but simple. Living our life embracing nutsa maat (we are all one) and uy'skwuluwun (with a good mind and spirit) requires a very strong committed passionate person – I interviewed thirteen of these amazingly strong people.

For my many children, nieces and nephews – this is for them. For my yet unborn grandchildren – this is for you. For the Ta't Mustimuxw – this is because of you. For Wise Woman, Wild Woman and Salmon (Woman) – this is from you.

Bibliography

Absolon, Kathy & Willett, Cam. (2006). Putting Ourselves Forward: Location in Aboriginal Research. In S. Strega, & L. Brown (Ed.), *Research as Resistance: Critical, Indigenous and Anti-Oppressive Approaches to Research*. (Pp.97- 126) Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press.

Alfred, Taiaiake. (1999). *Peace, Power, Righteousness: an indigenous manifesto*. Ontario: University of Oxford Press.

Alfred, Taiaiake. (2000). Deconstructing the British Columbia Treaty Process. In *Balayi: Culture, Law and Colonialism.* 3(2001):37-65.

Alfred, T. (2004). Warrior Scholarship: Seeing the University as a Ground of Contention. In D. Mihesuah and A. Wilson (Eds.) *Indigenizing the Academy: Transforming Scholarship and Empowering Communities*, Pp.88-99. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Alfred, Taiaiake. (2005). *Wasáse: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom*. Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press.

Allen, Paula Gunn. (1992). *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions*. Boston, MA. Beacon Press Books.

Altamirano-Jimenez, Isabel. (2008). Nunavut: Whose Homeland, Whose Voices? In K. Anderson, et al. (Guest Eds.) Indigenous Women in Canada: The Voices of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Women. *Canadian Woman Studies.* 26(3,4) 128-134.

Amnesty International. (2008). Stolen Sisters: A Human Rights Response to Discrimination and Violence Against Indigenous Women in Canada. In K. Anderson, et al. (Guest Eds.) Indigenous Women in Canada: The Voices of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Women. *Canadian Woman Studies.* 26(3,4) 105-121.

Anderson, Kim & Lawrence, Bonita (Eds). (2003). *Strong Women Stories: Native Vision and Community Survival.* Toronto: Sumach Press.

Anderson, Kim. (2000). *A Recognition of Being: Reconstructing Native Womanhood.* Toronto, ON: Second Story Press.

Anderson, Kim. (2006). New Life Stirring: Mothering, Transformation and Aboriginal Womanhood. In D. Lavell-Harvard & J. Corbiere Lavell (Eds.) *Until Our Hearts Are On the Ground: Aboriginal Mothering, Oppression, Resistance and Rebirth* (pp. 13-24). Toronto, ON: Demeter Press.

Anderson, Kim. (2008). Notokwe Opikiheet – "Old-Lady Raised": Aboriginal Women's Reflections on Ethics and Methodologies in Health Research. In K. Anderson, et al. (Guest Eds.) Indigenous Women in Canada: The Voices of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Women. *Canadian Woman Studies.* 26(3,4) 6-14**.**

Anderson, Kim. (2010). Affirmations of an Indigenous Feminist. In Suzack, C., Huhndorf, S., Perreault, J. & Barman, J. Eds. *Indigenous women and feminism: politics, activism, culture.* (pp. 81-91). Vancouver, BC. UBC Press.

Anzaldúa, G. (Ed.). (1990). *Making Soul, Making Face: Haciendo Caras: Creative and Critical Perspectives by Feminists of Color.* San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books.

Armstrong, Jeannette. (1996). Invocation: The Real Power of Aboriginal Women (Keynote Address: The National Symposium on Aboriginal Women of Canada, University of Lethbridge, 19 October 1989). In C. Miller & P. Chuchryk (Eds.), *Women of the First Nations: Power, Wisdom, and Strength* (pp. iX-Xii). Winnipeg, MB: U of Manitoba Press.

Arnet, Chris. (Ed.) (2007). *Two Houses Half-Buried in Sand: Oral Traditions of the Hul'q'umi'num' Coast Salish of Kuper Island and Vancouver Island by Beryl Mildred Cryer.* Vancouver, BC: Talon Books.

August, Jodi. (2007). Interview, August 10, 2007, Kamloops, BC.

August, Josephine. (2007). Interview, August 10, 2007, Kamloops, BC.

Assembly of First Nations. (2010). The Reality for First Nations in Canada: Fact Sheet. www.afn.ca/article.asp?id=764. Retrieved Dec. 2010.

Baker, Emerance. (2008). Locating Ourselves in the Place of Creation: The Academy as *Kisu'lt melkiko'tin*. In K. Anderson, et al. (Guest Eds.) Indigenous Women in Canada: The Voices of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Women. *Canadian Woman Studies.* 26(3,4) 15-20**.**

Basso, Keith H. (1996). *Wisdom Sits In Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache*. Albuquerque, NM: U of New Mexico Press.

Bastien, Betty. (2004). *Blackfoot Ways of Knowing: The Worldview of the Siksikaitsitapi*. Calgary, AB: University of Calgary Press.

Blackstock, Cindy. (2009). Child Welfare Tributal Briefing Note. www.fncaringsociety.com. Retrieved Dec. 2010.

Bob, Amelia. (2007). Interview, May 1, 2007, Duncan, BC.

Brant, Beth. (1994). *Writing As Witness: essay and talk*. Toronto, ON: Women's Press.

British Columbia. (2010). BC Representative for Youth. *Canadian Council of Provincial Child and Youth Advocates. Aboriginal Children and Youth in Canada: Canada Must do Better.* www.rcybc.ca. Retrieved January, 2011.

Burns, James MacGregor. (2003). Transforming *Leadership.* New York:Atlantic Monthly Press.

Canadian Woman Studies Journal. (2008). Volume 26, Numbers 3,4. A York University Publication. Indigenous Women in Canada: The Voices of First Nations, Inuit and Metis Women. Guest Editors: Kim Anderson, Patti Doyle-Bedwell, Elize Hartley, Beverley Jacobs, Carole Leclair, Tracey Lindberg, Sylvia Maracle, M. Celeste McKay, Patricia A. Monture.

Cajete, Gregory (1999). A Sense of Place. In G. Cajete (Ed.), *Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence* (Pp. 178-189). Santa Fe: Clear Light Publishers.

Chow, Rey. (1994). Where have all the Native gone? In A. Bammer (Ed.) *Displacements: Cultural Identities in Question.* (pp. 125-151). Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Cull, Randi. (2006). Aboriginal Mothering Under the State's Gaze. In D. Lavell-Harvard & J. Corbiere Lavell (Eds.) *Until Our Hearts Are On the Ground: Aboriginal Mothering, Oppression, Resistance and Rebirth* (pp. 141-156). Toronto, ON: Demeter Press.

Dann, Mary and Carrie. (2004). In Wilma Mankiller. (Ed.) *Every Day is a Good Day: Reflection by Contemporary Indigenous Women* **(pp. 103)**. Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing.

Deloria, Vine Jr. (2004). Marginal and Submarginal. In D. Mihesuah and A. Wilson (Eds.) *Indigenizing the Academy: Transforming Scholarship and Empowering Communities* (pp. 16-30). Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Desterres, P. (1993). Quebec Native Women's Association. www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ch/rcap

Doyle-Bedwell, Patti. (2008). With the Appropriate Qualifications: Aboriginal People and Employment Equity. In K. Anderson, et al. (Guest Eds.) Indigenous Women in Canada: The Voices of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Women. *Canadian Woman Studies.* 26(3,4), 77-89.

Enfranchisement Act, R.S.C. 1869

Fairholm, Matthew. (2001). *TheThemes and Theory of Leadership: James MacGregor Burns and the Philosophy of Leadership.* TheGeorge Washington University Center for Excellence in Municipal Management. Working Paper CR01-01. www.TeachingLeaders.org retrieved February 2, 2011.

Flowers, Rachel. (2007). Interview, February 21, 2007, Victoria, BC.

Frideres, J. (1998). *Aboriginal People in Canada: Contemporary Conflicts.* Scarborough, ON. Prentice Hall Allyn & Bacon Canada.

Friere, P. (1984). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Continuum International Publishing Group.

George, Chief Dan. (1974). *My Heart Soars*. Vancouver, BC: Hancock House Publishers, Ltd.

Goulding, Warren. (2001). *Just Another Indian: A Serial Killer andCanada' Indifference*. Calgary, AB. Firth House Publishing.

Graveline, Fyre Jean. (1998). *Circle Works: Transforming Eurocentric Consciousness*. Halifax, NS: Fernwood Publishing.

Green, Joyce. (Ed.). (2007). *Making Space For Indigenous Feminism.* Halifax, NS: Fernwood Publishing.

Guerrero, M. A. Jaimis. (1999). Exemplars of Indigenism: Native North American Women for De/Colonization and Liberation. In Cathy Cohen, Kathleen Jones & Jean Tronto (Eds.) *Women Transforming Politics: An Alternative Reader* (pp. 205-222). NY: New York University Press.

Henning, Denise. (2007). Yes, My Daughters, We are Cherokee Women. In Joyce Green (Ed.). Marking Space For Indigenous Feminism. (pp.187-198). Halifax, NS: Fernwood Publishing.

Henry, Mavis (2007). Interview, February 20, 2007, Victoria, BC.

hooks, bell. (1989). *Talking back: thinking feminist, thinking black*. Boston, MA: South End Press.

hooks, bell. (1990). Talking Back. In Gloria Anzaldúa. (Ed.). *Making Face, Making Soul: Hacienda Caras: Crate and Critical Perspectives by Feminists of Color* (pp. 207-211). San Francisco: aunt lute books.

hooks, bell. (1995). *Killing Rage – Ending Racism.* Henry Holt & Company Inc.

Huhndorf, S. & Suzack C. (2010). Indigenous Feminism: Theorizing the Issues. In Suzack, C., Huhndorf, S., Perreault, J. & Barman, J. (Eds.) *Indigenous women and feminism: politics, activism, culture.* (pp.1-20). Vancouver, BC. UBC Press.

Hwitsum. Lydia. (2007). Interview, May 1, 2007, Duncan, BC.

Indian Act, R.S.C. 1951

Indian Act, R.S.C. 1985, c.1-5

Jaimes, M. Annette & Halsey, Theresa. (1997). American Indian Women: At the Center of Indigenous Resistance in Contemporary North America. In Anne McClintock et al. (Eds.). *Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, nations and Post Colonial Perspectives* (pp. 298-329). Minneapolis, MN: U of Minnesota Press

Kovach, Maggie. (2009). Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts. Toronto, ON: U of Toronto Press.

La Fountaine, Debra (2004). In Wilma Mankiller. (Ed.) *Every Day is a Good Day: Reflection by Contemporary Indigenous Women*. Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing.

Lavell-Harvard, D. Memee & Lavell Jeannette Corbiere (Eds.) (2006). "*Until Our Hearts Are on the Ground": Aboriginal Mothering, Oppression, Resistance and Rebirth.* Toronto: ON: Demeter Press.

LaRocque, Emma. (2007). Metis and Feminist: Ethical Reflections on Feminism, Human Rights and Decolonization. In Green, J. (Ed.) *Making Space For Indigenous Feminism.* (pp. 53-71) Halifax, NS: Fernwood Publishing.

Loomba, Ania. (1998). *Colonialism/PostColonialism: The New Critical Idiom*. New York, NY: Routledge Press.

McGadney-Douglass, Brenda F., Apt, Nana Araba & Douglass, Richard L. (2008). Back to Basics: Mothering and Grandmothering in the Context of Urban Ghana. In D. Lavell-Harvard & J. Corbiere Lavell (Eds.) *Until Our Hearts Are On the Ground: Aboriginal Mothering, Oppression, Resistance and Rebirth* (pp. 105-124). Toronto, ON: Demeter Press.

McGregor, Lurline Wailana (2004). In Wilma Mankiller (Ed.). *Every Day is a Good Day: Reflection by Contemporary Indigenous Women*. Bolder: CO: Fulcrum Publishing.

McIvor, Sharon. (1999). Self-Government and Aboriginal Women. In Enakshi Dua and Angela Robertson (Eds.) *scratching the surface: Canadian anti-racist feminist thought* (pp.167-186).Toronto, ON: Women's Press.

McIvor, Sharon. (2010). Personal Letter to Members of Parliament, May 18, 2010.

Mankiller, Wilma. (Ed.). (2004). *Every Day is a Good Day: Reflection by Contemporary Indigenous Women*. Bolder: CO: Fulcrum Publishing.

Manson, Emmy. (2009). Interview, March 25, 2009, Nanaimo, BC.

Manson, Shana. (2009). Interview, May 14, 2009, Victoria, BC.

Maracle, Lee. (1993). An Infinite Number of Pathways to the Center of the Circle. In Janice Williamson (Ed.) *Conversation with Seventeen Women Writers* (pp.166-178). Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Maracle, Lee. (1996). *I am Woman: A Native Perspective on Sociology and Feminism.* Vancouver, BC: Press Gang Publishers.

Maracle, Lee (2008). Decolonizing Native Women. In Alice Mann (Ed.) *Make A Beautiful Way: The Wisdom of Native American Women.* (pp. 29-51). Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.

Martin-Hill, Dawn. (2003). She No Speaks: and Other Colonial Construct of "The Traditional Woman". In Kim Anderson & Bonita Lawrence (Eds.). *Strong Women Stories: Native Vision and Community Survival* (pp. 106-120). Toronto, ON: Sumach Press.

Mihesuah, D. (Ed.) 1998. *Natives and Academics: Researching and writing about American Indians.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Mihesuah, D. 2003. *Indigenizing American Women: Decolonization, Empowerment, Activism.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Mihesuah, D. & A. Wilson (Eds.) 2004. *Indigenizing the Academy: Transforming Scholarship and Empowering Communities*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Modeste, Sarah. (2008). Interview, June, 16, 2008, Duncan, BC.

Monture, Patricia & McGuire, Patricia. (Eds.) (2009). *First Voices: an aboriginal women's reader.* Toronto, ON: INANNA Publications & Education Inc.

Montour, Patricia. (2008). Women's Words: Power, Identity, and Indigenous Sovereignty. In K. Anderson, et al. (Guest Eds.) Indigenous Women in Canada: The Voices of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Women. *Canadian Woman Studies.* 26(3,4) 154-159.

Native Women's Association of Canada. (2008). Sisters In Spirit Traveling Quilt. In K. Anderson, et al. (Guest Eds.). Indigenous Women in Canada: The Voices of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Women. *Canadian Woman Studies.* 26(3,4) 122-134.

Nicholas, Andrea Bear. (2008). The Assault on Aboriginal Oral Traditions: Past and Present. In Hulan, Renee & Eigenbrod, Renate. (Eds). *Aboriginal Orla Traditions: Theory, Practice, Ethics.* (pp. 13-44). Halifax, NS: Fernwood Publishing.

Paige, S. Marlo (2009) In the voices of the Sul-hween/Elders on the Snuw'uyul teachings of Respect: their greatest concerns regarding Snuw'uyulh today in the Coast Salish Hul'qumi'num' Treaty Group territory. Victoria: University of Victoria.

Point, Susan. (2007). Interview, October 29, 2007, Vancouver, BC.

Rogers, Janet Marie. (2005). Sky Woman. In Sandra Laronde (Ed.). *Sky Woman: Indigenous Women Who Have Shaped, Moved or Inspired Us.* Penticton, BC: Theytus Books Ltd.

Royal Commission on Aboriginal People, (1996). Volume 4, Chapter 2, p.1. www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ch/rcap/sg/sj3_e.html. Retrieved Dec. 2010.

Sam, Jennifer. (2008). Interview, July 11, 2008, Kamloops, BC.

Schaefer, Carol. (2006). Grandmothers Counsel the World: Women Elders Offer Their Vision for Our Planet. Boston, MA: Trumpter Books.

Simpson, Leanne. (2006). Birthing an Indigenous Resurgence: Decolonizing our Pregnancy and Birthing Ceremonies. In D. Lavell-Harvard & J. Corbiere Lavell (Eds.) *Until Our Hearts Are On the Ground: Aboriginal Mothering, Oppression, Resistance and Rebirth* (pp. 105-124). Toronto, ON: Demeter Press.

Small, Gail. (2004). In Wilma Mankiller. (Ed.) *Every Day is a Good Day: Reflection by Contemporary Indigenous Women*. Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing.

Smith, Andrea. (2005). *Conquest: Sexual Violent and American Indian Genocide*. Cambridge: South End Press.

Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. (1999). *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. New York, NY: Palgrave.

Stevenson, Winona. (1999). Colonialism and First Nations Women in Canada. In Enakshi Dua and Angela Robertson (Eds.) scratching the surface: Canadian anti-racist feminist thought (pp.49-82).Toronto, ON: Women's Press.

Stirbys, Cynthia D. (2008). Gender-Based Analysis and Differing Worldviews. In K. Anderson, et al. (Guest Eds.). Indigenous Women in Canada: The Voices of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Women. *Canadian Woman Studies.* 26(3,4) 38-146.

Sunseri, Lina. (2008). Sky Woman Lives On: contemporary Examplesof Mothering the Nation. In K. Anderson, et al. (Guest Eds.). Indigenous Women in Canada: The Voices of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Women. *Canadian Woman Studies.* 26(3,4) 21-25.

Suzack, C., Huhndorf, S., Perreault, J. & Barman, J. Eds. (2010). *Indigenous women and feminism: politics, activism, culture.* Vancouver, BC. UBC Press.

Thomas, Robina. (2000). *Storytelling in the Spirit of Wise Woman: Experiences of Kuper Island Residential School*. Unpublished Master's Thesis, School of Social Work, University of Victoria.

Thomas, Robina. (2005). *Uy'skwuluwun: On Being Indigenous*. IGOV Doctoral Student Symposium. January 20, 2005. Unpublished paper.

Thomas, Robina. (2005). Honouring the Oral Traditions of my Ancestors through Storytelling. In Leslie Brown and Susan Strega (Eds.). *Research as Resistance: Critical , Indigenous and Anti-Oppressive Approaches to Research*. (pp.237-254) Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press.

Thomas, Robina. Xwulmuxw Slheni and Peoplehood. In Jeff Corntassel and Tom Holm (Eds.) *The Power Of Peoplehood: Contemporary Indigenous Community-Building.* University of Texas Press (Forthcoming).

Thomason, Dovie. (2001). Public Lecture, University of Victoria.

University of Victoria, Faculty of Human and Social Development. *Protocols and Principles for Conducting Research in an Indigenous Context*. (2003)

Vancouver Sun. (2007). *Pickton*. http://www2.canada.com/vancouversun/features/pickton/index.html p.1 . Retrieved January 30, 2011.

Voyageur, Cora. (2008). Fire Keepers of the Twenty-First Century: First Nations Women Chiefs. Montreal, PQ: Mc-Gill-Queen's U Press.

Wall, Steve (2001). *To Become a Human Being. The Message of Tadodaho Chief Leon Shenandoah*. Charlottesville, VA: Hampton Roads Publishing.

Waziyatawin, Angela Wilson, (2005). *Remember This! Dakota Decolonization and the Eli Taylor Narratives*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.

Welsh, Christine. (2006). Director and Writer. *Finding Dawn. NFB Of Canada Production.*

White, Ellen Rice (Kwulasulwut). (2006). Legends and Teachings of Xeel's, the Creator. Vancouver, BC: Pacific Education Press.

White, Ellen. (2009). Interview, March, 27, 2009, Nanaimo, BC.

Wilson, Shawn. (2008). *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*. Halifax & Winnipeg: Fernwood Press.

Wyse, Viola. (2008). Interview, June 24, 2008, Nanaimo, BC.