



Cultivating Relationships for

Truth and Reconciliation

WITH ALL MY RELATIONS



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*Faculty of
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Dialogue with (former) Chief Greg Peters

Genuine reconciliation is grounded in the truth about the historical adversity Indigenous communities have faced and the ways these hardships may manifest today as well as the demonstration of courage, resiliency, self-respect, and decency. True reconciliation calls for listening, learning, loving, and healing. It is about building relationships and sharing truths and burdens.

The **94 Calls to Action of the TRC** are for all of us to act where we can, and particularly for privileged people to work for justice. Former Chief Greg Peters generously shares some ideas for reconciliation and invites honest self-reflection.



Educational Developer, Indigenous Knowledges and Ways of Knowing

“Although the [Truth & Reconciliation Commission] itself has faced widespread criticism (Garneau, 2016; Tait & Ladner, 2017), the impact and importance of this document, and the momentum it has sparked, cannot be overestimated: reconciliation has emerged nationally as a ‘moral and political imperative’ (Lightfoot, 2017, p. 297), with post-secondary institutions at the forefront of this change process (Bopp et al., 2017)”

-Raffoul et al, 2022, p. 163-164

**My lessons from
“Professor Peters”**

GP- Greetings my friend, hope you are having a great day. The need for genuine dialogue and relationship building is key to reconciliation. It has been my experience that building relationships with leaders of common interest is key. The outside world should never ask, “what do those people want?” Through **establishing relationships**, they begin to know, as we do, the needs of the communities involved. **Continuous communications** makes that possible. We tend to only interact with each other during times of crisis. What kind of relationship is that?

Regular informal honest communication is more powerful than all of the structured meetings. It has been my experience that the stresses of leadership are universal and the trust is not always found. Trust is a process that takes time and effort and work to achieve and maintain.

KK- That was all mighty profound. Your wise words, make me sense a good dialogue ahead and insights that would benefit many. I am eager for your continued reflecting, sharing, and illuminating. Many thanks for this gift of your spirit and energy in such meaningful words.



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GP-I have been thinking **we need to be well enough to reconcile**. The pains run deep and we have much to do with forgiving and learning to trust. I attended mass today and thought it was my personal act of forgiveness. Never hated the people, only the institution. Pow Wow this weekend, another chance to celebrate and heal. It is a time to share our gifts and see old friends. Wish you were here for that. But I share my joys with you always.

Really accepting someone's apology is not so easy and will take time and healing the catastrophic lingering effects of colonial thinking cannot be fixed by saying "I'm sorry." **Time and patience will help**. How do you reconcile with a person who has been looked down upon for his/her whole life? How do you dialogue with a person who has been degraded and maligned for no other reason than the color of her/his skin?

What about financial reparations?? The earning power of my parents and grandparents was stymied by a system setting them up for failure. For the present, building new and better relationships is an attainable and worthwhile first step. "I'm sorry", are just words unless there is concrete action, that proves you are sorry. If the desires of a person's heart is to reconcile, then it will occur. The most desired gifts of the grandfathers **is kindness**. We all need to use this gift in everything we do. The desire of our heart should be to share, foster, and promote kindness in everything we do. We will talk later; love you; be well.



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KK- My dear brother and friend and teacher,

Your words are piercing, poignant and so very powerful. It is all true - it seems to me - this necessity for the privileged people to approach reconciliation with kindness, honesty, humility. Truth telling can sting and it should penetrate to the heart. The heart of the matter is colonialism. **Colonialism was and is a destructive force** that decimated cultures, peoples, languages, places, ways of life, loving family ties and long held relations to generations past, present and well into the future.

Racism, discrimination, colonialism have destroyed peoples' sense of themselves and of their confidence in other human beings. It has been so violent, so damaging, and so callous, much of the truth has yet to be told. So many horrors that have not been shared. To reclaim relationships with one's own self, with kin, and with human kind, require so many steps of honesty and listening and committing to action.

I am grateful for your sharing and your commitment to justice.
With love and appreciation.



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KK- I am doing some additional reading; it is inspiring my thinking and expanding my understanding. In the book: ***Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto*** it is by Dr. Taiaiake Alfred. He is born and raised in the Kahnawake Mohawk Territory and schooled by Jesuits. He was a machine-gunner in the U.S. Marine Corps. Dr. Alfred earned a doctorate from Cornell University, and is known widely for his scholarly work on Native nationalism, Iroquois history, and indigenous traditions of government. He is an advisor on governance and land issues for the Mohawks of Kahnawake. Dr. Alfred is the author of *Heeding the Voices of Our Ancestors: Kahnawake Mohawk Politics and the Rise of Native Nationalism* (Oxford, 1995). He resides in Songhees Nation Territory, where he is Indigenous Peoples Research Chair at the University of Victoria.

This political manifesto--calls on the indigenous peoples of North America to move beyond their 500-year history of pain, loss, and colonization and make self-determination a reality. Dr. Alfred, urges Native communities to return to their traditional political values to educate a new generation of leaders committed to preserving indigenous nationhood. Only a solid grounding in traditional values and the principles of consensus-based governance will enable Native communities to heal their present divisions, resist assimilation, and forge new relationships of respect and equality with the mainstream society. Based on Western as well as indigenous traditions of thought, Dr. Alfred does not condemn non-indigenous people; he invites us all to transcend historical prejudices and join in the struggle for justice, freedom, and peace



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Peace, Power, Righteousness:

An Indigenous Manifesto

Dr. Taiaiake Alfred

The Table of Contents includes:

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Native American Political Traditions

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II Power

The Problem of Native Politics

Nationhood

Sovereignty - An Inappropriate Concept

Colonial Mentalities

Self Conscious Traditionalism

Responsibility

Accountability

III Righteousness

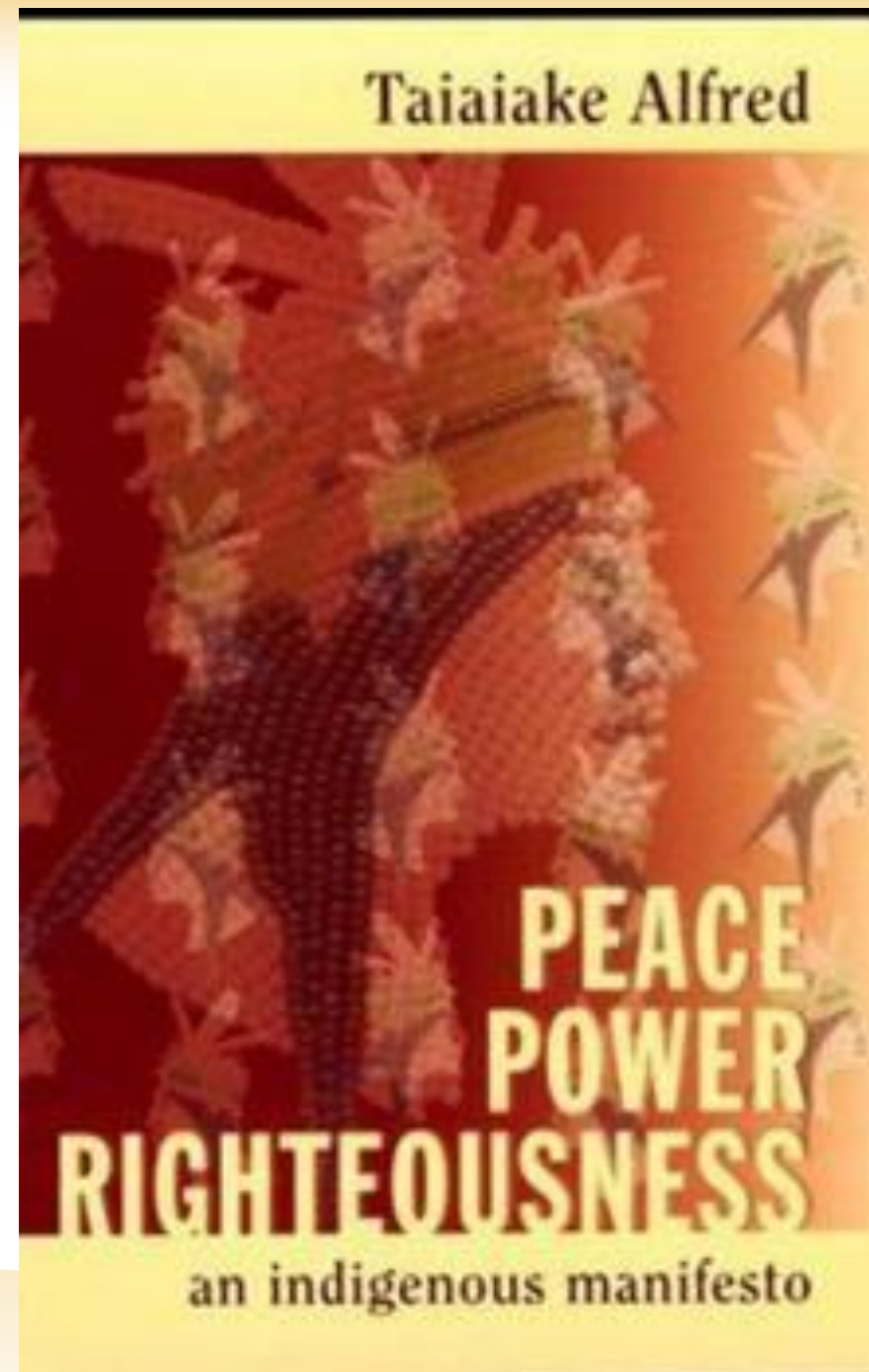
Money as an Illusory Panacea

Modern Treaties, a Devious Method of
Assimilation

Toward a New Native Leadership (for the Youth)

Co-optation

'Rejoicing, Recognizing, and Responsibility'



Sorry it has been so long since our last chat, I am having trouble with my computer as I believe it has been hacked. The pow wow was one of our best in years with a good crowd and lots of dancers. My great nephews were my guest, they are 6,7,9,10. Made me think of reconciliation and what I want them to learn and when they should learn. They are the ones who will change the world.

My doctor is starting me on chemo meds again. I must trust that the Creator has everything under control, because I sure don't. I believe walking through this life with kindness in our hearts keeps us on a path of continuous reconciliation. Its not easy. Racism and bigotry are powerful, but they are learned behaviours that can be modified. We keep an open heart and a positive attitude in the belief that we all want harmony and peace. I look forward to a continuing dialogue as it is strengthening me to think and communicate .Today is a good day to convince one person that life is grand, even if the one person is me. Be well my friend



The image features three stylized roses with dark outlines and light centers, set against a textured blue background. The roses are arranged in a triangular pattern, with two at the top and one in the center below them. Each rose is on a thin stem with several leaves. The stems of the roses extend downwards and curve outwards at the bottom, where they meet a decorative base of leaves and buds. The overall style is reminiscent of a vintage poster or a book cover.

HATE HAS TALKED SO LOUDLY FOR
SO LONG. GREED HAS TALKED SO
LOUDLY FOR SO LONG. LIARS HAVE
TALKED SO LOUDLY FOR SO LONG.

LOVE HAS GOT TO STOP WHISPERING.

- MARIANNE WILLIAMSON

Kk- Good day wise and kind being,

Your great nephews, I suspect, they would have been thrilled to have time with you and at the superb Pow Wow. I am sorry to have missed it. I always relish the gift of being a part of it and I welcome the invitations, when offered, to dance with the community.

Your subdued approach is surprising as you state the hardship of the imposed adversity from racism, bigotry, colonialism, discrimination ethnocentrism, and anthropocentrism. We humans, and white folks particularly, have become the worst kind of planetary vandals, as David Orr has said. The more privileges one assumes and usurps, the more havoc this places upon other peoples, places, and our planetary systems.

You well may have approaches you have used to awaken others to the need to overcome these destructive patterns and to de-colonize our minds, hearts, and hands - our practices. What might be some special ways you would recommend to meaningfully advance the conversation and capture the interest of those open to genuine work to help reconcile?

Some of what I am envisioning through my work with my students and collaborators is to foster more openness to fuller thinking and wider acceptance of responsibility to act.



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Perhaps, Greg, you have thoughts about our suggesting a repertoire of knowledge, understanding, skills, and attitudes for persons engaged in reconciliation? Perhaps this could be helpful to guide the teaching of these competencies to others.

I miss our chats and I continue to welcome your ideas, as always.
What if we cultivated more competencies in:

- a. Systems-thinking competency
- b. Strategic-thinking competency
- c. Values-thinking competency
- d. Futures-thinking competency
- e. Implementation competency
- f. Interpersonal competency
- g. Intrapersonal competency
- h. Integration competency??

AASHE. (2020). *Campus sustainability hub*. Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education. <https://hub.aashe.org/>



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GP- Good morning my friend, I hope the day finds you well. I have been struggling with my health. I am achy and sore everyday and I think it affects my thinking. It is difficult to hold a continuous thought as it is interrupted with ouch. The firm belief that has sustained me is that there is only so much pain in the world and its my job to bear as much of my share as I can.

We cannot fully reconcile until we **learn to love and be loved**. I have been thinking of the AA12step program. Admitting there is a problem, followed by steps to reconcile the person using substances with society. I am sure there is an approach there but ouch. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol and our lives had become unmanageable. We came to believe a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. I believe there is a framework for wellness in the 12 steps. Have a great day



12 Steps, as outlined in the original *Big Book* and presented by AA are

1. Admitting powerlessness over the addiction
2. Believing that a higher power (in whatever form) can help
3. Deciding to turn control over to the higher power
4. Taking a personal inventory
5. Admitting to the higher power, oneself, and another person the wrongs done
6. Being ready to have the higher power correct any shortcomings in one's character
7. Asking the higher power to remove those shortcomings
8. Making a list of wrongs done to others and being willing to make amends for those wrongs
9. Contacting those who have been hurt, unless doing so would harm the person
10. Continuing to take personal inventory and admitting when one is wrong
11. Seeking enlightenment and connection with the higher power via prayer and meditation
12. Carrying the message of the 12 Steps to others in need

<https://americanaddictioncenters.org/rehab-guide/12-step>



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I am sorry for the pain you are suffering. Your pain seems mighty intense. Wishing it was not what you had to contend with at this stage of your dynamic and meaningful life. I continue to be enriched by every exchange with you. Taking action now. Starting with friendly relations with self and our capacity to be an agent of reconciliation may be a good jump off point.

The power of the 12step framework has merit to consider for broader healing of relationships with one another. That is a great idea to pursue. I hope you have fewer ouches tomorrow and more reflections on the pleasures that you have given to so many and that you have enjoyed.

Peace to you, Greg.

I wish I had a way to capture your texts and the profound insights in those notes too. Your sharing has been moving and lights the way for what could aid genuine relationship building and reconciling injustices.

I continue to learn with you, and relish this journey that life affords us.



GP - Its a frosty morning here.

I have been busy with child welfare working group as we try and design a more culturally appropriate model. We have to remember that its the family who need healing. No more lost children. We have to aggressively defend our families and communities from provincial and federal exploitation. Too often the children are apprehended and the home and family destroyed over poverty. It is not an easy process, as we are all colonially educated and our thought process is governmental. I am confident we will develop a model that suits our community. I believe all children have a right to be loved , to feel they are a part of a protecting and caring family and community. It is time to crawl out of the shade of colonial thinking and into the warmth of the creators sunshine. We need to free our hearts and minds and imagine good without fear. We must strive daily to make the world a better place for everyone. We must remind ourselves our loyalties are to each other and not to agencies of the government.

Sorry for the rant, my body is failing me. My mind and spirit are intact and my will to help is stronger than ever I believe that's enough for today. Stay well



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Kk Hello Greg,

What more needs to be said in a day than that?? Your chutzpah and courageous spirit are formidable Greg.

You have said so much. I am grateful to be learning with you.

Wishing you well with your healing, bold proposals by the specialists, and your own dance with immortality.

I hope you are reaping smiles and thank yous. Radiating hope and peace. Encouraging positive acts of kindness by example

I agree that what seems sensible and just can be long delayed through other less noble human tendencies and motivations. We daily encounter our own value-action gaps, and contend with the *human condition*.

PEACE AND GRATITUDE.



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After generations of facing colonialism, we are not healthy people. We are not modeling healthy adult behaviour. We need to work on communication strategies and skills to protect our children from government take over.

For Child Welfare systems to work well, we need to change the culture from adversarial to cooperative. These debilitating states do not produce desired outcomes.

Children are entitled to be loved; to freedom and self-direction; to be safe, protected, healthy and with opportunity. Children also have the right to healthy family life and healthy community. This encompasses everything you want to do with community building.

The system breaks families apart. CAS only stays in business if they take away children. More money goes to foster care than to families to care for their children. Families are forced into adversarial systems and it is destroying us.

It is a balancing act to empower people and not make them dependent. We need to focus on prevention in child well-being. People need to learn to express their discontent without anger. When they destroyed our families and our societies we were forced to adapt to a society that we did not understand.



Human is as human does, humans demonstrate such capacity for good, even greater good, as well as propensities for devastating harm and despicable conduct. We are wondering how might the concept of *More Human* help us capture this range of human power and potential? Over centuries, humans have set in motion dysfunctional hierarchical frameworks. Those in power said, "more intelligent, more wealthy, more white, meant you were more human." With this sick system permeating the world, we have degraded our own humanity and devastated peoples, cultures, wildlife, and environments. Through dialogue, exploration, a mix of science and spirituality, we talk about and seek to share ideas for helping humans to become more human.

**GREG REMINDS US:
KINDNESS + HONESTY = RECONCILIATION**



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Seven Grandfather Teachings

<https://www.sd73.bc.ca/en/our-district-board/seven-grandfather-teachings.aspx>



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The Seven Sacred Teachings

1. To cherish knowledge is to know **WISDOM**;
2. To know **LOVE** is to know peace;
3. To honor all of the Creation is to have **RESPECT**;
4. **BRAVERY** is to face the foe with integrity;
5. **HONESTY** also means “righteousness”, be honest first with yourself – in word and action;
6. **HUMILITY** is to know yourself as a sacred part of the Creation,
7. **TRUTH** is to know all of these things.

