

# LIFELONG LEARNING MODEL ~ TOWARD DECOLONIZATION ~ FROM THE HEART

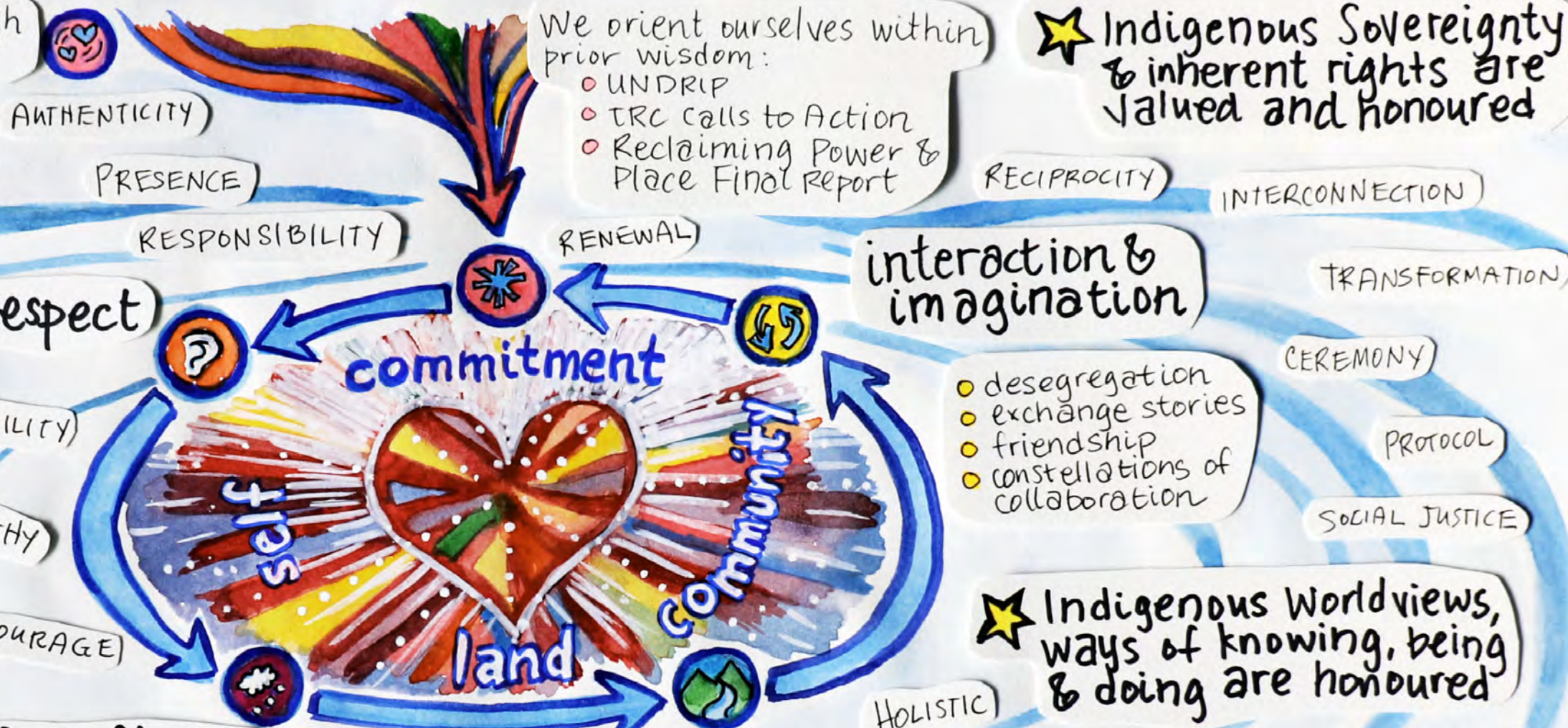
We are called to the work through moral & ethical relations.

★ Critical Hope ~ better futures are made through learning, imagination and action

We orient ourselves within prior wisdom:

- UNDRIP
- TRC calls to Action
- Reclaiming Power & Place Final Report

★ Indigenous Sovereignty & inherent rights are valued and honoured



listening with respect

RESPECT

ACKNOWLEDGE  
COMPLICITY

- 🗣️ speakers
- 📺 media
- 📖 reading
- 📋 course work

★ Indigenous peoples' needs and priorities lead & receive support

MAKING SPACE

VULNERABILITY

👤 Personal Action

self-reflection

WISDOM

- attend to emotions & spirit
- examine personal values
- unlearn myths & colonial ways
- integrate the truth

👥 Relational Action

ANTI-RACISM

place & culture awareness

- local First Nations & territories
- Diaspora Indigenous people
- Land of birth
- ancestral lands

🏘️ Community Action

CULTURAL SAFETY

SOLIDARITY

HOLISTIC

EGALITARIAN

EQUITY

LEADERSHIP

REPAIR

🏢 Structural Action

... possible visions for reconciliation emerge through action & relationship

WORKING WITH...

Learning from Indigenous People

LISTENING TO...

WALKING WITH...



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★ Indigenous peoples' needs and priorities lead & receive support



interaction & imagination

- desegregation
- exchange stories
- friendship
- constellations of collaboration

★ Indigenous Worldviews, ways of knowing, being & doing are honoured

self-reflection

- attend to emotions & spirit
- examine personal values
- unlearn myths & colonial ways
- integrate the truth

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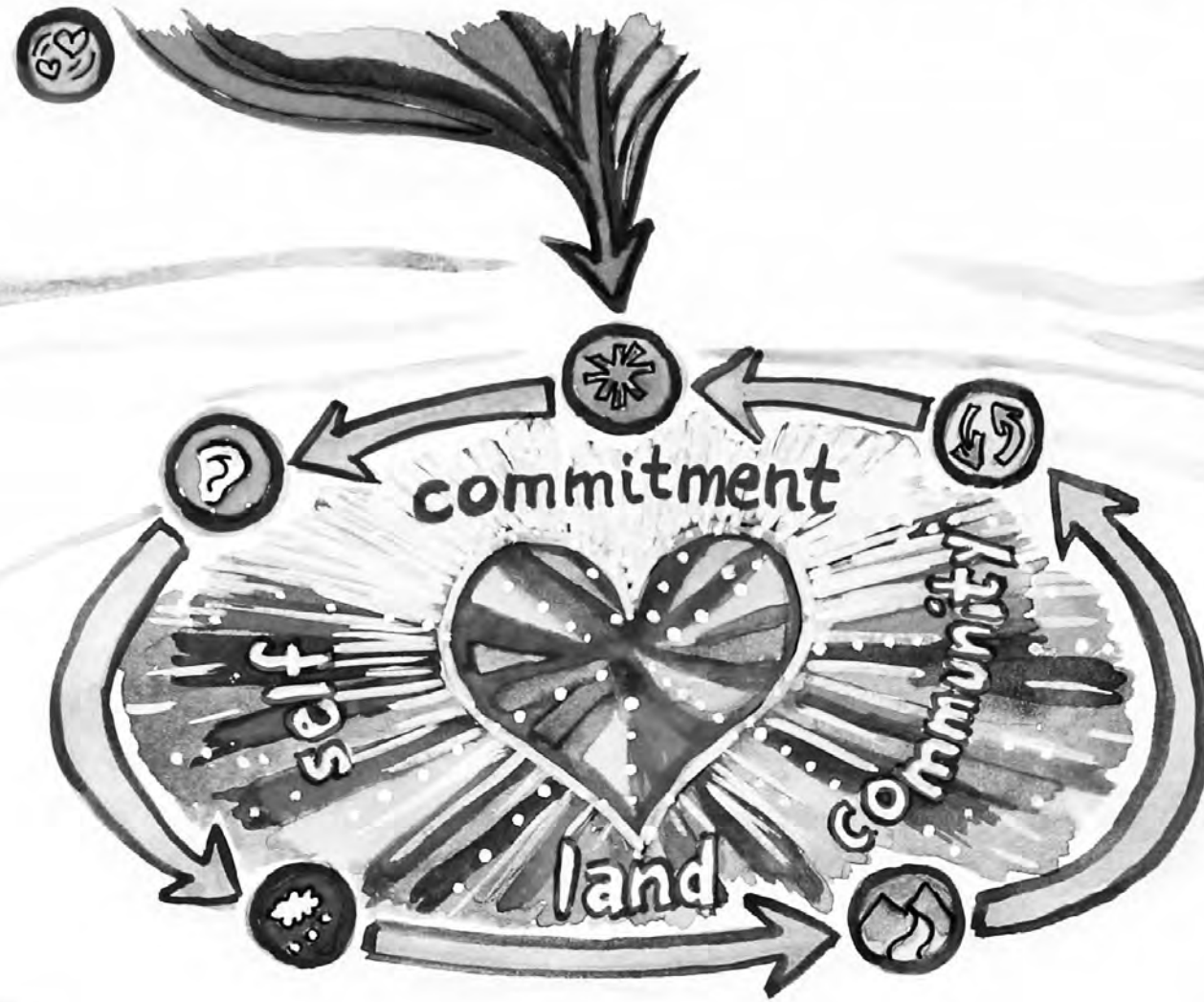
WORKING WITH...

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Learning from Indigenous People  
LISTENING TO...

prototype © december 2021 © andrea n. mann

WALKING WITH...

WORKING WITH...

# Lifelong Learning Model – Toward Decolonization – From the Heart Prototype December 2021 – Andrea N. Mann

## Acknowledgments and References

As I share this final-for-now prototype of the *Lifelong Learning Model – Toward Decolonization – From the Heart* with community members in the West Kootenay region who may apply it in their learning and community work in the coming year, I am deeply grateful for the many relationships and resources that have guided my journey in Indigenous Education since 2012. Each person walks a unique path, but my hope is that this model will bring us one more way to connect and understand, as collective momentum toward social justice strengthens in this beautiful and complex place. I have traced the outline of my own learning below to thank and honor the people and resources that have helped me, while also sharing possible entry points with others. As a settler, there will always be a lifetime of learning ahead, but I am reassured and guided by recent teachings from Métis scholar Dr. Jaime Fiddler, “once you have a relationship with the knowledge, you can easily continue learning in every direction” (personal communication, Nov. 12, 2021). Let us continue to learn and take action together with respect, humility and courage.

The heart in the Learning Model title and at the center of the graphic continually reminds us of the importance of relationship. In every effort of this work of learning, reflection and repair, I bring the heart of who I am as parent to my child Alexia. I learn as much from them as they from me, in our shared intention to be stewards for the just, sustainable, peaceful and healthy future we both want for our descendants and human and non-human kin. As Elder Gerry Oleman, St’at’imc, taught through the [FitNation](#) training I participated in earlier this year, and teaches in his podcasts, [Teachings in the Air](#), we must think of love as commitment to care, beyond all its other meanings and associations (lives in Brandon, MB personal communication, May 2021). I commit to unwavering care in my love for life, for the land, for my child and family, and the growing circles of community I contribute to. In contrast to the individualism of dominant culture, the heart teaches that there is no self without relationship. As Lacerda-Vandenborn (2020) shares, “we are all related and (it is through) relationality and reciprocity we learn our place in the cosmos” (p. 199).

The process of building the Lifelong Learning Model with key collaborator Christy Anderson brought alive Leanne Betasamosake Simpson’s (2017) teachings in ethics, including: consent, reciprocity, respect, renewal, relationship and empathy, (p. 57) along with her exploration of “constellations in relationship with other constellations” as “flight paths out of settler colonial realities” (p. 217). Christy brings her proud Métis identity to the work of facilitating collaboration among local Nations and with government and other organizations in the health, education and non-profit sectors. Her work offered both the initial spark, and an ongoing touch point for the Learning Model design, as she found opportunities to seek feedback from various

community members. Her frequent collaborator Bart Knudsgaard also shared his expertise and resources to help guide our progress. Thank you Christy for your innumerable gifts of insight, direction and connection in our collaboration. Your friendship brings such joy and resonance in these challenging times.

I also owe particular gratitude to Dr. Yvonne Poitras Pratt, Métis scholar and activist, for her guidance since my early learning in Indigenous Education, as well as the context for further growth offered by the [Indigenous Education: A Call to Action](#) graduate program she leads, and in which I am currently enrolled. Her 2019 paper, "*Exploring reconciliatory pedagogy and its possibilities through educator-led praxis,*" written with Dr. Patricia Danyluk, is the source for the linear growth concept forming the base of the Lifelong Learning Model. She is a constant inspiration and support to so many, modeling ethical and caring relationships and bringing profound commitment to her teachings of story, pedagogy, Métis rights, and Indigenous Métissage processes. With her, and through her encouragement, I have witnessed and experienced many of the "meaningful reconstruction" processes Dwayne Donald (2012) describes as the work of Indigenous Métissage. Through creativity and ethical relations, we can craft reconciliatory stories that bring forth great potential to "revitalize relationships with a common sense of place" (D. Donald, 2012, p. 550).

While approaches to pedagogy may not be explicit in the Learning Model, Indigenous Education is inherent to this work. I am grateful for Werklund school of Education professors who set me on a good path during my Bachelor of Education degree. The lessons of Dr. Jacqueline Ottmann, Anishinaabe (Saulteaux) and Dr. Lyn Daniels, Cree Métis, continue to sustain me, as they so memorably taught and modeled ways of grappling with difficult truths through kind and gentle presence. The writing of Dr. Jeanette Armstrong is also a constant inspiration, and I will never forget the gift of her and Dr. Marlowe Sam bringing lessons of life and activism directly to students gathered in my classroom in 2019, before the pandemic made such opportunities even more rare. For accessible reference, the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) conferences, resources and First Peoples' Principles of Learning can provide all educators a place to learn and return as we continue to challenge and improve the way teaching and learning happens in our society.

The classrooms at Mount Sentinel Secondary School and Brent Kennedy Elementary School have remained an inspiring context for learning and growth as a teacher. Thank you to the colleagues and students of all ages who have all brought such open hearts and courage to learning about Indigenous cultures and the historical and contemporary realities of colonial injustice and myth-making. There is no better way to orient ourselves to the future than building shared responsibility, connection and vision with children and youth. We would do well to be guided by their ability to discern and integrate the truth, and their constant motivation to ask the questions that bring clarity to what matters most. Thank you also to the School

District 8 Kootenay Lake Aboriginal Education team for the many professional learning opportunities they have provided since 2018.

I wish to express my deep gratitude to all the [From the Heart Kootenays](#) youth, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, mentors, artists, family, friends and community members and our funder VIDEA, who have now walked together for three annual cycles of collaborative arts projects dedicated to resurgence and reconciliation. It is through listening, imagining and problem solving in this circle that the most hopeful visions for the future are emerging. Unending gratitude to Sandra Jacques, Mi'kmaq and Donna Wright, Métis, who teach us that through inclusiveness, authenticity and open hearts, creative potential is limitless. Thank you also to the From the Heart Learning Circle at the Nelson Public Library, for their ongoing response to the youth call to action, and commitment to the work and joy of learning from Indigenous writers. Thank you Shawn Marquis for the worldview awareness you are bringing to both circles, supporting us to also be silent and grounded in life and in spirit. It is an honor to be a part of such vibrant, courageous and supportive circles.

Considering the relational and community action being taken in our region since the 2020 anti-racism awakening following the murder of George Floyd, I also extend my appreciation to the members of grassroots organizations Kootenay Anti-Racism Education (KARE), and West Kootenay People for Racial Justice (WKPRJ), who are bringing sustained commitment to challenge and lead toward better futures. As Robyn Maynard and Leanne Betasamosake highlight in their chapter in the anthology *Until We are Free*, Black, Indigenous and Queer solidarity movements are bringing new possibilities: "with ethical relationship-building based on consent and accountability... we can be effective co-resistors" (2020, p. 82). Their upcoming collaborative book "[Rehearsals for Living](#)," to be published in June 2022, promises to articulate "abolitionist and anti-colonial presents and futures," and will certainly bring guidance to the complex dynamics we find ourselves navigating here and across the globe.

In addition to the personal learning above, I have also enjoyed the companionship of many thoughtful writers and thinkers through their public offerings, both in the works below and on social media. With an orientation of appreciative inquiry, and a commitment to engage in dialogue with others whenever possible, I count the resources below as primary influences for the Learning Model, and for my life path overall:

**Government Publications:**

*United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)*

*Calls to Action, Truth & Reconciliation Commission*

*Calls to Justice: Reclaiming Power & Place, National Inquiry into MMIWG2S*

## Truth Learning:

*Ravensong*, novel, Lee Maracle

*Indigenous Canada*, Open Online Course, University of Alberta

*Indigenous Writes*, non-fiction book, Chelsea Vowel

*Keetsahnak: Our Missing and Murdered Indigenous Sisters*, Essay Anthology, Kim Anderson, Maria Campbell & Christi Belcourt

*This Place: 150 Years Retold*, Graphic Short Stories collection, Alicia Elliot  
Foreword with 11 storywriters and 6 illustrators

*Unsettling the Settler Within*, non-fiction book, Paulette Regan

*Decolonization is Not a Metaphor*, journal article, Eve Tuck & Wayne Yang

## Worldview learning:

Christi Belcourt, art, writing and activism

*Embers*, short spiritual reflections, Richard Wagamese

*Sand Talk*, non-fiction book, Tyson Yunkaporta

*Resilience Teachings* and several books, Monique Gray Smith

*Circle works*, non-fiction book, Fyre Jean Graveline

*Jagged Worldviews*, article, Dr. Leroy Littlebear

*Making Space: Lessons from collaborations with Tribal Nations*, article, Erich Steinman

*Braiding Sweetgrass*, non-fiction book, Robin Wall Kimmerer

*Reconciling Ways of Knowing Forum*, video webinars, Indigenous Knowledge & Science Society

*Decolonize First & Decolonize*, reflection workbooks, Ta7talíya Michelle Nahanee

Lastly, recognizing that generalized knowledge can only ever be a starting point, my own learning will be grounded for the foreseeable future in continuing to build place and culture awareness of the local First Nations and territories where I live, the lands of my birth and my own distant ancestral lineage. It is the land, and land-based culture, that will bring remedy and reversal to the impacts of cultures of dominance and materialism. A poem by Métis writer Katherena Vermette describes that "this country has an other story... it is written / in water / carved on earth" (2018, p. 61). This inspired me to seek a story of decolonization by following the water that flows past my home in Nelson. In its concrete-confined path westward, the river showed me evidence of the colonial mindset: exploitation, domination, control, disrespect, apathy, ignorance, and numbness. I hope to better tune my senses to the presence of the water, mountains, plant and animal life beyond colonial structures, along with cultural and language learning of the longtime First Nations stewards of these lands—to begin hearing the stories of renewal that await our collective contribution.

### Foundational resource:

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