

FOREWORD

Moving from the Transactional to the Relational

Leroy Little Bear

I am increasingly asked to speak to groups about what an Indigenous approach to management is and how it is different from a 'Euro-centric' view. And I was pleased to be invited to provide the opening address at the 2nd IARMOS conference in Ottawa in 2024. This Foreword to the book project that has evolved from the IARIMOS movement is a version of that address.

Why am I asked to speak on such matters? I think it is because when Europeans came to North America, or colonised other parts of the world, they came with the belief that their interpretive template was the only template. Everyone else's template was just myths. But many are not so sure now! That is why they are hungry for our knowledge today. At the same time, the people I am from, Blackfoot, Cree and other First Nations, have tried the European template (either by choice or by force), and it has not worked for us either. Not surprisingly then, there is a groundswell among Indigenous peoples who say it is time to come full circle. It is time to go back to our lodges and bring out our ways: our ways of interpreting the world and the management knowledges and frameworks that stem from Indigenous views. All people are looking for new ways that can help them be successful managers and great leaders.

But what do I mean by 'interpretive template'? Every morning you wake up thinking you are waking up to the *real reality*. But what you are waking up to is not the real reality, but the interpretation of it brought about by your cultural paradigms and metaphysics. Stephen Weinberg, a Nobel Prize winning scientist says, 'there is an objective reality out there but as soon as you put a human in the picture it becomes an interpretation'. In other words, all cultures have an interpretive template that their members walk around with and understand the world through.

The modern European interpretive template can consist of the following aspects: this is the way God made it and it will be like that forever and a day; everything is about matter; everything is inanimate except for you and I; existence is about matter; we

experience things in isolation; we do things from a linear perspective; time is our guide; language is about nouns and the other.

But my people, like many Indigenous peoples, bear a very different interpretive template. In a nutshell, whereas the European approach to seeing is in terms of separations and transactions, the Indigenous way is to see connections and relationships.

Hundreds of generations of North American Indians have come and gone since before and after the last Ice Age. Through their mutual relationships with the land built up over this time, they have developed icons, symbols, and images about the totality of the environment. Those icons, symbols, images and even language serve as repositories for the paradigms, values and customs. They embody the land.

This is why these icons, symbols, images and Indigenous language are important. And, this is why the land they relate to is a very important referent in the minds of native peoples. The land is 'mother': it cannot be separated from the actual being of Indians. According to Cajete, 'Native people express a relationship to the natural world that could be called 'ensoulment''. The ensoulment of nature is one of the most ancient foundations of human psychology.

For Indians, the ensoulment of the land is a web of relationships with the earth, animals, plants, inorganic matter and the cosmos. It is captured in the stories, songs, and ceremonies. This is why stories, songs and ceremonies are important – they cannot be dismissed as 'mere myths'. And, for native peoples, the ensoulment of the land and other elements in the world must be passed on to the younger generation.

From the above, one can conclude that it is the place that determines who you are. Anne Waters observes, 'American Indian identity and worldview, a history of place consciousness, preserved through oral history, manifests discrete geographical place symbols within consciousness that provide a conceptual framework for identity'. Furthermore, Native identity loss comes about when these relationships are broken, when the land does not recognise you and you do not recognise the land.

In Western science, if something is not subject to measurement, it is not scientific. By contrast, in Blackfoot science, if it is not about relationships, it is not scientific. In other words, Indigenous people are all about relationships and not measurement.

If I were to relate these interpretive templates, in a concise way, to management styles, I would say that a conventional Eurocentric management is usually a very structured, controlled approach – from top to bottom. Every part is controlled by rules and definitions. If it is a retail business, the main interest is focused on the transaction. In other words, once the receipt is printed at the cash register, the transaction is complete. No emphasis is placed on an ongoing relationship. It is **Transactional**.

On the other hand, I see Indigenous approaches as **Relational**. This type of management is more focused on long and ongoing relationship between an organisation and its clientele and its stakeholders. Satisfying clientele and employees and the community and other stakeholders, having loyal customers, and retaining customers and good relations are 'key'.

There is a lot in this book that you will benefit from that can help you be a new kind of successful manager and great leader, but it is a lot. So please read this book with this simple 'North star' in mind: it is easy, and sometimes tempting, to fall back into a transactional worldview and style with its atomisation and separations. But always look for the longer view, the power of seeing and building and nurturing the relationships that connect all things.

1

INTRODUCTION TO INDIGENOUS MANAGEMENT: KNOWLEDGES AND FRAMEWORKS

**Jesse Pirini, Stephen Cummings,
and Ana María Peredo**

Indigenous Management: Knowledges and Frameworks emerges as a response to the gatherings of the Indigenous Academy of Indigenous Research in Management and Organization (IARIMOS), where the need for a dedicated resource to support instructors and students in their research and teaching became evident. Through rich discussions and collaborations with our wider community, the vision for this book took shape, recognising the importance of a guide that integrates Indigenous ways of knowing and organising. It offers different ways of knowing, practicing and supporting sustainability, development, inclusion, innovation and entrepreneurship. It is essential to see how these knowledges may be rooted in quite different worldviews – different conceptions of how elements of reality are distinguished and how they are related, how we come to know things and what it is that we already know, and what values range over these factors.

A growing community and literature is exploring how Indigenous ways of seeing, knowing and valuing – which are diverse, but typically more holistic, community-oriented, including non-human as well as human realities, and promoting views of prosperity other than economic prosperity than Euro-centric approaches – have been repressed, overlooked and undervalued, and theorising how things could be different. *Indigenous Management: Knowledges and Frameworks* builds on those foundations,

drawing together a set of indigenous approaches to, and frameworks for, good management and organisation. It is a resource for students and decision-makers interested in managing and organising in ways that draw on or reflect Indigenous experiences.

Indigenous Framework 1.1: What Do We Mean By ‘Indigenous’?

Five interwoven threads run through the ways in which Indigeneity is understood by international organisations and in scholarly literature, including Indigenous writers such as Peredo et al. (2004). Indigenous peoples are populations who share:

- a sense of descent from populations inhabiting a region prior to later inhabitants;
- collective attachment to ancestral lands and their resources;
- maintenance of distinctive social–cultural norms and institutions;
- spoken or once spoken distinctive languages;
- geographical, political, and/or economic domination by later inhabitants or immigrants.

Our approach to Indigeneity in this book is grounded in seeing Indigenous identity this way: a product of these interacting and mutually reinforcing elements. We are also guided by the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues which also states that Indigenous people ‘form non-dominant groups of society’. So, while Jennifer (Chapter 12), Kate (Chapter 44) and Caithi’s (Chapter 8) chapters in the book are about the rejuvenation of Irish Indigenous culture and language (from which much can be learnt), their inclusion here does not suggest that people of Irish heritage living in Ireland are Indigenous; nor does Leon and Simone’s Chapter 47 about how Indigenous values from Africa informed African-American business development suggest that people of African-American heritage are Indigenous in the United States.

At a philosophical level, *Indigenous Management: Knowledges and Frameworks*’ contents raise questions about what ‘good management’ actually means. Beyond achieving short-term financial gains and measuring progress using economic metrics, Indigenous perspectives seek to deliver economic benefits *and* realise community aspirations, including social, cultural and political elements that promote sustainability. Indigenous communities can leverage these approaches to support their communities, but they can also underpin a move towards a more inclusive and sustainable future, and help us confront existential questions that face us all. In this way, Indigenous management and organising can promote a fundamental paradigmatic shift, rather than just another ‘bolt-on’ set of developments to traditional business school teaching.

This ‘multi-valence’ encourages managing and organising differently. And it also shapes our book’s structure. This structure was inspired by a participant at a hui (‘town hall’ meeting) we ran a few years ago to help develop a Māori Economic Development Strategy for a region in Aotearoa New Zealand. An earlier hui had determined that economic development for Māori by Māori would have multiple

dimensions: not just financial, or conventional economic, aspects; but aspects relating to social, cultural, environmental, and political dimensions too. We built these dimensions into a strategy canvas co-created with local communities and started by seeing economic development as the foundation, with the other dimensions resting in layers above this (Pirini & Cummings, 2022). A participant called Kevin Shedlock then spoke. He argued that:

Economic goods should be at the top of the mountain. They're like the snow, beautiful and gratifying to see and enjoy, but without social, environmental, and cultural developments as foundations, that snow melts away fast.

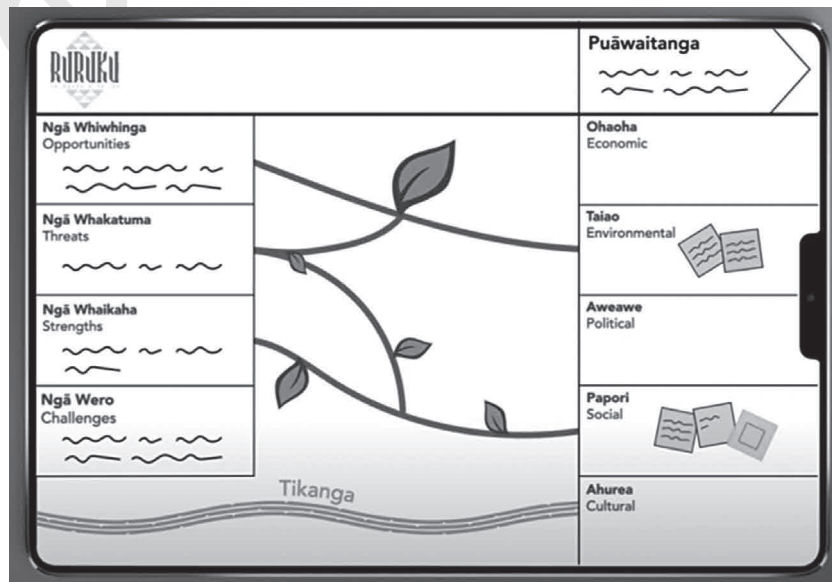


Figure 1.1 The Ruruku Strategy Canvas, With Economic Development at the Summit of Cultural, Social, Political, and Environmental Development

Local people liked this idea, and it became the shape of the project's strategy development: the shape of how the community visualised development in their co-created strategy tool that came to be named Ruruku Canvases (one meaning of Ruruku in Māori is weaving together), and the shape of the strategy built with the Ruruku Canvases. These Canvases related five types of development needed to support Puāwaitanga, a thriving or blossoming (Figure 1.1). (It should be noted that other Indigenous communities would view the positioning of various versions of prosperity differently, but the key thing is that almost all would see a multiplicity of types of prosperity and that they were interwoven or connected to one another.)

These layers or depths came to be reflected in the work of the regional Māori Economic Development board (Te Matarau-a-Māui) that was recommended as part of the strategy to develop and manage future development following the Ruruku project.

A large part of this approach to viewing development was a blend of this Indigenous management thinking with the latest visual technologies to create development maps that showed and recorded how organisational and business development was supported by local social relations and political representation, relations to the land (whenua) and cultural myths about the land which conveyed appropriate and sustainable uses of resources (Figure 1.2). These depths provided a necessary basis for management thinking (there is more on this project in Chapter 58).

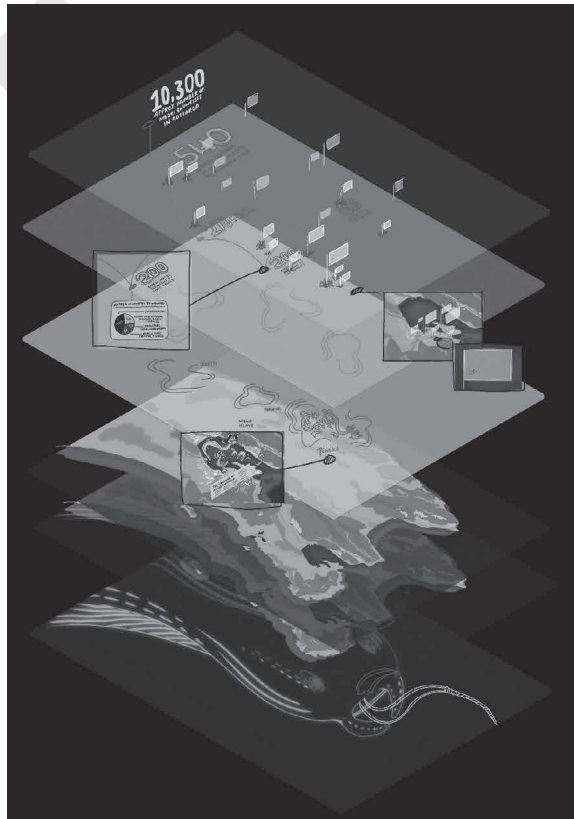


Figure 1.2 Concept Drawing for Te Matarau-a-Maui Development Mapping

When we presented these developments to Professor Ella Henry (who comes from another region in Aotearoa, and whose ideas you can see further on in this book), she commented that it was important to see these depths as a reflection of the Māori

concept of whakapapa. This way of thinking about our interconnection to place is common to many Indigenous peoples, and it is a useful framework for understanding Indigenous management. For instance, working with Quechua and Aymara Peoples we learnt that Indigenous knowledge and practices are intricately woven into the fabric of community life and are foundational to the creation and operation of community-based enterprises and it is deeply reflective of the Andean notion of 'allin kawsay' loosely translated as 'living well'. Similarly, the concept of 'ubuntu', as a guiding principle in African societies highlights the importance of relationships and interconnectedness among human and non-humans. Whakapapa is explained in more detail in the Indigenous Framework #2 box below.

Indigenous Framework 1.2: Whakapapa and Interconnected Depths

Whakapapa is popularly used to mean genealogy in the Māori language, but it literally means to 'create a base or basis'. Whakapapa can relate to the recitation of genealogies or stories which create a foundation of meaning for people. As whakapapa can include genealogies or stories about the entire world, whakapapa are ways by which people come into relationships with people, the world, its beings, history and spirits.

As such, it provides a grand fabric of knowledge. Hence, traditional Māori knowledge includes elaborate genealogies about the world, with various classifications of species of flora and fauna, rocks, fish and so on, interlinking to form a woven fabric in which all things are interrelated. These woven genealogies form a framework which is 'clothed' in a vast array of stories and traditions that explain the essential character, features and relationships of those in the genealogies.

Whakapapa can also describe the actions of creating a foundation, and layering and adding to that foundation. This may be done by reciting genealogies and stories, and through ritual. Whakapapa allows people to locate themselves in the world, both figuratively and in relation to their human and other ancestors. It links them to the dramas played out on the land and invested it with meaning. By recalling these events, people layer meaning and experience onto the land. Understanding this makes it easier to see why many scholars link Indigenous management practices and more recent approaches to 'sustainable management' which focus on environmental and social well-being in addition to economic development.

Based on information from the *Te Ara Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*
<https://teara.govt.nz/en/papatuanuku-the-land/page-8>

Coming to see economic, business or financial development as 'the snow' – which can only provide lasting benefit if the mountain underneath is well-founded – the book is arranged in five parts or layers, that are listed, from the foundations downwards, below:

- 1 The stories, myths and protocols that inform our relationships with resources
- 2 Indigenous ways of connecting to the land, water, air, and other beings
- 3 The power of political voice and co- and communal- design
- 4 Social and community accountability and collective responsibility
- 5 Management and organization based on the four foundations listed above

These five parts of *Indigenous Management: Knowledges and Frameworks* can be read in order or explored in any sequence – the layers are distinct, yet interconnected. A related way of thinking is the *Wurundjeri* people of South-East Australia's conception of the layers of Country: the Biik Ut (below country), the Biik Dui (land country), the Baanj (water country), the Murnmut (wind country), the Wurru Wurru (sky country) and the Tharangalk (above the clouds, and home of the creator spirit Bunji – often depicted as an eagle). While these layers can be seen as separate, baanjmin and binbeal (rain and rainbow) act as connectors of all layers of Country, and by a similar logic you can connect across the layers of this book too. And all of these elements of this book's 'tapestry' are created for educators, students, and researchers working on practical projects advancing Indigenous aspirations, or those in practice seeking to apply tools that embed Indigenous knowledge on its own, or interface it with the best knowledge from more traditional academic practice.

The two case examples below convey the attitude with which we hope readers will regard the material in *Indigenous Management: Knowledges and Frameworks*. The first, on Dr. Seuss's book *Come Over to My House*, outlines how the knowledges and frameworks included here should not be viewed as primitive, lesser-developed or limited when compared to conventional Euro-centric approaches to management. But nor should they be seen as special, extraordinary or especially 'inspirational' in some 'new age' fashion. They should be seen as *normal approaches to management*. Perhaps ones that you haven't encountered before, ones that are different from your experience, but if that is the case they should be seen as interesting and valid. This book seeks to normalise these approaches so that more people learn from and use them, not to put them on a pedestal or observe them as if they are an exhibit behind glass.

The second case example, *Pepa 9*, tells of how Indigenous approaches do not need to be seen as separate from others, or kept pure. In the real world and in the lives of real people they come together and co-exist. Creative development can come from the respectful blending of approaches. *Pepa 9* tells the tale of how the Indigenous people of Rarotonga combined the European technology of the printing press with their own curiosity about other Indigenous peoples and what could be learnt from them: about them, and about their own people and ways too.

This is the kind of 'two-eyed seeing' approach that we hope readers can develop or enhance through their engagement with materials in this book: bring your own ways of viewing management but explore how they may be challenged or improved with the other eyes that you will encounter (See Indigenous Framework 1.3 at the end of this chapter).

Box 1.1: The Problem With (and Good of) Dr. Seuss's 'Come Over to My House'

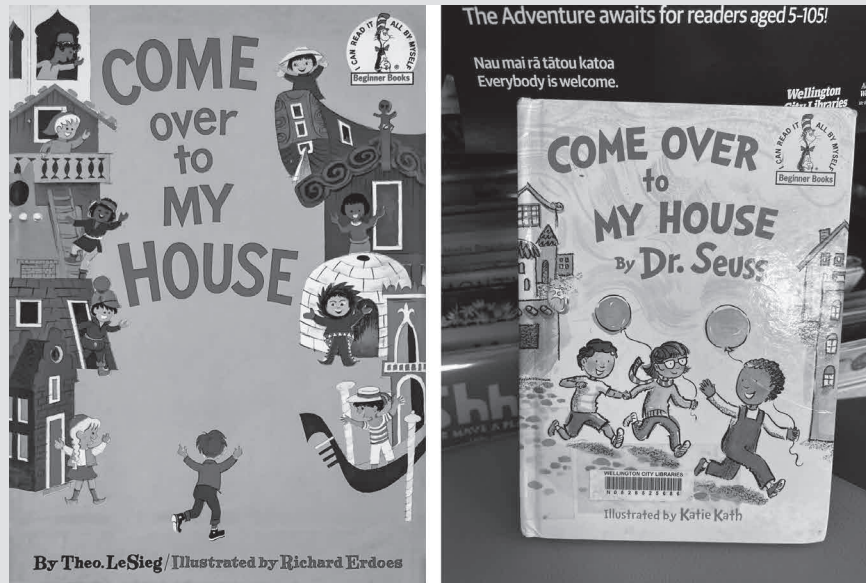


Figure 1.3 The Original (Left) and Recent (Right) Covers of *Come Over to My House*

Source: Photograph by Stephen Cummings at Island Bay Library, Te Whanganui-a-Tara

For many people of a certain age, their first encounter with Indigenous cultures might have been a book written by Theo LeSieg (a.k.a. Dr Seuss). Published in 1966, *Come Over to My House* – particularly its artwork (which wasn't done by Seuss) – reflects many of the problems prevalent in a Euro-centric view of Indigenous peoples 60 years ago: As one critic put it, a: 'white male protagonist travels from one stereotype about people's dress and housing to another across the globe' (Figure 1.3 left). For this reason, it is almost impossible to find a copy of the original book in a public library today.

However, a new version is now prevalent (Figure 1.3 right). With more thoughtful representations, that no longer make a white male the protagonist observer who leads and oversees everyone else, and a few other tweaks, the book's words and message are given new life.

This message is best expressed in the refrain 'Come over to my house, come over and play...' where in each instance other peoples are seen to be kind and their lives interesting. It leans into and encourages a 'childlike' curiosity for learning and engagement.

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There is now a book that uses Seuss's format to show kids and families living with disabilities (the word author Eliza Hull chooses, purposefully, to use). Hull explains her aim is to show that the kids and families in her version of *Come Over to My House* are not tragic, worse off or to be looked down upon; but nor are they to be put up on a pedestal as exotic inspirations that should make others 'thankful' for what they have. They are just normal: different but normal. As Hull's interviewer in the podcast listed below says: 'sometimes the most radical acts are acts of normalization'. And our aim in this book is to project stories about Indigenous management that may seem novel, interesting and insightful, but should also be seen as *different but normal* ways of managing.

References and Further Resources:

- ABC News. (2022, September 21). Eliza Hull on the importance of inclusive play in her new picture book. *ABC News*. <https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/lifematters/eliza-hull-on-inclusive-play-in-her-new-picture-book-come-over-t/101460760>.
- Tom, G. [@GrandpaTom]. (2022). *Come over to my house by Dr Seuss read by Grandpa Tom*. Youtube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wkT8YonixVM>.

Box 1.2: Pepa 9 – Introducing Different Indigenous Peoples

In the middle of nineteenth century a printing press was set up on Rarotonga, the main island of the group that came to be known as the Cook Islands in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. It was brought to the island by a missionary named Aaron Buzacot and was used to print a variety of educational materials. During this period Rarotonga, partly due to the work of the press, had one of the highest literacy rates in the world.

Buzacot was also active in training local people to operate the press, and in 1849, while Buzacot was back in England working on a translation of the Bible, it was used to print posters they called Pepa that could be used to pin up and make interesting topics cheaply and widely available for people to discuss.

Buzacot makes no mention of the Pepa in his memoirs, even though he describes other items produced on the press in some detail. This has led some library historians to suggest that the Pepa were produced by local people for local people on topics they thought interesting.

One of these, Pepa 9, introduces the indigenous Sami people of northern Scandinavia to the indigenous people of Rarotonga. It describes the Sami's distinctive culture: how the position of the sun would change through the seasons (something hard to comprehend for people who lived near the equator) leaving them in darkness at some times of the year and all-day light in others; and the nature of snow – kiona in Cook Island Māori – which translates as water-stone. It goes on to explain the extraordinary: that snow is a white substance that falls from high in the sky in a form

similar to feathers of a chicken. This made it so cold that the Sami men and women (pictured) had to wear clothing made from animal skins!

Pepa 9 depicted another Indigenous culture, one that like theirs managed their lives in accordance with the conditions of their land, and one quite other from the French and British people the Rarotongan's had encountered living removed from their land. It shows a curiosity for how different people, similarly adapted their cultures in clever ways to suit their conditions. In ways not better or worse than there's, just different. And, to any human, fascinating.

References and Further Resources:

Auckland Libraries [@AucklandLibraries]. (2022). *The Pepa trail – printing in rarotonga*. Youtube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BYYnNKbzTts>
 Ngako: The collections podcast - learning about Lapland in Rarotonga. (2024). SoundCloud. <https://soundcloud.com/auckland-libraries/learning-about-lapland-in-rarotonga>

Both of the case examples above illustrate the advantages of what has been termed 'Two-eyed seeing': regarding knowledges, Indigenous and otherwise, equally, and seeking to utilise both in a balanced and fruitful way (as we outline in Indigenous Framework box #3).

Indigenous Framework 1.3: Two-Eyed Seeing

A concept that has gained wide currency in Indigenous research is that of 'two-eyed seeing'. This concept is credited to Canadian Mi'kmaq Elder Albert Marshall, whose view is represented as 'learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the strengths of Western knowledges and ways of knowing, and to using both these eyes together, for the benefit of all'.

Although the concept originates in a Canadian Indigenous setting, its impact is meant to stand for the intersection of a multitude of Indigenous and mainstream Western sciences. As Bartlett et al. explain: 'one might wish to talk about Four-Eyed Seeing, or Ten-Eyed Seeing, etc'. In fact, a very similar conception exists in various other traditions. In Aotearoa New Zealand: Macfarlane et al.'s, *He Awa Whiria* (the braiding of the knowledge streams); and in Quechua worldviews particularly through *yanantin*, *masintin* and *ayni*. These conceptions offer deeply rooted, relational ways of holding multiple knowledges – making them strong philosophical cousins.

This approach does not just mean pasting together bits of Indigenous perspective and Western scientific outlooks, but, as Wright et al., put it, integrating them in a thoughtful way that allows the two eyes to see more together than just two single views

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transposed. It is tempting to think of the way that two-eyed seeing is what enables depth perception in normal vision.

The two-eyed seeing approach is seen as a force for decolonising and re-Indigenizing, elevating the Indigenous perspective in contrast to the dismissive view often held of it, and requiring a collaborative approach with Indigenous peoples in research that concerns them. It adopts a 'strength-based' perspective on Indigenous research, recognising the assets and resources of Indigenous communities and avoiding stereotypical views of weakness and vulnerability. (In keeping with this framework, half of the contributors to this book are Indigenous, and half non-Indigenous allies).

A good example of moving from a Euro-centric, or conventional 'one-best way' management attitude to a Two-eyed Seeing perspective, are the changes in recent thinking being applied to managing wildfire risk in Australia. Until recently, Indigenous people's knowledge about how to live with 'Country' and manage fires in Australia's climate and the concept of 'cultural burning' (or burning in controlled ways based on inter-generational knowledge of the land to reduce the threat or uncontrollable blazes), was dismissed as primitive and foolish as the Australian authorities sought to deploy the best European knowledge they could to protect their 'properties'. It was, however, becoming increasingly obvious that this was not working. Now, Indigenous knowledge is being re-visited and re-appreciated by Australia's regional governments. Integrating cultural burning with the latest scientific technologies, and more thoughtful relationships with Country in a joint approach, is recognised as the way to address the existential threat that wildfires pose in this part of the world (you can read more about this case in Part II of this book in Chapter 21).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER RESOURCES

- A new history of management explainer video.* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g8OnW6E36oU>
- RURUKU strategy development canvas explainer video.* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yqOr_X7QOLs
- Bartlett, C., Marshall, M., & Marshall, A. (2012). Two-eyed seeing and other lessons learned within a co-learning journey of bringing together indigenous and mainstream knowledges and ways of knowing. *Journal of Environmental Studies and Sciences*, 2(4), 331–340.
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EVERYDAY FORMS OF LEADERSHIP TO CARRY WITH YOU

Jeff Ganohalidoh Corntassel

First words: Osiyo nigada. Jeff Ganohalidoh Corntassel dagwado'a. Tsalagi ayetli agwenasv'i. Echota galsgisgo'i. Jean agitsi nole Gary agidoda. Dagwaltina'i Westville, Ogalahoma nole Huntington Beach, California ane ha. Nigohilv tsigesvi ane he'i Ani Lekwungen nole Ani W̱SÁNEĆ ahani tsitsinela'i nogwu.

Hello everyone. My name is Jeff Ganohalidoh Corntassel. I'm a citizen of the Cherokee nation and I dance at the Echota ceremonial grounds in Tahlequah, Oklahoma. My parents, Jean and Gary, live in California. I live with my family on the unceded territories of the Lekwungen and W̱SÁNEĆ nations and peoples, whose relationships with these lands and waters shape their political thought, governance and self-determining authority that should inform how we all relate to this place. As I share these opening words, I pose two interrelated questions to promote accountability as a visitor to Salish lands and waters: how will the lands, waters and communities benefit from my time here? And how do we go beyond land acknowledgements to take everyday actions that make space for Indigenous resurgence?

According to the late Cherokee Elder, Benny Smith, 'Cherokee is for everyone'. I admit that I cringed a little when Benny first told me this. After all, the Cherokee Nation has experienced over five hundred years of violent colonisation, including the decimation of our peoples from deadly diseases as well as removal from our original homelands in 1838–39, and subsequent attempts to dispossess us from our lands/waters, languages, ceremonies and relationships that we consider sacred. Based on this ongoing colonial legacy, I questioned whether anyone outside of our nation's citizens had a right to access our knowledge systems, stories and cultural practices. However, after reflecting on Benny's statement over the years, I have taken a different perspective on it. Cherokee knowledge is meant to be shared – not taken, misused or appropriated by others, but *shared* with others.

Cherokee is a worldview and way of life that has sustained us for over 10,000 years and has the potential to help others. The Cherokee notion of gadugi, for example, means that no one person is left to face life's challenges alone. Gadugi is about helping each other out and promoting a sense of community camaraderie. Similar to gadugi, Cherokee principles and practices are meant to help others. The generosity and practice of gadugi in our community is still strong after withstanding dire threats to our very survival. The depth and strength of our community relationships are embodied by our collective and individual resilience and resurgence. As an old Cherokee adage goes, when confronted by adversity, we survive, adapt, prosper and excel. Our nation has gone through these stages multiple times, which is why we think beyond an immediate threat to the implications for future generations having the ability to prosper and excel. Cherokee is for everyone as our lessons and stories of resilience and strength are to be shared so that future generations thrive.

In the spirit of Cherokee is for everyone, I will share a Cherokee leadership model that Benny graciously taught me. From there, I will discuss everyday actions and forms of mobilisation that Indigenous peoples engage in to promote their resilience and resurgence.

A Cherokee notion of leadership starts with the individual. That person has a dream or a vision that is so vivid, it compels them to action. That dream might be about revitalising an Indigenous language, working to perpetuate the culture in some way, or some other aspiration. And while these stages aren't all sequential, a follow-up is to incorporate this new change or action into your everyday life. If this change is to become transformative for others, you have to model and embody that transformative action. Again, this might entail speaking the language every day or finding new ways to honour those intimate relationships you have with humans, lands/waters, animal nations, plant nations or other aspects of the natural world. The part that can be most difficult is the next stage, which is making the vision relatable to others. It becomes most relatable through those daily actions and by describing the impacts the actions have on our lands, cultures, and communities. This is where most people fail to convey the significance of the actions they are taking. The actions bring the dream to life but in order to bring wider change, people need to see how they fit into the larger picture. Sharing stories and teachings help people relate to these actions within a larger community context.

Leadership is effective when the shift focuses from individual action to collective action. The final stage is mobilising people for change. Unlike several top-down leadership models that start with the premise of mobilising people at the beginning stages, the Cherokee model of leadership that I have described is relational. It's also premised on the timeline of the individual who had the dream or vision, which can take months, years or a lifetime to fulfil. This is really an embodiment of leadership by example. People take their cues from individuals who exemplify leadership through relational responsibility, gadugi and quality thinking. In this community-driven model of leadership, where the people lead, the leaders follow.

I have been thinking about a Cherokee notion of leadership for several years now and find that new lessons continue to unfold. One area that I have focused on is the everyday aspects of leadership. What are the things that we do every day to promote our health and well-being? How are we honouring and protecting our intimate spaces, whether in family settings, among kin, in ceremony and other places where we can fully express our spirituality? I have found that most people regard everyday actions as routine or mundane. However, these often unseen and unacknowledged everyday actions are vital to our futures as Indigenous peoples. In these everyday actions, our creativity, our intellect, our heartfelt emotions and our humour take centre stage. Everyday conversations, prayers, foods, stories and relationships may not seem revolutionary on the surface, but they form the groundwork for future large-scale actions and mobilisations.

It is also important to think about Indigenous-led resurgence as a key component of everyday leadership. Resurgence entails turning away from the state and other heteropatriarchal, and colonial institutions in order to focus on complex and intimate relationships to lands/waters, communities and cultural practices. This reframing of decolonisation includes centering Indigenous nationhood and leadership in everyday ways so that future generations will thrive. Resurgence also invites solidarity from settlers but on terms that Indigenous peoples establish and safeguard in their leadership roles.

When one looks more closely at everyday acts of resurgence, they are expressions of love for the land and our communities. It is through these everyday acts of resurgence and leadership that we transcend colonial barriers and focus on reinvigorating and perpetuating ancestral practices that promote our health and well-being. Everyday forms of leadership and resurgence can promote transformative actions that strengthen and renew our longstanding connections with lands/waters, cultural practices and communities.

What are some things that you do every day to promote your health and well-being?

What are some powerful dreams or visions you've had during your life? How did they impact you? And finally, a big one, what does solidarity with Indigenous-led resurgence look and feel like for you?

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