Presented by Gary Pritchard

INDIGENOUS PLACE MAKING & ETHICAL SPACE

“We are all Indigenous People on this planet, and we have to reorganize our thinking to get along.”
WELCOMING AND OPENING
WHAT WE ARE GOING TO SHARE TODAY WHILE WE ARE TOGETHER

Our Virtual Learning Place
- understanding ethical space and place making,
- slowing down and avoiding the dumpster fire,
- prior to venturing out on your next project, and
- a fireside chat.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada defines reconciliation as an “ongoing process of establishing and maintaining long term relationships.”
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

• Before we begin our journey of understanding these topics, I would like to acknowledge the contributions of Elder Dr. Reg Crowshoe and Elder Larry McDermott.

• I am very fortunate to have Elder McDermott in my life to help me understand my role in conservation and to helping all people.
BUT BEFORE WE BEGIN

Remember, Canada is a vast and diverse country. Each region opportunity and has distinct challenges.

If you look at BC, it is largely without treaty, Quebec has a unique civil law and historical realities. Ontario has some of the oldest and most difficult colonial treaties.

And of course, the Indigenous peoples across this country are as diverse as the land itself.
PLEASE UNDERSTAND

• That these two terms are not truly the same.
• People tend to interchange them which is incorrect.
• Misuse of terms can lead to poor gathering outcomes.
• Each idea or concept has a role and a place in reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.
WHAT IS ETHICAL SPACE?

• In June 2017, Elder Crowshoe and Elder McDermott lead the members of ICE in a Pipe Ceremony to demonstrate the intent to collaborate and co-create an ethical space to work together over the course of the following year to help create the Pathway Targets. For some members of the committees, the Pipe Ceremony was new and unknown, but it opened the hearts of all who participated to do what was needed in a Good Way.

How do you define ethical space?

• The focus of ethical space is on creating a place for knowledge systems to interact with mutual respect, kindness, generosity and other basic values and principles. All knowledge systems are equal; no single system has more weight or legitimacy than another.

• One system does not need the other to “corroborate” it to achieve internal validity. For example, the written system does not always need archaeological evidence to provide sound “proof” of an Indigenous practice or story.
While agreeing to formally enter ethical space may be straightforward for most parties, actually being within that space together requires flexibility. Parties may frequently need to adjust to change, surprise, and other factors that cannot be envisioned at the initial stage.

What is meant by that statement?

Why do you think I flagged this as an area of issue or concern?
• While engaged in ethical space, no party can claim to have achieved (or even entered into) processes of consultation or accommodation as defined under existing or previous provincial or federal legislation or policies. That is not the purpose of ethical space.

• With opportunity comes risk. Indigenous Peoples are understandably hesitant to (re)build or establish relationships of trust with settler governments. The usurpation and dispossession of lands, territories and waters still resonates in the lived realities of Indigenous Peoples across Canada. In addition, Indigenous systems of knowledge, language, laws, customs, protocols and practices have never been respected as such.
TWO-EYED SEEING & ETHICAL SPACE

• **Ethical Space** cannot be cultivated without Two-Eyed-Seeing, which is the practice of learning to see using two knowledge systems, drawing on both to guide discovery and problem solving. It is within this **Ethical Space** that all collaboration, mutual support, and multi-directional knowledge sharing occurs.

• In Larry’s words, “ethical space was part of how this country came together, practiced in 1764 Treaty-making. Ethical space, in essence, [is] our laws. John Borrows calls these laws ‘gifts’, of which there are seven: **Love, Humility, Courage, Generosity, Respect, Truth**, and **Wisdom**. Wisdom comes last, and love comes first, as the Creator, the Great Spirit, the activation of creation comes from love; love is also the underpinning of the Canadian constitution.
Those Seven Sacred Gifts were organized into a methodology for western and indigenous cultures to engage one another, specifically academically.

This methodology was founded on parallel governance, with a ‘western business model’ on one side, and oral traditional governance on the other. The goal is not to blend them, but to allow both disciplines to thrive. Ethical space is everything between those parallels, where bridges can exist. For example, a smudge is equivalent to the gavel and the Seven Sacred Gifts are equivalent to Robert’s Rules of Order.”

Robert’s Rules of Order: A guide for running meetings effectively and efficiently, based on the procedures used in the British parliament. The principles included in the handbook are applicable to any decision-making organization, from Congress to community club committees.
GUIDANCE ON ACHIEVING ETHICAL SPACE

• Remember the knowledge systems shared in the space are to complement the other. Not validate or limit the other. Most certainly not dominant or command the other.

• Should be co-facilitated by a knowledge keeper or Elder from each knowledge system.

• When and where possible, have a balanced circle!

• The first gathering of minds should be focused on relationship building interactions not business. Learn and share from each other.

• Should have both forms of knowledge transfer, the Western written and Indigenous oral methodologies.

• Should be opened and closed in a good way, through the use of ceremony.

So, what do I mean by creating a balanced circle?
SO WHAT IS INDIGENOUS PLACE MAKING THEN?

• **The focus:** “How the design and programming of the built environment of settler cities have contributed to the invisibility of Indigenous peoples and minimizing their cultural influence.”

• Place making is broadly understood as employing a community’s strengths to create a presence in public spaces that reflects that community’s identity, health, and well-being.

*Western Technical Definitions:* Place is the centering of individual and shared meaning among a community (Relph 1976). It is where individuals and groups find meaning in their environment and the act of place making assists cultural and social capital (Lewicka 2013).
Indigenous place making is aimed at restoring Indigenous presence in Canada through art and design that is created, produced, and driven by Indigenous communities and underpinned by Indigenous knowledge.
PROJECT DEVELOPMENT & PROGRAMING

Through a place making lens

• Your approach in an Indigenous context means incorporating the spiritual, the emotional, the physical and the mental ways of being into urban development at multiple levels.

• Urban Indigenous communities have a strong emphasis on collaboration, are grounded in traditional values/principles, work with traditional Knowledge Keepers, such as Elders and healers, and can provide strong resources to help move the agenda forward on Indigenous place making.
SLOW DOWN!

It is so easy to get caught up in the inner workings of your project(s) or operations. You are excited about the outcomes and want to share it with all that will listen.

Prior to setting off on your quest to create any form of space, please consider:

• Cultural Understanding of the First Nation Reconciliation Process,
• Local Understanding of the Indigenous Communities in which they would like to build a relationship with,
• Challenges internally with good relationship building or collaboration,
• External factors that make good collaboration difficult,
• Knowledge systems and problematic outcomes,
• Benefits to the local Indigenous communities, and
• The “Why” for a collaboration or duration of collaboration.
PRIOR TO VENTURING OUT ON YOUR OWN

• NO one should ever believe that there is a one size fits all prescribed solution to ethical space or place making.

• But should seek input on how to receive, respect and translate a diversity of stories, perspectives, knowledge (systems), language, ceremonies, cultures and understandings.

• There is no magical “answer” to this topic and no one should ever be looking towards a “finish-line” for this reconciliation in this context.

• These processes are to elevate Indigenous peoples and their world views.
OPENING QUESTIONS

1. If Indigenous peoples were to have a role in your project, what does that role look like? Have you given consideration to the constraint(s) to the peoples you want to work with?

2. How do you go about “making room” for Indigenous peoples in your daily work or projects?

3. What does reconciliation mean in the context of the work you do or on how you or Canadians operate today?
What do you see as barriers/opportunities to creating ethical space and embracing indigenous place making?
Avoiding the project dumpster fire!

This is typically the time when Indigenous environmental leaders, knowledge keepers and Elders are brought in.

Hopefully, we can avoid this current trend since it is difficult even for Indigenous supporters or leaders to solve. If we plan early and create a safe space all differences can be identified, clarified and resolved.
Thoughts to leave you with on the need for a paradigm shift in the conservation sector.

- We all have a responsibility to be true stewards to the land,
- We need to create a space where all are welcome,
- Recognize the integral role of Indigenous peoples as leaders in conservation,
- Respect the rights, responsibilities and priorities of the Indigenous community,
- Maximize conservation outcomes, and
- Build support and participation for conservation with the broader community.
MIIGWETCH
&
THANK YOU

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