

# Circle of Knowledge Episode 1 – Lewis Cardinal

- Conor Kerr: Today on the Circle of Knowledge podcast.
- Conor Kerr: We're really proud today to invite Lewis Cardinal to come and kick off this speaker series. An educator, community advocate, a leader, just an incredibly nice guy. He's handsome, he's got an awesome vest. So let's give Lewis a big warm welcome.
- Lewis Cardinal: The community and the individual are so closely linked to each other, because the individual needs the community, needs the community to grow, to develop, to be nurtured in. But the community also needs the individual.
- Conor Kerr: Tawaw, welcome to the Circle of Knowledge podcast, sponsored by the Edmonton Community Foundation. My name is Conor Kerr and I'll be your host for our conversation today with Lewis Cardinal.
- Conor Kerr: We're really proud today to invite Lewis Cardinal to come and kick off this speaker series. Lewis Cardinal, I've been a very huge fan of his work and everything he's done.
- Conor Kerr: I was quite honored that he was willing to come and join us. I'm not going to speak too much about him here, but I'd just like to introduce him and that he's an educator, a community advocate, a leader, just an incredibly nice guy. He's handsome, he's got an awesome vest.
- Conor Kerr: So let's give Lewis a big warm welcome.
- Lewis Cardinal: Thank you, Conor. I think that's the best introduction I've had in a long time. Keep it simple. I like that philosophy. It's the way I like to do things.
- Lewis Cardinal: Hello, everyone. I'm so happy to see so many of you here considering that fact that it's a little bit chilly outside. I wouldn't be a Canadian or a Cree if I wasn't complaining about the weather all the time.
- Lewis Cardinal: But anyway, I want to thank you for being here, and I also want to acknowledge, of course it's already been done, that we're on Treaty 6 territory. But I also want to acknowledge the personal commitment that treaty applies to us, and I challenge each and every one of you to integrate and internalize that treaty and those treaty relationships that come along with that recognition in yourself.
- Lewis Cardinal: Now, actually I've been kind of given the run of the hall in the sense of how to do this presentation, and initially I was asked to talk about my family's involvement in political activism, my involvement in community advocacy, et cetera, et cetera.

Lewis Cardinal: I tell you, it was a lot more difficult than I thought. So I tried to keep it as simple as I can, and try to make it more of a story and recollection, and collection of ideas and teachings that my ancestors have provided to me, but also with some of my friends and relatives that I've met along the way.

Lewis Cardinal: And that's one thing about being a Cardinal in Alberta is you're pretty much related to everyone. Hence the saying, "All my relations," or "We're all related," 'cause we pretty much are, when it comes down to that.

Lewis Cardinal: The title of my presentation is called Carrying the Bundle Forward: The Future Belongs to Our Children.

Lewis Cardinal: That underlies the basis of what I believe leadership is about, what I believe community advocacy is about. Because, when we do things, we don't do things for ourselves. We do things because it needs to be done, but we also do things 'cause we know it's important to recognize the future generations so that our work always pays itself forward.

Lewis Cardinal: I want to go back in history with my family, and in doing this, it was difficult for me to pick which pictures and where to start with the family, 'cause the family is so broad and so wide, but here it goes.

Lewis Cardinal: I want to first acknowledge my grandparents, Frank and Agnes Cardinal who are in the center, and Harold Cardinal, my uncle Harold who was well known later in the Indigenous movement back in the late 60s and early 70s.

Lewis Cardinal: That handsome gentleman to the right looks a lot like my son Hunter Cardinal, but he's actually my father, Don Cardinal. Don and Harold were leaders in the Indian Association of Alberta back in from '68 to '74, I think were the years, and they did some significant work that really changed the way Canada sees Indigenous rights within the constitution and within the work that we're seeing today in reconciliation.

Lewis Cardinal: But, the gentleman in the middle and my grandmother, she was the real power behind the throne. She made all those jackets, and that became quite a symbol for our family during the times. Everybody had a jacket, or everybody had a vest, and it was made by her hands. She tanned the hide, she did everything. She beaded them and everything. Her maiden name was Agnes Cunningham. The Cunningham family then. Again, once you plug into the Cunningham family complex, you are then related to every Metis in the country as well.

Lewis Cardinal: The little guy in the back on my grandfather's [inaudible 00:05:30] was the first Indian to do a photobomb, I think it was. Still don't know who that is, and I'm asking all my relatives, "Who was that guy?"

Lewis Cardinal: "I don't know."

Lewis Cardinal: And I say, "Well, maybe it's the future looking over our shoulders."

Lewis Cardinal: But, anyway, I want to go back a little bit more. My grandfather started his ... he was a young man when he was asked to become the chief of Sucker Creek First Nation. I think it was in 1939 when he was appointed by a council of Elders, because in 1939 the First Nations on the Southern shore of the Lesser Slave Lake in Treaty 8 had divided up. It used to be one big band with Kinosew being the chief, and then all of the bands, or, the First Nations now... All the First Nations had a headman, is what we called them. We call them counselors today.

Lewis Cardinal: But, they came along at a time when they saw what was happening in the residential schools, they saw the disappearance of their treaty rights, they also saw the disappearance of their human rights, and their civil rights as Indigenous people. And this picture was taken in 1946, not very far from this building. In 1946 the Indian Association of Alberta was meeting to gather their thoughts around what was called at the time the Joint House Committee on Indian Affairs. Joint House being the Senate and the House of Commons.

Lewis Cardinal: They met to discuss what their issues were and what they needed to address at House of Commons, and why it was important for them to do so. Of course, education and the residential schools were at the top of the list in this regard. But the interesting thing about this picture, while it's an historical picture, and to have a listing of all the names of these people in this photograph that I have yet to release, but my grandfather is up in the center, and I don't know if I get this to work ... no, I guess not.

Lewis Cardinal: But anyway, take my word for it. He's a young looking, handsome guy. His name is Frank Cardinal. He was one of the founders of the Indian Association of Alberta.

Lewis Cardinal: The interesting thing about this, is that at this time, it was illegal for Indigenous people to meet in any number greater than 12. Unless you had a clergy, unless you had an Indian affairs agent, unless you had an RCMP in presence taking the minutes and recording what was being said.

Lewis Cardinal: In the center you see John Lori, no disparagement to him, but he worked really well and close with the Indigenous community. A number of these leaders actually adopted him into their family.

Lewis Cardinal: They had a good relationship, but this was the way that they could meet at the time. I was asking my grandfather, I said, "how did you guys organize yourself in the north, when you couldn't meet for political purposes without having the police or the clergy watching over you?"

Lewis Cardinal: He told me that, he goes, "Well, that was pretty simple." He said, "you know us Cree, eh? We like to hunt."

Lewis Cardinal: So what he was saying was that, when they would go hunting, they would always organize that they would tell their Indian agent that they're going hunting and they'll be back on this day. But all these leaders would do the same thing at the same time, and then they'd all meet out in the woods somewhere, in the bush somewhere, and then they'd start to organize, and that.

Lewis Cardinal: So they put together a very comprehensive assessment of what the issues were affecting Indigenous people, particularly here in Alberta. So much so, that in 1947 they then went to Ottawa. There was a train load of them. Again, my grandfather's second from the left.

Lewis Cardinal: They look like a bunch of gangsters, don't they? Yeah.

Lewis Cardinal: Anyway, but they were going. Brave as they were, they were making their way to Ottawa. There were more of them that were there. I think about, maybe 16 to 20 altogether.

Lewis Cardinal: But, when they got to Winnipeg the police got on board and removed half of them. Because, they said, they didn't have permission to leave the reserve. So they were taken off. But that didn't deter them.

Lewis Cardinal: They kept going, And they finally made their way to Ottawa. The interesting thing about this picture is, in 1947 when they went to address the house joint committee ... It's interesting, we say joint committee today and it means something totally different, considering what happened on October 17th.

Lewis Cardinal: Anyway, they made their way there, but on their way there, they were told that they weren't allowed to go to the House of Commons. Because at that time they were still wards of the court, children of the state, and that the children didn't need to go and make their arguments.

Lewis Cardinal: It was illegal for Indigenous people to defend their treaty rights, or to have a lawyer to defend them. It was against the law for a lawyers to defend Indigenous people at the time.

Lewis Cardinal: So, they had to go through a series of questioning to find out what it was they're going to say, so forth and so on. Then, they had to get an injunction to lift that ban, because it was illegal for a First Nations person to put a foot on the House of Commons at the time.

Lewis Cardinal: So that's the struggle that they had to go through just to get into the House of Commons. So they finally did make their way into the House of Commons, did read their list of grievances, and then four years later in 1951 the Indian Act was amended. Not only because these guys, but with also other Indigenous leaders from across Canada.

Lewis Cardinal: They changed and amended the Indian Act in 1951 to remove all those strict, strict regulations. From you can defend yourself, you can leave your reserve without permission now, so forth and so on. Of course, it was the start of collecting and regathering our rights as Indigenous people.

Lewis Cardinal: So that's why this is a very special photo for me.

Lewis Cardinal: So, going back, that was the Indian Association. Here's the Indian Association in 1968. So fast forward 20 years. The next generation.

Lewis Cardinal: My uncle Harold here, 1970s, addressing Chretien And Prime Minister Trudeau ... one. And they are presenting what was called the Red Paper. The White Paper was a discussion paper that sought to remove Indigenous rights, so First Nations rights in Canada, and the reserves that we lived on. The Indigenous Chiefs and the Elders provided a countermeasure.

Lewis Cardinal: It was called Citizens Plus, but tongue-in-cheek we called it the red paper, to counter the white paper that was happening. In so much, that when the Queen came in 1973, because in Canada we did have a meeting with the Queen. There Harold, and the Chiefs, and my grandfather, and all these other folks were there to present the importance of the treaties, and the importance of how her government in Canada needed to recognize the treaties.

Lewis Cardinal: Now, this was the environment that my brother and I grew up in, was during the heyday of the movement back in '68 and '74. So we were very familiar with the events that happened. Usually my father liked to bring this us all the meetings and stuff. He would bring us to places where we had to walk up a mountain trail and find an Elder on the side of a hill, and sit and talk with them so that they could get direction.

Lewis Cardinal: Because the cool thing about the Indian Association of Alberta, is they recognized early on, that if we are going to move forward as Indigenous people, we have to do it in the way that is shaped by our own Indigenous thought, our own Indigenous philosophies, and most importantly our own Indigenous ceremonies. Those have to be the foundation for the Indigenous movement to move forward.

Lewis Cardinal: So, it then became important that Indigenous Elders then became part of that bedrock of how that movement started to go forward.

Lewis Cardinal: Now here's another historical picture. So, they just delivered the Red Paper to the government, Trudeau and his folks, and in the center is Harold Cardinal. He was quite young, I think he was 22 years old, Or 23 years old, at the time. Quite a young visionary leader, but also supported by the wisdom of the Chiefs, and the wisdom of the Elders.

Lewis Cardinal: My father's to the left. He has the book open, the Citizen's Plus paper open. So this has become a very significant thing, because if are going to point a time in history where Indigenous Rights suddenly got to that tipping point, this is the point when that happened.

Lewis Cardinal: Indian affairs, at the time, and the Government of Canada, were truly trying to eradicate Indigenous rights. It was because of these actions of these leaders, and the selflessness.

Lewis Cardinal: Now, they didn't have budgets to travel. They didn't have per diems, say. And I remember my father traveling up North, he used to be followed by the police all the time. The RCMP was, "Make sure you keep an eye on these guys." So they would park the car at a distance, and I remember being taught how to observe if you're being followed, and things like that.

Lewis Cardinal: But they didn't have much money for anything. I remember him buying a bag of apples to take up North, and that was his food for the trip. But what he did was, that he recognized his police officer was over there again. He knew he was there, so he went to him and said "Listen." Knocked on his window and said, "Listen, I have to go to High Level. So, since you are following me why don't we just go together?"

Lewis Cardinal: And they did.

Lewis Cardinal: They did, they traveled up North together and he went about his business. But that was the environment that they were working in at the time. And again, That environment was confirming that tradition of that kind of leadership. So it was done because it needed to be done. And it was done in the way that was going to respect who we were, but also making a future that was going to be better for us all.

Lewis Cardinal: Here's a closer picture of it, and I don't have a list of everyone who is in this. But it certainly is an historical one. Here's my father to the left. Eugene Steinhauer, there. Et cetera, et cetera.

Lewis Cardinal: But these two gentlemen are also a very big part of Canadian history. The person to the left is Moostoos. Moostoos and his brothers, Kinosew and other brothers, had made Treaty Number 8 in 1899 in Willow Point, which is now called Sucker Creek. My First Nation.

Lewis Cardinal: And they saw in the early '80s, 1880s, that there was going to be significant issues coming from the newcomers that were coming into our territories. There was already stress and pressures. There was already starvation starting to happen.

Lewis Cardinal: So we knew, and he knew, that we have to engage in a way that would not resort to violence or conflict. Because they also knew- they're very wise- these

Indigenous guys didn't just speak Cree. They spoke Michif, they spoke French, they spoke English, They had multi-languages. Because they were traders. It was a part of their way of knowing. So they were multilingual. And as you can tell, they dressed pretty fancy to.

Lewis Cardinal: So, Moostoos was the oldest brother. He was more of the spiritual leader of the community. His brother, to the right, Kinosew, was elected or appointed to be our chief. The one who would represent people at negotiations.

Lewis Cardinal: And so, these two then put together Treaty Number 8, and they really significantly contributed to the opening of Alberta. Well, even before Alberta was born, they opened up the North. At the time, until recently, it was the largest treaty that had been made anywhere in the Americas, if not the world, for the amount of land that it opened up to development.

Lewis Cardinal: So, those previous pictures were my first Nations side. And it's significant to know that these two here are my Great-grandparents. Albert Cunningham is to the right, And Betsy Cunningham, also known as Courtoreille, was on the left. This picture was taken about 1899, just right after their wedding.

Lewis Cardinal: Now, the Cunningham family is a significant historical family. I can trace the family back, because I'm a genealogy nerd in this way. I can trace The Cunningham branch of my family back to 1812 when Patrick Cunningham leaves County Sligo, in Ireland, aboard the HMS Taylor.

Lewis Cardinal: Now, he's a part of this idea from Selkirk, if anybody knows who Selkirk was, Lord Selkirk. He decided that he wanted to populate what would become Manitoba with Orkney men, Scottish men, and Irish men. So he sent a ship up there to pick up all these people.

Lewis Cardinal: So they came, and my fifth great-grandfather came on that ship and landed at York Factory In what would become Northern Manitoba. Once he got to York Factory, him and 31 other settlers then made the long journey from Fort York to where Winnipeg is right now. And that group became the first group to settle the Red River Settlement.

Lewis Cardinal: As soon as he got to the Red River settlement, he then married into the Bruce family, which is another large Métis family name. Benjamin Bruce, his father-in-law, Was originally from the Orkney Islands, but his wife, her name was Matilda And she was a Cree woman. So, they had a daughter named Nancy Anne Bruce, and that's the one that he married.

Lewis Cardinal: So, him and Auntie Anne had a few kids, as a large Métis family usually does. They worked in the forts, from Fort Garry all the way to Fort Edmonton here. Right up until it closed down. I think it was in the late 18th century. 1910, something like that.

Lewis Cardinal: But they worked as Clerk Masters, as Paymasters, in many different configurations. Providing food and supplies for the Fort, et cetera, et cetera.

Lewis Cardinal: So, the family, the Cunningham family, then becomes really deeply ingrained, particularly with the three Prairie provinces. From Manitoba, to Saskatchewan, to Alberta. Before the even became provinces, except for Manitoba. Patrick's son, one of his sons, became the first to sit on the first government of Manitoba. The first organized government of Manitoba.

Lewis Cardinal: Similarly, with another ... I think it was a grandson of his, sat in the Early formation of the governments of Saskatchewan.

Lewis Cardinal: This gentleman to the left, Samuel Cunningham. Samuel Cunningham is also known as Captain Sam.

Lewis Cardinal: He was born at Lac St. Anne. His father was the son of Patrick Cunningham. But he was also known as Captain Sam Cunningham. He created a regiment, And all Métis Regiment, in 1885.

Lewis Cardinal: I know Métis don't like to hear this too much, but they had a good thing going here and they wanted to defend what their interests when Riel was resisting in the Northwest Territories. Wanted to protect those interests.

Lewis Cardinal: So he organized this regiment to go to Lac La Biche, and defend Lac La Biche, but the war ended before they could get there, so they turned around and came back to St. Albert.

Lewis Cardinal: He also sat in the first organized government of the Northwest Territories in 1880 to 1882. The gentleman to the right, is Edward Cunningham. Father Edward Cunningham was the first ordained Métis priest, or the first what we would call Aboriginal now days. He was the first Métis priest ordained, just in St. Albert here By Father Grandin.

Lewis Cardinal: He had a huge impact in relations with Indigenous people, and the Métis, and the government at this time.

Lewis Cardinal: Samuel Cunningham, to the left, He then goes up north to Grouard, and the interesting thing is while my third great-grandfather Moostoos and Kinosew were negotiating Treaty 8, he was hired as the interpreter. So, he's on the other side of the table interpreting, in terms of what's happening.

Lewis Cardinal: One of the interesting stories that has been shared with me is that, while he was interpreting, the story goes, There was a reporter from the Edmonton Journal or the Edmonton Bulletin who asked him when looking out at the negotiations, all of the men were up in the front of the tent with Commissioner, all the women were pushed back. The reason for that was because the commissioners noted that they only spoke with the men, because that was the way of the time.



Lewis Cardinal: The women were to be left out of the negotiations. However, within the Cree tradition, women are central to the any negotiation. The oftentimes would lead to strategic direction in terms of negotiation, so they had a huge role to play.

Lewis Cardinal: But, what the journalist saw, was as the commissioners and the men were talking a woman would run out from the back, run up to talk to her husband, run back. And another woman would come running up, talk to her husband, and run back.

Lewis Cardinal: The journalist says, "What's going on with that?" Because, while, since commissioners don't want to talk with the women, the women are telling their men to accept, not to accept, or don't forget to add this into the discussions. So they managed to continue to do that.

Lewis Cardinal: Now, these two gentlemen. Sun Traveler is the progenitor of the Calihoo family in Alberta. Again, the Calihoo family is both Métis and first nations. He came from Caughnawaga. He's our Iroquois connection. So he came then, as a trader, 1820-1823. Right around there he comes up into this territory.

Lewis Cardinal: He does marry into the Indigenous population here. He has, I think, three wives and from that he has, I don't know, 32 kids or something like that.

Lewis Cardinal: One of his children, his oldest, is there. His name is Michel. Michel Calihoo.

Lewis Cardinal: Michel Calihoo signed the adhesion to Treaty Number 6 in 1878. Just not too far on the outskirts of Edmonton. And so, he took this Michel First Nation, which was subsequently disappeared under mysterious circumstances. But he also was a contemporary with Papaschase. So Michel was my third great uncle, And Sun Traveler, that was his Mohawk name, was my fourth. Yeah, I think was my fourth great-grandfather.

Lewis Cardinal: But Papaschase is also my fourth Great uncle, as well. So, we have a close relationship with Treaty signers here, as well as treaty signers in Treaty Number 8.

Lewis Cardinal: So that's Michel.

Lewis Cardinal: And these guys are bringing up that same kind of spirit that these ancestors of mine carry with them. Hunter Cardinal to the left, and Jackie Cardinal to the right. They are applying the Indigenous knowledge, wisdom, and the stories of our Elders and our cultures and our traditions, and applying them into practice. Into the practice of business, into the practice of relationship building.

Lewis Cardinal: Very much carrying on that sense of tradition, so that the future has a better place by creating better opportunity for the people that are here. It's through relations, and relationship building, that we are going to make a difference.

Lewis Cardinal: So, the Indigenous world view, or view the leadership, Has really helped me to focus on some of the work that I've been able to do. And from the key elements that we learn is that all life is sacred, and that everything here has lay for us and it the comes from Mother Earth. And, that we are only a small part, as human beings, of this great mystery we call life.

Lewis Cardinal: We are not androcentric. In other words, we do not put herself in the center of that great circle of life. We are only part of it.

Lewis Cardinal: And also, within that value, we know that balance or harmony, is a major teaching. Across all Indigenous nations. That we must maintain balance and harmony. So that we do not harm ourselves, but we also do not harm The future for our children. Nor do we harm the environment, or any of those kind of relations, For other people as well.

Lewis Cardinal: From that we recognize that we are spiritual beings. We recognize that to honor our spiritual sides. As a whole human being, We recognize that her spirit is important, our mind is important, to keep that sharp. Our physical body and keeping that in balance is important. And your relationships, or your emotions. Keeping those four elements in balance is what really makes a human being, truly a human being.

Lewis Cardinal: And, to walk in a sacred manner, again, is to keep those values and principles of harmony and sacredness in everything that you do, Because we are deeply interconnected to many, many different things about around us. We are not separate. We have not moved ourselves away from the relationships that we have all around us.

Lewis Cardinal: We are a part of it, And what we do does have an effect on what others do as well.

Lewis Cardinal: Because of that great council of life, when we're sitting in that position, we have an obligation or responsibility to speak for those who cannot speak for themselves. And when you see on the news Indigenous people protesting about protecting Mother Earth, protecting the rivers, protecting the forests, they are doing that because of the sacred commitment. It is an obligation on our part.

Lewis Cardinal: We have to make sure that the animals, the plants, and everything that is here is maintained in that balance and harmony. And of course, through that respect and honesty, becomes a foundational principles Of how that relationship is to be maintained.

Lewis Cardinal: Within time, the concept of time, is about how when we hold ceremonies we have to go through certain things in order to complete it. Rather than say we're going to start a sweat lodge at 2 o'clock and will be done at 3:30-

Automated: Here's what I found on the web for protect-

Lewis Cardinal: Sorry.

Lewis Cardinal: We have to say, "Well, we have seen four songs per round. And then we have to do four rounds." And could take 45 minutes. It could take two or three hours, depending on who you're sitting in his lodge with.

Lewis Cardinal: Time becomes another way of looking at how you maintain that relationship, by ensuring the steps that are necessary to acquire the ends that you want.

Lewis Cardinal: Relationships, again, must be maintained. By doing that you are respecting and honoring identities and voices of other people. Because, each person who was born, the other women say and have taught me, is that every person that is born is in response to prayer from someone in your community, someone in your family.

Lewis Cardinal: Someone in your nation at one time, prayed to the Creator for an answer. Prayed to the Creator for a direction. So they sent you. You came down, with your uniqueness, and your gifts. And, As the women say, when the babies are small and when they're born their hands a little tiny fists, like that, because they're carrying those gifts directly from the creator And it's our responsibility as parents, his relatives, as teachers, as a community member, To create a safe and nurturing place where we can open those hands So those gifts can be revealed.

Lewis Cardinal: By creating that nurturing environment you're allowing the person to grow into the purposefulness of their life and the reason why they are here. By creating that safe place, by creating that giving place, those gifts that that child will aspire to, will certainly provide gifts for the generations to come.

Lewis Cardinal: So, while we look after our children in a good way, and we make sure that spaces is there, and we make sure that nurturing is there, we are actually helping the future along with that, as well.

Lewis Cardinal: And of course, each family is also unique. While each person is unique, each family also has its own characteristics. It has its own way of doing things. I Was just talking with a friend of mine and we were talking about this point.

Lewis Cardinal: And he goes, "Yeah, in your family there seems to be a lot of politicians and people involved in advocacy work."

Lewis Cardinal: Well, yeah, there is.

Lewis Cardinal: And his family are all musicians. Everyone plays something, and everybody's doing something, to one degree or another, in music.

Lewis Cardinal: But that goes back to that point of how each family's unique, and our Elders also teach us that each nation also is unique.

Lewis Cardinal: Each nation has its own ceremonies, its own purposes that it needs to follow. So when we were making treaties back in the day it wasn't just, hey let's settle this land issue, or let's see what we can get, it was about also acknowledging that we as Nations need to acknowledge other Nations and the gifts that they have.

Lewis Cardinal: But, by sharing and learning from those gifts we then become better, because we will learn as well. And that's why sharing becomes important. Because we will learn from you, as well as you will learn from us. And by that sharing of knowledge we become transformed.

Lewis Cardinal: And leadership within that tradition becomes a burden.

Lewis Cardinal: My grandfather taught me that, if you want to be a leader- oh no, he said, "A person who seeks to be a leader, is a fool."

Lewis Cardinal: Because leadership is a burden. Leadership is a heavy responsibility to carry if you take it seriously. Because you need to maintain a sense of balance and fairness within all things that you do, and oftentimes it can be a very difficult thing. But by creating an opportunity to have dialogue, that opportunity to create the space for building a common vision, that can be very difficult work,

Lewis Cardinal: If you don't allow that space each voice then will not be given an opportunity to speak, or to share. When you do that it allows a greater opportunity for different ideas to merge. And perhaps the answer that you're looking for is being held by the quietest person in the meeting. So, if you allow that space for them to speak, and feel safe with space, it's amazing ideas that can be generated.

Lewis Cardinal: Because one of the things that I've learned, in working within community advocacy, is that when we do put our heads together we do tend to create, a consensus, ideas that have longevity. Ideas that speak the immediate needs of the community and not to the ego of an individual.

Lewis Cardinal: So, communication then becomes key. Community becomes a ceremony, and how we carry forward these ideas. And within that, conflict resolution also is centered around consensus and working towards a solution.

Lewis Cardinal: That's why we have sentencing circles, that's why we have talking circles, and healing circles. We are looking to remedy, the solution, so we don't have trip over it again, and again.

Lewis Cardinal: And so, talking circles in my work, I use quite frequently. Because I do not have the answers, and that's another thing that my grandfather told me. He goes, "I don't have the answers. But what I do have is people who are concerned about the issues who can generate some of these answers."

Lewis Cardinal: It is from there that we can create something unique.

Lewis Cardinal: So, leadership, then, from that Indigenous perspective is based on your merit. It's based on who you are. It goes back to what it is that you do. So your actions become your resume.

Lewis Cardinal: And also, it's a part about knowing yourself. So we talk about preparing for leadership we talk about getting to know yourself, and knowing a community as well, and recognizing that it requires a healthy ego. Because politics is a blood sport.

Lewis Cardinal: Community advocacy, when it strongly resisting you, is a difficult thing to do. And if you're not strong enough to deal with it, it can keep you down.

Lewis Cardinal: So, within that tradition leadership then is not a permanent gift of authority. It's actually seen as a temporary gift. So for example, if you are given the responsibility to lead a hunting team, or hunting group, the community will say, "Let's get you, because you're the best hunter among us. Take some men and women with you, and go out and get some meat for us."

Lewis Cardinal: Well, that persons been given authority to tell these people what to do. To follow a certain strategy because of their experience. During the hunt, this person will provide that leadership in that direction in terms of how they're going to get what they need to get.

Lewis Cardinal: Upon returning back to the community, though, once the goal has been met the authority also dissolves. So then it goes back to being consensual within the community.

Lewis Cardinal: Leaders within Indigenous communities are naturally recognized. You don't have to be an elected individual to be a leader. One thing that I noticed within our Indigenous communities, is that there are two forms of leadership. You have the official leadership that the government responds to, et cetera, et cetera, and then you also have an informal leadership within the community.

Lewis Cardinal: Quite often, it's usually women or Elder women who have that kind of authority. And sometimes, and once in a while, it could be the same person who plays both roles.

Lewis Cardinal: But, the community will always identify its leader based on the needs of the community. So there is not one leader fits all, sort of thing. There's always a leader that responds, that is identified to respond, to a particular issue. And that way, a community builds on its strengths.

Lewis Cardinal: It recognizes that this person can do something really well, and it recognizes that this person can do severely well. And depending on the issues and depending on the time, Those are the people that you might want to use to provide leadership for you. So it's a transformational leadership model.

Lewis Cardinal: So it can move around.

Lewis Cardinal: Now you'll have some traditional leaders who are in a place of ensuring, during those times, in between those times of need, To ensure that the community continues to function, and maintaining that ceremony and communication, and the wellness of the community.

Lewis Cardinal: The leaders keep the people together. And move in its chosen direction.

Lewis Cardinal: One thing that I've learned about that, is that when the people lead, the leaders follow. By allowing that opportunity for the community to come and identify its needs and set the agenda, the leaders recognize that they have to follow what the people need. If they are going to be, in fact, true leaders.

Lewis Cardinal: And again, the old adage about being like grass. As a leader you have to be flexible and resilient. And that's a teaching within the sweetgrass braid, as well.

Lewis Cardinal: So, a good leader also creates opportunities for others to excel and prosper. It doesn't take the profits, it Doesn't take the opportunities for themselves. A good leader can be measured by what opportunities they've created for other people in the community.

Lewis Cardinal: It also helps young leadership to develop. I've seen too many leaders push aside young leadership and not provide the opportunity to learn about leadership. That good leader needs to be able to create those opportunities for the next generations to take their place. And the only way that they can get it, is by engaging in some real and meaningful leadership opportunities.

Lewis Cardinal: And of course, a good leader role models the principles and values of the community or the nation that they represent. But also being like a hunter. Very keen and aware of the environment, and its subtle changes.

Lewis Cardinal: So not only are we good hunters, and we can read the lay of the land, and read what the tracks are saying, or what the geese are saying when they're flying over, but you have to be sharp in recognizing The fluidity within your community. Where things are going.

Lewis Cardinal: So you have to be observant.

Lewis Cardinal: These are skills that can be acquired. Again, the use of ceremony, the use of leadership opportunities, that sort of thing. Because within the Indigenous tradition- I should step back- within the Western European tradition The balance of power is usually the individual over the collective. Right?

Lewis Cardinal: The individual over the collective. That's a priority.

Lewis Cardinal: Within the Communist tradition they put the collective over the individual, as having a dominance.

Lewis Cardinal: Within the Indigenous traditions, we have the individual and the collective like this ... in a continuous seesaw. In the center, the fulcrum of this, then, is ceremony.

Lewis Cardinal: Because, we've seen when a community starts to dominate an individual begins pressing them. But we've also seen at the other way as well. Where very strong minded individual can dominate the community and oppress them.

Lewis Cardinal: The ceremonies keep us in balance. Like this. Sometimes it swings one way, sometimes it swings the other. But by utilizing ceremony and communication, the traditional Indigenous leadership provides this balance within a community.

Lewis Cardinal: Because the individual needs the community, and the community needs the individual. They are the same. That's when the symbol of the circle is very powerful. Because at the same time, that circle represents you, on the other hand the circle represents everyone.

Lewis Cardinal: So, you are one and the whole at the same time.

Lewis Cardinal: The sign of the circle is the oldest human symbol. Found in cave art going all the way back 60,000 years, And it means the same thing. It is the sign of the Creator as well.

Lewis Cardinal: So, we also as a community, and individuals, are a part of that great Creator. So we have that creator within us.

Lewis Cardinal: There'll be a test after.

Lewis Cardinal: So, next-generation leadership. The way that I envision it, what I'm seeing already starting to happen which fills my heart with great hope, is there's this old saying that I learned when I lived- well, from the north.

Lewis Cardinal: "Strong like two people."

Lewis Cardinal: Because the Elders said that, in the future, will have to become very grounded in who we are as Indians, as they would say. But also we have to master the skills of what's around us at that time. We have to become strong in this world, and we have to become strong in our world.

Lewis Cardinal: So you have that duality. You have that dual-culturalism, if you want to call it that as well. But that's what they saw the future as. Never forgetting who we are, and never forgetting how grounded we are to our traditions, our identities, and our languages. But also being able to survive quite well in the world that is being built around us. And we're starting to see that happen.

Lewis Cardinal: We're seeing a rise in Indigenous languages, starting to come back. Institutions like this, are graduating more and more Indigenous people, Not only prepared to meet the professions that are challenged with, but also meeting it equipped with their traditions and knowledges. And that's growing more and more.

Lewis Cardinal: So they're mastering today's tools, education and technology. They're guided by the principles and visions of their people. For me, the best is yet to come. When I see my children doing their work, when I see you students doing your work here. I'm excited. Because I know my grandchildren are going to be living in a better world that I grew up in.

Lewis Cardinal: So thank you, in the future.

Lewis Cardinal: Here's me!

Lewis Cardinal: Have I changed much? I've got a pair glasses.

Lewis Cardinal: But anyway, my Cree name is [Cipeygoesik 00:43:39], and that is Blue Sky. When I was given that name and ceremony as young man, I was told that the purpose of my life is to build bridges between two worlds that don't understand each other. And that's pretty much what I've been doing my whole life, is acting as a bridge, as a go-between.

Lewis Cardinal: Building a bridge not so that we can cross over into the middle, And then meet and shake hands and then go back this way. Actually, to cross all the way across to the other side. Go there, learn the good things that are there, come back and share this with your people. In the opposite is true as well.

Lewis Cardinal: So, when I was given that name I kind of felt a lot of responsibility, there. But, when I was young, when I was this young, I was already mediating fights between my cousins and being the peacemaker, and that sort of thing.

Lewis Cardinal: My father, Don Cardinal, and Bertha Noella Willard-Moostoos- Moostoos is her great ... great grandfather, my mother's great-great-grandfather.

Lewis Cardinal: And this section, talks about adding to the bundle. I remember, "Remember the people." Is what my grandmother taught me. And I remember that one of the very first big political messages I ever got, was when I was about four or five years old. My grandmother had made a new jacket for me. Moose hide jacket.

Lewis Cardinal: And she was fitting it on me. And then, she started to tell me stories about the old days. But she gave me this one teaching where she said, "When you become a man, Grandson, and when you become successful in taking care of yourself and taking care of your family, remember to turn and help those people up who cannot help themselves. They will need help. There are those who will need help."



Lewis Cardinal: "But always remember the people, and do things for them when you can."

Lewis Cardinal: And that became pretty much a foundational element of how I see my involvement in the work in the world that we do today. My personal statement, and I always advise people, have a personal statement. It kinda keeps you on track in terms of where you're at.

Lewis Cardinal: "To create and maintain connections and relationships across cultural divides, and to do what I can for a socially just and responsible society for those yet to come."

Lewis Cardinal: This is how it began for me. That was about 25 pounds ago. I'm off to the right. And I was on, I call it my rite of passage.

Lewis Cardinal: I had a radio show back in the day, at the University of Alberta. And I was looking for an interview. And then I heard the stories from the community, that there was this guy having visions of Big Bear coming to him and telling him he has to run to New York City to get a sacred bundle.

Lewis Cardinal: And I thought, "Well, that's an interesting story." So I went and interviewed him. Him and I became quite fast friends. That's Jim Thunder, in the middle.

Lewis Cardinal: And so, he had asked me to come with him, and I said, "Well, I've got a radio show, I'm studying at the University. Et cetera. I can't go, I can't go."

Lewis Cardinal: He said, "I'm going to come to four times. On the fourth time, if I don't ask you, if you say no I'll never bother you with this question again."

Lewis Cardinal: I said, "Okay."

Lewis Cardinal: So he came once, he came twice, he came third- on the fourth time, I realized that I needed to do something with my life because I was kind of getting a little squirrely, at that time. I needed something.

Lewis Cardinal: And so I said, "Sure, I'll go with you."

Lewis Cardinal: So we started not too far from here, on September 1st, 1988. And we ran 4400 kilometers, 2709 miles.

Lewis Cardinal: That's a long ways. And we arrived on March 21st, 1989 at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, that held the bundle of Big Bear. Which I've also learned I'm related to, by the way.

Lewis Cardinal: But that was my rite of passage. It was a terrifying time, because we didn't have any money, we weren't sponsored by the Corporations. But we did manage to Make enough money to bring us all the way from here, to New York City, and back.

Lewis Cardinal: And so, that really showed me what can be done with perseverance and ceremony. Again, remembering what my ancestors had gone through, and remembering the challenges that they went through.

Lewis Cardinal: So I got married, Jaclyn Hunter. I taught at the University of Colorado, Boulder, While I was still in undergrad. Teaching expository writing, because I had a knack for it. I got three undergraduate degrees. Master of Science in Journalism, BA in Film Study, And then an Honors Degree in English.

Lewis Cardinal: And is currently pursuing my PhD Studies at the University of Alberta in Indigenous People's Education.

Lewis Cardinal: And I want to make sure I go through these quite quickly, because I know that we're getting close to running out of time. But, I did a lot of work. It's a list of things that I've done. What I thought was really important to me was The Edmonton Aboriginal Accord Relationships, done in 2006.

Lewis Cardinal: Because what we did during this process is We utilized Indigenous processes of consensus and decision-making. We let the community set the agenda. This was 10 years before reconciliation came here. We were already doing that work by bringing in many different communities of the Indigenous community together.

Lewis Cardinal: And that was difficult work, because as you know, there's a lot of that lateral violence within our community. But by using ceremony, by using these principles, we all sat together. And for the first time we spoke as one voice. And we told the government, "In this city, this is what Indigenous people want."

Lewis Cardinal: And we had a list of 22 things. And then guess what happened? The leaders followed the people. The municipal government aligned its finding envelopes to meet those needs. The provincial government did the same thing, and the federal government did the same thing.

Lewis Cardinal: So there is power in those processes.

Lewis Cardinal: And then I ran for politics. Most people know me because of this. So I ran for city Council in 2007. I came within 181 votes of winning.

Lewis Cardinal: I ran as an NDP federal candidate for Edmonton Center From 2001 to 2014. A great education.

Lewis Cardinal: That's when I hit the wall. Because I wasn't taking care of myself. So then I had stepped back, look after my health, and do other things. So here's a list of things that I've done. Not to spend a lot of time on it, but working on many different things internationally, as well.

Lewis Cardinal: One of my things that I really enjoyed doing was creating the WicitoHwin circle of shared responsibility and stewardship. That was an Indigenous governance

structure created By the principles And foundations of Indigenous decision-making.

Lewis Cardinal: And I did some work internationally, In Martin Luther King International College of Ministers and Laity, and Morehouse College in Atlanta.

Lewis Cardinal: Now let's see ... all right, and here's some of the awards that I got. I don't really like to talk about it too much. There you go.

Lewis Cardinal: But, what I want to add to the bundle, because what we're doing, what I'm doing is I'm carrying a bundle that was given to me. A sacred bundle. All these teachings and knowledge that's been provided to me by my ancestors and my father.

Lewis Cardinal: Is that, when I get that in these teachings, I'll put them in there, And handing it to my children now. And they in turn, will handle that bundle. To their children.

Lewis Cardinal: So, what can I offer? If you can see it, it can become real. I saw myself running into Central Park in 1989. When we started on September 1st. So I knew that that was going to happen. But also, if you're developing a purpose and a structure for the work that you do, the vision needs clarity. It cannot be a hodgepodge. You have to be very clear and concise about what it is that you're going to do. I got that teaching from the Elders, who said, "When you pray, be very clear and concise about what you're praying for."

Lewis Cardinal: The other side of that Is you've got to be careful what you ask for, as well.

Lewis Cardinal: Gather your strength in ceremony. Take care of yourself, your spiritual side. Connect with your relatives that way. Seek counsel from Elders and knowledge keepers. They provide strengths, especially when you're facing the most difficult times, and challenges that you have. Turn to them.

Lewis Cardinal: But also, don't take no for an answer. I think the best challenge I get is when someone says, "No, you can't do that."

Lewis Cardinal: Well, then you go when you do it. Sometimes my take a few tries to get it right, but be kind to yourself.

Lewis Cardinal: One of those great lessons. Look after your health. There's four parts of you, make sure that those things remain in balance. Make sure you feed all those four parts to keep you healthy.

Lewis Cardinal: And remember that it's all about relationships. That's really a major lesson. If there was a hashtag for Indigenous people, it would be #it'sallaboutrelationships.

Lewis Cardinal: So here some people like me that I've met. The Dalai Lama and I hung out at the House of Commons for half a day. As his guest. Which was really interesting.

Lewis Cardinal: One thing that he taught me about- I asked him a question. We had a long conversation. One of the questions that I asked him is, "How can you forgive the Chinese government for what they've done to your people?" A very direct question.

Lewis Cardinal: And he said, "You know, the hardest thing that you will ever do is to forgive. But in order to move forward that is what needs to be done."

Lewis Cardinal: Desmond Tutu, to the right. Tutu to the right. He taught me that the world needs Indigenous people. To hang on to your language, your customs, and your traditions. Said that we need that.

Lewis Cardinal: Noam Chomsky. I'm putting these two pictures together, because that's Noam Chomsky and that's Leroy Little Bear. Noam Chomsky, he'd like a joke, of a play on words and that sort of thing. But I was telling him, I said, "You remind me of one of my favorite Indigenous scholars, Leroy Little Bear."

Lewis Cardinal: I said, "You're the white man's Leroy Little Bear." And Leroy Little Bear is a great Indigenous scholar. He's Blackfoot, but I call him the Noam Chomsky of Indigenous scholars. So they're good relations.

Lewis Cardinal: Martin Luther King Jr. III, I had met on a few occasions, and we talked about his father and legacies in the burdens that we carry as a next generation. And he reiterated the importance of self-care and the importance of prayer.

Lewis Cardinal: Because his people, when they led the American Civil Rights Movement, it was always centered around prayer, and around the gospel, and around the hymns. Central to it.

Lewis Cardinal: And Douglas Cardinal, he is a Blackfoot Métis, And he is a relative of mine several generations removed. But he's also one of my great teachers.

Lewis Cardinal: And so, he's there for me when I call him as one of those Elders. "Hey listen, I'm having a hard time." Then he gives me help.

Lewis Cardinal: So, you are in front of a very long line of ancestors. And that's what I'm telling you. Is that you are ancestors. Walk in that sacred manner, as the ones who have done, have gone before you.

Lewis Cardinal: Remember that you are here for a purpose. You carry within you the gifts of your nation. Carry within you the strength of your family. All those generations are lined up behind you, and you're at the head of it. And somebody's handing you a bundle.

Lewis Cardinal: Hai Hai

Conor Kerr: NorQuest College provides learners with a complete education that balances strong academic Foundations with Indigenous cultures. Our Indigenous student Center and it's extensive network of supports and services includes Indigenous student advisors, counselors, Elder supports, Indigenous awards, and a ceremonial space that allows students to engage in events, smudging, and ceremonies.

Conor Kerr: Learn more at [NorQuest.ca/Indigenous](http://NorQuest.ca/Indigenous).

Conor Kerr: And now, back to our show.

Conor Kerr: All right, thank you Lewis, for joining us today. We wouldn't be here without the hard work of yourself and your family to get us to a place where we can speak these truths about Indigenous history, Indigenous leadership, and how we can move forward.

Conor Kerr: And so, my first question for you is, there's always been a struggle for Indigenous people, especially in urban environments, to incorporate ceremony into their leadership practice. How would you recommend that young Indigenous leaders And educators who are coming forward in cities like Edmonton really capture that ceremonial practice that you mentioned earlier, into their own leadership?

Lewis Cardinal: I wish there was a section in the phone book, or the phone app, under Elders. But there isn't.

Lewis Cardinal: What I recommend to young leaders when I see, because they don't call themselves leaders, and I don't call myself a leader- It's more of a western tag- I see myself more as a servant then a, well, public servant I guess you could say.

Lewis Cardinal: But for myself what helped me to be grounded was to find an Elder who I could identify with. Because you're not always going to have immediate rapport with an Elder. There might not be anything wrong with the Elder, It just might be the wrong Elder for you.

Lewis Cardinal: So, what I recommend young people do, or anyone is looking for mentorship that way, is to ask an Elder that you might know. Or ask a few people, That you're looking for an Elder who can talk to me or teach me about these particular things. Or you can ask an Elder if they can help you to ceremony. And, you do that by protocol. With tobacco and a gift, to ask them to help you.

Lewis Cardinal: And when you present that gift to the Elders, sometimes they'll say, "Well, I'm not the person you're looking for, but I know this other person who is." And so they'll direct you to a person that night better suit what it is you're going to need.

Conor Kerr: And just moving on, on the balance aspect of Indigenous leadership and Indigenous leaders, you mentioned earlier in your talk about the seesaw for Indigenous leadership. I was wondering if you could expand on that concept a little bit for our listeners?

Lewis Cardinal: Yeah, I was talking about how the individual and the community, also known as collective, the community and the individual are so closely linked to each other. Because individual needs community. Needs the community to grow, to develop, and to be nurtured. But the community also needs the individual.

Lewis Cardinal: Because if you don't have the individual you don't have the community. And so, these two things go back and forth. It's not so much, as I was explaining, Where you put the individual above, like individual rights, above the community rights. Which is done in Western and European political traditions.

Lewis Cardinal: Or within communist traditions, where you the collective or the community over the individual, and they have a predominance of rights over the individual rights.

Lewis Cardinal: In fact, it's a play between the two. The individual and the collective are meant to be balanced. So it's like a seesaw. At one end you have the individual, at the other end You have community. But they are meant to be equal. So you can always pursue what it is you need to pursue as an individual, and do what you need to do, without having it overrun by what the community thinks that you should do, or what it wants from you.

Lewis Cardinal: So, therefore, you always have the freedom. Because individual always has freedom. But community also has the right to exist around its own principles and its own needs, so that community, be it a family, or hamlet, or a town, exists because people have come together. To bring their energy together to build a future, and livelihood, and to live in harmony with each other.

Lewis Cardinal: So it has its rights, And the individual has its rights. So those rights of individuality and collectivism are meant to be in balance with each other, so that you get the best of both. You get the strength of the community, But also the community gets the strength of you.

Lewis Cardinal: Because, if you're healthy and you're grounded in your knowledge and traditions, you are going to help the community become a better place for future generations, as well.

Lewis Cardinal: So it's a careful balance, and sometimes as seesaw tips really high In one direction, and then really high and the other. And when that happens your community is becoming out of balance. So ceremonies become the fulcrum, the center point of that seesaw. Then helps it to bring back into balance that equation.

Conor Kerr: He spoke a little bit about leaders, and maintaining that balance and their own personal lives, To have that healthy place to move forward from. What kind of advice would you give from your own experience for Indigenous and non Indigenous leaders, to maintain a healthy balance between their community obligations, their individual obligations, and their own personal health?

Lewis Cardinal: Two things come to mind immediately. One is, I have a number of Elders I work with, so it's not just like one Elder does everything for me. Because each of them have different, both male and female, have different gifts and things that I look to for guidance and direction.

Lewis Cardinal: So, if I'm feeling a bit lost, a bit stressed, then I'll call up one of my Elders and I'll say, "I'm feeling a bit lost and distressed. Can I come over for some tea?"

Lewis Cardinal: So I can talk to them about what I'm doing.

Lewis Cardinal: Or, I'll ask them can we go into ceremony, and bring them protocol for that. A pipe ceremony or sweat lodge, or something. And that helps me to kind of get myself back on track.

Lewis Cardinal: And the other thing is that I look to other community leaders as well. So you're not doing this in isolation, alone. You're actually tapping into the community's Elders and leaders as well.

Lewis Cardinal: So I know so many people are heading big organizations in the city, who are involved in politics, who are leaders in every way you can define it.

Lewis Cardinal: So I create my own little circle of Leaders that I connect with, And say, "Hey, I'm feeling lost and a bit disjointed about things. Can we have a talk about that?"

Lewis Cardinal: And sometimes they'll say, "Yeah, but Bill over here wants to talk, too."

Lewis Cardinal: So I say, "Well, let's get together." And then we have conversations, and we support each other. Because you need a sounding board, and you need a cultural connection as well.

Lewis Cardinal: So those are the two ways that can help you to keep balance. However, the cautionary tale is recognizing that, and being able to reach out and ask for that kind of help. That in itself is a lesson. No matter how many other Elders have told me just that, I had to go to the edge and find that out myself.

Conor Kerr: I think, just from even my own personal experience, often Indigenous leaders and young Indigenous people- not even just young, but Indigenous people in general- often feel that their daily work is just being continually pushed up against a wall.

Conor Kerr: Just bashing into that wall over, and over, and over again. Having this same conversations, seeing things stall, or not really move forward. And I was just wondering if you could elaborate on the few things that you've seen change for, I guess, the good of Indigenous peoples across Alberta, Edmonton, Canada, in the course of your own career as an educator and a leader.

Lewis Cardinal: Oh yeah, I can go right back to the early days of the Indigenous movement in the late 60s and early 70s. When racism and discrimination was just so visible.

Lewis Cardinal: And I'm fearful today that it's presenting itself again.

Lewis Cardinal: But anyway, back then it was pretty direct. Indigenous rights didn't exist. They were more looked at as niceties, rather than actual legal obligations. And so from that point on 'til today, what's that 40 years or something? 40, 50, 40 years.

Lewis Cardinal: Seeing now, it's entrenched in the Constitution. Look what happens in one lifetime if you don't take no for an answer.

Lewis Cardinal: When we were doing, more recently, back in 2006- we being the Edmonton Urban Aboriginal Counsel for the city of Edmonton at the time- when we said we want to consult with the Indigenous community, we want to use consensus process. That means anyone can stop it at any time.

Lewis Cardinal: And we went and had conversations with over 2500 Indigenous people. We identified issues. We use consensus through the whole process. Even the development of a governance structure.

Lewis Cardinal: At the beginning, people said, "That will never happen. They are not going to allow you to do it."

Lewis Cardinal: And I said, "Have you tried?"

Lewis Cardinal: And they said, "Well no, they just won't."

Lewis Cardinal: And I said, "Why don't we trust the process?"

Lewis Cardinal: One thing that I've learned is the process is the product. And so he going to a good process, and you're very clear about the processes it's amazing how people gravitate towards it and find strength within it for themselves, and find nurturing and growth within themselves as well.

Lewis Cardinal: So when we did the Urban Accord Relationship Agreement dialogues and discussions, I remember talking to city Council and saying, and I use this in my talk, "I will come to you four times, and if you do not all agree, I will leave you never come back again."



Lewis Cardinal: What a bold thing to do!

Lewis Cardinal: So I went back, and on the fourth time ... We were asking for 2 million dollars to help build this thing, right? Never been done before, never been tried before. Totally built an Indigenous foundation.

Lewis Cardinal: And, on the fourth time all the city managers agreed. And then all city Council agreed. So, they said we can't just, like we have to vote on it.

Lewis Cardinal: So, it was unanimous. Both times. But I had to keep going back and addressing them and telling them, "Here are the benefits and this is what's happening."

Lewis Cardinal: And so, on the fourth time we got 2 million dollars, we developed the Edmonton Urban Aboriginal Accord Relationship Agreement from that. We built the Indigenous Relations Office, the first of its kind in Canada. We built Kiche Askiy, Which is the first cultural ceremonial landbase anywhere in Canada.

Lewis Cardinal: So we did a lot of first things because of that relationship agreement, the people said could not be done.

Conor Kerr: We thank you for all your hard work on that, as an Indigenous community here.

Conor Kerr: So I'm going to bring it back to some of the work that you've done in your own career as an educator. What advice would you have for educators, Indigenous or non-Indigenous, On how they can incorporate Indigenous leadership practices into their own teaching, and how they communicate those messages to their students.

Lewis Cardinal: Well I think that's a difficult question because there are so many different facets to it, right? Of leadership, and what do we mean by that.

Lewis Cardinal: One way of integrating that is taking a look at what it is that you are teaching. What it is they tried to do. And integrating those Indigenous worldviews into your curriculum. So I'll talk to the teacher and say, "Well, okay, you're in this leadership group. Your teaching leadership. How are you introducing concepts of Indigenous leadership and Indigenous community decision-making processes into your curriculum?"

Lewis Cardinal: Because that really provides an alternative, another way of looking at things that I think is missing when we are looking at how we can do stuff. By having those elements put into curriculum, is a great way of helping to teach those things.

Lewis Cardinal: So, while I do advocate that students should take at least a mandatory course on Indigenous history and concepts, and that sort of thing, I also believe equally is that all of the curriculum needs to incorporate Indigenous knowledge. Into the curriculum itself. Right?

Lewis Cardinal: But as a teacher, that's talking about leadership and things, bringing Indigenous leaders. Let them answer some of these questions for them. Because if you just take one perspective not really allowing the fluidity of Indigenous leadership to really present itself.

Lewis Cardinal: And so, what might happen in the Inuit community will be the different from what will happen in the Blackfoot community, or the Plains Cree community, in terms of how they interact. But the basis of that leadership, there are commonalities. And that's consensus, that's relationship building. Those sorts of things are commonalities.

Conor Kerr: I would like to discuss your question about advice for Indigenous people who are moving to a center like Edmonton. As we know it Edmonton is an Indigenous community, it's an Indigenous city. We have people come here from all over Northern Canada, Western Canada, Eastern Canada.

Conor Kerr: It's a large population that's growing and becoming more and more involved. Lots of restaurants are coming from up north, and they come to the city and they don't feel that sense of community right away. It's kind of a struggle for them to, often, get involved or to realize their true potential and become the leaders that they can be.

Conor Kerr: How do you think they could really get involved? Or what advice would you have for them, even just on a personal level?

Lewis Cardinal: Oh wow that's ... That is the question isn't it?

Lewis Cardinal: First of all lets take a look at the population of Edmonton. Indigenous population, within the borders, are around 75,000. Within the geographical borders of the city of Edmonton.

Lewis Cardinal: When you expand to a commuting distance, of let's say 45 minutes outside of the city, a lot of people commute that distance everyday. The population rises to over 110,000 Indigenous people.

Lewis Cardinal: So that makes Edmonton already the highest urban population in Canada. Because they're here every day going to school, going to work, et cetera, et cetera.

Lewis Cardinal: So they're in here all the time. That's one thing to remember, Because all of the nations of Indigenous People in Canada live in Edmonton as well. So it's following the tradition of the gathering place that's at the center of the city, which they used to call [Behonan 01:11:25], back in the day.

Lewis Cardinal: So it's a gathering place for people, and it carries that spirit still.

Lewis Cardinal: One thing that I try to bring forward to my community is, open your doors wide. There so many Indigenous people. Create opportunities for them to engage with you.

Lewis Cardinal: Now if you're a student, you're coming from out of town. You don't know this place very well. Try to connect with some people who do know the city very well to find out where things are happening.

Lewis Cardinal: The city of Edmonton, through their Indigenous Relations Office, has a wonderful email list and let you know everything that's going on in the city from talks, and powwows, and round dances.

Lewis Cardinal: If you don't know that, if you're not plugged into that, You really think they're not doing much. But actually there's a lot of stuff going on, you just gotta find a way to get plugged in. Right?

Lewis Cardinal: And start with the city of Edmonton Indigenous Relations office. Plug into the Canadian Native Friendship Center. A number of social service programs are also plugged in, and are doing many different things.

Lewis Cardinal: So there is a lot to be done, it's just that we haven't communicated that as effectively yet. But I do know in the very near future that is going to change.

Lewis Cardinal: And the Friendship Center is building a new center for itself. There's an Indigenous Center for Wellness and Culture coming up. There's all kinds of different things that are really starting to take root here.

Lewis Cardinal: And so, in a center like here, at NorQuest, The Indigenous Student Center is also a great hub of collecting that information, And that plug-in to the community.

Conor Kerr: One of the things that were trying to really do in the Indigenous student Center is create a space for the community in Edmonton, for Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous peoples, to come together and learn. Learn together.

Conor Kerr: And I think my next question, here ... If you are an Indigenous leader or non-Indigenous leader In an organization, you're working with a team and your work isn't necessarily around Indigenous relations, or Indigenous services or supports, but you as an individual want to learn more, you want to get more involved, you want to start bringing Indigenous knowledge and concepts into your team ... And I am seeing this come up from my work, often.

Conor Kerr: Areas like development companies are even coming to us and chatting about how they can start working better with Indigenous communities, working better with Indigenous Elders, working better with Edmonton at large, here, and really honoring the concept of treaty and Treaty 6.

Conor Kerr: Are there any very easy places to start? I know you mentioned connecting with the community, connecting with Elders. How about resources? Books? Websites?

Conor Kerr: Anything you that you could recommend that they should take a look at to start their own journey?

Lewis Cardinal: I think it depends on what the company is, what the organization is, and what they want to do.

Lewis Cardinal: I mean, of course Edmonton and Alberta generally is an energy producing province. We are an oil province. But were more than that, as well.

Lewis Cardinal: There is a growth of Indigenous entrepreneurs that is increasing substantially. Led, the majority, by women. Indigenous women. Which is an interesting thing.

Lewis Cardinal: There is the development of the aboriginal professional associations. I think there's two of them. One is called AKSIS. And they create that opportunity for companies to kind of plug into other Indigenous people, also other Indigenous companies. But also to work with Indigenous people to address these kind of issues.

Lewis Cardinal: It's through AKSIS, then, that they can access different organizations that are doing similar work. So if an oil company wants to improve its hiring practices, there are different ways that they can ... hiring practices to increase its base, And actually met somebody from Shell who was doing the same thing, asking me the same question.

Lewis Cardinal: You have to break it into its constituent parts. What kind of policy do you have, And what is the hiring process that you have in place now. What's your Indigenous reflectivity, do you have Indigenous people in your company? That sort of thing.

Lewis Cardinal: So they need to plug into the Indigenous community to seek that guidance, right? And I always say open up broad, your search, and you will find some people that will be able to give you direction. And then they'll be able to help you to build what it is you need.

Lewis Cardinal: Because just going to one person doesn't guarantee that you are going to get everything that you need, But once you find the people who are able to provide you with that guidance and direction, then you build a relationship with them.

Lewis Cardinal: But, as always the first step is stepping out. Reaching out to the community's key.

Conor Kerr: I know your talk there, you talk about how if we had a hashtag, what was it? It would be, like, #allourrelations?

Lewis Cardinal: #it'sallaboutrelationships.

Conor Kerr: All about relationships. And I think that's something That we definitely want to echo and make sure that us at NorQuest College are really building.

Conor Kerr: I've got one last question for you. So, at NorQuest College when we're bringing in outside educators, we're looking into our hiring practices. We're looking into how us, as a Western institution, that really values her relationships and supports and services we can provide to the Indigenous community, and to our Indigenous students, how can we make sure that were truly valuing Indigenous traditional knowledge and leadership?

Lewis Cardinal: Well first of all, what you did today I think is a step in the right direction. You're inviting people from the community, who have actually been engaged in this field. Asking them to come and provide their knowledge and their wisdom, their experience, is the first way of doing it.

Lewis Cardinal: And following the protocol of the cultural ways of respecting that knowledge. Because if you open it up to more, the broader community, you're going to be able to bring in more people who are understanding of that knowledge base that looking for.

Lewis Cardinal: So, by reaching out to the community you're demonstrating that issue, right? One of the examples I use is that I started a round dance at the University of Alberta for a long time. The first round dance I had, hardly anybody came. It was done by 9 o'clock.

Lewis Cardinal: The second year, a few more people came.

Lewis Cardinal: And then the third year, community members came.

Lewis Cardinal: And then the fourth year all the communities came from all over the place, and it was huge and they were helping. They were bringing food, They were doing ... So it takes time.

Lewis Cardinal: And that's one thing that you have to create, is Once the reputation of your organization is that it is open and inviting people come, but it just takes a bit of time.

Lewis Cardinal: Because you put up posters, and invite everyone, and email everyone, doesn't mean you're going to have a massive turnout the first time around. But if you're consistent ...

Lewis Cardinal: And I was telling you, jokingly, that tenacity is another word for Indigenous. Because you have to keep trying. And you're not taking no for an answer.

Lewis Cardinal: C practice at the same way, as well.

Conor Kerr: Yeah. No, that's great advice for us here at NorQuest College.

Conor Kerr: Well, Lewis, I'd like to thank you so much for taking the time to come here and speak with us today, and To share your family's history. Your family's journey through leadership in the province here, And all the work that you've done for Indigenous people.

Conor Kerr: We just want to thank you so much for taking the time to be here.

Lewis Cardinal: Well, thank you, and all the good work that you do, and the Indigenous student Center does.

Lewis Cardinal: Hiy hiy.

Conor Kerr: Hiy hiy.

Conor Kerr: Circle of knowledge was recorded at the NorQuest College innovation studio, And is hosted by me, yours truly, Conor Kerr.

Conor Kerr: Production and editing by Corey Stroeder.

Conor Kerr: Theme song is Eagle Rock, by West Hutchinson.

Conor Kerr: Special thanks to the Edmonton Community foundation, whose generous sponsorship May the Indigenous speaker series and the Circle of Knowledge podcast a reality.

Conor Kerr: Lastly, and most importantly, big shout out to all the speakers who have been involved. We are incredibly grateful for the knowledge and time you share to make this series a possibility.

Conor Kerr: Thoughts, comments, questions, anything else regarding to the Circle of Knowledge episode, we'd love to hear from you. Contact us at [podcast@norquest.ca](mailto:podcast@norquest.ca)

Corey Stroeder: Hey Conor. Today's episode went really well. I thought Lewis was incredibly knowledgeable.

Conor Kerr: Lewis was the man.

Corey Stroeder: And really inspirational, with the stories he had to share.

Corey Stroeder: So he used the word hiy hiy. Could you explain that to me?

Conor Kerr: Yeah, I'll try. With the best of what I know here.

Conor Kerr: I kind of got this teaching from Rubin Quinn, a Cree teacher in Edmonton here, and he was talking about hiy hiy is brought down from the word for Creator, and it's giving thanks to the Creator. This hiy hiy..

Conor Kerr: And so, it's a word of thanks, and giving thanks. And so you often hear Cree people saying this when they are giving a teaching, they're giving protocol, they're giving anything. Anything, you would say hiy hiy, or thanks for, I guess, not hiy hiy.

Conor Kerr: I pass you a glass of water, you would say thanks. I would hope so, if you're a polite guy.

Corey Stroeder: So is it h-i h-i? Is that okay?

Conor Kerr: Most people tend to spell it h-i-y h-i-y.

Corey Stroeder: Okay.

Conor Kerr: Kind of back and forth. I've also seen it spelled just i-h-y, or i-h i-h. Or h-i h-i, as you mentioned.

Conor Kerr: But the one that comes up the most is h-i-y h-i-y.

Corey Stroeder: All right.

Conor Kerr: I'll see that in emails often.

Corey Stroeder: Great. Well, hiy hiy.

Conor Kerr: Hiy hiy.