



# MUST READ Books

**Siyam  
Consulting**

Written by: Sxwpilemaát Siyám / Chief Leanne Joe  
[www.siyamconsulting.com](http://www.siyamconsulting.com)



## About the Author

Sxwpilemaát Siyám, also known as Chief Leanne Joe, of the Squamish Nation, is one of sixteen Hereditary Chiefs of the Squamish Nation and the first female Chief of her Lackett Joe Family. She shares her traditional name with her late father, Sxwpilem Siyám, Chief Philip Joe. Sxwpilemaát Siyám is also a descendent of the Kwakwaka'wakw speaking people and carries the traditional name of Q-Gee-Sea Loud, which was given to her by her late Cheecheeya (grandmother on her mother's side). She is also descendant of the Thomas family of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation on her late grandmother's side of the family (my late father's mother, Emma Thomas).

Sxwpilemaát Siyám was born and raised on the beautiful shores of North Vancouver while having close relations to her roots on the east coast shores of Vancouver Island. She moved to the Nicola Valley 17 years ago, after she met, fell in love, and married Timothy 'Spike' Manuel (N'petkwulax), from Upper Nicola Band with relations to the Nlaka'pamux and Shuswap People. They live in the Nicola Valley. Sxwpilemaát Siyám and N'petkwulax have a 17-year old son named Isaac, who carries Sylix, Skwxwu7mesh and Kwakwaka'wakw traditional names. Sxwpilemaát Siyám's husband is a traditional knowledge keeper/cultural teacher and works with youth and community to engage them in rebuilding their cultural teachings and knowledge. Their son is their life teacher as he engages them in healing, listening, laughter and patience.

Sxwpilemaát Siyám holds space in many organizations, focusing her work on Economic Reconciliation. One of her roles is as Transformative Storyteller for Economic Reconciliation, with Simon Fraser University, Faculty of Environment, Community Economic Development. To find out more, please go [www.siyamconsulting.com](http://www.siyamconsulting.com) and download **Step into the River: An Economic Reconciliation Framework** and so much more. She also supports SFU Beedie School of Business, Women in Leadership, and many other organizations through her consulting business.

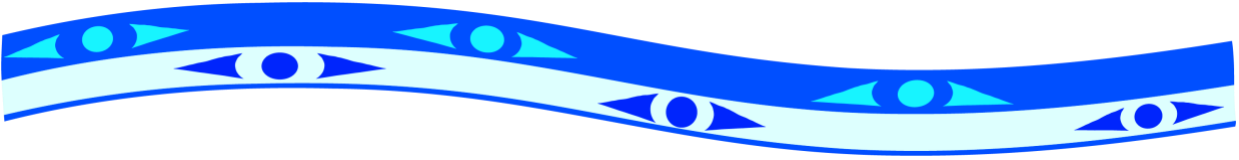
Sxwpilemaát Siyám also serves as a Trustee for the Squamish Nation Trust; representing the benefactors in the management of this Community Trust and has is also a Board of Director for BC's [New Relationship Trust](#). She serves and has served as an advisory or board member for many other entities. Her educational background includes a B.A. in Business, CED Certificate, and many other related trainings and experiences.

Sxwpilemaát Siyám is a very passionate and resilient woman who is committed to working with others to keep her circle strong and continue the movement towards self-determination. She believes her People's greatest legacy is the children, thus, it is their responsibility to ensure that the children's future and the generations to follow have a good life based in a holistic approach to well-being. So, that all of the 'People Yet to Be' have the tools to engage in the world in a completely different way than we have and can walk in two worlds with ease...using the past to make a better a future.

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# Siyam Consulting

## Purpose

Support the ever-rising presence of First Nations and all Indigenous Peoples from coast to coast.

## Vision

Nurture reciprocal relationships built on my 6 R's, bringing together Indigenous and corporate Canada, institutions, and communities to create transformative spaces for the next seven generations.

## Mission

Create a desired future state where love and light is in everything we do.

## The Riverbed: The Values of Economic Reconciliation

Reconciliation needs to be accompanied by purposeful actions in all spaces of society. These actions should happen through Indigenized approaches and processes. The riverbed is the channel in which a river flows. It helps guide the river's course. As seen through an Indigenous worldview, these values are interconnected and reinforce one another - none of them can be adopted on its own or ranked higher than the others. While Indigenous peoples already largely live by and embody these values, all people and organizations need to adopt and enact these values as it is only through our collective efforts that we can protect and care for what matters most for current and future generations.

- Accountability and truth telling
- Regenerative
- Embraces and celebrates diverse knowings and ways of being
- Connected to Land and Place
- Rematriation
- Reciprocal relationships
- Anti-racism, equity, and solidarity
- Self-determination, cultural sovereignty, and Indigenization
- Recognition and respect

**For detailed understanding of these Values, please see appendix.**



## Introduction

This is a compilation of some books by Indigenous and non-Indigenous authors and storytellers about so many issues facing Indigenous Peoples past, present and future in the land we know as Canada. This is not an exhaustive list of every book out there on every topic about us and for us. This is just a decent handful to get you started on many subjects such as Reconciliation, Indigenous history, Residential Schools, Indigenous Identity, Resilience, Racism, Discrimination, Truth, Indigenous Economics, and so much more. Find one that resonates with you, being there and then find another and keep on reading. The more you read, the more you will know and understand and be able to have truthful and honest conversations about our lived history and current issues we face daily.



### **Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants** by Robin Wall Kimmerer

As a botanist, Robin Wall Kimmerer has been trained to ask questions of nature with the tools of science. As a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, she embraces the notion that plants and animals are our oldest teachers. In *Braiding Sweetgrass*, Kimmerer brings these lenses of knowledge together to show that the awakening of a wider ecological consciousness requires the acknowledgment and celebration of our reciprocal relationship with the rest of the living world. For only when we can hear the languages of other beings are we capable of understanding the generosity of the earth, and learning to give our own gifts in return.

### **Birdie** by Tracey Lindberg

is a darkly comic and moving first novel about the universal experience of recovering from wounds of the past, informed by the lore and knowledge of Cree traditions.

### **Indian Horse** by Richard Wagamese

Saul Indian Horse has hit bottom. His last binge almost killed him, and now he's a reluctant resident in a treatment centre for alcoholics, surrounded by people he's sure will never understand him. But Saul wants peace, and he grudgingly comes to see that he'll find it only through telling his story. With him, readers embark on a journey back through the life he's led as a northern Ojibway, with all its joys and sorrows.



## **The Outside Circle** by Patti LaBoucane-Benson

In this important graphic novel, two Aboriginal brothers surrounded by poverty, drug abuse, and gang violence, try to overcome centuries of historic trauma in very different ways to bring about positive change in their lives. Powerful, courageous, and deeply moving, *The Outside Circle* is drawn from the author's twenty years of work and research on healing and reconciliation of gang-affiliated or incarcerated Aboriginal men.

## **The Education of Augie Merasty** by David Carpenter and Augie Merasty

This memoir offers a courageous and intimate chronicle of life in a residential school. Now a retired fisherman and trapper, the author was one of an estimated 150,000 First Nations, Inuit, and Metis children who were taken from their families and sent to government-funded, church-run schools, where they were subjected to a policy of "aggressive assimilation."

## **The Break** by Katherena Vermette

When Stella, a young Métis mother, looks out her window one evening and spots someone in trouble on the Break — a barren field on an isolated strip of land outside her house — she calls the police to alert them to a possible crime.

## **The Lesser Blessed** by Richard Van Camp

A fresh, funny look at growing up Native in the North, by award-winning author Richard Van Camp. Marking the debut of an exciting new writer, *The Lesser Blessed* is an eye-opening depiction of what it is to be a young Native man in the age of AIDS, disillusionment with Catholicism and a growing world consciousness.

## **Dancing on Our Turtle's Back** by Leanne Simpson

In *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back: Stories of Nishnaabeg Re-Creation, Resurgence, and a New Emergence* activist, editor, and educator Leanne Simpson asserts reconciliation must be grounded in political resurgence and must support the regeneration of Indigenous languages, oral cultures, and traditions of governance.

Simpson explores philosophies and pathways of regeneration, resurgence, and a new emergence through the Nishnaabeg language, Creation Stories, walks with Elders and children, celebrations and protests, and meditations on these experiences. She stresses the importance of illuminating Indigenous intellectual traditions to transform their relationship to the Canadian state.

## **In This Together: Fifteen Stories of Truth and Reconciliation** edited by Danielle Metcalfe-Chenail

This collection of essays from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous contributors from across Canada welcomes readers into a timely, healing conversation—one we've longed for but, before now, have had a hard time approaching.



**Indigenous Wellbeing and Enterprise: Self- Determination and Sustainable Economic Development** by Rick Colbourne and Robert B. Anderson

In this book, we explore the economic well-being of Indigenous people globally through case studies that provide practical examples of how Indigenous well-being is premised on sustainable self-determination that is in turn dependent on a community's evolving model for economic development, its cultural traditions, relationship to its traditional territories and its particular spiritual practices.

**The Reconciliation Manifesto: Recovering the land, rebuilding the economy** by Arthur Manuel and Grand Chief Ronald Derrickson

In this book Arthur Manuel and Grand Chief Ronald Derrickson challenge virtually everything that non-Indigenous Canadians believe about their relationship with Indigenous Peoples and the steps that are needed to place this relationship on a healthy and honourable footing.

[Whose Land Is It Anyway? A Manual for Decolonization](#) - free ebook by the Federation of Post- Secondary Educators of BC.

This handbook, supported by the British Columbia Federation of Post-Secondary Educators (FPSE), is designed to give you that knowledge. It brings together some of the most important Indigenous academics, activists and allies to explore the impacts of colonization on Indigenous peoples and to look at paths toward decolonization that can right those wrongs and may, some day, lead us toward true reconciliation.

**21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act** by Bob Joseph

Since its creation in 1876, the Indian Act has shaped, controlled, and constrained the lives and opportunities of Indigenous Peoples, and is at the root of many enduring stereotypes. Bob Joseph's book comes at a key time in the reconciliation process, when awareness from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities is at a crescendo. Joseph explains how Indigenous Peoples can step out from under the Indian Act and return to self-government, self-determination, and self-reliance—and why doing so would result in a better country for every Canadian. He dissects the complex issues around truth and reconciliation and clearly demonstrates why learning about the Indian Act's cruel, enduring legacy is essential for the country to move toward true reconciliation.

Also read Indigenous Relations Insights Tips & Suggestions to Make Reconciliation A Reality and Working Effectively with Indigenous Peoples® by Bob Joseph (which is only available by taking the training).

**Resource Rulers: Fortune and Folly on Canada's Road to Resources** by Bill Gallagher

Today, the courtroom is the battlefield, the boardroom is the trading post, and it's chiefs (not governors) who recite winning proclamations to the losing side. That's because natives have racked up the most impressive legal winning streak in Canadian history with well over 150 wins. The defining dynamic of these David and Goliath match-ups is the remarkable rise of native empowerment as Canada's First Peoples redraw the map of our home and native land. Resource Rulers tracks the rise of native empowerment and its remarkable legal winning

streak in the Canadian resource sector. It offers a way forward, with new rules of engagement for resource development and for winning outcomes in the road-to-resources sweepstakes.

## **Indigenomics: Taking a seat at the Economic Table** by Carol Anne Hilton

It is time to increase the visibility, role, and responsibility of the emerging modern Indigenous economy and the people involved. This is the foundation for economic reconciliation. This is Indigenomics. Indigenomics lays out the tenets of the emerging Indigenous economy, built around relationships, multigenerational stewardship of resources, and care for all.

## **Peace Pipe Dreams: The Truth About Lies About Indians** by Darrell Dennis

In addition to answering these burning questions, Dennis tackles some tougher subjects. He looks at European-Native interactions in North America from the moment of first contact, discussing the fur trade, treaty-signing and the implementation of residential schools. Addressing misconceptions still widely believed today, Dennis explains why Native people aren't genetically any more predisposed to become alcoholics than Caucasians; that Native religion doesn't consist of worshipping rocks, disappearing into thin air, or conversing with animals; and that tax exemptions are so limited and confusing that many people don't even bother.

## **Unsettling Canada: A National Wake-up Call** by Arthur Manuel

This book describes the victories and failures, the hopes and the fears of a generation of activists fighting for Aboriginal title and rights in Canada. Unsettling Canada chronicles the modern struggle for Indigenous rights covering fifty years of struggle over a wide range of historical, national, and recent international breakthroughs.

## **Seven Fallen Feathers: Racism, Death, and Hard Truths in A Northern City** by Tanya Talaga

Over the span of eleven years, seven Indigenous high school students died in Thunder Bay, Ontario. They were hundreds of kilometres away from their families, forced to leave home because there was no adequate high school on their reserves. Five were found dead in the rivers surrounding Lake Superior, below a sacred Indigenous site. Using a sweeping narrative focusing on the lives of the students, award-winning author Tanya Talaga delves into the history of this northern city that has come to manifest Canada's long struggle with human rights violations against Indigenous communities.



**Clearing the Plains** by James Daschuk is a book that explores how government policies led to starvation among First Nations peoples in the 19th century. First published in 2013, *Clearing the Plains* is an indictment of our first prime minister, Sir John A. Macdonald. It blames him for systematically starving Indigenous people to make way for the railroads and his national dream.

**Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Métis & Inuit Issues in Canada** by Chelsea Vowel

In *Indigenous Writes*, Chelsea Vowel, legal scholar, teacher, and intellectual, opens an important dialogue about these (and more) concepts and the wider social beliefs associated with the relationship between Indigenous peoples and Canada. In 31 essays, Chelsea explores the Indigenous experience from the time of contact to the present, through five categories – Terminology of Relationships; Culture and Identity; Myth-Busting; State Violence; and Land, Learning, Law, and Treaties. She answers the questions that many people have on these topics to spark further conversations at home, in the classroom, and in the larger community.

**Surviving Canada**, edited by Kiera L. Ladner & Myra Tait - Published in 2017 to coincide with Canada's 150th birthday, *Surviving Canada* is a collection of writing that reflects on Indigenous people's fraught and complex relationship with Canada.

**Distorted Descent** by Darryl Leroux was published in 2019, is about the 21st century phenomenon of descendants of French settlers in Canada self-identifying as Indigenous. The book explores the social, cultural and historical influences that have led to this phenomenon and takes on two prominent organizations in Quebec that encourage this practice. It also looks at how this practice is actively harmful to Indigenous people today and how such claims reinforce white supremacy, harmful stereotypes and public policy.



**Seeing Red** by Mark Cronlund Anderson & Carmen L. Robertson was published in 2011, explores how Canadian newspapers portrayed Indigenous people from 1869 to the early 2000s. It looks at how the media portrayed notable stories, such as Louis Riel and the North-West Rebellion,

the sale of Rupert's Land, the death of E. Pauline Johnson and many more, and examines how these depictions reinforced harmful stereotypes.

**Lessons in Legitimacy** by Sean Carleton is a 2022 book that looks at how the B.C. government created school systems — including Indians residential schools, Indian Day Schools and public schools for white students — to reinforce systemic racism, inequality and white supremacy. The book explores how better understanding this part of history, which ran from 1849 to 1930, can better inform attempts at reconciliation in education, policy and public awareness today.

**#NotYourPrincess: Voices of Native American Women** Edited by Lisa Charleyboy & Mary Beth Leatherdale

Whether looking back to a troubled past or welcoming a hopeful future, the powerful voices of Indigenous women across North America resound in this book. In the same style as the best-selling *Dreaming in Indian*, *#NotYourPrincess* presents an eclectic collection of poems, essays, interviews, and art that combine to express the experience of being a Native woman. Stories of abuse, humiliation, and stereotyping are countered by the voices of passionate women making themselves heard and demanding change. Sometimes angry, often reflective, but always strong, the women in this book will give teen readers insight into the lives of women who, for so long, have been virtually invisible.

**God is Red** by Vine Deloria Jr. is considered a seminal text when it comes to highlighting and exploring Indigenous spirituality, weaving together long-held beliefs and practices with important questions for contemporary times.

**Highway of Tears** by Jessica McDiarmid - is an isolated stretch of highway in northwestern British Columbia where many Indigenous women and girls have gone missing or been murdered. In *Highway of Tears*, journalist Jessica McDiarmid investigates some of the tragedies that have taken place along this road and explores the larger societal and cultural issues that have led to this crisis.

**Intimate Integration** by Allyson D. Stevenson - is a 2020 book that looks at the history and impact of transracial adoption, including Adopt Indian and Métis Project and the Indian Adoption Project, which led to the Sixties Scoop. The Sixties Scoop was a policy in the 1950s through the 1980s, where Indigenous children were taken from their families and placed into foster care, then eventually with a white adoptive family. *Intimate Integration* looks at the irreparable harm it created on adoptees and their families, as another avenue to erase Indigenous identity and culture in the name of colonialism.

**Unbroken** by Angela Sterritt - In her memoir *Unbroken*, Angela Sterritt shares her story from navigating life on the streets to becoming an award-winning journalist. As a teenager, she wrote in her notebook to survive. Now, she reports on cases of missing and murdered Indigenous women in Canada, showing how colonialism and racism create a society where Indigenous people are devalued. *Unbroken* is a story about courage and strength against all odds.

**A National Crime** by John S. Milloy is one of the first comprehensive studies of the residential school system. It was first published in 1997 and re-released 20 years later, as a response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Historian John S. Milloy looks at previously unreleased government documents — which he accessed while working on the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples — to highlight the systemic racism and white supremacy that drove residential school policy and practices.

**The Story of a National Crime** by Dr. Peter Henderson Bryce was a report by Dr. Peter Henderson Bryce, the chief medical officer for Indian Affairs, that was first published in 1922 and re-published in 2018. The report outlined the horrific conditions Bryce witnessed at residential schools and called for action and for Canadians to speak up. The report shows how much the government knew about the harms of residential schools going back over 100 years and it is a testament to how little was done.



**Prison of Grass** by Howard Adams, was first published in 1975 and re-issued in 1995, is now considered a classic. It is one of the first books to challenge the harmful stereotypes of Indigenous people as portrayed in history, media and popular culture. Howard Adams highlights how Indigenous people had complex societies and systems of governance and how colonialism erased this from the dominant historical narrative. Prison of Grass also explores the harmful social, cultural and psychological effects colonialism had on Indigenous people.

**The North-West is Our Mother** by Jean Teillet. She is a lawyer, Métis expert and the great grandniece of Louis Riel. Her book, The North-West is Our Mother, is a history of the Métis Nation. It begins in the early 1800s, when the Métis became known as fierce nomadic hunters, and continues to the late 19th-century resistance led by Riel to reclaim the land stolen from them, all the way to present day as they fight for reconciliation and decolonization.

**Economic Well Being of Canada's Indigenous People** by Belayet Hossain & Laura Lamb

The level of economic development and general wellbeing of Canada's Aboriginal peoples continues to be much lower than for non-Aboriginal Canadians. While many socioeconomic and institutional factors have been identified as contributing to the wellbeing of Aboriginal Canadians, the current research focuses on employment income, given the belief that higher income is associated with a higher level of wellbeing. Data from the 2012 Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS) is analysed with an IV-ordered probit model to examine the factors affecting employment income. A set of explanatory variables includes measures of social and human capital, assessed via education and health status, as well as other socio-demographic factors.

**Routledge Handbook of Indigenous Wellbeing** Edited by: Christopher Fleming & Matthew Manning

The Routledge Handbook of Indigenous Wellbeing consists of five themes, namely, physical, social and emotional, economic, cultural and spiritual, and subjective wellbeing. It fills a substantial gap in the current literature on the wellbeing of Indigenous people and communities around the world. This handbook sheds new light on understanding Indigenous wellbeing and its determinants, and aids in the development and implementation of more appropriate policies, as better evidence-informed policymaking will lead to better outcomes for Indigenous populations.

**My Conversations with Canadians** by Lee Maracle

In prose essays that are both conversational and direct, Maracle seeks not to provide any answers to these questions she has lived with for so long. Rather, she thinks through each one using a multitude of experiences she's had in Canada, as an Indigenous leader, a woman and mother and grandmother over the course of her life. Lee Maracle's *My Conversations with Canadians* presents a tour de force exploration into this writer's own history and a reimagining of the future of our nation.

**Braiding Legal Orders: Implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples** by John Borrows (Editor); Larry Chartrand (Editor); Oonagh E. Fitzgerald (Editor); Risa Schwartz

Implementation in Canada of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) is a pivotal opportunity to explore the relationship between international law, Indigenous peoples' own laws, and Canada's constitutional narratives.

**Métis: Race, Recognition, and the Struggle for Indigenous Peoplehood** by Chris Andersen

Ask any Canadian what "Métis" means, and they will likely say "mixed race" or "part Indian, part white." Canadians consider Métis people mixed in ways that other indigenous people -- First Nations and Inuit -- are not, and the census and the courts have premised their recognition of the Métis on this race-based understanding. Andersen asks all Canadians to consider the consequences of adopting a definition of "Métis" that makes it nearly impossible for the Métis nation to make political claims as a people.

**Living on the Land: Indigenous Women's Understanding of Place** by Nathalie Kermoal (Editor), Isabel Altamirano -Jiménez (Editor)

Across eight chapters, readers intersect western academic research (and writing) and indigenous wisdom teaching and narrative. The text offers observational wisdom supported by localized experiences. The text also offers occasional insight into how to do research with indigenous peoples, even though this is not a focal point of the text, it offers important insight that organically informs readers.

**Values: Building a Better World for All** by Mark Carney

Focusing on four major crises—the Global Financial Crisis, the Global Health Crisis, Climate Change and the 4th Industrial Revolution—Carney proposes responses to each. His solutions are tangible action plans for leaders, companies and countries to transform the value of the market back into the value of humanity.

**Sacred Economics: Money, Gift, and Society in the Age of Transition** by Charles Eisenstein

Sacred Economics traces the history of money from ancient gift economies to modern capitalism, revealing how the money system has contributed to alienation, competition, and scarcity, destroyed community, and necessitated endless growth. Today, these trends have reached their extreme—but in the wake of their collapse, we may find great opportunity to transition to a more connected, ecological, and sustainable way of being.



**Indigenous Women, Work, and History: 1940–1980** by Mary Jane Logan McCallum

When dealing with Indigenous women's history we are conditioned to think about women as private-sphere figures, circumscribed by the home, the reserve, and the community. Moreover, in many ways Indigenous men and women have been cast in static, pre-modern, and one-dimensional identities, and their twentieth century experiences reduced to a singular story of decline and loss. In *Indigenous Women, Work, and History*, historian Mary Jane Logan McCallum rejects both of these long-standing conventions by presenting case studies of Indigenous domestic servants, hairdressers, community health representatives, and nurses working in "modern Native ways" between 1940 and 1980.

**Indigenous Men and Masculinities: Legacies, Identities, Regeneration** by Robert Alexander Innes & Kim Anderson (Editors)

"*Indigenous Men and Masculinities*" highlights voices of Indigenous male writers, traditional knowledge keepers, ex-gang members, war veterans, fathers, youth, two-spirited people, and Indigenous men working to end violence against women. It offers a refreshing vision toward equitable societies that celebrate healthy and diverse masculinities.

## **Decolonizing Employment Aboriginal Inclusion in Canada's Labour Market** by Shauna MacKinnon

Indigenous North Americans continue to be overrepresented among those who are poor, unemployed, and with low levels of education. This has long been an issue of concern for Indigenous people and their allies and is now drawing the attention of government, business leaders, and others who know that this fast-growing population is a critical source of future labour. Shauna MacKinnon's *Decolonizing Aboriginal Inclusion in Canada's Labour Market* is a case study with lessons applicable to communities throughout North America. Her examination of Aboriginal labour market participation outlines the deeply damaging, intergenerational effects of colonial policies and describes how a neoliberal political economy serves to further exclude Indigenous North Americans.

## **Life Stages and Native Women: Memory, Teachings, and Story Medicine** by Kim Anderson

A rare and inspiring guide to the health and well-being of Aboriginal women and their communities. The process of "digging up medicines" - of rediscovering the stories of the past - serves as a powerful healing force in the decolonization and recovery of Aboriginal communities. In *Life Stages and Native Women*, Kim Anderson shares the teachings of fourteen elders from the Canadian prairies and Ontario to illustrate how different life stages were experienced by Metis, Cree, and Anishinaabe girls and women during the mid-twentieth century.

## **From Where I Stand: Rebuilding Indigenous Nations for a Stronger Canada** by Jody Wilson-Raybould



An Indigenous leader who has dedicated her life to Indigenous Rights, Jody Wilson-Raybould has represented both First Nations and the Crown at the highest levels. And she is not afraid to give Canadians what they need most – straight talk on what has to be done to move beyond our colonial legacy and achieve true reconciliation in Canada. In this powerful book, drawn from speeches and other writings, she urges all Canadians – both Indigenous and non-Indigenous – to build upon the momentum already gained or risk hard-won progress being lost. The good news is that Indigenous Nations already have the solutions. But now is time to act and build a shared postcolonial future based on the foundations of trust, cooperation, recognition, and good governance.

## **True Reconciliation: How to be a Force for Change** by Jody Wilson-Raybould

There is one question Canadians have asked Jody Wilson-Raybould more than any: What can I do to help advance reconciliation? It is clear that people from all over the country want to take concrete and tangible action that will make real change. We just need to know how to get started. This book provides that next step. For Wilson-Raybould, what individuals and organizations need to do to advance true reconciliation is self-evident, accessible, and achievable. True Reconciliation is broken down into three core practices—Learn, Understand, and Act—that can be applied by individuals, communities, organizations, and governments.

## **Reconciling History: A Story of Canada** by Jody Wilson-Raybould and Roshan Danesh

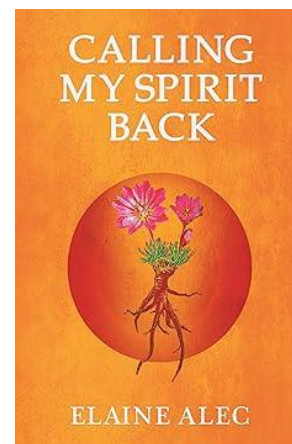
The totem pole forms the foundation for this unique and important oral history of Canada. Its goal is both toweringly ambitious and beautifully direct: To tell the story of this country in a way that prompts readers to look from different angles, to see its dimensions, its curves, and its cuts. To see that history has an arc, just as the totem pole rises, but to realize that it is also in the details along the way that important meanings are to be found. To recognize that the story of the past is always there to be retold and recast and must be conveyed to generations to come. That in the act of re-telling, meaning is found, and strength is built.

## **"Indian" in the Cabinet: Speaking Truth to Power** by Jody Wilson-Raybould

Wilson-Raybould's experience in Trudeau's Cabinet reveals important lessons about how we must continue to strengthen our political institutions and culture, and the changes we must make to meet challenges such as racial justice and climate change. As her initial optimism about the possibilities of enacting change while in Cabinet shifted to struggles over inclusivity, deficiencies of political will, and concerns about adherence to core principles of our democracy, Wilson-Raybould stood on principle and, ultimately, resigned. In standing her personal and professional ground and telling the truth in front of the nation, Wilson-Raybould demonstrated the need for greater independence and less partisanship in how we govern.

## **Calling My Spirit Back** by Elaine Alec

Indigenous Peoples have always carried the knowledge necessary to heal. When our people heal, our families heal, our communities heal and our land will heal. You cannot have one without the other. These stories are teachings, prophecy and protocols shared throughout the years by elders, language speakers, medicine people and helpers. They have been the foundation to individual healing and learning self-love. They teach us how to make good decisions for ourselves and for all other aspects in our lives.



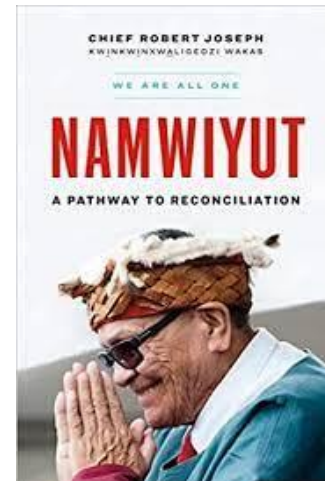
## **Coming of Age: Overcoming trauma to achieve self-determination** by Elaine Alec

What if coming of age wasn't about age at all-but about remembering who you are? In this powerful blend of memoir, Indigenous wisdom, and healing framework, author and community leader Elaine Alec shares her journey of overcoming addiction, shame, and generational trauma to reclaim her identity and voice. Through personal stories, cultural teachings, and practical tools from her Cultivating Safe Spaces framework, this book offers a pathway to emotional healing, self-determination, and reconnection. This is not just a story of survival-it's a call to remember your humanness, to break generational cycles, and to step into your purpose with clarity and courage. Grounded in the lived experiences of a Syilx and Secwepemc woman, *Coming of Age* is for anyone seeking to heal from trauma, embrace their identity, and transform how they relate to themselves and the world around them.

## **Namwiyut - We Are All One: A Pathway to Reconciliation**, Dr. Chief Robert Joseph

In this book, Chief Robert Joseph traces his journey from his childhood surviving residential school to his present-day leadership journey bringing individual hope, collective change, and global transformation.

Before we get to know where we are going, we need to know where we came from. Reconciliation represents a long way forward, but it is a pathway towards our higher humanity, our highest selves, and an understanding that everybody matters. In this moving and inspiring book, Chief Joseph teaches us to transform our relationships with ourselves and each other.



## **Five Little Indians** by Michelle Good

Taken from their families when they are very small and sent to a remote, church-run residential school, Kenny, Lucy, Clara, Howie and Maisie are barely out of childhood when they are finally released after years of detention. With compassion and insight, *Five Little Indians* chronicles the desperate quest of these residential school survivors to come to terms with their past and, ultimately, find a way forward.

## **Truth Telling: Seven Conversations about Indigenous Life in Canada** by Michelle Good

With authority and insight, *Truth Telling* examines a wide range of Indigenous issues framed by Michelle Good's personal experience and knowledge. From racism, broken treaties, and cultural pillaging to the value of Indigenous lives and the importance of Indigenous literature, this collection reveals facts about Indigenous life in Canada that are both devastating and enlightening. *Truth Telling*

also demonstrates the myths underlying Canadian history and the human cost of colonialism, showing how it continues to underpin modern social institutions in Canada.

## **A Mind Spread Out on the Ground** by Alicia Elliott

Alicia Elliott explores the systemic oppression faced by Indigenous peoples across Canada through the lens of her own experiences as a Tuscarora writer from Six Nations of the Grand River. Elliott examines how colonial violence, including the loss of language, seeps into the present-day lives of Indigenous people, often in the form of mental illness. Elliott, who lives in Brantford, Ont., won gold at the National Magazine Awards in 2017 for the essay this book is based on.

## **Hope Matters** by Lee Maracle, Columpa Bobb and Tania Carter

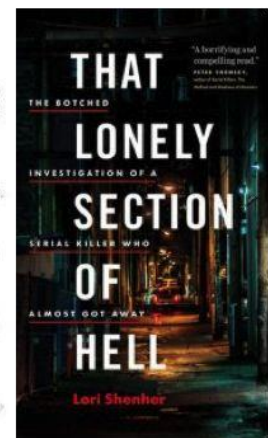
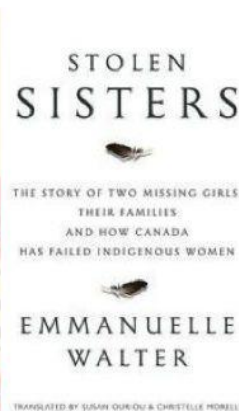
A collection of poetry from award-winning author Lee Maracle and her daughters Columpa Bobb and Tania Carter, looks at the journey of Indigenous people from colonial beginnings to reconciliation. The collaborative effort documents the personal mother-daughter connection and also the shared song of hope and reconciliation from all Indigenous communities and perspectives.

## **Legacy: Trauma, Story, and Indigenous Healing** by Suzanne Methot

This book is accessible, relatable, and full of storytelling about real people. It deeply resonates with me as a traditional counsellor, educator, and Indigenous person. Suzanne Methot, a brave Nehiyaw writer and community helper, takes up the challenges of logically explaining a child's traumatized brain and body and how these impacts continue into adulthood. Methot also explores Indigenous health-care models, proving that Indigenous values provide solutions.

## **Stolen Sisters: The Story of Two Missing Girls, Their Families, and How Canada Has Failed Indigenous Women** by Emmanuelle Walter

In 2014, the nation was rocked by the brutal violence against young Aboriginal women Loretta Saunders, Tina Fontaine and Rinelle Harper. But tragically, they were not the only Aboriginal women to suffer that year. In fact, an official report revealed that since 1980, 1,200 Canadian Aboriginal women have been murdered or have gone missing. This alarming official figure reveals a national tragedy and the systemic failure of law enforcement and of all levels of government to address the issue.



# MUST READ

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## **The North-West Is Our Mother: The Story of Louis Riel's People, the Metis Nation** by Jean Teillet

There is a missing chapter in the narrative of Canada's Indigenous peoples—the story of the Métis Nation, a new Indigenous people descended from both First Nations and Europeans. Their story begins in the last decade of the eighteenth century in the Canadian North-West. Within twenty years the Métis proclaimed themselves a nation and won their first battle. Within forty years they were famous throughout North America for their military skills, their nomadic life and their buffalo hunts...

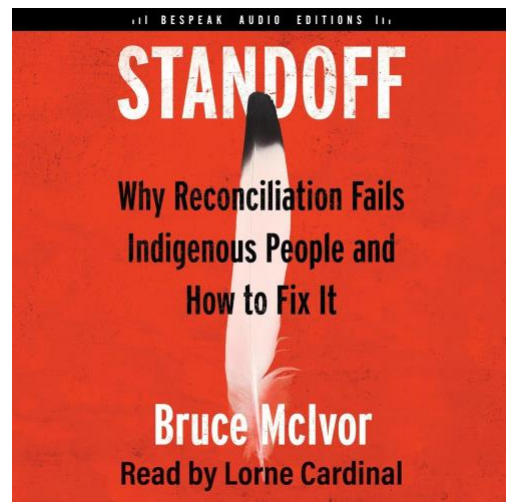
## **No Surrender: The Land Remains Indigenous** by Sheldon Krasowski

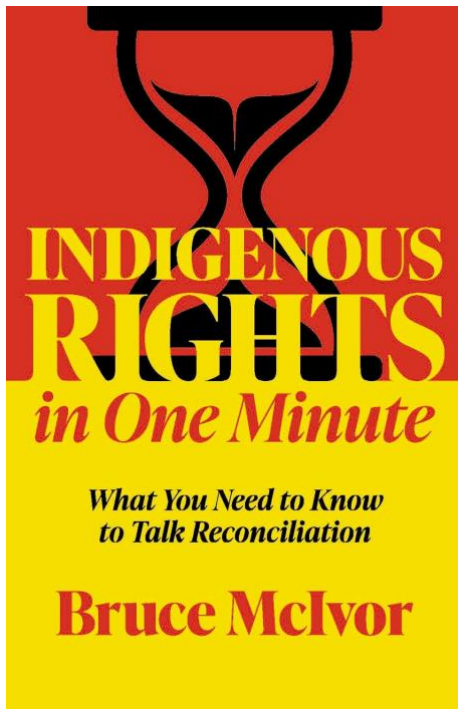
Between 1869 and 1877 the government of Canada negotiated Treaties One through Seven with the Indigenous peoples of the Great Plains. Many historians argue that the negotiations suffered from cultural misunderstandings between the treaty commissioners and Indigenous chiefs, but newly uncovered eyewitness accounts show that the Canadian government had a strategic plan to deceive over the “surrender clause” and land sharing. According to Sheldon Krasowski's research, Canada understood that the Cree, Anishnabeg, Saulteaux, Assiniboine, Siksika, Piikani, Kainaa, Stoney and Tsuu T'ina nations wanted to share the land with newcomers—with conditions—but were misled over governance, reserved lands, and resource sharing. Exposing the government chicanery at the heart of the negotiations, *No Surrender* demonstrates that the land remains Indigenous.

## **Standoff: Why Reconciliation Fails Indigenous People and How to Fix It**

by Bruce McIvor

Faced with a constant stream of news reports of standoffs and confrontations, Canada's “reconciliation project” has obviously gone off the rails. In this series of concise and thoughtful essays, lawyer and historian Bruce McIvor explains why reconciliation with Indigenous peoples is failing and what needs to be done to fix it. Widely known as a passionate advocate for Indigenous rights, McIvor reports from the front lines of legal and political disputes that have gripped the nation. In clear, plain language he explains the historical and social forces that underpin the development of Aboriginal law, criticizes its shortcomings and charts a practical, principled way forward.





## **Indigenous Rights in One Minute: What You Need to Know to Talk Reconciliation** by Bruce McIvor

A shortage of trustworthy information continues to frustrate Canadians with best intentions to fulfill Canada's commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. To meet this demand, lawyer and historian Bruce McIvor provides concise, plain answers to 100 essential questions being asked by Canadians across the country. To ensure the country's reconciliation project progresses from rhetoric to reality, ordinary Canadians need straightforward answers to fundamental questions. McIvor provides the answers and context to support a thoughtful and respectful national conversation about reconciliation and the fulfillment of Canada's commitment to a better future for Indigenous people.

## **Flawed Precedent: The St. Catherine's Case and Aboriginal Title** by Kent McNeil

In *Flawed Precedent*, preeminent legal scholar Kent McNeil provides a compelling account of this contentious case. He begins by delving into the historical and ideological context of the 1880s. He then examines the trial in detail, demonstrating how prejudicial attitudes towards Indigenous peoples influenced the decision. He further discusses the effects that *St. Catherine's* had on law and policy until the 1970s when its authority was finally questioned in *Calder*, then in *Delgamuukw*, *Marshall/Bernard*, *Tsilhqot'in*, and other key rulings. He also provides an informative analysis of the current judicial understanding of Aboriginal title in Canada, now driven by evidence of Indigenous law and land use rather than by the discarded prejudicial assumptions of a bygone era.

## **Distorted Descent: White Claims to Indigenous Identity** by Darryl Leroux

*Distorted Descent* examines a social phenomenon that has taken off in the twenty-first century: otherwise, white, French descendant settlers in Canada shifting into a self-defined "Indigenous" identity. This study is not about individuals who have been dispossessed by colonial policies, or the multi-generational efforts to reconnect that occur in response. Rather, it is about white, French-descendant people discovering an Indigenous ancestor born 300 to 375 years ago through genealogy and using that ancestor as the sole basis for an eventual shift into an "Indigenous" identity today.

# MUST READ

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## **Clearing the Plains** by James William Daschuk

In arresting, but harrowing, prose, James Daschuk examines the roles that Old World diseases, climate, and, most disturbingly, Canadian politics—the politics of ethnocide—played in the deaths and subjugation of thousands of aboriginal people in the realization of Sir John A. Macdonald’s “National Dream.”

## **This Place: 150 Years Retold**

This Place is an anthology of comics featuring the work of Indigenous creators as they retell the history of Canada. Elements of fantasy and magical realism are incorporated throughout the book, telling the stories of characters like Jack Fiddler, an Anishinaabe shaman facing murder charges, and Rosie, an Inuk girl growing up during the Second World War.

## **Decolonizing Wealth, Indigenous wisdom to heal divides and restore balance** by Edgar Villanueva

Decolonizing Wealth is a provocative analysis of the dysfunctional colonial dynamics at play in philanthropy and finance. Award-winning philanthropy executive Edgar Villanueva draws from the traditions from the Native way to prescribe the medicine for restoring balance and healing our divides.



## **Living Rhythms, Lessons in Aboriginal Economic Resilience and Vision** By Wanda Wuttunee

Living Rhythms offers a current perspective on indigenous economics, planning, business development, sustainable development, and knowledge systems. Using a series of cases studies featuring Aboriginal communities and organizations, Wanda Wuttunee shows that their adaptations to economic and social development are based on indigenous wisdom and experience.

## **Upholding Indigenous Economic Relationships, Nehiyawak Narratives** by Shalene Wuttunee Jobin

This book explains settler colonialism through the lens of economic exploitation, using Indigenous methodologies and critical approaches. What is the relationship between economic progress in the land now called Canada and the exploitation of Indigenous peoples? And what gifts embedded within Indigenous world views speak to miyo-pimâtisiwin ᓄᓐ ᐱᓕᓐᓂᓐ (the good life), and specifically to good economic relations?

## MUST READ

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I highly recommend you read Indigenous authored books to you children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews. There are so many to choose from.

Check out [Strong Nations](#) for book lists for children, teens and adults.

# Strong Nations



Check out [Theytus Books](#) for book lists for children, teens and adults.



## Appendix

### The Riverbed: The Values of Economic Reconciliation

Reconciliation needs to be accompanied by purposeful actions in all spaces of society. These actions should happen through Indigenized approaches and processes. The riverbed is the channel in which a river flows. It helps guide the river's course. As seen through an Indigenous worldview, these values are interconnected and reinforce one another - none of them can be adopted on its own or ranked higher than the others. While Indigenous peoples already largely live by and embody these values, all people and organizations need to adopt and enact these values as it is only through our collective efforts that we can protect and care for what matters most for current and future generations.

- Accountability and truth telling
- Regenerative
- Embraces and celebrates diverse knowings and ways of being
- Connected to Land and Place
- Rematriation
- Reciprocal relationships
- Anti-racism, equity, and solidarity
- Self-determination, cultural sovereignty, and Indigenization
- Recognition and respect

### Accountability and Truth-telling

Taking responsibility includes our accountability to our children, the land and its creatures, and future generations. It also includes taking responsibility for past and ongoing impacts of settler colonialism on Indigenous ways of being, knowing and doing in Canada. It is a commitment to truth-telling and taking actions that are accountable to the truth. There are also planetary levels of accountability and transparency and through all levels of systems.

For First Nations and more broadly, Indigenous Peoples, storytelling is the foundation of articulating lived values that form the basis for Indigenous governance and regeneration. The sharing of this experiential knowledge and living histories through storytelling, comprises part of the core teachings that Indigenous families transmit to future generations. Canada's version of history is very different from Canada's Indigenous Peoples' lived experience. This is demonstrated by Paulette Regan, Euro-Canadian scholar and academic liaison to Truth and Reconciliation Commission:

*“Settler violence against Indigenous peoples is woven into the fabric of Canadian history in an unbroken thread from past to present that we must now unravel, unsettling our comfortable assumptions about the past. At the same time, we must work as Indigenous allies to “restory” the dominant culture version of history; that is, we must make decolonizing space for Indigenous history—counter-narratives of diplomacy, law, and peacemaking practices—as told by Indigenous peoples themselves.”*



We must stop the colonial story being the only story of Indigenous lives. The narrative of this history not only has to be told, with the truth and followed by accepting that truth, but also being accountable by fully appreciate the ongoing impacts of colonization has on First Nation communities, families, and peoples and the lived experiences of resilience and resurgence that need to be shared with intergenerational survivors. In short, meaningful reconciliation efforts, commitments and actions must confront colonialism not only historically but as part of an ongoing process that continues to impact present generations of Indigenous youth and families.

## Recognition and Respect



Practicing openness to different perspectives and experiences, including Indigenous ways of being, knowing and doing. Respect is a foundational piece to all the other values and aspects of this framework, and all the work required for economic reconciliation. Honouring and acting upon Indigenous rights to self-determination, including the inherent right of self-government and that they are Title and Rights holders to their traditional territory. This includes committing to actions and principles of Land Back, and upholding the rights of individuals whether they live on- or off-reserve.

Governments, Industry, Institutions, etc. speak to recognition of Indigenous People in Canada and respect for the relationships with Indigenous peoples and First Nations, which are absolutely required for reconciliation to be meaningful. However, let us be honest about how serious we are in ensuring sovereignty of Indigenous peoples and their communities. As a majority of the time, it's only to the point where settler Canadians are comfortable and not disturbing their well-being. We are recommending that we must get unsettled in our comfort zones and move through the uncomfortable spaces to truly recognize and respect our Canadian history, Indigenous Title and Rights (without a fight), and their sovereignty.

## Regenerative

*“Indigenous” refers to how living things learned a way of inter-relating within a specific place to achieve the dynamic optimum efficiency ensuring constant renewal.”*

-Dr. Jeanette Armstrong

As Dr. Jeanette Armstrong has emphasized, to live regeneratively requires that our whole society does things in such a way that we do not destroy the lands and all beings' ability for constant renewal. A circular and regenerative economy is one that is iterative and gets better over time as we learn. It is based on ecological restoration, land protection, equitable relationships and partnerships, justice, and fair participatory processes. Rather than extract from the land and each other, how do we do things that are consistent with the rights of nature, valuing the health and well-being of Mother Earth by producing, consuming, and redistributing resources in harmony with the planet and all its creatures? Embracing a culture of spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical well-being, our economic system encourages and generates collective healing.



## Connected to Land and Place

For Indigenous peoples, the land does not belong to them, but rather they belong to the land. This inherent connection to place since time immemorial is the foundation of their societal laws and ways of being. The knowledge and spiritual connection that comes from being tied to the land creates respect, recognition, and the ability to be in reciprocity with it.

An economic system that is connected to land and place is locally designed to redistribute goods so that all organisms can thrive and provide for future generations. It requires re-localization and democratization of how we produce and consume goods, ensuring all have full access to healthy food, renewable energy, clean air and water, good jobs, and healthy living environments.

This value asks us to move away from treating the land solely as something to be used, manipulated, and extracted from to treating the land as a part of ourselves, where we are rooted and understand the relationship to family, community and land through our responsibility and accountability to it and all those connected to it.



## Reciprocal Relationships



Relationships are built on respect and in the spirit of exchange. For Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals, communities, organizations, and institutions, this means that knowledge, capacity, and wisdom is not one-sided or hierarchical. Collaboration and partnership with Indigenous Peoples and communities can generate transformative spaces and can shift us away from dominant western ways of being. This is about working side by side as equal partners in the economy, in partnership with Indigenous communities in every aspect of economic development. This is particularly important in BC because most of the land is unceded territory.

This reciprocal relationship also extends to how we as humans relate to the land and other creatures. Interlinked with the value of Connected to Land and Place, each place has its own system of reciprocity to be respected.

## Justice, Anti-racism, and Solidarity

A just world means that all children, families, and communities are thriving, not just surviving. Injustices experienced by Indigenous people are not separate from other injustices. We honour the resilience of Indigenous, Women, Black and all People of Colour, as well as LGBTQIA2S+ community members who have endured this system of oppression and continue to be leaders in dismantling it. We are committed to social and ecological justice and learning to move away from performative or token allyship towards true solidarity with one another as we move forward together.



## Self-determination, Cultural sovereignty, Indigenization



Indigenous worldviews, culture, values, protocols, practices, are embedded in decisions, processes, and outcomes across various contexts of community economic development. Immersing local people into regenerative knowledge together as a whole community, not divided as it is in many communities throughout BC. By learning from Indigenous ways of being, knowing and doing communities can make decisions that reflect the original peoples of this land and honour their inseparable relationship to the land, committing to transformation through decolonization and Indigenization.

## Rematriation

Rematriation is a core act of reconciliation, which involves acknowledging, respecting, and supporting matriarchy in our everyday roles and responsibilities personally and professionally. This comes about through human-equity and not gender-equity (equality based in humanness on not just gender only), decolonization, destruction of male sexism, toxicity, abuse and violence, continuation of revamping laws and policies to create greater access to women for equality in employment and compensation, board positions, access to capital, and so much more. This is about the rebalance of responsibility in our communities and not about power and control. This work is required internally within our communities and more importantly, externally throughout non-Indigenous communities.

It is through the process of Rematriation that Indigenous peoples and Nations reclaim their identity, culture, and ways of being. Indigenous women's spiritual connection to matrilineal ancestors and relations that extend beyond this world, and their role as life givers means that they are in a unique position to lead in a way that consistently places children and families at the center. Honouring and supporting women to lead in their fullest potential is required not only to enable the full sovereign expression of all Indigenous relatives, but also for the benefit of all communities by helping people overcome fear and move towards love.

