

(Tosh Southwick)

Good morning, folks. I'm going to try and make sure. Oh, I have my hand up on the zoom. Am I supposed to have my hand up on the zoom? Is that, OK? I'll let you guys' figure that out too. Anyway. Good morning, everybody. I think ...

This one. No, maybe not. Yes. Pushing hard. Can I just push the button? Yeah. Perfect. Let's just do that.

Thanks. Awesome. Thanks. So, some familiar faces in the room and some new faces in the room. And for those of you that are joining online, my name is Tosh Southwick. I'm a citizen of Kluane First Nation. My family is the Chambers Dixons. My grandmother was Babe Southwick, a famous dog musher in the Yukon. It's not genetic. I'm horrible at it. I have three Red Lanterns to prove it.

My mom is Grace Southwick of Burwash Landing and I'm super excited to be here. I was really thrilled to when Sarah reached out and said, hey, we're we got this little project, you know, we're going to talk about some interesting topics. And I said, what's that? She's like, oh, yeah, this electoral reform was like, yeah, it's little.

Just. Big piece. And I have the, I think the honor and I was talking to Michael Vernon earlier on the break. I get to pick and choose the work that I do as a consultant and one of the things that appealed to me about this project was that you guys are starting it with values and that's a very First Nation way of thinking about big projects.

What are the values that are important? What are the things that we need to always keep in mind? And for me in in the work that I've had the honor of doing throughout my career, being able to go back to the things that I value the most has saved me time in and time out.

I don't pick any work that doesn't have an impact in the Yukon. I could work wherever I wanted in Canada, but if it's not going to benefit the North, if it's not going to be something that's going to make an impact here, I choose not to do that work because I guide my choices based off my values so... I thought we'd talk about values and governance, and I'd share with you a few pieces that I've come to sort of understand about how these two things interact, particularly when we're talking about the Yukon.

So, for me values are part of a bigger sort of, part of human beings. We've got our world views, and these are the things that we believe to be real. These are the pieces that we know to be true. So, in my worldview, having a garage sale on a Saturday in Whitehorse, you got to expect a few people. I was not prepared for the people at 7:30 in the morning with walkie talkies.

Different world views, right?

Then we've got our beliefs. These are the things that that we believe to be true that are maybe not based on facts but are the things that in ourselves we know that are our beliefs. Then we have our values.

What are the things that we believe in, the things that guide our behaviors, the things that are the pieces that that we hold really, really true and they are the ones that if you're going to clash with somebody's values, those are the hard, hard conversations we find in the world. And ultimately those pieces produce our behavior the way that we act.

In my work in advancing reconciliation across sectors. I think it is fair to say that there's a whole bunch of different world views at play at any given time, even in the Yukon, where we've got a small population, we generally all see the world in different ways, and I think one of the parts that's really interesting about having different world views is that you can surround yourself with those that think the same or you can surround yourself with everybody who thinks differently.

And we are stronger when we have multiple points of view, multiple worldviews at play.

The part that gets challenging is when we start to say which worldview is right or wrong, and so I'd encourage you when you're doing this work to be open minded and stick to all sorts of different world views, and that they're all OK. They're all happy to be there.

So, I'm just going to give you an example, I'm going to hope this works.

So, have you seen this? It's actually just on Facebook again. So, if you see this dress as gold and white, put your hand up.

Yeah.

Now the rest of you are like you guys are crazy this thing is blue and Gray or dark, different colors that are there, right? It's how they see this piece. So I did this little experiment with my kids and my husband last night and they all my kids, all three of my kids and my husband all see it blue and Gray. Yeah. Yes, you've indicated, and I very clearly see it white and gold.

The part that is the same for all of us, it's a dress, right? It doesn't mean that we're any one of us is wrong.

And so there are things that are actually naturally occurring in our brain that make us see the world differently. And the part that becomes really important is when we try and find that common ground. Yes, it's a dress. We can all agree on that, right.

So, here's another one. Oh, I lied.

(Secondary voice from presentation) "Laurel. Laurel. Laurel."

So, if you heard Yanni put your hand up. Right. And it's super clear because I'm like man, that is "Laurel". But the other half of the room is going to be like, no, I very clearly heard Yanni. So, it isn't just visual, it can be what we hear. It can be what we feel.

And I often will tell people that even in the Yukon, where we can all agree on a whole bunch of values, there are points in time when I walk into a space as an indigenous woman, that my emotional reaction is going to be different because of my lived experience because of the things that have happened. And that's OK it happens. We have different ways of perceiving the world.

So, a very common one. And I I've worked with a number of environmental folks in, in conservation and both in the Yukon and Canadian parks and all of these pieces and so catch and release is a great example of different world views. It is true that many Yukon First Nations want to conserve fish and have concerns about that fish.

But in my part of the world, how I was raised, we would never catch and release. We are taught from a very young age. You do not play with your food, you got no business out there catching the biggest of the deepest fish, because you're not. It's those aren't the best ones that you want to eat anyway. They're the Breeders and you don't catch fish and let them go for sport. And so even though we would agree fishing and conservation is important the "how" we do that differs based off of different world views and how we've been taught.

And beliefs play a big role in this, so I want to start the just digging a little bit deeper into these things. So beliefs are assumptions about the world. They stem from, our experiences, our culture. Sometimes they're they're things that we think to be true. They can be positive, they can be negative and they can be quite varied. So I'm just going to use a couple of beliefs that I think are very Yukon.

Even though there is no evidence Yukoners generally will tell you, there is a thing called cabin fever, right? This is a very different place in February and March than it is in July, right? Cabin fever for us makes sense. If somebody came up and said there's no such thing as cabin fever, I'm like, I totally believe in cabin fever.

Born and raised. There is no factual evidence that being born and raised in the Yukon makes you a better Yukoner. In fact, I could tell you several stories of people who were born and raised in the Yukon who were not better Yukoners. But man, do we hold this belief right to the point where there's actual bumper stickers that you could purchase that says I'm born and raised.

So beliefs, they're powerful. There are things that have impact on the work that we do.

And they're they're these pieces that, you know, we we have the ability to shift. You can shift somebody's belief based off of experience. Michael Vernon shifted my experience with the media by making sure he's like Tosh when you swear, when you're being interviewed, this is what happens. He shifted my beliefs right. You can do that. You can have that impact on folks at your table. You'll be able to shift their beliefs a little bit.

Values are much harder to shift and some of the hardest conversations we're having in this world right now are about contrary values.

It is true that you can shift somebody's values and point of view, but generally that has to happen with a transformative experience. You have to have something that is truly a big impact. So, when somebody says life changing, those are the times that you'll see values shift. Other than that, we stay fairly true to our values. They might shift a little bit as we grow older and have different experiences. But it is fair to say once a dog person, you're probably always a dog person like those values you tend to hold close.

These values refer to things that we think are important. So, for example, somebody might prioritize and value financial security. Another person might value vacations, and getting the heck out of the Yukon. Both of those things can be true at the same time. My husband is well, first, he'd be horrified if he found out I was mentioning him on a live streamed event, but my husband is an introvert. He values quiet time at home without people. I'm an extrovert, so you can imagine at the garage sale, when there's 45 people shopping, where he was, and where I was.

Different values, right?

So, example of some values that I think are very Yukon that are very much at place in the Yukon is fair to say we often will say we value the fact that we are in Wildlife's home, not that they are in ours. So, there was recently a big kerfuffle in Porter Creek, where there was a group of homeowners who were relatively new to the territory, who wanted all the foxes trapped and moved away. You could imagine others in Porter Creek were like, no, your house is in their territory, you have to move. Then we got into the born and raised it wasn't fun anyway.

It is fair to say most Yukoners have values about making decisions here. We don't like it when Ottawa comes up and says this is what the Yukon territory will do. We share values around that.

It is fair to say that a sense of community that happens in a place like the Yukon in the north is unique, right? I was taught when I was growing up, if you saw somebody on the side of the road who was broken down in winter and you didn't stop, God help you when you got home and somebody found out, you drove past them. Because you're in Yukon, you stop that sense of community is important, right?

I think it's fair to say that we value reconciliation. I am constantly reminded as even as hard as my hard day can be, we're trying to advance indigenous rights. It is different when I go down South, there is a different expectation here.

I remember the first time I was in Manitoba and Winnipeg for a conference, and we walked into a restaurant in downtown Winnipeg, and the owner said no, and there was about seven of us from a conference and he said, no, I don't serve First Nation people. And I looked at the people that were with me and he said, yeah, you guys can't be in here and they were ready to leave. And I was like, man, if this was the Yukon, I would have every cousin, every auntie and all their friends at this restaurant right now.

We have different expectations up here.

And so those values lead to different behavior in. In my experience, when we can find out and we're like, hey, why is somebody acting that way? Why is somebody mad right now at this conversation? One of the first things I want to do is say, what are they valuing because it's likely that that experience is rubbing on something they value very close to their heart.

And so behaviors come about in a whole bunch of different ways, but generally you can tie them back to the world views that people hold. So if you're in this room and you're you're fairly new to the Yukon and you would see my, my kids come in and if lunch was being served, they would look in the room, they would scan for elders because they've been taught that elders in our worldview are the most important people in our community and that they are to be served first, so they would not get up and eat. I mean they might try, but they would quickly learn. They would not get up and eat until somebody who is older than them and after your uncle said, OK, now it's your turn.

And they would be ready to jump up and serve people. So that's their behavior that you would see. And if you didn't know that, you'd be like, why isn't anybody eating? Right? It'd be weird. So behaviors can kind of tie to those pieces.

Now, here's the fun, fun part.

Opinions.

Opinions come and go. They change very easily, but human beings tend to make opinions and change their opinions off of who they surround themselves with. And we see this playing out right now in, in some dangerous ways because it is really easy on social media to delete somebody who doesn't have the same opinion as you. It is very easy on social media to build an algorithm that just continually supports the things that you believe in. And so opinions become really polarizing now, where that hasn't always been the case.

And so, we do have people who have strong opinions, strong beliefs, and that behavior is reflecting that piece. I think it's also fair to say the values shift across this place we call home. So, the same values that you would say, yeah, as a Canadian, as a Yukoner, "I hold these values," are maybe not necessarily true in other parts of the country. And this place we call home is huge. And so those values shift quite a bit. And I remember the first time I had the honor of going to the East Coast and I finally figured out why there was a lot of East coasters here. We have very similar values, you can see that. When I was there, I was very comfortable, except for when I got into a taxi and he started bartering with me about where I was supposed to go and for how much that was a new experience. But you could see that, but like you could walk in there and have a conversation with anybody, and if they saw you on the side of the road broken down, they would stop. And that was different for me. And so, I think that it's OK for our values to be unique in the Yukon. It's OK for them to be grounded in this place, in the experiences that we have here.

Oh, look, I went ahead of myself. That was supposed to be the pretty side that said that, but that's good.

So, I'm going to use a couple of examples. So often you'll hear, particularly when we're talking about governance, that many people valued transparency, that this is a piece that lots of I think most Canadians would say, yes, we want our systems to be built off of transparency. Yet many bureaucracies don't build their programs and services that way, and in fact, transparency is a really hard target for lots of different systems to meet.

But it's still a common value that we would say, and so you want to pick values for this work that you're undertaking that are achievable. That makes sense, that are you're going to be able to put forward and hold up and make sense, right from word, go.

It is fair in my experience that most Yukoners hold a value about connection to the land. You would be hard pressed to live here and thrive for 10 years. If you hate the outdoors. It would be hard, right? I can't live in Vancouver. It's too busy for me. I would not thrive there, right? I have a fundamental aversion to long bouts of rain, so it wouldn't be good for me there. And so, it is fair to say that a value of connection to the land is important, but we rarely see that built into our Yukon systems, even though it's a value that many of us share. And so how do we how do we make sure, there's a match between those pieces.

It is fair to say that we deal with the clash of values about an individualistic society and a collective society quite a bit in the Yukon. So, in most of our First Nation communities, we are taught that our job is to be there for our clan, our family, our nation, our community. And that we make decisions based off of what's good for the collective, which is very contrary to a lot of Western systems that are based on what's best for the individual.

And so, then you amplify that with this belief in the Yukon of Community, you can see how it gets quite fuzzy, especially if some of you are seeing a red and or a blue and black dress and others are seeing a gold and white dress. So, it can get complex pretty quickly.

Relationships.

It is fair to say that we value relationships in the Yukon. If I see Ranj Pillai in Save on Foods, I'm not going to go, Oh my God, I can't talk him with, he's the premier. I'm gonna be like, Ranj, we gotta talk. Right here in the meat aisle, we're having a conversation, right? Relationships underpin a lot of the things that happen, including governance in the Yukon. We know people, they know our families, we understand communities. I had an honor to meet a new elder today. And the first thing I said to that elder is this is who my family is, and this is where I'm from, and he did the same thing, because we are grounded in relationships, those pieces are important.

All 14 Yukon First Nations are matriarchal societies. We follow our mother. But you don't see that in some government systems. So, you have a clash of values, right? But in some communities, if you walked into Burwash, for example, and you wanted to make a decision, you would be told that partly of that, that conversation you had, happened at the elders council. And if you were from a very Western governance system and you walked into that room and you saw almost all female elders around that table, you might go, "Why am I here to make a decision," and you might be like a particular CEO who came to our community last year and headed right to the oldest man in the room as they're talking to him about this, this work that his company wanted to do. Only for that older man to say, "I am the janitor, and not from this community and you need to be talking to the women over there."

And so, there's a different value on how that governance works, right? For him, he was looking for a male that was going to be in charge, and he came to a community where we are matriarchal. A lot of times those decisions are made by the women at Elders Council.

And so, you want to be aware of these different values that underpin governance systems. It becomes important when you're trying to build a system or shift a system that's relevant for the place that we call home.

Education versus experience.

I often tell the story of one of my uncles. We have a very changing demographic and dynamic in Kluane country with climate change and our rivers are drying up and all of that fun stuff. And we had a group of academics come up from down in the States and they, one gentleman there, he was going to get on the boat and he said I have three Ph.D.'s and water and hydrology and all of these things. And my uncle said, "That's good for you, but you aren't driving this boat and I'm not getting on it because you've never been on this lake!"

Fair statement right? You could have three PHD's and know a lot about water, I'm not getting on a boat with you because I know my lake and so they in the Yukon we value both of these things. They both can be true. They might differ for some folks, right? So, when you're thinking about what are those, go ahead, Michael, when you're thinking about what are the pieces that that makes sense, you want to start just to think about not just the pieces that you've always taught are matter.

And sometimes we inherit values. Sometimes we're told respect is a value. That's very, very common across a whole bunch of cultures. But respect means different things. So, when somebody comes and asks me what respect means to me, I will often tell them that we were, in my way, we would respect that water, that we have the off like, I think the opportunity and, really, the experience to watch right now outside that door is life. It's spirit for others, they would look at that water as a resource.

And so, respect can mean different things. And so, it's not enough just to put these words up and say these are the values you have to dig into them. You have to understand what they mean. What do they look like? What are the behaviors that we're showing when we're saying those things are true.

Integrity, ethics, honesty, or all common values that you'll see you want to dig deeper into those. What do they look like? How can we find out that we're both talking about a dress rather than those colors?

So just a quick exercise. This says pair up because I wasn't aware that you were going to be in tables like this. All good. I understand there are student facilitators at each table. Is that right? Perfect.

Almost. You guys don't have one. Thank you, student facilitators. So, for those of you online, feel free to participate as well. But at your tables, I'd like you just to do some quick brainstorming for five, I don't know how much time do we have left, Sara? 5-10 minutes and for you online you can do the same thing.

What are some common Yukon and specifically we want to talk about governance values that you see at play right now, 2024, it's May, what are some governance values that you see at play? Talk about it at your table or online think about it, and then we'll share back. As you see them right now, good clarification, Michael.

\*\*\* Time Lapse\*\*\*

OK, so hopefully you had a chance at your table to wrestle with a couple of them. We're just going to share back if we can. And I understand there's a few folks online that contributed as well, so that's awesome. So, if we can just start at this table and you don't have to share everything you talked about, but just one or two values you identified that are you think you're at play with the Yukon and talking about governance.

(Sara McPhee-Knowles)

Just wait for the mic.

(Tosh Southwick)

Like oh, now you even used a flip chart. Excellent. It's OK. No pressure, no pressure.

(Member)

We have a couple, well more than a couple, however I will read 2. Increased consultation with indigenous governments. Resolving and collaborative solutions as well as school governance between the First Nations and the Crown.

(Tosh Southwick)

Great. Thank you. Yeah. And that's a very unique northern value that you don't see at play in, in other governance systems, right, great. Thank you. Next table. Thanks Sarah.

(Sara)

Oh, I missed some of that.

(Tosh Southwick)

There's a value about delegation.

(Member)

Some of the things our group talked about was um, majority rules.

(Tosh Southwick)

Ah yeah.

(Member)

That our political system is acrimonious. That in theory it should be about balance. That reconciliation is a very important part of where we're at. That some governments are risk adverse and are more interested in the continuation of power, rather, like to be popular more than make an impact. And the importance of representation of underrepresented under representative groups.

(Tosh Southwick)

Nice. Thank you. Sarah's coming your way. Next table. So, if you haven't delegated a speaker, you got 20 seconds. Oh, she's like we did.

(Member)

OK, so first thing we had to do is figure out what type of governance, because there's a lot of different types of governance in the Yukon, whether you're talking about the territorial, there's municipal, we do have a representative for federal, and there's a number of different First Nations that also have their own governance. But given the scope of what we're doing here, we decided to go with territorial government. So we found that some of their values included supporting First Nations self governance, which has already been said is pretty unique for the Yukon and that we have such a high value for that type of the you know multiple systems within the system.

We also feel that they highly value economic development for the better or the worse. And fairness. The Yukon Government is doing a lot to try and be fair. Sometimes in those attempts, though, they're trying so hard to be fair to one person that is becoming unfair to another person. So there's also like the values for the land and water and, they seem to value popularity. And concern for future generations, which is something that I think is kind of becoming a more emerging type situations. I think what we were feeling.

And and they value education. And unfortunately, there's a lot of selfishness that's valued within the government as people are thinking entirely about how I can get reelected in four years instead of what



can we do for the people during the four years that we're that we've been given the honor of being here to represent them. Yeah, anyone ...

(Tosh Southwick)

Great. Awesome. Perfect. OK, next one.

(Member)

So common values is one of the things we found was approachability and accessibility. In Yukon, our politicians are very much accessible and connected, concerned about Yukoners as a whole, awareness of rural voices. And we find that they embrace the idea of community, to balance the economy and the environment, and have good formal relationships with First Nations, and are forward thinking. And also want to note that Yukon has one of the highest community service or volunteer rates in all of Canada, and quite proud of that.

(Tosh Southwick)

Great. Thank you.

(Member)

Thank you. So those folks must have been listening to us because two of our important points are they've raised, which was accessibility and connections, but our group viewed it more as what we expect from our representatives, so value expectations. So we expect our representative to be nonpartisan, even though we recognize they are. We want them to be accountable, which every four years we get a chance to do, and hopefully we build a relationship with them.

And given the smallness of our community, because, like yesterday, 50,000 people in a riding in Vancouver for one MLA, we don't have 50,000 people here. We have 19 representatives, so if we can't talk to them, we really have a problem.

(Tosh Southwick)

Great. Thanks Chris.

(Member)

As we are the last group, a lot of our stuff is already said. We kind of looked at from the same perspective of what we kind of expect from our representatives, the big one being, the first one being access to elected officials, staff proceedings, that sort of thing. Like a lot of people, if you live in a dense riding in Whitehorse, you probably expect an MLA to come to your door and try to talk to you and if they don't then you're probably not gonna vote for them. The 2nd is reconciliation. It's an ongoing process that we expect to flow through every piece of government governance. We do recognize that there is a, what do you call it? An environment of competition in our in our system, that's both a positive and a negative, but we also expect a certain amount of collaboration between all these competing interests. And we also do expect a fair amount of fairness within our governments.

(Tosh Southwick)

Great understanding. We've got some comments from our participants online.

(Michael)

Yeah, just one or two. One is, I value a healthy environment for now in future. So decisions about development must consider consequences.

Some thoughts from someone else is reality me first, the other person, second. Aspirational is the other person 1st and me second.

And another one. There's another one just come in. Another one is aspirational transparency except when it's inconvenient. OK. And engagement at least, good lip service. He also had a note here, "suffering from some cynicism". But it is still a great place to live, and we do tend to take care of each other and our place. More conversations and working consensus would help.

(Tosh Southwick)

Nice, great. So, lots of variety right. There was lots of distinction amongst each of the table, but there were also some themes that were there. So, I think it is fair to say there are some concrete values that are at play right now in governance. There's also, it's also fair to say as you move forward in this process, what are some values that you're not seeing right now that you want to see and build a system that reflects those.

So just quickly want to talk a bit about why are values worth considering in this this work and I think, you know all of the pieces that I've already said, but if you build this system and it's not congruent with the values that you think are important for Yukoners, it's going to clash right off the back. We're going to, we're going to see that pretty quickly, right? And so if you consider the fact that you're starting with that is great, and if you can draw a line and as your work progresses and go back to those values that you agree on, and ask yourselves, is this complementary to what we said here at the beginning.

Especially as you progress, cause there's gonna be a whole bunch of conversations that you have, so when you're stuck and you will get stuck and they'll say if you're not just Michael's already getting mad, he's like, yeah, we're gonna get stuck if you don't get stuck, then I would come back and question whether the work was hard enough. Did you dig in deep enough because you're a big group, you're a diverse group, there should be different world views at play. You want to keep going back to those values to help you guide that.

I think when we make sure that these values guide the decision making and I understand today you already talked about values about how you're going to work, together, I think that's a really big step. It's sometimes, you know, lots of groups that I work with say, oh, that's the fluffy stuff, we don't need that. But if you cement that at the beginning and you talk about that idea that you want to be open minded and I think one of the ones that I saw on the list that Sarah said was that you want to be inquiring, you want to be, but it was the curiosity. That's a great value to go into this conversation with, right. And if you go back to that, I think it'll help on those pieces.

It is fair to say when shared values are embedded, particularly in a system, they can influence everything from opinions, to behavior and ultimately enhance shared values. And so I think there's a lot of room and

a lot of work that can happen there, that even though maybe it feels like you're doing more work upfront than you want to, it'll pay off in the end. I'll give you a couple of examples.

Few of you guys mentioned balance. If we put forward and say we really want to honor the value of balance in this system and you fast forward a few months down the road and the system that you're where recommendations you're putting forward haven't at all reflected balance, it's going to be apparent pretty quickly, right. And so, whether that be balanced for a stable foundation, whether that be balanced around representation, whether that be balance and how they operate in that that realm balance is a value that you want to be able to see in the behaviors that you're gonna elicit from that system.

Privacy is a common value that many bureaucrats and public servants try to put into the system. But in the Yukon, if somebody goes to their nursing station and Burwash or D-Bay, what are you gonna do? You gonna put sheets around that, like it's a different thing. So, the values you choose and the ones that you're putting forward need to be reflective of the place that we call home.

It might be aspirational, and it might sound great to have privacy as a an important value for a lot of government programs, but is that realistic? Can you do it on the ground? So, I think we want to, we want to think big, but you also want to make sure that you're picking values to underpin your work, that makes sense in this context.

So, one of the things that I was taught when I was growing up is that First Nation way in particular, our job is to reach consensus. Now, consensus doesn't mean we all agree and we see the the world the exact same way. In fact, if I had done that dress test at the beginning and everybody saw white and gold I'd be like Sarah we have a problem, concern.

Consensus in in the way that I was taught was that we can come to a decision that we can all live with, not that we all think is great and was awesome. So you can imagine if the value was put out for an electoral system, that consensus was an important piece that we wanted to consider how different the system would have to look in order to tie back to consensus. Just like balance, right?

And so, consensus while you're trying to and I think just in this room, while you're trying to challenge yourselves to agree and come on a way forward is not easy. There are entire First Nation governments that are run by consensus that haven't been able to make a decision on something because they haven't reached it yet. But the important part for me with consensus is that everybody's voices matters. Everybody is recognized around the table as being able to contribute, and that everybody's going to have to give something. There's going to be concessions across the way, not anybody's gonna walk out, right?

And so, I think that that consensus value is one that you see in some governance systems and ones that you don't see. Generally, I look at groups and they say yes, we value consensus and then they have a vote. So, you're, you know, they're contrary to your values, you're not, your behaviors are not holding what you say your values are, and so you want to make sure they're congruent that way.

This is probably one of the value shifts that I see happening the most in the Yukon and I heard you were talking a bit about it today.

Often times, Canadians in particular will say we've all we value equality. And oftentimes, what I think many people are actually valuing is equity. And I think from a First Nation perspective, we are often

pushing for fairness and they're distinct. They're not the same thing. They mean different, and the behaviors that come out of them would be different to reflect that. So, if we talk about equality, it's based off an assumption that everybody has the same platform that's there. Everybody can stand to the same height to the tree.

If we know nothing, we know that that is not the case in Canada right now. And I can tell you I just have to say two things to prove that to you. One Indian status. My Healthcare is fundamentally different than the vast majority of Canadians because I have something called Indian status in 2024. So that's one thing I can tell. We're not all on the same crate, just off of that.

Secondly, we live in the north. What is true here for Yukoners is different than it is for folks that live in the South. Right. Anybody who's tried to order a rushed Amazon package, when it says 24 hour delivery and they're like, or my favorite, when you talk to the delivery guys and they're like, oh, we can only send it to Atlin. You know where you gotta come to get it to Atlin?

So, we know that we don't all have the same crate and so when you're talking about these values, you want to make sure that the behaviors makes sense and are actually honoring what that piece is. So if you value equality or equity, then the conversation should be different. If you're aiming to value fairness, it should be different. I'm not going to say which one, I'm just saying they're different.

Just a few other things that I want you to consider as you go down this road of deciding which values will underpin your recommendations.

There's always going to be a bias and we have to try our best first to recognize that it exists.

I have an incredible bias that Kluane is the nicest part of the Yukon. I can't help it, it just comes out of me. Anybody who's worked with me, like was like, yes, I hear all the time. And so, and I'm in the room and somebody's like, oh, I was at Sheep mountain one time I'm like, I instantly love you. You've been in my part of the world. It's great. I have a bias. I have to check that, right?

It doesn't mean that we're going to get rid of them. It just means we're going to be aware of that. So as you're doing this work here, what are the biases that you need to be aware of?

Access.

Somebody in one of the groups mentioned accessibility. Those are different. There's biases around that right. There was a survey that was done by the territorial government about four years ago. No, it must be about 6 now. And it asked Yukoners, what is the single biggest challenge you have to gaining meaningful employment and the first multiple choice piece was public transit.

I'll tell you public transit is not the biggest challenge in Burwash.

So, whoever designed that particular questionnaire was very urban focused, right? And so you want to watch these biases. We have a bias towards Whitehorse, we have a bias towards the things that are true here, but not necessarily in the other parts. So, you want to be careful of that where you can and just acknowledge that it exists. It's not something you can do away with.

I think if there's anything you can practice while you do this work, and generally when my business partner Davida Wood and I are doing some of that hard work with reconciliation, the tough, tough meetings, the tough conversations, this is the single biggest thing that I rely on.

And I truly believe empathy is something that we can learn that we can practice. It's a skill that, even if it's not totally innate, we can expand. Now empathy doesn't mean that I'm going to feel bad for everybody. Doesn't mean I agree with them. It means that I can understand that they see the world differently than me. It means that I'm OK with different world views. I'm OK with my husband saying that dress is not gold and white. Right? And so, when you're in those points where it's not easy and you've got somebody who's saying, I want this value and you're thinking I don't agree with that, and it's the tough, hard conversation. My suggestion to you is try to practice empathy. Try to understand what values and behavior are driving that person's response to it, especially if it's emotional, because chances are you are clashing with one of their core values, something that's deeply important to them.

When we see people very emotional, generally, it's a value that's being challenged and so try to find that common ground, try to go back to not whether or not the dress is golden white or blue black. Go back to it's a dress.

When you get really challenged, try and take a step back and focus on the what. If you can agree on the what first, then work on the how. Human beings love to jump to the how and the solutions. But come to consensus on the what where you can and that will make the how that much easier, right. And you want to be really clear with your expectations. If we all say we're going north and this table goes to Dawson, this table goes to Old Crow and I go to Burwash, we've all gone north.

But did we get where we're supposed to go? And so, take the time to be clear about your expectations. Take the time to explore what equity, what integrity, what transparency means to you, and be concrete about it, because it's going to mean something different to everybody in the room.

OK. I want to skip that one because that's not supposed to be there. And I want to go. To questions I like this little squirrel.

(Sara McPhee-Knowles)

OK. Thank you very much, Tosh. The floor is open. Also feel free to pass a written question to Christy or a facilitator who could, that can hand it to me if you would prefer, but the floor is open. I'm watching for hands. Michael.

(Member)

I know that, you know, you mentioned the worker stuff can mean a bunch of different things to different people and a lot of times there's been kind of using one word definitions, which can probably do a lot of different things to different people. When we're talking about our values and developing values that we're going to make recommendations based on giving guidance for us on how we can do that.

(Tosh Southwick)

Yeah, I would try and relate and I would have a purposeful conversation on if this is the value, what does it look like in practice and try and get OK, I get what you're understanding, so I'll and I'll give you an example.

I said to my husband I really value time that he and I have a conversation. I said I want to go like just him and I the kids, the nieces and nephews. I'm like, you know, let's go out on a date I want to try and do a date night every two weeks. He sticks up at McDonald's coupon on the fridge, two can dine for \$9.99, right? So yeah, we're going for a date, but there's no congruency on what that behavior looked like, and so I realized I wasn't clear on that part. But in all seriousness, seriousness, if I value respect, to me, that looks like at this table, everybody getting a turn, purposely giving, say so round table is a tool we use lots in First Nation communities. People can pass, but we want to make sure they've given the opportunity. That's one way that respect looks like to me.

Respect looks like ceremony. So if I say to you, Michael, I want to make sure that we're practicing respect but I've never told you that it looks like ceremony, when you don't do ceremony, we're gonna be challenged, right? So let's, let's look at what that looks like in behaviors. If this is our value, what are our behaviors that support that? What does that mean for us? Great question.

Also, don't tell my husband. It's probably \$13.99 now with inflation, but we're working.

(Sara McPhee-Knowles)

Other questions?

(Tosh Southwick)

Other questions? Any value examples that you want to wrestle with?

(Member)

So, we talked about this morning about consensus and what that looks like and realizing that we're going to have to sometimes take votes when there's not a clear consensus. And then we're talking like is 50% plus one enough to move on or do we need 60%. Or like we really want to get to consensus, but when we have to think about what does that look like to you?

(Tosh Southwick)

Yeah. Yeah. So to me, if we say we value consensus then we don't vote. We work through those pieces until we can get to that, that final point. Now for me, the practicality of that is an issue.

And I you know, you don't have 10 years to reach this this. I mean, yeah, you don't you just don't right. And so I don't know that I would go out and say I value consensus but we know we're going to vote I think you could say something like we value collaboration in everybody's voice but we know we're going to vote we're going to have to do that piece.

But if you come out to a vote and people are walking away and they're not feeling good about it, it's likely because their core values have been compromised and you're asking them to do that, and that's not going to feel good.

So right when you get to that point, you know what place, what pieces can you put in earlier, before you get to that vote to try and make sure you're you're not getting to that piece where people's values or class and I would challenge you to say you're going to know where some of those hard conversations are you going to feel it in the pit of your stomach and you're like oh, it's gonna be tough one. What can you do to prepare for that in a good way?

Well, you go back to those values you talked about when working together. You know that curiosity. So if I say we're rolling curious curiosity, then I'm going to check myself when I'm like, Oh my God, why is Michael asking that question for the fifth time? Because we just said we're going to value curiosity and not saying that Michael's asking lots of questions, but you're going to, you're going to have to work on that part.

I think when you get to the point about voting, I would put a high threshold on it. I think you want to make sure that you've got a tipping point where if it's 50/50, I would be concerned. I would be like, hey, we, we haven't reached enough of a tipping point on that piece. I don't think you can do 50 point. And I just go back to our own conversations in the territory, some of the most controversial decisions we've made, as Yukoners we've purposely held to a really high standard of 75, 80, 90 percent. And there's reasons for that. Right.

But you also want to respect why are there people seeing it differently? Have you given them the chance to be heard? Are you practicing the empathy to say, OK, and we ought to make a distinction in governance, work, where just because I don't agree with you doesn't mean, I don't understand you.

And so if you can listen and listen to understand and you still come out of it and you're like, no, we see the world a different way, can you get to a point where everybody at least feels heard and that they had the opportunity to be heard? These would be things that would be important to me.

And if all of that fails, a very traditional form of dispute resolution in the Yukon is leg wrestling.

(Sara McPhee-Knowles)

Any other questions from the floor at this point or in writing that have been turned in.

I have a question. I'm going to exercise chairs prerogative and ask the question, and you touched on this a bit in your last answer of how do you build towards a position and getting the group to get to a point where they can live with something. And I think a reality that we're going to rub against tomorrow, from Max yesterday, in this process is the values underlying the system which we're going to talk about this afternoon and how there are going to be differences of opinion that may be really difficult to bridge if they can be bridged. Like when they're digging into worldviews and how things ought to work sometimes, there may be, I'm not trying to presuppose, but I'm curious about any suggestions you might have for situation when you are going to be having that rub against core values in a way where it's almost inevitable. And how would you suggest we move forward?

(Tosh Southwick)

Yeah. The first piece is, I think you want to go back to that, like that common ground that you have at the beginning. Everybody in this room put their name forward because they truly care and they think this is

important, right? So there's a, there's something you can go back to. Nobody's here because this is the thing they want to be doing on Saturday and Sunday on summer Yukon summer, so here because you believe in this and you understand the importance of it. So there's common ground.

I'm going to go back to the empathy, and if you feel yourself getting really frustrated and angry, try and take a deep breath and understand, try your best to understand what value is being rubbed for that person who is not seeing your way.

I often think for those of you that are and there's a few of you that I know in the room. Chris is one of them, there's some neutral folks, folks that have the ability to see multiple world views. I would seek them out in this room and find them because they can do two things they can translate because sometimes when the conversations are really hard, we need somebody to phrase it a different way for us. So find your natural translators in the room. People who are neutral and who are able to shift a little bit and a little bit versatile and that. For those people like me, I have very strong world views. I need people like my business partner who can help me see the light in other people's views. And she's great at that part. So I would try and find those folks to see if you can reframe something.

I would also try and ask questions in a way to understand and advance the empathy. Why is this hard for you, or what am I missing here? I don't understand what this piece is that's there and I'm just going to give you an example. I have two aunties who are part of the 60s scoop, and both of them were raised down in parts of the states are amazing human beings are incredible women. Perseverance. Resilience like you can't even imagine.

They are both huge Trump supporters. That is a very hard, I cannot understand how that can be true and you could be indigenous at the same time. Like that's very hard. And so I have my other cousin who is the natural neutral person. And he will always push me back to, OK, but you love them, they're your aunt, regardless of whether or not they support him or not, you guys are family and so we have to find a different way to do that part.

So, in those conversation, we have just agreed that they understand that I, that's not my preference. I don't understand that piece and I've understanding to them that they have a physical reaction when I, contrary to that, that piece. So, we will allow decisions to be made with other people who can navigate, who can be neutral amongst that. And that's a skill. So, you know, the ones that are feeling the most emotional about those the most polarized pieces, sometimes you need the folks who are in the middle to make that advancement.

Lastly, I Michael like this one. I'm a firm believer I'm an automatic person. I mean, my gut can respond very quickly and some of the best advice I've ever received from my elders is to sleep on it. There's something very powerful about taking the time, even if it, you know, it's hard. Take the time to sleep on it and try and think about what can come after that.

So I will, you know progressively try not to write Northwestel on my very angry letter until the morning. OK, I'm going to take it. I'm not going to write it really mean almost always that e-mail becomes much nicer, becomes much clearer, right? So take the night to sleep on it if you can.

(Sara McPhee-Knowles)



Thank you very much. Any other final thoughts from the room? And other people had some time to think. Michael, do we have the zooming person? Excellent.

(Michael)

So, the zoom is, we've is more a comment than a question, but just from someone wrote an excellent presentation that gives me hope. We have the heart and smarts to make this an even better home.

(Tosh Southwick)

Nice. I like that anonymous person online.

(Michael)

And then the question I have Tosh, is when we're talking about thresholds and voting thresholds, just curious about your lived experience with the self government agreements, because I arrived in Yukon 21 years ago, and one of the first things I had to do was write was, make the video for, I think it was Carcross first and then Kluane that was promoting self government to the people. And I noticed that in some cases thresholds were different. Some First Nations set the higher threshold for passing, and some did go with 50%. And we're 20 years later. We're 30 years later, in some cases. With your work on governance, what have you found? Like, how has that affected the implementation and how has it affected people's ability to live with it.

(Tosh Southwick)

Yeah. Leave it to Michael Vernon to ask a very complex question. Right. Right at the end. Before lunch. Yeah, that's a fantastic question. I, I the only thing I can do is tell you from my experience in, my opinion those communities that hire had a higher threshold, I think had an easier job of implementation because it's a clear correlation between the buy in and desire to go down that road for our community versus a group within that. I think it is fair to say with those nations that lowered their threshold they'd had multiple conversations and in some cases multiple votes before. I mean look, land claims is always going to be controversial right to self government is going to be controversial anytime you're shifting a system it's going to be controversial.

And so, some of the things I think we did well down that journey. I think was talking about what could be. Sometimes we have a hard time as human beings with change, particularly if there's not clear line of sight on what that actually means.

So, if, while you're walking through your decisions and you say somebody throws something out and says, what about this? If you walk through and say concretely, this is what that would look like. You will help people who are trying to grapple with that, understand that. And I don't think we did an awful job at that with land claims. I think we could have done better.

One of the things I don't think we did well with that vote was follow our own traditional governance ways and start with ceremony anchored in the traditions. Spend the time, particularly with our knowledge holders, to explain what was happening and what was meant. So, some of the resistance I saw in some of the votes was not against self government. It was against, I don't know what this means, and in the absence of the surety, I'm going to stay with what I know.

And so there there's a distinction there for me. I think there's also something different, just when you talk about voting thresholds, my lived experience is different than those that that walked before. So where I'm like I'm used to 50% representation of First Nations on boards, you know, guaranteed represent I have to often remind myself that that people like my mom and some people in this room weren't even allowed in the room, let alone at the table to make the vote. And so there is a very distinct piece there for that, and so land claims, it does look different and it looks different in in the ways that you set those thresholds for votes. There's emotions behind that. There's trauma behind that.

Good question. Good. I'm not sure what you're eating for lunch, but it. Looks super fancy.

(Sara McPhee-Knowles)

OK. On that note, thank you for your questions. Thank you for your active participation in the group discussion and Many thanks to Tosh for her words and her energy and for joining us today. We'll break for lunch. Please get something to eat. Go outside.

\*\*\* End Transcription \*\*