

Relinquishing a Legacy of Hatred, Embracing Respect For All Life

Conversations with Dino Butler ©

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What follows was published in News From Indian Country in 1995 as a five part series of conversations with Darelle "Dino" Butler. Permission to reprint was been granted by the author.

Inserted on September 12, 1997 - I am sorry to note that [E.K. Caldwell has died](#).

Prologue

His ancestors were forcibly removed in the mid-1800's from their homelands in the Rogue River area of southern Oregon and northern California and forcibly marched to the Government Hill Agency on what is now the Siletz reservation. The impact of this forced relocation had a direct influence on his upbringing and the way he learned to make decisions about his identity as an indigenous man and his place in society.

Born April 8, 1942 in Portland, Oregon and raised mostly in logging camps around Siletz, Darelle "Dino" Butler has walked a difficult path in his lifetime. He does not romanticize the steps of the journey and discourages young people from emulating his own youth and early adulthood.

At age 13 he was sent to MacLaren Boys School for curfew violations and "wandering" over 100 miles from home. The anger that he carried within him further ignited there, and over the next two decades it fueled into a rage that threatened to become his only identity. Between 1956 and 1970 his continued arrests for assaults and related charges resulted in ongoing incarceration. The longest time he had outside of jails and prisons was six months.

In 1974 he was introduced to the [American Indian Movement](#) (AIM) and attended some of his first traditional ceremonies. Something within him shifted, and with this shift came the stirrings of a spiritual reawakening. His involvement with AIM took him to many Native communities involved in the struggle against the U.S. Government's ongoing disregard for indigenous rights and sovereignty.

On June 26, 1975, [an FBI attack](#) on the Oglala, South Dakota spiritual camp resulted in the deaths of two FBI agents and one indigenous man. Butler was arrested and charged with two counts of murder. The 1976 trial, in which he and co-defendant Bob Robideau were acquitted, drew national attention.

In the late 1970's he participated in the Minnesota Citizen's Review Committee on FBI misconduct, working towards the release of Leonard Peltier, who was convicted for the deaths of the two FBI agents. Butler's 1979 request for political asylum in Canada was denied because he returned to the U.S.

to testify for the defense in Peltier's trial.

En route to ceremony in Canada in 1981, Butler began an unexpected journey through the Canadian Corrections system. He and his cousin, Gary Butler, were charged with allegedly attempting to murder two Canadian policeman. After the pipe was denied entrance into the courtroom, they refused to participate in the trial and presented no defense. They were found not guilty. The journey that he took through the jails and prisons there from 1981-1984 strengthened his spiritual resolve as he became actively involved in securing religious freedom and access to ceremonies for indigenous people incarcerated in Canada. These efforts resulted in the first indigenous ceremonies ever permitted in the Canadian Corrections system.

This pivotal time in his journey brought a new awareness, showing him the devastating effects of the hatred that had taken root within him and those around him. It opened his heart to a new kind of healing and a commitment to respecting all life.

In the past decade Dino Butler has continued on that healing journey. In 1992 he returned with his family to the Siletz area after living in the spiritual camp at Redwind in central California for nearly five years. He and his companion, Juanita Whitebear, and their family, comprise part of the nucleus of Oregon Native Youth Council, a grassroots organization dedicated to helping native Youth and their families establish identity as indigenous people that is not steeped in confusion and violence.

And his journey continues, relinquishing a legacy of hatred, embracing respect for all life.

The Why of this Interview

EK: You wanted to make a statement about why you decided to do an interview.

DB: I would like to start with a story. The way that I was taught was that in the beginning Grandfather/Grandmother, the Creator, made this universe and created Mother Earth. Four families were put upon the earth to live in harmony and respect to life. The Black people. The White People. The Red People. And the Yellow People. He put each of these People in a different part of the world and he gave them a way of life to live upon that land. He also gave them instructions about their way of life and the instruction was that no one People would force their way of life upon another People. No people should accept anything that is being forced upon them in that way. That if these ways weren't followed that the People would become confused and there would be a lot of pain among the People.

To me, if we tell this story right, all other things will become clear and people hearing what I say will understand.

The reason I would like to do this interview is that I see a lot of what I consider to be confusion that is used to control our emotions and our actions. Instead of having the truth determine how we conduct ourselves in this universe, we tend to let the confusion do that for us now. It's getting worse with each generation. It all began for our people and our way of life back when our ancestors were brought onto the reservations as survivors. They saw a lot of their people killed. Too many people died. Then they were brought to the reservations to live as prisoners of war. I don't think that we ever sat down as a people and as a nation to deal with what had happened so that it can be released and so we can go on with our lives as a nation. Instead they just passed the bitterness and the confusion on to

their children.

EK: You said you would like to dedicate this interview to [Anna Mae Pictou](#) (Aquash).

DB: Anna Mae was, and still is, an inspiration to me. Everything I do in my life, with my life, is dedicated to people like Anna Mae, who gave up everything she had to give to keep her beliefs alive. Her beliefs will always be alive as long as I'm alive in this world. That's how I dedicate myself to her and to all of our people who carry that spirit and pass it on. My greatest desire is to be able to pass that spirit on to other people in the next generations so that we don't lose the reality of our existence. That's what always kept our people and all life alive and surviving in this world. To resist the things that separate the physical and spiritual beings. That's why I'd like to dedicate this to Anna Mae, who to me represents the spirit to all of our people.

EK: How would you define the legacy of hatred?

DB: It came with the Pilgrims because that's what they were running away from when they came over here. That confusion was brought from another land and ever since they came here they have taught that. They came and they called our people Indians. Then they began to teach us how to act as Indian people and we've been doing it ever since.

When I grew up in this society, that was one of the strongest teachings that was taught to me. Hate for the white people, the black people, anyone that was different than me. This was taught to me by my own family. The hate is a big mistake for us to be teaching our children. It is a tool that is used to oppress our spiritual beings. It's not a natural thing for us to hate. The hate of all life does not come from the Creator because Grandfather has not created anything that's meant to defeat us as human beings or to separate us. When we let the hate determine our actions, then we're denying our true identity that tells us to respect life. And that doesn't mean only the life that we choose to respect and just forget about the rest. All life is the same life that Grandfather/Grandmother has created. It all comes from Him, from Her, and we are an extension of it. If we choose to separate ourselves from that into hate, we're letting ourselves represent something other than what is the truth.

We keep getting further and further away from our true identity, which is quite evident in the way that most of our people conduct themselves today. You look back over the generations and go back a thousand years and our people knew their identity. They knew their relationship to the earth and all life. They respected all life. It was more honor to touch your foe and get away in battle than to take that foe's life. You didn't take life unless there was a real purpose for it, not just because you hated. When they had to take life, they gave offerings to the spirit that life represented to them. We don't have that amongst our people today.

We can no longer base our struggle for liberation from a corrupt values system on hate for an enemy. Our struggle has to be based on something much stronger and more lasting. If we base it on hate, then all of our struggle is for nothing.

EK: How has the legacy of hatred affected the [American Indian Movement](#) (AIM) in its evolution and where it is today?

DB: Some people say that AIM has always been here. Some say it's a reawakening of our

spiritual being. AIM to me is a spiritual reawakening within myself. Our people had to learn them from the beginning, so this evolution has always been going on amongst natural people of the natural world.

When we started becoming acquainted with AIM and the teachings, a lot of us had come out of prisons, institutions, the orphanages, the bars, and years of being oppressed. We brought that hate with us into the Movement. That's why we were so quick to pick up the guns and the arms to fight our enemy. Our enemy at that time was the government forces because they were the most visible ones who were causing pain upon our people and our way of life. We let that determine our actions at the time. I read this saying one time, "It's easy to die for a cause; it's a lot harder to live and work for that same cause." That's the understanding that a lot of us thought we brought to the Movement, but we really didn't have the understanding of what it meant to work. But we were all willing to die. That was the one thing that we were all willing to do in the late 60's and early 70's, to die for our beliefs - for our People. We didn't know what it was to live and to work for those same goals and to continue on. We didn't have that understanding yet.

I think that was the evolution that [AIM](#) brought to our People. To go from willingness to die for our people to willingness to live and to pass life on. To live for another day instead of die. That's how the hate controlled us spiritually. It changed our need for a life in this world. The philosophy of our life was to fight our enemy out of hate, instead of fighting for love of our People and respect for life. To me, now, as I look back over the years, that's the evolution of AIM and what AIM brought to our people.

We have to go through the things that we go through. Each and every one of us goes through our learning experiences, and a lot of those experiences are filled with pain and confusion. In the end, if we survive, we come out with a much better understanding of who we are and where we come from. That's what AIM represents to me. The will to continue in this world. The will to resist, the will to live. To pass that on to the next generations and the next seven generations ahead of us.

EK: Do you think that because people were young, both chronologically and spiritually, that this had a strong influence in AIM and caused confusion between people and how they treated one another?

DB: We had all come from different aspects of this society that had no respect for us as human beings and as indigenous people. We carried a lot of resentments from all the bitterness and that hate had control of us. We had just started learning about spirituality. AIM introduced to me spirituality that allowed me to identify to myself as an indigenous person of this land. I had no idea what it meant to be an indigenous person of this land. There was nothing that this society offered that allowed me to relate to myself as that. I had to relate to myself as something else in order to continue on in this society.

When they brought our people to the reservations in the 1800's, our people had to become no threat to the values system that was filled with hypocrisy. So our people became what they had to become. They became Christians, because as Christians, they were no longer a threat to a values system that taught them their natural identity to the land and to all life. That values system that needed to control all life was a corrupt values system. Another way our people became no threat to this values system was by becoming alcoholics and then denied the truth about who they were and they denied their responsibilities to their people.

They became a part of this corrupt values system through the different methods.

I was like a baby and everyone else was like a baby because we were just coming back to life, waking up from a sleep that our people had been in for a long time. AIM began to teach us those things and about the reawakening of our spiritual values. We were just waking up and learning how to walk as human beings. We didn't really know how to represent our true identity in this world. Since we were all babies, well, then we had a tendency to act like babies about a lot of things.

EK: You mentioned that with all these divisions within AIM that you think the Movement has "stalled" spiritually. Would you explain that?

DB: In the beginning of AIM, a lot of us brothers and sisters came together and we formed a solid bond. We learned how to pick up that pipe and we learned how to pray again and dance together and sing together. And we grew spiritually. We started fulfilling some of our responsibilities in this world through these teachings that we were learning. We progressed and we became stronger and we became more compassionate as people. One of our responsibilities in this world is to continuously learn within ourselves. We were working hard to do that in the beginning with AIM. We progressed to a point where we became Sundancers, pipe carriers, sweat lodge people.

Then we came to a point where I feel like we began to not learn any more. Because we do carry hate and refuse to let it go, then it still controls us and determines our actions. There are other confusions and misunderstandings that we have and refuse to let go. That makes us cling to ways that separate our spirit from our physical being, whether that be through hate or through egos or pride or whatever. I think that knowledge has stopped coming to us because we are not willing to release those things. When we become hypocrites, then we become unnatural beings. The spirits are all around us in this world and they can help us. For example, if you're an alcoholic and you're always drinking, then you're an unnatural being, and the spirits cannot help you in the same way because they do not recognize you as a natural being. Ego is the same way. Our ego is the thing that makes people lie and bring dishonor around them. It is one of the unnatural teachings like pride and hate. That's the way the Movement has become. Until we are able to release these things we carry inside of us that tend to separate us, we are not going to be able to grow.

When AIM was growing spiritually as a movement, it had credibility with the people. Because AIM has stopped its spiritual growth, it no longer has credibility among the people. That's the whole difference between AIM of yesterday and today. We have to really look at that to understand where AIM is going and look at what we can do to bring that credibility back.

EK: Do you think that the so-called AIM Paper Wars that are going on are an indication of this "stalled" spirituality?

DB: I think they are a clear indication of that. This is within the AIM Movement, the AIM people, the AIM Autonomous and this one and that one. To me these are diversionary tactics that we allow to happen. What's being diverted away is the truth of what is really happening to us as a people. I can see what we're going to pass on to future generations and it's going to hurt us and lessen our chances to survive as a people into the future because we're not passing on knowledge.

Some of us have quit drinking. Some of us have been able to quit using drugs. But that's only a small part of it. There are things that each and every one of us can do to strengthen our circle as human beings. When we all meet together we meet in a circle because that circle represents life. It also represents the truth of who we really are in that circle. We're not going to survive as a people unless we base that circle on respect for all life.

EK: Do you think that this Grand Jury investigation into [Anna Mae's](#) murder is another diversion?

DB: Very much so. All these things like this Grand Jury investigation and these Paper Wars and the general suspicion, with people accusing one another of ridiculous things that are untrue, it's all diversionary. It is beneficial to the corrupt values system that controls all of us like that. When we get involved in these things, we lose focus of the real issues, and to me the real issue we are struggling for is the liberation, not only of our people, but of all life, from a corrupt values system that is destroying our natural identity to this land.

Anna Mae Pictou - the 1975 Shootout - Leonard Peltier's Situation

EK: Do you think that identifying the actual person(s) that killed Anna Mae will be of consequence to the true liberation of the People from a legacy of hatred?

DB: I don't think that it's the issue here. Certainly the truth is at issue, but to me, it's not the truth of who or what killed Anna Mae. The real issue is a lot bigger than Anna Mae or anybody. The issue is survival. Anna Mae gave her life for a reason. Our getting involved with each other fighting about who's telling the truth about it and pointing fingers at each other won't work. We should confront what really happened to Anna Mae, and what really happened to her is a corrupt values system that is the enemy to all natural life.

Our people use incidents like what happened to Anna Mae like some of our people use alcohol. They use it to hide behind rather than face up to what really happened to her. It's easier for us to accuse each other than to face our real enemy.

There was a time I went through learning a lot of hard things. I was in jail in South Dakota, accused of murdering two FBI agents from the fire fight at Oglala. I remember when they found this body on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. It was Anna Mae's body. Me and Anna Mae had become real close. I remember sitting in that jail cell and I wanted to do something for Anna Mae. I was so angry that I wanted to hurt somebody. After the anger came this really lonely feeling that comes from feeling helpless in the world. I loved Anna Mae so much, yet there was nothing I could do but bang my head against that steel wall. To me, that was one of the loneliest times of my life.

That's when my life began to change for me, because Anna Mae came and talked to me in my sleep. Up to that point I'd been thinking about trying to escape from jail. I wasn't willing to spend the rest of my life behind bars for something I did no wrong for, so I was gonna do all these things to stop that from happening, even if it meant making them kill me.

She came and talked to me. I didn't feel sorry for her after that. I knew she didn't want that from me. There was something more she wanted from me than my pity. I didn't have it in

me at that time. I didn't have that strength, that understanding within myself about how to give to her and all our people. That's when I think I truly began to understand about the sacredness of life in this world. It became more real for me.

EK: What did you learn from what happened at Oglala?

DB: There's a lot of confusion that came out of what happened at that shoot out at Oglala. When we learn from our experience, then we cannot say that this was a mistake or that was a mistake. What happened to Anna Mae wasn't a mistake. What happened at Oglala wasn't a mistake. If we can learn something from it and not let it happen again.

When I lived at Oglala I carried a rifle and I was willing to use that rifle. Each and every one of us that was there at that time was of that same mind. To keep our hate, I guess, we were willing to die for what we thought was the continuance of our people. When you are willing to give up life like that, there are consequences. That's not giving something to your people that will continue on. I think it's being selfish that way.

The thing that came to me was that my willingness to die out of the hate was wrong for me. I hated those people and I thought their form of violence was to confront. I hated those people not because they were the enemy, but I hated them because I was confused and did not understand my relationship to them. The young men that came there that day to fight with us, they too, carried the same kind of confusion because they hated us. They were confused and victimized by the same corrupt values system that gave both sides the energy to fight with such deadly force. I don't know what they really believed in, but I know what brought them there to fight with us and what brought us there to fight with them. It was meant to teach us something. It taught me that they weren't my true enemy. There are those of us who feel compassion for those men who were killed at Oglala and for their families.

For me to be able to look at that and admit that today means I have responsibilities now to fulfill. One of the responsibilities is to respect those people as my relatives. I couldn't do that then, back in 1975. If I had known how to respect them as my relatives then, I wouldn't have fought with them and tried to kill them and they wouldn't have tried so hard to kill me. We would have fought in a different way. A lot of confrontations that went on in that time were done under those kinds of circumstances. Those of us that have survived all those learning experiences to be where we are today, maybe we understand that a little bit better now and we're not willing to pick up the rifles so fast anymore. We learned to use our minds more and our mouths less. And it's not easy.

I think that we haven't progressed as far as we should have. We still carry unspiritual ways within ourselves that the corrupt values system can use against us and against each other. If we truly understood that and our growth was continuing on, then maybe there wouldn't be all this pettiness that goes into these "paper wars" and accusations of who's doing what to this one and that one and who's telling the truth. Our focus would be more on something a lot more enduring for our people. On respect for all life.

EK: Would you like to comment on Leonard Peltier's situation?

DB: I think what's happening with Leonard's case is a real clear example about spiritual growth being stopped and being separated from the people. When this thing at Oglala came down we were all there together and we were like a family who had been living together

for quite a few months. Those of us who lived there the longest became close and we knew each other. We trusted each other and we knew what the person was going to do under any circumstances, whether it was life threatening or life fulfilling.

When that whole thing happened and people went to jail and people got killed, our family was still strong and we still believed in each other and supported each other. We represented the truth of each other and the truth of our family circle. We wanted to add to the greater circle of life where all life is represented.

Over the years Leonard became a [prisoner of war](#). He is serving two life sentences for something that he didn't do. I know. I was there. We were all there that day. When I speak of our family, I speak of those who were there that day. They survived everything up to that point and survived through that. None of those people are close to Leonard now, and when I say close to Leonard, I mean as close as Leonard will let us be. He no longer trusts the people who were with him when this all started. It's entirely another group of people now.

Leonard represents a lot of things to the indigenous people of this land and all these things relate back to the truth. Leonard represents the truth. If we allow Leonard to represent anything other than the truth, then we become victimized by this corrupt values system that is keeping Leonard in jail today. That is the lesson that is there for us to learn. For whatever reason, Leonard doesn't seek advice and he doesn't seek direction from any of the family that was with him that day when Oglala came down and people gave their lives for what we're struggling for. I think that there is something there for Leonard to learn as well as for us to learn.

Leonard is taking direction from other people now. He's a desperate man. When you keep a man locked up like that for years, they become desperate and they will do anything to get out because they want to end that suffering. So he's willing to listen to anybody who comes to him and says they can get him out. Then he will turn his back on other people. That's part of that corrupt values system. Because he's insecure and isolated, separated from the people, it's easy for him to give in to it. That comes from loneliness and isolation. In his learning process at this time, he doesn't trust the people who were with him when this all happened. He listens to other people. People who are telling lies about him and about what really happened at Oglala.

Like this book of Peter Matthieson's, *In The Spirit of Crazy Horse*, it talks about that me and Bob Robideau knew about this guy who was coming to the camp that day and that he was bringing dynamite to us and that guy now claims that he is [Mr. X](#). Well, there is no Mr. X. There was no man coming to our camp that day bringing dynamite. Those are all lies created to keep Leonard in jail longer.

When this Mr. X thing first started happening we had a meeting in California. There were people there who were at Oglala that day. It was brought up about creating this lie about Mr. X being there and killing those men to raise support for Leonard's liberation. To create this lie to show that someone else pulled the trigger. The final agreement in that meeting was that the Mr. X idea wouldn't be used because it was a lie. We decided that because everything that we had done so far was always based on the truth, and that it was the truth that had liberated us in our trial, that when the truth finally came out that it would liberate Leonard and set him free. So it was decided that nobody would use this Mr. X theory - that

it would be shelved.

I came back from South Dakota that year from the Sun Dance and was told that the writer from the movie Oliver Stone was considering making about what happened at Oglala had come to Portland. He was picked up by a member who was there at the shootout that day and was taken to a phone. He talked to the guy who was supposed to be Mr. X who had shot and killed those agents. He supposedly drove down there in that red pickup after the shooting was going on. His shooting was supposedly a reactionary thing that happened when this agent looked up. Like it was more or less an "accident" or something. That is all totally false. Totally untrue. That never happened.

We have always maintained that those agents who were killed were caught in the crossfire. That red pickup had nothing to do with any dynamite being delivered that day or any Mr. X. The truck was operated by a man in the area who heard the gunfire and was worried about the safety of a family whose house was inside the compound. He checked the house, found no one home, and went on his way.

It is totally false that I had knowledge of who that person was and knew that person was going to come into our camp that day to deliver dynamite. I felt like me and my family were put in danger. I lost a lot of respect for Peter Matthieson as a writer and as a person I could trust because he didn't verify this, and it put me and my family in jeopardy. He never made any effort to contact me and ask me if this was true.

I'm not going to go out of my way to cause a scene over this because I can't divert my attention away from what is the real truth here. Peter Matthieson was victimized by that too. Whatever made him do that separated him from seeking out the truth. That's the important thing to me, not who's telling the biggest lie. What I represent is what I have to be concerned with and I have to be focused on the direction I am going in all the time. I cannot allow myself to become distracted by other things that do not represent the truth.

It's sad what's happening to Leonard today. Like I said, there's something to be taught there and something to be learned there for all of us. I don't doubt that Leonard could be a free man, but it has to start within him. He has to believe in himself first instead of believing in all these lies and the people who are wanting to bring these lies to him. He has to believe in himself because he is the truth of what he represents in this world. He represents a lot to his people and to all our people. He represents the agreements between the United States government and the indigenous people of this land. And all the violations of the treaties between two sovereign nations. Like them being there that day (the U.S. government) and causing that fire fight and the aftermath of it on that reservation, terrorizing the people to get what they wanted, which was a conviction of Leonard.

They also wanted a conviction of me and Bob Robideau and fortunately we got to have a fair jury. I never have believed that we had a fair trial, because the only kind of fair trial we could have gotten from the U.S. government was no trial at all. We weren't guilty of anything. But they did put us on trial and they told their lies. Enough of the truth was allowed to be presented in that courtroom by a fair judge that the jury would not convict us.

Leonard wasn't given that recognition at his trial - he wasn't allowed to present any truth. He has been separated from the truth that he represented in that courtroom. The jury wasn't

allowed to see or hear or feel the truth. And he's been separated from it now. He's not lost, though. There's a way of going to the knowledge and there's a way of not going to it. We all have to learn the difference and that's what he's learning now and that's why he's where he's at today. Until he learns the difference, he's always going to be a prisoner of war, whether it be physically or within himself. Right now I think he's a prisoner all the way because he's allowed himself to become separated from his spiritual being and has become confused enough to believe the lies. He needs to get back the truth. The truth that Leonard represents to all of us. Maybe that's the lesson he's there to teach. He's not there just for the heck of it, you know. The corrupt values system of those who put him there is what's keeping him in there.

EK: Would you summarize the effects of the corrupt values system that is the true enemy of the people.

DB: It's the values system that does not respect all life. It teaches us to hate each other and it confuses us and separates our spiritual and physical beings. It's a values system that done Annie Mae under; it took her physical being from us. It didn't take her spiritual being, though. It's the values system that forced our people onto reservations in the 1800's. It's the values system that drove the Pilgrims out of England and brought them into our homeland. That's our enemy. It's not our relatives. It's not the two leggeds or the four leggeds or the ones that live on the land or the ones that live in the water. Those aren't our enemies. The values system that separates us from the natural world is the true enemy.

The Struggle for Indigenous Prisoners Rights

In North America freedom of religion is supposedly a guaranteed Constitutional right. For indigenous people those guaranteed rights have been continually violated. Of the many diverse groups inhabiting North America, indigenous people are the only group that has been forced to seek specific legislation to protect traditional spiritual practices and religious freedoms. Native people imprisoned in North American penal institutions have had and continue to have an especially difficult time in securing their right to pray in the ways of their ancestors. The dominance of Christianity is particularly evident in corrections systems throughout the U.S. and Canada in its standard practice of establishing paid positions for Catholic and Protestant chaplains. even when indigenous religious practices become a part of a corrections system policy, they are typically under the supervision of Christian chaplains. This inherent conflict of interest is rarely acknowledged. In many cases when indigenous prisoners pursue their religious rights they become targeted within the system for negative repercussions. Darelle Dino Butler is a man intimately aware of these struggles. During his incarceration in Canada early in the 1980s he became actively involved in pursuing religious freedom for Native prisoners. In this third conversation in our series, he discusses his involvement in that struggle.

EK: In the time you spent in prison in Canada, you spoke about having to understand why you were really there. Why were you there?

DB: I was facing two life terms for the alleged attempted murder of two Canadian policemen. I remember walking into that prison in Canada and hearing that cell door close. I began to question Grandfather's wisdom. By then I had fulfilled my commitment to become a Sun Dancer for our people. I was a pipe carrier, and things were supposed to be happening to me in my life and changing in a good way. None of these bad things were supposed to be happening to me. I said, "Grandfather, why? Why is this happening? Did you just want to keep me alive to be cruel to me and make me go through these things or

what?" I began to feel sorry for myself and blame other people for my predicament. I was doing all the wrong things. At some point, something happened inside me and I was taken away from all the distractions around me. After I got over the self pity and the anger, I was able to look at myself and see some of my own weaknesses. Once I was able to do that, I was able to start changing and to form some strength for myself with honor and dignity.

One of the things that helped me to do that was the guards that were guarding me. They gave me very "special treatment" there in the prison. I was always real close to the front in the same cell so they could keep a close watch on me. Some of these guards would come by and I could feel it and see it in their eyes that they really hated me. I looked at those guards and I began to see myself hating them. I never really looked at it like that before. I could see the loneliness in their eyes and the pain they had that was coming from the hatred. Hate was in control of their emotions and in control of their lives. I was being controlled by my hate, and I had to admit that. I had to decide that I didn't want to be like that. And it was hard. It still is hard not to hate, but I understand that the hate separates the spiritual and physical beings of everyone of us because it is unnatural. It is a hypocrite that uses hate like that. The number one teaching among all tribal people is to respect all life. When we hate one another like that, we are not capable of having respect for all life. To me, if I am separated from my spirit so much, then it becomes spiritual genocide. The truth tells me that I must respect all life and not try to destroy it. The hate destroys. It destroys us from within and it destroys our identity with one another I began to realize that.

I thought, "Well, here I am, and I've been in jail twice now facing the rest of my life behind prison. Something's not right here." I see now that I had to go back to jail because it is real hard for knowledge to get through my skull because it is so thick with ignorance. So the spirits took pity on me and put me into those prisons where all this confusion is not so influential in my life. I was stuck there with myself. It showed me I needed to look at myself and correct myself and correct my ways. I realized that I had to go to prison to learn what I had to learn. I couldn't do it out here at that time.

EK: Did you think that part of why you were there was to help the Native prisoners get access to ceremonies?

DB: One of the reasons that I was there was to learn that it wasn't me that was important in this world. What is important is that pipe and what it represents. I thought that "I" was going to help my people with that pipe. It was wrong for me to think that I was going to help my people that way. I had to learn that it wasn't me that was going to take that pipe where it was needed, but it was that pipe that was going to take me where it was needed. All I could and can do was to find the courage in prayer to hang on and stay with that pipe. It didn't need me. I needed it. It wasn't me that was needed up there. It was that pipe. All that time there was no respect for Native people's religious way of life. It was determined in Canada by the warden of each institution and what he felt. There were no policies that included Native religion. So people were not allowed to pray as Native people in the jails there at that time.

My belief was that the power of the pipe was greater than any pipe in this world and that power would take care of me and my needs in this world if I believed that way. So I asked to pray with my pipe when I went into those jails. I asked to pray with the sage and cedar and prayer feathers and everything that I had been taught to pray with. It was denied, so that started the whole process.

I remember the first time I was allowed to "officially" pray within the walls of that institution. They came to my cell and handcuffed and shackled me and marched me out to the Protestant minister's office. I was allowed to hold an abalone shell with some sage and cedar in it and I prayed that way. That was the beginning. In the end we had a sweat lodge and I had my pipe and could keep it inside my cell and brothers were fasting inside the prisons. Things that were never allowed before and never thought of before in their system. It took a lot of different ways of going to knowledge to achieve that. It brought a lot of brothers together up there.

When I went to court when our trial was going to start, I told my lawyers that I wanted them to make a request that my pipe bundle be allowed to sit on that defense table. I said that the pipe bundle represents to me what the Bible represents to the Catholics and the Protestants. I wanted that to be represented in the courtroom. They met with the judge in his chambers and the judge denied to even hear that argument in court. He said this was not going to be a "political trial." He said he was not willing to take that authority and set that precedent. The lawyers came back and told us, and I said to them, "Well, we we go back in there, I want you to make that request one more time, to hear a petition to have this pipe bundle represented in the courtroom." We went back into court, and the lawyers made that final request. It was denied.

Then I told the lawyers that since the judge denied that, I asked them to resign from the case and we would not present a defense. Because to let that man, that court, that government separate me from my identity, then I was no longer anything. I would be nothing, and I had been that enough in my life already. That's what I was when I was in the penitentiaries all those years, and when I was an alcoholic on the street, and when I was popping pills. I was nothing.

I knew more than anything else in my life I did not want to be that anymore. If I allowed that separation in that courtroom from my pipe bundle, then I would become that again. So, the lawyers walked out of the courtroom and me and Gary Burler, we sat there and presented no defense for two charges of murder. We were facing life sentences on each of them. We understood that we could be convicted very easily and sent to the penitentiary for the rest of our lives. But we were willing to take our identities with us and live the rest of our lives inside those walls if we had to do that. We would not allow that identity to be separated from us again.

They presented our case and told all these lies against us. The jury would no convict us of attempted murder, even with no defense. They wouldn't believe we had tried to kill those officers, because we didn't. It was them who had tried to kill us. They were trying to assassinate us and we were defending ourselves. Because we survived that attack, we went on trial and not them. And that's what it was all about.

The pipe was there to give us courage to go with that pipe on that journey that we had to take through those jails in Canada.

They tried everything there because we wouldn't allow the separation from our spiritual being. Kent was a maximum security prison. After about six months, they took me to a special unit that used to be death row. There was nobody in any of the other five cells. Then they brought Gary (Butler) in and put him two cells away from me. Right after lunch there comes a man with a welding torch and he took chains and brought them to the doors

and they they put this big monstrous padlock on there and welded those chains together. That's how we spent the next six months.

In their ignorance they put us through all that, and it helped me to understand them better. It takes a lot of hate to do that to another human being. That hate was visible. That's why that pipe was needed up there. Because our brothers and our sisters inside those jails were hating, too.

The Indian people came to us and said the policy had been that Indian people don't ask for religious rights up there because when they do they get beat down really bad. There was a group of brothers in Saskatchewan that had tried. What broke them up was that they were strip searched and sent defenseless into the yard. A group of white prisoners were given baseball bats and turned loose on them while the guards stood and watched. After this beating, they took the Indian brothers and shipped them out to different prisons. That's the kind of things these brothers told us would happen to us and that we wouldn't find too much support from the brothers.

I started asking for the right to have my pipe. My request was denied. It all grew from there. I had a support group outside called The Society of the People Struggling to Be Free. They started to put word out in the community about what was going on and started getting some support together.

There was a brotherhood with all the Indian brothers in the jopint. I presented to these brothers at a meeting, asking them to support our request for ceremonies. All the brothers agreed. We put in the request to have ceremonies and sweat lodges and so forth and they never got back to us. We waited a year. Then they sent us a notice that told us how we could pray and when we could pray and what we could do. It was so distorted that it no longer represented our way of life, the indigenous way of life. It no longer represented what our prayer ceremonies would represent when they are done properly. I refused to accept it. Nobody agreed to accept it and that's when the struggle inside there truly began. Some of the reawakening of those brothers started happening at that point.

Eventually what evolved was a fast to pray for our oppressors because they were not only doing this to us, they were doing it to themselves. There was so much confusion in them, and in us, that we were both victimized by this corrupt values systme, pitting us against each other in that way.

When this fast started, some of the brothers came to me and said, "Isupport what you're doing and believe what you're doing is right, but I can't accept starving myself to death. My way of helping is more like going and grabbing a couple of guards and taking some hostages and getting the attention this way." And I had to tell them, No, you can't do that to support this because this is aspiritual fast, praying for these people because I feel the hate that they have for me is destroying them, too. And I want Grandfather and Grandmother to have pity on them and and help them to understand what's happening to them, and what happens to cause things to be that way between us." I said, "Just pray for us. That's all you can do is just pray for us."

Gary (Butler) started fasting first. They took him out of the population and put him in isolation. They separated us because we were organizing. He sent word out that he was going to start fasting and praying for these people who were denying us these ceremonies.

He was into his second day by the time I got the note. So I started fasting, too. About six days went by when Stuart Stonechild, one of the brothers who had been at Saskatchewan, joined the fast. It finally ended up there were sixteen brothers inside that penitentiary who were fasting. Some of those brothers were some of the same ones who said there was no way that they would starve themselves.

EK: How long was the fast?

DB: I fasted 34 days that time. Before it was over, Gary ended up clear across Canada. They ended up taking people out of there to separate us. That was all right, too, because when we decided not to accept what the administration was offering us, we decided that no matter what happened we would continue. If they chose to separate us and send us to other prisons that we would carry it there and request it there.

EK: When the end of the fast came, what was the resolution with the system?

DB: During a session of the Parliament, which is like the Congress down here, their Attorney General for the country was asked on the floor of the Parliament why Indian people were having to fast to death for religious freedom in the prison system in Canada. He was asked, "Don't you think that's kind of embarrassing the Canadian people?" He got asked this two times by different people in Parliament. He got on the phone to Kent Prison right away and wanted to know what in the hell was going on because it was putting him on the hot seat (laughs) and he didn't like it. He wanted it resolved right away and said, "Whatever they're asking for, give it to them!"

So they came and told us. But we wouldn't negotiate with the prison officials because we didn't trust them. We knew that as long as we had to communicate with them that we were gonna get the raw end of the deal. They brought in a professor of law from the University of Simon Fraser to act as our arbitrator. He had been in to our meetings before, so we all knew him. He came and explained to us that the prison officials had been told to settle it and get it over with because it was causing the government embarrassment.

We sat down and wrote out that we wanted a sweat lodge regularly; we wanted Elders and our spiritual advisors to come into the prisons to consult with us; we wanted our pipes and ceremonies and the right to fast. We asked that since I was the pipe carrier that I would be allowed to go into another prisoner's cell to set up his altar to fast because the only place we were allowed to fast was in our cell. They said no way that would ever be done because of a long standing policy that no prisoner was allowed in another prisoner's cell. We asked for it anyway. When it all came back they had given us everything we asked for because that's how bad they wanted it to end. Then we had to wait again for about a year before we actually had our first sweat in there. It took that long while they dragged through the paperwork.

From there they changed national policies in the prison system by recognizing Native people's rights to their ceremonies in the federal system.

EK: Weren't there other fasts also?

DB: There were three altogether. The first two were in Oakalla Provincial Jails and one was in the federal prison at Kent. It was the last and the longest. The first one was about

ten days. They told us we could have our pipe bundle inside Oakalla, but they lied to us. Then we went to court and the pipe was denied entrance in the court room. That was the second fast. It lasted twenty one days. The second fast broke when they broke my pipe to me in Oakalla and I was allowed to keep it. We did those fasts tried everything else available to us going through channels in their system, and none of it worked.

EK: When was the pipe finally allowed into the court room?

DB: It was the second time we went into court in 1984. Our lawyers appealed the conviction for weapons possession. The appeals court overturned the conviction and then said they wanted to retry us again. The lawyers met with the judge in his chambers and the judge said, " Look, I don't want controversy in this. I expect you people are going to want that pipe in the court room. You don't even have to make a motion about it. If it shows up in there, then it shows up in there, and it's all right." He didn't want to mess with it that time (laughs).

We went back to court, but by that time we had served four years, the maximum sentence on weapons possession. They wanted to keep us there as long as they could because we were wanted back in the States on a bogus murder charge. The States needed more time to work on their case. The Canadian government was willing to retry us on the same charges on which we had already served a maximum sentence and in which the guilty verdict had been overturned in appeal. It didn't make any kind of sense, legal or otherwise. Except the Oregon officials wanted them to keep us for two more years. The judge told us he had decided in his mind that he was going to sentence us to 16 months. When he heard what our lawyers presented, he changed his mind and sentenced us to one day. They had no choice but to send us back down to the States. The Oregon officials knew they had no case, and we were fully acquitted.

The Current Indigenous Struggle in Oregon's Prison System

EK: Earlier in your life, when you were in the Oregon prison system, had Native prisoners gained any religious rights?

DB: When I was in there none of that was allowed. But it was the farthest thing from my mind in those days praying, I mean. By the time I came back from Canada, they were allowed to have sweats and grow their hair long.

EK: The Oregon Corrections Division is supposed to be working on a systemwide policy for religious rights. Have you been involved in that process?

DB: One of the prisoners began calling me about some commission being formed to develop a policy about Native religious rights in Oregon's corrections system. His concern was that Native people were not being consulted about this. I was kept aware of what was going on through him and some people in the community. One of the concerns of the prisoners is that this be not given to the jurisdiction of the chaplaincy. The concern of the brothers seems to be that if their religious rights are going to be determined by non Native people who believe in a different way that a lot of things will really change for them. The Native ceremonies at Oregon State Penitentiary have always been under the Activities Department. Things have gone good that way without major interference. It's up to the brothers to make things happen and not on anybody else because all the organized

activities are up to the group themselves to work out and schedule and all that. If it goes under the religious department then it will be under the jurisdiction of the chaplaincy. Then it will be up to them to schedule and determine when ceremonies can happen and what can be done. The brothers can foresee difficulties.

They began contacting different people in the community for support and asked to be represented at these committee meetings and the public hearings in the communities. They wanted to approach all the different tribes in Oregon, because probably over half the Native prisoners in there are from outside Oregon. Basically what they wanted to do was to send a runner to each of the tribes in Oregon to have them bless the sweatlodge and welcome them there. This is not their home country and when you are in someone else's home, you have to ask permission to do these things and be recognized by the Native people of this land to support their right to pray here. I thought that was a good idea and I still think it is a good idea. It should be done in a respectful way so that the people of this land cannot ignore it or look the other way.

When it got to that stage of planning there was some problem with the unity in there and it caused separation. It gets to the point where people get more involved with their personality differences instead of dealing with the real issues. This is a classic thing of becoming disorganized within themselves instead of being united in their struggle for religious rights for Native people within the walls. This plays right into the system wanting to have control over these things. That's the focus of this whole kind of diversionary tactic to make us lose focus of the real issue.

I think there were two supposedly public meetings that have been held in the communities. None of the Native people in the community were notified through the regular channels of communication like the radio and local papers. A few people learned about it somehow and went and stated that these meetings should be rescheduled so more people could attend them. That request was denied by the corrections people and they went ahead and had them anyway. There was a protest made by the people who did attend, but they were ignored in that protest. Corrections was supposed to use information gathered in these meetings to make their final decision about this policy. So there really is no community involvement in making this decision.

EK: Were you on that original committee?

DB: There was a committee that had been thrown together. I think there was a prison chaplain or priest on there, and a Captain of the guards. The Native people on the committee all worked within the system and were picked by the system. The reason I got a call was that the Lakota Club, which is the brotherhood inside the walls, had wanted to make a request for me to be on this committee.

I told them to submit my name and I would do what I could do to help out. I got a letter from Corrections that I was on this committee. This was after they had already been meeting for awhile. They said they would notify me of meetings. The next letter that I got said that all these decisions had already been made and blah, blah, blah, you know. I had never been invited or notified to go to any of the meetings. Yet my name was listed as being part of this and making these decisions. And I am not the only Native person who was asked for input and then not told what was going on until after the fact.

EK: Would you comment on the women's prisoners involvement in this whole process?

DB: This committee for religious rights has had its focus all on the men prisoners. As far as I can tell, there has been very little, if any, input from the women. They have not sought the women's perspective.

The women's prison already has the chaplaincy in charge of the women's ceremonies and there have been some real problems because of it. That's one of the arguments the men are making in their circle. If the chaplain forgets to put out a memo about the schedule, then there is not going to be a sweat lodge ceremony. My understanding is that this happens there more often than it should.

And other things like this will happen. They only allow the women to sweat once a month. If the women were responsible for taking care of this themselves, it would happen, because the women want it to happen. Nobody is paying attention to them on this commission. They are not having a chance to tell what they need and their perspective as women.

EK: Do you think this has to do with how the dominant system generally devalues women?

DB: Yes, and I think it's a purposeful effort by the system to separate the men and the women whether through the families or through spirituality or whatever. This values system does that.

Respect for the women and our relationship to that power that is represented by the women is very sacred to all male life. The values system that seeks to control all of us has to break down that kind of values system that respects women and the female power, and that teaches us our identity as males to the female power.

Because the sisters are locked away and are so far from us, we don't think about them enough. It shouldn't be like that. The women should automatically be our main concern for these religious rights because it's really important that the women be able to have these ceremonies. Even more important than it is for the men, I think, because that's where our power comes from - the power to protect that life that those women represent to our world. Those ceremonies are a part of keeping that life safe and protected. Our responsibility should be to the women first for them to have their rights. We need to be more concerned with the women in prison. If the women are taken care of, everything else will fall into place. Our place in the circle is to protect that female power.

EK: If it is determined by the policy that it will be overseen by the chaplains, do you think it will ever really work?

DB: No, I don't think it will work if it is under their jurisdiction because their belief doesn't allow for any way other than their own way. Because the priests and the ministers in that way of life believe that way, it's the same values system that separates. The indigenous way of life is the oldest way of life on this land. It will not be respected by another religious group who thinks their way is the only way. They don't have understanding of our ways, and mostly what they do understand, they disagree with anyway.

EK: What do you think would work?

DB: I think it should be up to the sisters and brothers to decide. And keep it under the Activities Department.

EK: Would having a paid Native coordinator to bring in Indian doctors and spiritual leaders and whoever else is needed work?

DB: Yeah. It worked up in Canada. We had a person who was affiliated with a Native organization on the outside. He would act as our liaison with the people. He took care of the paperwork and the schedules and the communication. It wasn't a good idea to leave it up to the chaplaincy because they didn't care one way or the other. I think that it would take someone who is concerned about the brothers and sisters inside these places and someone who the community knows and respects. Someone who can be depended on to carry out their responsibilities. There are people who would help that have no interest in being part of a paid staff, but a coordinator on paid staff could probably do a good job and make sure people got what was needed.

Our people cannot afford to give up their right to pray. They need those ceremonies and this way of life. It shouldn't be denied because they are in prison. Because of where they are, they may need it even more.

Grassroots Organizations and the Oregon Native Youth Council

EK: You have talked about the Fourth World prophecies. How do you see us being affected in this time by these prophecies?

DB: When I first started walking this path the teachers told me that the earth is going to go through four stages of purification and that the people will go through four stages of purification before there is peace and harmony again. They told me that the earth was in its third stage of purification and that the people are in their first stage of purification. When mother earth goes into her fourth stage of purification, a lot of us are gonna perish physically because we're not in our fourth stage. There will be some who are in that fourth stage who will survive and for them life will continue on, but that there will be a lot who will be lost.

When you walk on the path of knowledge, sometimes you're gonna find that we have to leave some of our people behind. Life is a continuous learning experience. One of the things that slows us down in our spiritual growth is when we have people that we care about who are falling down around us. We're trying to follow this path of going to ceremonies and not add to the confusion and the weakness of our people as a nation. Yet there are many of our people who can't walk that path. They go through a lot of suffering because of it. We want to stop and help them out, so we slow down and try to reach out a hand. Sometimes we get stuck there and we're slowing down our learning process for people that are weaker and more confused than us and who are refusing to give those things up. Because we love them so much and we are attached to them, we want them to walk with us. Sometimes in staying there with them we stop our responsibilities of spiritual growth. Once we stop our spiritual learning, we are no longer preparing ourselves for the next lesson that's gonna demand more knowledge and strength and courage. You can't force this way of life onto someone. You can't make anybody change.

An example of that for me was when I was worried that the pipe was coming between me and a family member who said I cared more about everybody else than I did about them. I went and prayed with the pipe and said that if it was gonna come between me and my family, then I wasn't sure I wanted it. I wrapped it up and put it away. Then I went back down to my family member's home and I started drinking. When I became that confused, my spiritual growth stopped. That's what I mean when I say we want to help our loved ones, but sometimes we can't, and when we try anyway, then we stay there with them at their level and are not preparing ourselves properly. Then when we can't help anybody.

My teachers told me there are gonna be times in my life when I'm going to have to leave these people behind, even though it brings pain to my heart, if I'm to continue to fulfill my responsibilities in our circle of life to help strengthen the future for our people. Leave them behind, but don't forget them. Remember them in my prayers and help them that way.

EK: You're involved with Oregon Native Youth Council (ONYC) in Oregon. What is that about?

DB: Oregon Native Youth Council, as it implicates, is closely associated with our young people, the youth, and the little people. To me the main concern of Oregon Native Youth Council is to break this trend of hate that is being passed on generation after generation. We as adults today are doing that to our children. Teaching them to hate and to be mean and petty. So, the Youth Council's purpose is to wake up our people to what we are doing to our children, teaching them to hate like that, passing on the confusion that has separated us.

Look at what's happening to our youth today. Our youth are forming gangs and killing each other. It's really sad what is happening today on the reservations and in the urban areas. I grew up and saw a lot of adults drink themselves to death, knowing they were dying and yet they kept drinking. To me, that's always been so sad that someone would just give up on life so much. To know that they're dying and do it anyway. And that's what we're concerned about - not giving that kind of life to our children. Because if this keeps on going for another two or three generations,, with our people giving up that spirit to live, then we will not survive as a people, as a nation in the future. That's our responsibility to our young people today - to not give them that kind of life. To show them there is another way to go.

ONYC isn't just for youth who are getting into trouble. We want to support and encourage the youth who are doing well because they are strengthening our circle. They need to know that we appreciate them and the good things they contribute.

Anybody who represents Oregon Native Youth Council or works with ONYC has to understand that they cannot add to the confusion that is being used to oppress our people spiritually and physically. We don't advocate the use of alcohol or drugs or violence within our circle because we don't want people in our circle contributing to the downfall of our people.

Our long range goal is to overcome the hatred and confusion that separates all people. But first we need to work with our people and we need a physical land base to work from. We want to set up a permanent encampment in Oregon where youth can have a safe place to find the balance between the two worlds with the ongoing assistance of Elders and adults.

It will be a healing place, not just for the Youth, but for all Native people. So people can learn to stay strong in their identity and not be dominated by the values system that is not based on respect for all life.

EK: A lot of the young people that are involved in this mentality of anger and violence as a way of feeling powerful see themselves as being "warriors". Would you talk about your perception of what being a "warrior" means?

DB: In this world there's two powers that we know. There is the female power and the male power. Everything else evolves from those two powers. Female power is the power that gives life and brings life into this world and the male power is the power to protect that life. Being a "warrior" to me is just one part of our responsibility as males in this world. It only represents one part of the complete male power that says that we respect and protect life.

I don't know if there is a word in any of our tribal languages that says "warrior". Because the concept of a warrior to me is a person who's always willing to go to war. That's not one of our teachings, always being willing to war. There are other ways of respecting and protecting life, too. The concept of warrior has been corrupted by that values system that comes more from the teaching of fighting out of hate for an enemy rather than out of love for our people.

If we're going to look at ourselves as males, as men, as warriors, we have to look at the whole being. We don't give up our right to defend ourselves or our people. That's true. As men we have to fulfill that part of our responsibility. And we have to recognize the difference between a real threat and a perceived threat. But we also have responsibilities to be fathers to our children, responsibilities to the female power and to our women to nourish and protect that power. We have responsibility as men, as males, to our elders and to our future generations and taking care of those people, too. We have responsibilities to our ancestors. They have a place in our circle in this world and it's a sacred place. We have to take care of those places. To me that's being a warrior. It's not just always being willing to go to war. There are a lot of aspects to it. As men we have to learn these things and do these things because the youth aren't going to do it by themselves. And those young ones have a lot to teach us, too.

EK: Would you talk about what the children and the youth have to teach us?

DB: I'm 52 years old and during my life I fathered children that I didn't even know. I remember my first daughter. She was 8 years old before I ever know about her or even met her. I had just gotten out of prison and I was just going down the street and this car stopped and someone said, "You know you have a daughter, don't you?" And I said, "No." She told me she lived right down the street and that I should visit her some time. I remember going down there and meeting my daughter for the first time.

My whole life has been like that with my children. I have two daughters and four sons. Except for my last two sons, I don't really know any of my other children. That's how confused and separated I was in my hate.

These two boys that I have with me now teach me a lot of things. Like I have come to the understanding that our ancestors and our children are united. The unity these children

represent in this world has knowledge for us to draw upon to help us understand who we are. The innocence of our children is the wisdom of our elders from past generations. If we have the ability and take the time to look within our children's eyes, and see what is inside of these children, we can learn from that. Because to me, that's one of the ways our ancestors come to us.

One day I looked over at my boy, Che, and he was just sitting there looking at me. There was no expression on his face. I thought at first that something was wrong with him. Then I started looking at his eyes, and I started seeing another world through his eyes. It scared me, because I hadn't witnessed something like that before in a child's eyes. This feeling came over me that he saw things in me that I still cling to because I am not strong enough or wise enough or courageous enough to let go of them, like maybe some of the hate that I still carry and haven't been able to separate from myself because of all of those years in prison. I saw that as long as I carry that weakness and that confusion within me, I cannot truly represent the identity that was meant for me to represent in this world. He made me think about that. This feeling came over me that I had to deal with this. He is here to remind me and to expect that of me. It was like my ancestors were looking at me. They were telling me that they were willing to help me but that I had to be willing to help myself first by admitting to my own weaknesses.

This other boy I have who's about 16 months old now, he has the same innocence. All of our children carry that innocence for us, but we are always thinking that we are the ones who teach these children and that we own these children. Like they are ours only. We don't look at our children and respect them like we are supposed to. Because we can't do that we lose our ability to communicate with our past. We have to start thinking about what it really means when we say our children are the future and make sure there is a future there for them.

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