



# Elevate: Manaaji'idiwin

## Enrichment Guide

Compiled by Ksenia Broda-Milian for Royal MTC

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Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre is proud to call Manitoba home. Royal MTC is located in Winnipeg on Treaty 1, the traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg, Cree, Anishininew, and Dakota people, and the National Homeland of the Red River Métis. We are thankful for the benefits sharing this land has afforded us, acknowledge the responsibilities of the Treaties, and embrace the opportunity to partner with Indigenous communities in the spirit of reconciliation and collaboration.

## The Role of the Audience

Theatre needs its audience! We are happy to have you here. Every staff person, actor, and crew member backstage plays an important part in your experience, and you also have a role in the experience of cast, crew and the people around you.

**Arrive Early:** Please make sure you give yourself enough time to find your seat before the performance starts. Latecomers may not be admitted to a performance. We ask schools and other groups to arrive at least 20-30 minutes before the show.

**Cell Phones and Other Electronic Devices:** Please **turn off** your cell phone/mp3 player /gaming system/camera/smart watch. Texting, surfing, and gaming during performances is very distracting for the performers and other audience members. Using cameras and recording devices during a performance is **never** allowed.

**Talking During the Performance:** Even when you whisper, you can be heard by performers and people around you. Unless it is a relaxed performance, disruptive patrons will be removed from the theatre. Please wait until after the performance to share your words with others.

**Food/Drinks:** Food and outside drinks are not allowed in the theatre. When there is an intermission, snacks and drinks may be available for purchase. There is complimentary water in the lobby.

**Dress:** There is no dress code at the Royal MTC, but we respectfully ask you not to wear hats in the theatre. We strive to be a scent-free environment and thank all patrons for their cooperation.

**Leaving During the Performance:** If you leave the theatre during a performance, you will be readmitted at the discretion of Front of House staff. If readmitted, you may be placed in an empty seat at the back of the auditorium instead of your original seat.

**Being Asked to Leave:** The theatre staff has, and will exercise, the right to ask any member of the audience to leave if that person is being inappropriate or disruptive including (but not limited to): talking, using devices that produce light or sound, and deliberately interfering with an actor or the performance (tripping, throwing items on or near the stage, etc.).

**Talkbacks:** A short question and answer period with the actors takes place after student matinees, first Tuesday evening shows, and some public matinees. While watching the show, make a mental note of questions to ask the actors about the production or life in the theatre. Our artists deserve to be treated with respect! It's okay to have a negative opinion, but this is your chance to ask questions and understand the performance or process, not to criticize. If you have a concern, see the house manager after the show and they will make sure your feedback gets to the appropriate Royal MTC staff.

**Enjoy the show:** Laugh, cry, gasp – responding to the performance is part of the nature of theatre! As you get involved in the story, try to balance your reactions with respecting the people around you. The curtain call is part of the performance too – it gives you a chance to thank all the artists for their hard work with applause, and for them to thank you for your attention. We all appreciate when you stay at your seat and join in the applause!

## Playwright Biography



**David McLeod** is a member of Minegoziibe Anishinabe (Pine Creek First Nation, MB) with family roots also in the Métis village Camperville, MB. His early theatre experience was as an actor in Thompson Playhouse productions, Thompson Beer & Skits Nights and as a member of People for People, an Indigenous troupe, all based in Thompson, MB. In the early 2000's upon moving to Winnipeg, he was a regular in Winnipeg's spoken word scene and became a member of the Winnipeg Indigenous Writers Collective, going on to win the

Winnipeg Centennial Library's inaugural spoken word competition. He became actively involved in theatre acting, appearing in the late Doug Nepinak's *Incident at Oka, Manitoba* during the Winnipeg Fringe Theatre Festival as well as a CBC radio adaptation. He acted in *Shakespeare in The Red*, staged at Prairie Theatre Exchange. David performed twice at the CBC Winnipeg Comedy Festival with stand-up written by Darrell Dennis. David's poetry and writing has appeared in anthologies: *Let the Drum Be My Heartbeat*, *Prairie Fire* and *Manitowapow: Aboriginal Writings from the Land of Water*, as well as IWC chapbooks *Urban Cool* and *Bone Memory*. He is truly thankful for the Pimootayowin experience to reconnect to writing with so many talented people and the opportunity to learn and grow as a writer.

### The Pimootayowin Creators Circle

*Elevate: Manaaji'idiwin* was first developed during David McLeod's membership of this Circle. Led by Governor General Award-winning playwright Ian Ross, the Creators Circle supports the creation and development of new plays by Manitoba-based Indigenous artists.

Pimootayowin is an Anishinaabemowin word meaning *journey*, a word chosen by Ross who explains: "The creation of new art is often described as a journey, so too, our lives. In any journey, we often don't know what lies ahead but we can emerge enriched by them. I look forward to mentoring talented creators who have fascinating, relevant stories to tell."

Pimootayowin is dedicated to developing new voices for the theatre. All participants receive an honorarium, as well as fees when the play is professionally workshopped in preparation for the public presentations. You can hear the newest batch of works read this fall at the Festival of New Work. [Keep up with all things Pimootayowin here.](#)

## Playwright's Notes

One major element of Indigenous humour is teasing, often adjacent with extreme truth-telling. This action often transcends difficult situations. I hoped to stretch this element of Indigenous philosophy like a thin red thread throughout the play, allowing it to stitch scenes together where laughter connects with pain, loss and, most importantly, self-discovery. The elevator scenario places two individuals within a pressure cooker situation, where two characters ultimately have no choice but to face and witness each other's truth. I hope this translates towards a sacred place sometimes called reconciliation.

Humour was always part of my family growing up; I'd often listen to relatives joke about tough situations often to minimize them. Over the years, I've learned that humour is directly connected to Indigenous resilience.

*ELEVATE: Manaaji'idiwin* exists because of MTC's Pimootayowin Creators Circle, led by Governor General's Award-winning playwright Ian Ross. The program brought several aspiring writers together to try our hand at playwriting. The word "Pimootayowin" means journey in Anishinaabemowin and it certainly was.

I share much gratitude to Ian and the other participants of the program: Katie German, Lynette Bonin, Jim Compton, Rosanna Deerchild, Kathleen MacLean and Tracey Nepinak. I humbly acknowledge that I entered a gifted circle and stepped out of it with something that resembled a play – it would not exist without them.

*ELEVATE's* story is rooted in an actual experience I had several years ago. I entered an office tower in Winnipeg to visit a friend. While standing in a full elevator on the ground floor, a security guard rushed in and asked, "Where do you think you're going? Out!" I thought, someone must be in trouble. Then I realized he was addressing me? It was embarrassing, being taken out of the elevator and being escorted to the exit. This simple act is at the very root of the play.

There are so many people to thank who helped develop this play, particularly the wonderful team at Royal MTC (Kelly, Herbie, Melissa, Kevin, Nolan). Special thanks to Niigaan Sinclair, Dené Sinclair, Isaac Murdoch, Dennis Chartrand, Shelley MacDougall and Jeneda Benally. It is truly an honour to have my play produced within this beautiful theatre with its many dedicated individuals.

Lastly, thank you for being here. When I first entered the theatre, it was very surreal. Now it is especially so real.

Chi Miigwetch

See the entire creative team and cast for Royal MTC's production, including their biographies, [on our website](#), where you can also download the Ovation program.

## Content Overview

Occasional strong language and choreographed fighting. Experiences of racism and discrimination are discussed as well as depicted.

## Plot Summary

Adapted from one provided by the playwright

An elevator in a downtown Winnipeg office tower steadily becomes a pressure cooker when two men unexpectedly become entrapped within its walls. They must inhabit each other's differing ideologies and are situated to challenge and learn about each other.

Tallahassee is an up and coming First Nations leader who often shares quirky yet meaningful insights, while Jonesie, a career driven lawyer with a limited personal life, is gunning for a partner title at his firm; both are at pivotal stages in their careers.

The interactions begin with whimsical moments including an AI elevator voice, but frictions slowly progress into something much larger and eventually a battle of sorts entwines them in moving towards deeper understanding. The two eventually must work together to escape their predicament, but can the tight spot they're in possibly lead to a place of reconciliation? Their entrapment is a condensation of discussions that present differing world views of historic truths, apathy, misconceptions, and the overwhelming task of inner change — all explored within a story that sometimes blurs between the real and surreal, striving to elevate towards *manaajii'idiwin*. This word means "to go easy on one another and all of Creation," commonly referred to as Respect.

## Context and Related Resources

### Microaggressions

Microaggressions are subtle actions, expressions or behaviours that may be intentional or unintentional. They communicate hostile, negative, or derogatory messages to or about individuals in marginalized groups. Since people might not be aware they are partaking in this behaviour, such comments are sometimes overlooked. However, a microaggression can be just as harmful as an overtly racist act – "micro" means small, but their impacts are not. The cumulative impact of daily hassles of any type are linked to chronic health conditions: digestive problems, anxiety, depression, and have a large impact on major life events. Microaggressions that attack someone's identity incessantly have strong associations with these and more negative mental and physical health outcomes. These effects show that people are not being "too sensitive" and that microaggressions have an impact whether or not they were said or performed with hostile intent.

Types of microaggressions can show whether an individual has explicit or implicit bias. These examples are from the Indigenous Foundation:

- **Micro-assaults** are verbal or non-verbal attacks, avoidant behaviours, and purposeful discriminatory acts, such as interacting solely with white Canadians over Indigenous peoples in the spaces one occupies. They are the most overt of the microaggression types.

- **Micro-insults** often include rude remarks that can undermine one's cultural identity and uphold white supremacy. Micro-insults can look like a teacher mispronouncing an Indigenous student's name multiple times, or being surprised that an Indigenous student is performing well and voicing that surprise to said student. In *Elevate: Manaaji'idiwin*, Sharon the AI elevator voice congratulates Tallahassee on his use of English.
- **Micro-invalidations** disregard or invalidate the psychological effects of racism, and the experiences Indigenous peoples face due to racism. These types of invalidations can be seen by an individual claiming that they "don't see colour" or that "all lives matter". This can negate how racism and discrimination affect Indigenous peoples or other people of colour. Another example of this is when one individual tells the other that they are overreacting towards a racist comment or action, invalidating their feelings. While this might be said with the best of intentions, the impact is not such.

It is normal to make unintentional mistakes! We all may have implicit biases and behaviours that we are unaware of until you examine them. The Indigenous Foundation says, "It is not about never making any mistakes, it is about how you **respond** when it is brought to your attention and that you continue **learning** from your mistakes." Listen to the individual to whom you caused harm, listen, don't be defensive, and think about the impact and how you can be better in the future. Keep learning constantly and hold others accountable for their actions.

#### **Related Resource Links:**

Learning for Justice hosts an [excellent article about stereotypes, prejudices, their origins, and their effects](#), and [Project READY is an online PD curriculum that teaches about implicit biases](#) and their impacts. To learn about [how to respond to microaggressions](#) and unconscious bias, see this article from National Equity Project.

Examining our own possible biases is an important step to understanding ourselves and how we see the world. Harvard University hosts [Project Implicit, where you can select a test to determine your implicit biases](#) about various people and characteristics.

## **Bias in AI**

While artificial intelligence may seem objective and accurate, it is not immune to bias. **Explicit biases** are conscious and intentional prejudices or beliefs about certain groups of people. For example, an employer who openly favors one gender over another in hiring decisions exhibits explicit bias. **Implicit biases** operate unconsciously and can influence decisions without a person realizing it. Implicit biases are shaped by social conditioning, media representation, and cultural exposure. They can be particularly harmful because they affect our behavior even when we consciously reject discriminatory beliefs. If an AI model learns from biased language or imagery, it may generate prejudiced or stereotypical outputs. (Chapman University).

This does not mean that developers are purposely feeding AI information that is racist, sexist, or otherwise discriminatory, but you must think about which groups held power and might have had an agenda to fulfill, or might have unconsciously reflected prejudice in data collection. Because they are fed algorithms and learn from existing materials, AI reflects human inequalities. If the data used to train a system is not diverse or representative and is biased toward or prejudiced against a certain group or demographic, the model will reflect these



attitudes. Historically biased data collection that reflects societal inequity can result in harm to historically marginalized groups in use cases including hiring, predictive policing, credit scoring, healthcare, and many others (IBM).

#### **Types of Bias in AI** (from Chapman University)

- **Selection Bias** occurs when training data is not representative of the real-world population. For example, if a facial recognition model is trained mostly on lighter-skinned individuals, it may struggle to accurately identify people with darker skin tones, leading to discriminatory outcomes.
- **Confirmation Bias** occurs when an AI system is overly reliant on pre-existing patterns in data, reinforcing historical prejudices. For instance, if a hiring algorithm learns that past successful candidates were predominantly men, it may favor male applicants.
- **Measurement Bias** happens when the data collected systematically differs from the true variables of interest. For example, if a model predicts student success based only on those who completed an online course, it may fail to account for those who dropped out, leading to misleading conclusions.
- **Stereotyping Bias** occurs when AI systems reinforce harmful stereotypes. For example, a translation model that consistently associates the word "nurse" with female pronouns and "doctor" with male pronouns perpetuates gender bias, or an image-generation model that portrays engineers as predominantly male contributes to occupational stereotyping.
- **Out-Group Homogeneity Bias** causes an AI system to generalize individuals from underrepresented groups, treating them as more similar than they actually are. For instance, facial recognition systems often struggle to differentiate between individuals from racial or ethnic minorities due to insufficient diversity in training data. This can lead to misclassification and discriminatory practices, such as wrongful arrests.

Bias in AI can occur at several stages in the development process: Data Collection (for example, training AI on historical hiring data from a company that favored male applicants may lead to biased hiring recommendations), Data Labelling (the humans who annotate training data might have different interpretations of things like emotional analysis or facial expression), model training, and deployment.

The persistent idea that technology is objective and neutral is one that we must let go of, and recognize that to create AI systems that contribute to a society that is just and equitable, bias must be proactively addressed – and that by taking this approach from the beginning of development, this creation is indeed possible!

#### **Related Resource Links:**

[An article from the UN](#) explores how “bias from the past leads to bias in the future.” For a deeper dive, this [IBM article includes ways to avoid bias in AI](#).

## The Seven Teachings

Adapted from <https://www.southernnetwork.org/site/seven-teachings>, public domain.

The seven Teachings are guiding principles working towards restoring the cultural values, beliefs, and practices that were once forbidden. Many communities have adopted them in one form or another, as a moral stepping stone and cultural foundation. Each community has adapted the teachings to suit their community values. Despite where the teachings may have originated, they share the same concepts of abiding by a moral respect for all living things. The Teachings are Love, Respect, Courage, Honesty, Wisdom, Humility, and Truth.

Love – represented by the eagle – a force that is undeniable. With love all things are possible. It is everyone's right to have and experience it. In terms of the Medicine Wheel, love is the hub. It is symbolic of fire and the Creator. Humans are incapable of understanding the Creator; so in turn, he gave us a way to experience love and enjoy love through our children.

Respect – represented by the buffalo – this is the basis of the title of this play. David McLeod put in his introduction that the situation and characters are working towards *manaaji'idiwin*, 'to go easy on one another and all of Creation,' Commonly referred to as respect. He breaks this down as *Manaaji* = to go easy on someone, *Idi* = in a reciprocal way, *Win* = a way it is done. If you respect yourself and others, respect will come back to you.

Courage – represented by the bear – allows one to face danger, fear, or change with bravery and confidence. Mental and moral strength like the mother bear shows when protecting her cubs show courage.

Honesty - represented by the sage or sasquatch – is not the same as truth. But by speaking and acting honestly, you can be trusted and therefore morally upright.

Wisdom – represented by the beaver – is not to be confused with knowledge. Wisdom is the ability to make decisions based on gained experience and knowledge, and accept responsibility and accountability. When one pollutes the water, one does not break a human law, but the law of nature, which states that to poison the water, is to destroy oneself.

Humility – represented by the wolf – allows us to not be arrogant and humbly ask for guidance when needed. The wolf pack only survives if all members are as one, and each member understands their individual role. Humility means considering community as much as or before yourself.

Truth – represented by the turtle – is symbolic of law and principle. To know and understand all the seven teachings, is truth. Since the beginning of time the turtle has not changed. The turtle has been chosen to be the bearer of truth and the basic truth of the laws of nature have not changed. The turtle has been able to adapt to change without changing; thus it represents truth. It also represents time. Its shell has thirteen plates, symbolizing the thirteen moons in one year.

### Related Resource Links:

[The Seven Sacred Laws animated web series](#) is a made-in-Manitoba work that educates on these traditional teachings. Each 3- to 4-minute video features a meeting with one of the seven sacred animals who delivers a teaching.



## Some things you'll see at MTC

### Artwork

Artist Peatr Thomas developed a mural that plays a part during the production. Here is his explanation:

“7 beings or 'animals' of our Sacred Ancestor teachings are here in spirit at sunrise for the beginning of a new day and time. The eagle is the most prominent and reaches the entirety of the view because in the teachings they represent Love. Love is very important for all life to sustain itself/ourselves/each other.”



There are also two rivers in the piece. The artist does not specify whether they represent the two major rivers that flow through and meet through Winnipeg, but with The Forks being a hub of story sharing for thousands of years, it would be a very apt possible interpretation!

### Medicine Wheel Garden

The medicine wheel is a significant symbol in many Indigenous cultures across Turtle Island. It represents the interconnectedness of all life and the cyclical nature of existence. It is typically depicted as a circle divided into four sections, each representing a different aspect of life.

Typically depicted as a circle divided into four quadrants, the medicine wheel reflects balance and harmony. Often the four directions – north, south, east, west – are partnered with different elements, seasons, colours, animals, sacred medicines, and stages of life, each working together to support the well-being of individuals and community. There is no one “correct” medicine wheel.

MTC's medicine wheel features four sacred plants that hold powerful teachings: cedar (South), tobacco (East), sage (west) and sweetgrass (north). They will grow throughout the run of *Elevate: Manaaji'idiwin* and then move to the planter in front of the building to be shared with the community.

#### Related Resource Links:

View an [Anishinaabe teaching](#) and a [Cree teaching](#), or watch a [medicine wheel teaching video](#) (24 minutes).

## Glossary and Mentions

**Aaji-a-ga-day** – Anishinaabemowin: Mud Hen, Bottom Feeding Bird.

**Aako-Maagos** – Anishinaabemowin: stink.

**Ando-Mawizon** – Anishinaabemowin: go pick.

**A-Sin-ee-Qass** – Anishinaabemowin: Little Rock Girl.

**Boozhoo** – Anishinaabe greeting.

**Tansi** – Cree greeting.

**Chi Miigwetch** – Anishinaabemowin expression of gratitude.

**Gidi-bendaa-gos** – Anishinaabemowin: You belong here.

**Justice Murray Sinclair** – The Honourable Murray Sinclair or Mizanay (Mizhana) Gheezhik-iban, meaning “The One Who Speaks of Pictures in the Sky” in Anishinaabemowin, was the first Indigenous judge in Manitoba and second in Canada. He was a leader in Indigenous law and human rights, and in 2009 became chief commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. He was then appointed a Senator and became chancellor of Queen’s University. When he retired, he mentored Indigenous lawyers. He passed away in 2024.

**Maji-manidoo** – Anishinaabemowin: Bad Spirit.

**Ma-Na-Tis** – Anishinaabemowin: ugly.

**Mooshum** – Anishinabe word for grandfather.

**94 calls to action** – In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission announced their 94 Calls to Action. These are 94 activities all governments, courts, businesses, schools, and people living in Canada can do to help work towards mending the mistakes of the past and present so that all children – including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit children – can grow up happy, healthy, safe, and proud of who they are. (From Spirit Bear’s Guide, link in sources.)

**Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada** – The Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, the largest class-action settlement in Canadian history, began to be implemented in 2007. One of the elements of the agreement was the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada to facilitate reconciliation among former students, their families, their communities and all Canadians... The TRC spent 6 years travelling to all parts of Canada and heard from more than 6,500 witnesses. It created a historical record of the residential schools system. The TRC also hosted 7 national events across Canada to engage the Canadian public, educate people about the history and legacy of the residential schools system, and share and honour the experiences of former students and their families. It existed from 2007-2015. (From government of Canada website; link in sources.)

**Zoogi-de-wit Awiya Mawi** – Anishinaabemowin: courageous people cry.

### Related Resource Links:

Not just for youth – CBC Kids has brief but helpful videos that cover [the 94 calls](#), and [what reconciliation is](#), and more. For more information [breakdown by Thompson Rivers University simplifies the subjects](#) and adds context as well as providing resources. A comprehensive guide with a brief history of residential schools and TRC’s 94 Calls to Action, and outlines how Canada is working toward reconciliation today, is available from [Reconciliation Education](#).

The [Beyond 94 website monitors Canada’s progress](#) on the calls to action; current status is 14 complete, 34 with projects underway, 29 with projects proposed, and 17 not begun.

## Discussion Prompts

### Pre-Show

- What do you think of when you hear or see the word “reconciliation?”
- Is using humour to deal with tough situations part of your personal, familial, or cultural “toolbox?” Does David McLeod’s connection between humour and resilience resonate with you?
- What do you think is the place of humour in dealing with big issues? What about the place of theatre?
- Have you ever experienced a microaggression?
- Is expressing and confronting unvarnished truth (what McLeod refers to as “extreme truth-telling” something you are comfortable with?

### Post-Show:

- Which of the Seven Teachings do you feel are main themes of this show? How are they on display?
- It may be easy to paint one of the characters as a villain, but playwright David McLeod wanted both to be human and for them to see each other’s truths. Are there points where each does or doesn’t show the teaching of respect?
- How did David McLeod use humour in this play? Did that help the message resonate with you?
- Did you find the idea of an elevator as a microcosm of wider society effective?
- How might you address either character if you were stuck in an elevator with them?
- In what ways does the elevator’s AI show bias? How might you reprogram it?
- McLeod says that Indigenous humour involves teasing and extreme truth-telling, both of which are present in this play. Are you comfortable with these aspects, or do they make you uncomfortable?
- Has this play given you new food for thought about the concept of reconciliation?
- Did you learn anything from this experience? About history, contemporary life, other people, or yourself?



Kevin Klassen and Nolan Moberly in *ELEVATE: Manaaji'idiwin*. Set by William Layton, costumes by Amy MacPherson, lighting by Scott Henderson, photo by Dylan Hewlett.

## Further Reading and Resources

### Being an Indigenous Lawyer in Canada

The Dalhousie Law Journal recognizes that Canadian law has been used as a mechanism of assimilation, colonialism, and dispossession towards Indigenous people, who were also effectively excluded from law education and professions. In the mid-1990s however, the number of Indigenous lawyers doubled, and according to the Law Society of British Columbia, although non-Indigenous and Indigenous lawyers share similar experiences when it comes to career opportunities, recognition and commitment to their practice, Indigenous lawyers continue to face barriers and are more likely than white lawyers to feel pressure due to emotional demands. According to the National Study on [the Health and Wellness Determinants of Legal Professionals in Canada](#), Indigenous legal professionals experience higher rates of psychological distress, depression and burnout compared to white lawyers. UBC suggests that “reconciliation begins with truth” and so it is important to understand the truths that Indigenous people in the legal field have lived while striving to create a system that upholds only justice. Here are some resources you can explore if you are interested in this area:

UBC: [Indigenous alumni share their law school experiences over the last 50 years](#)

[Andrea Menard on Indigenizing, decolonizing and genuine reconciliation](#)

York University: [Indigenous lawyers in Canada: Identity, Professionalization, Law](#)

Canadian Bar Association: [Support for Indigenous Lawyers](#)

[Learning, Celebrating, and Supporting Indigenous Communities](#)

First Peoples Law: [Indigenous Law and Canadian Courts](#)

### Empathy

Empathy is different than sympathy. Sympathy is to feel pity and sorry for someone’s misfortune, or to want to help with something that you see as negative. Empathy on the other hand is the ability to recognize and understand another’s emotions, staying focused on their experience rather than reacting. You can practice empathy by listening without judgement and without the intention of jumping into problem-solve, believing that every person has strengths and potential, and recognize and keep in check your own biases and assumptions. Empathy is something worth cultivating in all aspects of life and can also be a tool for reconciliation.

[Indigenous Scholar Dr. Lavell-Harvard on Empathy and Reconciliation](#) (video, 12 minutes)

[Creating Connection with Empathy – Brené Brown](#) (video, 3 minutes)

American Psychological Association: [Cultivating Empathy](#)

Calm: [8 Exercises to Develop Empathy](#)

### Participating in Reconciliation

While the 94 calls to action may seem out of our hands as individuals, every person can play a part in reconciliation. “Together, Canadians must do more than just talk about reconciliation; we must learn how to practice reconciliation in our everyday lives – within ourselves and our families, and in our communities, governments, places of worship, schools and workplaces. To do so constructively, Canadians must remain committed to the ongoing work of establishing and

maintaining respectful relationships.” – National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation  
Here are some brief suggestions and resources with more ideas that everyone can do!

- Recognize that Indigenous people are not a monolith, and learn their distinct histories and histories between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. You can access the [free online course from the University of Alberta](#), or learn from books, podcasts, documentaries, short videos, or any media that works for you! Specifically, understanding the history of residential schools can help you to recognize why their massive impact is still incredibly relevant today.
- Don't treat September 30 as a holiday. [Wear an orange shirt](#), but don't stop there. On the [National Day for Truth and Reconciliation](#), use your time off of work and school to participate in a vigil, walk, gathering, or public event that celebrates Indigenous people. Learn about language, history, or teachings in person or online. Read a book by an Indigenous author. Be mindful of what the day is meant to commemorate.
- Engage with anti-racism and trauma-informed training in whatever kind of occupation that you have, and confront your own implicit biases.
- Learn the history of the land you are on. You can [explore a map to find out the groups that were and are traditionally stewards of the territory where you reside](#), and learn more about each. You can also [craft a personal land acknowledgement](#) that connects you personally to the area and gives examples of how you/your company engage with and support reconciliation. (Learn also why some Indigenous people – again, not a monolith! – do not feel that land acknowledgements are effective! There is not one best practice.) This [guide from UBC about land acknowledgements](#) has links to various viewpoints.
- Care for the land and show respect for the earth.
- Read the 94 Calls to Action, and create a [ReconciliACTION plan](#)
- Indigenous people are not just part of Canada's past, but its present and future. Support Indigenous businesses and living artists celebrating contemporary voices and Indigenous joy, not just history and hardship. This includes but is not limited to the work of playwrights presented by MTC next season and beyond!

McMaster University: [8 ways to engage in truth and reconciliation](#)

BC Campus: [Actions for reconciliation as citizens and educators](#)

Canada's History: [Truth and Reconciliation Package for Teachers](#)

Kids Help Phone: [12 ways to participate in reconciliation](#)



## Explore More: Recommended Library Reading List

### Explore more humorous takes on reconciliation

*Bury my Heart at Chuck E. Cheese's*, Tiffany Midge - This collection weaves witty memoirs together with hilarious musings on life, identity, and the current political climate in the United States. Midge, a Hunkpapa Lakota of the Standing Rock Sioux, explores what it means to be an indigenous person today, using satire, humour and blunt honesty to tell her stories. 818.608 MIDGE 2019

*Prairie Chicken Dance Tour*, Dawn Dumont - A witty and comedic story of a group of Indigenous dances find themselves together on a 15-day performance tour of Europe and hilarity ensues. Loosely based on a true story of a group of Indigenous dancers from Saskatchewan who toured Europe in the 1970s. FICTION DUMONT

*Indians on Vacation*, Thomas King - Inspired by a handful of old postcards sent by an uncle nearly a hundred years earlier, Bird and Mimi attempt to trace Mimi's long-lost uncle and the family medicine bundle he took with him to Europe. FICTION KING

### Explore more Indigenous playwrights

*Women of the Fur Trade*, Frances Koncan - Historical satire told from the perspectives of three women: a Metis Taurus, an Ojibwe Sagittarius and a British Virgo to be exact, during the height of the Canadian fur trade in a Treaty One territory. 819.26 KONCAN 2022

*Rez Sisters*, Tomson Highway - Award winning play which is the portrayal of seven women from a reserve attempting to beat the odds by winning at the biggest bingo in the world. 819.254 HIG

*Sir John A: Acts of a Gentrified Ojibwe Rebellion*, Drew Hayden Taylor - A satirical play which explores reconciliation and brings to life the patriarchal character of Canada's first Prime Minister whose bones are held for ransom by the star of the play – Anishinaabe man Bobby Rabbit. 819.254 TAYLOR 2018

### Explore more stories about being stuck in an elevator

*The Escape Room*, Meagan Goldin - Four high-flyers in the lucrative world of Wall Street finance are ordered to participate in a team building exercise which requires them to escape from a locked elevator. Things go horribly wrong in this thriller and dark secrets start to emerge. FICTION GOLDIN

*If I Never Met You*, Mhairi McFarlane - This heartfelt romantic comedy perfect features a chance encounter in a broken-down elevator with the office playboy which offers our heroine a new possibility. He doesn't believe in love, but she starts to actually fall for this charming, handsome man despite her best intentions. FICTION ROM MCFARLANE



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