

LEARNING

HOW

TO

SEE

with

Brian

McLaren

Season 7, Episode 6

Seeing Nature as an Indigenous Person

feat. Randy and Edith Woodley

Brian McLaren: I had like to read you a short passage from a book by Randy Woodley, who will be one of our guests today on Learning How to See. The book is called Becoming Rooted, and they're short daily reflections, a hundred of them, to help us reconnect with the sacred earth. This is from chapter two. "A spring gently rises up out of the earth and becomes a stream, which becomes a river, which becomes an ocean, which evaporates and becomes rain, which feeds itself back into the earth. Again, finding its way back to the surface. Water repeats the sacred cycle of enduring life. Water, soil, seeds, plants, the sun, the stars, the moon. These are all our teachers. They teach us about life, even as they give us life. A fern is one of the best examples of enduring life. Scientists call the pattern of a fern a fractal.

The natural world is full of fractals, patterns that repeat themselves at different scales. If you examine every part of the fern down to the smallest part of a leaf, you see it continuously repeating itself. I have read that a Nautilus shell does something similar, but I've not seen one up close. In a way, everything has a bit of a fractal nature, repeating itself, giving new life, and moving itself forward into the future as a species. We humans are beings of a fractal type nature. We are born and we reproduce. Life, sacred life, continues naturally to our descendants. Like a stream, we are on an enduring journey to seek the sacredness of our lives as human beings, how well we choose to listen and how well we choose to live will determine how much of the sacredness we will discover. Our most important teacher is dear nature, creation herself, Mother Earth. She holds the wisdom of the endless ages.

If we can learn to cherish our beloved teacher and follow the wisdom found in her fractal type patterns, we may survive the coming hardships. Creation is continually teaching us. Our human task is simply to look and listen and live well. She is teaching us now." Randy Woodley, who wrote those words, has become one of my teachers through life. I was blessed many years ago to enter into friendship with a number of Native American spiritual leaders, people who drew deeply from their indigenous tradition and deeply from the Christian faith that we shared. Many of his books have enriched me so deeply. And his newest book, I just am a big fan of, it's called Journey to Eloheh. Eloheh, a word meaning wholeness and harmony and beauty, this connectedness that we're learning how to see together. Indigenous people have memories in their culture of connection to the land and wisdom about learning from the land as our teacher, that many of us come from traditions that have forgotten.

We have centuries, generations of disconnection from the land, and one of our goals in this season of Learning How to See is to help us see a little bit more like indigenous people. If you wanted to make a simple distinction between indigenous people and colonizer people, you could say that indigenous people understand themselves as belonging to the land, belonging to the earth. Colonizer people say the land belongs to us, the earth belongs to us. I think if we want to learn to see nature in a new way, we would all do well to listen and learn from our indigenous brothers and sisters, who will teach us in turn to listen to and learn from the earth itself. In this episode of Learning How to See, you'll get a chance to meet Randy Woodley and his partner, Edith Woodley. You'll learn more about their tradition and their lineage and their ancestry and the identity they share as indigenous people. I trust you'll see them as your teachers and through them you'll gain the ability to see the earth itself, this created world as our teacher together.

That's so much of what we mean when we say, "Learning How to See," learning how to see ourselves not as owners of the land, but as part of the land to re-indigenize ourselves in

this beautiful earth. Welcome everybody to this episode of Learning How to See and this conversation with two wonderful, lovely, fascinating people who have become teachers of mine. I am so happy that Randy and Edith Woodley get to be in this conversation, and I get to be in this conversation for the benefit of all of you who are listening. Randy and Edith, you have such a fascinating story, and I'm so happy that the story now is available in a new and beautiful and powerful way through this new book Journey to Eloheh. I wonder maybe Edith, first if you could just introduce yourself, how do you like people to know about you? And then, Randy, you could do the same. And then, I'd love to just give you a chance to tell us about this beautiful new book.

Edith Woodley: My name is Edith Woodley, and I was born and raised on the Wind River Indian Reservation in Wyoming. I grew up in a crazy dysfunctional home, even though my parents did the best they could to raise all of us kids. There was nine of us. I'm the youngest of nine. I left home at the age of 19. And I think it's like four years later I met Randy, and then we started our adventure together, and then eventually our journey to Eloheh.

Brian McLaren: Thank you, Edith. And Randy, how about you?

Randy Woodley: Yeah. So, I was born in Alabama, not with a banjo on my knee. But I was moved to Michigan at six weeks old and my dad and mom were part of the Great Migration, who went up to work for the automobile factories. As my dad used to say, they taught them the three Rs down there, the reading, writing, and road to Detroit. So, I was raised in southeast Michigan, a town called Willow Run, which is part of Ypsilanti, which is kind of the outside of Ann Arbor, if people know where that's at. It's a pocket of the south, Willow Run was because of all the folks who moved up to work for the automobile factories. Yeah, so I was there until I was 19 years old and began my adventures. And basically, Edith and I were involved in native ministry through denomination for years and years, and we caused a lot of good trouble in that, until I think we finally decided that they couldn't continue to make the trouble we were trying to make.

So, we went out on our own, started an organization called Eagle's Wings Ministry, which is now it's Eloheh/Eagle's Wings legally, but we are also known as Eloheh Indigenous Center for Earth Justice and Eloheh Farm & Seeds. So, we're farmers. We've got six grandkids, four children, and a dog, and some chickens. We do a lot of writing, we do a lot of work, we do a lot of speaking and have our schools here, which is probably the highlight of what we do is having people come here and we host them for extended weekends and get to know them, build relationships. And yeah, it's great. There are two other elders that help us with that, a Hawaiian elder and a Lakota woman. Yeah, people leave different, which is what we hope for. Yeah.

Brian McLaren: Your new book, Journey to Eloheh, I just want to say we both have books coming out this year. If people were only going to read one book, I would recommend they read yours.

Randy Woodley: Well, that's what I said about yours.

Brian McLaren: Well, I feel the same way, Randy, because in one chapter, I forgot if it's chapter two or chapter three, you talk about the failed experiment of the West. I felt like you summarized

many, many chapters of my book in one chapter there. I mean, you said the same thing and said it better and so briefly and poignantly in that chapter. But in a way, I think you two feel as I do. We wake up every day knowing that there are issues of survival that are facing the human species right now, and those issues of survival depend on how we learn to see the earth and live with the earth and the natural world. The three of us, I think, have something deep that we share. We have to walk into a store and buy groceries or something and go to the doctor and meet people on the street, but we wake up each day with this realization that the way that we're living with this precious, sacred earth is unsustainable and there has to be a deep change in how human beings see and live.

In your book, you each begin by telling your individual story. And I'll just say your stories are riveting and the connections of your ancestors to larger stories of American history, or the history of Turtle Island, we might also say more broadly, I just have to say if people just wanted to read, touching, moving beautiful stories, well-told, the stories of your lives that you share in a couple of chapters in this book, it would be one of the most meaningful reads that they have on this year. I wonder if I could start with you, Edith. You talk very poignantly about the challenges and difficulties of your childhood, but also about the beauty of your childhood. There was a moment when you were a kid playing with your siblings and maybe some cousins, you were picking berries. You tell the story of picking berries and something happened there that ended up being a portal for you into something bigger. Could I ask you to just share that story?

Edith Woodley: Every summer, berry picking was a highlight of our lives. It was just something that we did. It was so much fun. As kids, we would love to run and just pick berries as much as we could, and it was just a really fun part of growing up. So, one time my brother and I were with a couple of other, my siblings or nieces and nephews, we were out picking berries. And we were all excited, and for some reason, my brother Tom, he goes, "Stop." And we all looked at him like, "Why?" And he said, "You pick the berries just in the middle." And we're like, "Why?" We're asking him these questions like, "Why are we doing this?" And we usually don't do this. And he's like, "Because the berries on top are to feed the winged relatives, our winged people. And then, the ones on the bottom are for the mice and the rodents and the smaller animals that can't get to the middle."

And so, the middle is all ours, so we don't pick everything. And so, I was like, "Okay." This is my brother Tom, and he always was telling us stuff like that. And as kids, as an older brother, it was like, "Okay, whatever. Okay." So, we did what he said. But then it didn't hit me until one day I was out with our oldest grandson, and we were picking berries. I was showing him on our property to pick berries with me, and he loved berries. And so, as we were picking him, for some reason, it just hit me. Everything that my brother told me all came flooding back to me. And so, I told it to my grandson. He was just a little bitty guy, maybe two years old or younger, I don't know, just a toddler age. And it just hit me. It was like a rock just hit me in the head. It was like, "Whoa. Now, what he said makes so much sense."

Brian McLaren: Yes.

Edith Woodley: So, like I said, I retold that story to my grandson and that's what we did. We picked just around the middle of the bush and left the top and the bottom for our relatives, the animals.

Brian McLaren: Yes. At that moment, you were receiving wisdom from your indigenous heritage through your older brother. And like all kids, we receive wisdom we don't fully grasp the importance of. And then, years later, as you're an elder, you're passing that on to your grandchildren and here's this wisdom. Can I tell you, Edith, as I reread this story in your book the other day, I couldn't help but think of another indigenous story from ancient literature about being careful what you pick from a tree. And I thought, "Here's yet another example of how I think we can learn to see." The Bible has been used in a thousand different ways to oppress people, to harm people, to help people, to make people rich. It's been used in almost every possible way, but if we can rediscover its wisdom as ancient ecological wisdom, here, the primal story in the Bible matches this story from your childhood. There are limits to how much we can take and we have to respect those limits. Oh, my goodness.

Randy Woodley: It goes along so well with the first part of Genesis there where it tells us to be, people say "stewards," I don't like that word, I like the word "co-sustainers," with creation to tend the garden, to toil the soil. If there was an original mistake, the mistake was the misuse of the environment, which was taking something from a tree that you're not supposed to take. And so, this ties right in with the problem that we're having today with the extractive mentality that the West has developed and not a mentality that considers the earth and the consequences and all of our other relatives that are so important that need to survive as well.

Brian McLaren: Well, Randy, that reminds me of a story that you tell in a chapter in the book, a Cherokee story from your heritage, a story that the Cherokee people tell about themselves about how they kind of got in trouble with the animal council and the plant council. And could you just share that story briefly?

Randy Woodley: Yeah, it's a little longer story than probably what we have time for, so I'll make it a little briefer. So, they say a long time ago that the people were basically misusing the animals. They got to the point where they would kill an animal indiscriminately, only take the best parts, leave the rest laying there, and not be grateful. So, the animals got together and they were led by the bears. And the bears said, "Hey," in the animal council, "what are we going to do about these people? They're killing us." "Well, how are they killing us?" "Well, they're killing us with bows and arrows." "Okay, well then we need to make bows and arrows." And you think about the nuclear race right there, right? So, the bears began to try to practice with their bows and arrows, but they have these big claws, and those claws were in the way and the arrows started going everywhere.

They couldn't hit anything. And finally the rest of the animals said, "We're going to put somebody else in charge of this meeting." And so, they put the inchworm in charge of the meeting. And the inchworm went around and listened to what everyone had to say, and then finally said, "What I think I'm hearing is that we're going to put diseases on the people." And so, they started thinking about swine flu and chickenpox

and bird flu and all measles and smallpox and all these different diseases that can be transferred through animals. And they put them on the people, and the people begin to die. First they say it was the children, the small children, and it was the elders, and then the men, and then finally the strong women begin to die. So, we're a matrix society, so that's the end of everything when the women die.

And so, they said, "We've got to go to the animals and we've got to ask for forgiveness and tell them that we'll stop acting this way." So, they did, and the animals listened. And then, the animals said, "Nope, we don't forgive you." And so, they continued to die. And all this time the plant people were watching this, and they felt sorry for the human beings. The plants did. And the plants have been around a lot longer. They're older, they're the elders. The only thing that's older than the plants are the rocks. So, we're getting pretty good wisdom for the plants. So, what they said was, "We're going to go to the people in their dreams and we're going to tell them how to heal each other from each disease." And so, they did, and one by one they began to get better. And finally all three councils came together.

So, you had the people council, you had the animal council, and you had the plant council. And they all came together and decided a few things. They decided that the humans were the best ones prepared to keep things in balance. And so, what the humans would do to remind themselves every time they took something from the earth or took an animal, is that they would put tobacco down to remind themselves that when you take something from the earth, you also put something back. And they would say a prayer, and they would say a prayer over that animal or that plant. They would thank it for giving its life. They would use all the parts and not waste it. Then the animals and the plants and the people then lived in harmony together. And so, that's our obligation today is to continue to remember that we're part of the whole community of creation. We are not the top, we're not the bottom, we're just part of the whole.

Brian McLaren: There's so much about that story. I remember as I read it, I thought, "What a fascinating difference that the language you were taught, when you were taught this story, was that there was a plant council and an animal council and a human council." Because in my upbringing, the words were the animal kingdom and the plant kingdom. And so, we import ideas of kingdom and hierarchy and power and domination even in that word, whereas council has the idea of shared wisdom. And I also was struck in the story how, in a sense, at the end of the story as I remember it, the Creator is happy that these three councils have achieved balance. It made me think of what a different worldview it is to understand we're part of a human council. We can be foolish, we can do harmful things, and we can learn and preserve that wisdom and how the interaction between these three councils all happens within the interaction of the Creator spirit who wants there to be harmony within and among these different councils.

And I just thought to myself, "What a beautiful story." I actually think that's the story, that's a huge part of the meaning that we should have derived from the Genesis story, those of us in the Christian tradition. It's the same wisdom, and here we find ourselves now needing to recover that wisdom. Randy, you have primarily, I think, Cherokee a heritage. And Edith, you have, really, you have many, many different stories happening within your story. Could you say a little bit about your background?

Edith Woodley: Well, I mean, it's a story. I mean, it's kind of untold story worry because of things that were happening out here in the West. The wars and the situations that the native people were enduring out here in the West was kind of, what's the word?

Randy Woodley: Hidden?

Edith Woodley: Hidden. Because there was a civil war going on back in the East and people were leaving and migrating from the East to the West. And so, they wanted more people to come out here, so they hid, and they got rid of what was really happening out here in the West. And so, my ancestry goes back, we were talking about it on our trip, and it goes back at least five?

Randy Woodley: Six.

Edith Woodley: Six generations. It's almost like reading a book almost as you're looking at my ancestry and how all of that fits into place of how things happened with my Shoshonean people. And it was just really mind-blowing. Randy's a genealogist. He spent some time with an uncle and my dad one time, and they started giving him all these little different pieces. And then, as we moved out here, he started doing a little bit here and there at different times, and as we moved out here, somehow he ended up reading this book, and then it hit on some names. And he goes, "Wait a minute, your dad and your uncle told me these different things about this, and here they are in black and white with the names and stuff." And so, that got him because of his brain, how his brain works about research and when he gets excited about something, he really digs into it.

And so, it was very exciting, the stuff, the research he started really doing on my ancestry. And it's just really beautiful the way it all pulls in together. And it's still kind of mind-boggling to know where one of my main ancestors did all this traveling from the West Coast. He was within the Northwest fur company and how he traveled down here into Oregon and then how he traveled all the way back East to bring the black robes. He heard this prophecy from some elders about black robes. And so, for some reason he ended up believing about this prophecy about the black robes. He believed in it. So, he set out on his mission to bring the black robes out.

Brian McLaren: And the black robes were the Jesuits, right?

Edith Woodley: Yes. Yeah. So, he ends up getting killed in the middle of doing that, but his younger son picks it up and he brings the black robes back out here.

Randy Woodley: He brings Father Pierre-Jean De Smet. He's the one that brought him out, who was the first... Then he marries into a group called the White Knives, which were sort of the green beret, if you will, of the Shoshone Protectors. And they have a son who becomes the guide to Bonneville and Fremont and a number of others, knew all the mountain men, etc. And then, later actually when he sees what's becoming of their food sources and everything with the settlers moving out here, joins the war and becomes a sub-chief under for what they call the Snake War. And then, finally moves back to what is then the reservation in Wyoming and becomes a sort of a statesman, well-respected person there. And then, Sacagawea is a distant relative. Her relatives basically are pinpointed through the whole settling of the Far West.

Brian McLaren: Learning How to See will be back in a moment. And of course, I think to be an indigenous person in the 21st century means that your gene pool in many ways reflects the history of what's happened in this country and different people mixing together, different stories mixing together. And that's true for you as well, Randy. As I recall, both Lord Baltimore, who brought Catholicism into the United States in a strong way, and Oliver Cromwell the British protector he was called, who persecuted Catholics and tried to impose violently radical Protestant thinking, it was a certain Protestant Christian nationalism of those times. That's part of your heritage along with your Cherokee heritage. And as I read this, I just felt you two are perfectly situated to bring indigenous wisdom from many tribes together. And you've done this through your PhD research. As I recall, Randy, I think it was 45 different indigenous peoples around the world who you have studied and surveyed and tried to understand their core values.

And because of your lives and upbringing, you also understand the sort of Western European tradition of the colonizers and settlers. And it just feels to me like the two of you are the perfect people to try to help all of us, for whatever our background, to understand some core indigenous values. And that's a big part of the heart of this new book, Journey to Eloheh. Randy, I wonder if you could share a little bit about that research and about those 10 values. And if it would be helpful, after you give some background, I have the list of them right in front of me. I'd be happy to read them or you may have them memorized, either way is fine.

Randy Woodley: Yeah, I don't have them memorized.

Brian McLaren: Yeah. [inaudible 00:29:08].

Randy Woodley: Yeah. So, I was a missionary in to Alaska natives for a couple years and those are what I call my missionary oppressor years. And I left there saying I would never oppress my native people again. And I went to seminary to figure out, "Well, how do I do that?" And discovered along the way the journals of a fellow named Evan Jones who was a missionary among the Cherokee, my people. And that set me off on a journey. He basically believed in the same things that the Cherokee people did. And then, eventually I did my PhD work. And at that time, my PhD work, I knew... Actually, we were doing a Pilgrimage of, there were about 50 of us on a bus with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship at the time. They're a multi-ethnic group and doing something called...

Edith Woodley: Pilgrims for Reconciliation,

Randy Woodley: Pilgrims for Reconciliation. Yeah. And in that, we read Walter Brueggemann's book, Peace. And a friend of mine, Terry McGonigal, was one of the teachers during that time. And we kept talking about this Shalom Construct. And I said, "Well," I kept saying to Edith, "We've got something in Cherokee like that." I can't remember what it's called right now. But I know the Navajos have Hozho, which is also another sort of way of expressing that harmony way. And so, after that first year, we did it a second year, but I went back and I talked to some elders. And they said, "Yeah, you were talking about Eloheh. Eloheh is our harmony way. It's the earth producing what it should, nobody's hungry, everybody's at peace with one another. It's not utopian at all, but it's like this is how we were made to live, so this is what we got to keep returning to, is this way of Eloheh. This is the harmony way."

And so, my research took me among 45 different Native American tribes interviews with, extended interviews with 10 elders from different tribes who spoke extensively about this construct. Every single tribe and every single elder knew exactly what I was talking about with this harmony way. And so, it's what we call widespread, but I would say it's pretty universal. And then, I had friends who were from all over the world who have told me, "Yeah, we have that same way." That's the original instructions that how we're all supposed to live. And so, then my dissertation, I extracted 10 values that were sort of complicated because there's other sort of values or subsets under that, but 10 major values that would be characteristic of the Native American harmony way.

Brian McLaren: Let me just say going back to this realization that the three of us share, we wake up each day being aware that our species faces a crisis of survival, that we could lead our species and many other species out of balance. We've already taken the ecosystems of the earth out of balance. We could lead to extinction, and we've got some momentum building in that direction. When I hear these 10 values, they don't just feel like nice ideas. They feel like, if we want to survive, these are the kind of things that we have to put center stage. I'll read them. I'll just also tell you as I thought of these, I thought, "What if when we read the 10 Commandments in the Bible, the point isn't that we're supposed to always and forever live by the 10 Commandments, but we should say, 'Wise people come up with a manageable list of core principles of how they should live.'"

And so, I'm going to read these 10 and then put them as 10 commandments or 10 guidelines or 10 pieces of wisdom that you have in the book because I think these would suit us very well. I'll just read them. First is harmony, seek harmony. Second is respect, honor the sacred. And can I just say something I love about the way you explain this is, the sacred in creation, the sacred in humanity, in the sense of our elders or the sacredness of children or whatever, and the sacredness of everything in God and in the Creator. I just love how that's all integrated under this value of respect. Accountability, accountability to the balance that must be maintained. Remember that we are related.

History, history that we look forward by looking back. We move forward by looking back. Humor, we have to be able to laugh at ourselves. Authenticity, speak from your heart. Equality, listen to everyone. Community, increase friendships and family. Spread that circle wide in the circle of connection relationship. Balance, work hard and rest well. Have that balance of work and rest. And then, generosity, share what you have. And it's what I love about this book, what the human race needs now is a fresh expression of values that will lead us to life rather than greed and exploitation and injustice and ultimately self-harm, right? So, yeah, anything you want to say just hearing me repeat your work there?

Randy Woodley: Well, just that I don't often quote the Founding Fathers, but there was this idea that they had this sort of conjoins with, and that's the common good. We create systems. We live our lives and we create systems that help the common good, so that we all can live together in harmony. So, these things are not just personal values, but they also are structural values, systemic values.

Brian McLaren: And I think at that moment, Edith, of your older brother and the berries or chokecherries, whatever it was, that at that moment he was taking a bunch of those values and helping them become actionable in that situation. There was balance, there was

generosity. Yeah.

Edith Woodley: Yeah, my brother Tom was a very unique person. He was kind of eccentric. And even though he wasn't my oldest brother, but he was one of my older brothers. He would walk around the house sometimes and just spouting off different things to us kids and different things like that. And he'd always come in at least once a week and smoke the house with sage or sweet grass and just sing a little song in our language and just do that as he went through the house. My brother Tom was really kind of a unique person, but I guess I didn't really realize it until that day. So, yeah.

Brian McLaren: Before we bring this conversation to a close, Edith, you mentioning sage and sweet grass. And one of the concerns that I think many people have rightly whenever descendants of the colonizers are speaking with indigenous people is that there is a kind of shallow appropriation that can happen, where people appropriate elements of indigenous culture in ways that I think are both disrespectful and ultimately unhelpful because for many reasons. But at the same time around the world now, and I know this from the research I did for my most recent book, *Life After Doom*, everybody who's paying attention to our ecological crisis and the related crises is saying, "We have to recover indigenous values." We have to help the whole world see the way indigenous people see. And I wonder if you could help us understand the right way to embrace these values. That's not just a matter of appropriation. I think that's an important question for all of us.

Edith Woodley: Well, personally, I feel like that in my own life, I had to really sit and think about who I am as a person and how the Creator, my relationship with the Creator, with God, and how I fit in to Mother Earth, and what is my part in what we're doing. And I've really grasped on to our relatives, the trees and the birds and the animals and the rodents and all of these things and how we are related and how we were there to help each other. I can't just take from that berry bush because what I'm doing is if I do that, I am taking everything away from my relatives. And when you think of a relative as in a human form, you're thinking, oh, you don't want to let them starve, so you don't take everything. You share.

And it started me thinking about, oh, wait. I think Jesus talks about that also about how you don't clean the edges of your fields. You don't take everything off your fields, you leave the edges around. Why? Oh, it's to help those who are in need of it. It's to feed them. It's to feed other people, or even the animals that come in and graze on the grains and different things like this. It just makes sense just to realize that we are one, the Creator created us, and I like to look at it like this, is that when the Creator created the world. He created the heavens and the stars and the water and all of these things. He created all that first. And then, he created the plants and the trees and all these different plants and trees and bushes and stuff like this, and then the animals, the birds, the fishes, and even those pesky mosquitoes, or poison ivy or poison oak.

He created all of that for a reason, but then it's like, "Oh, who did he create last? Oh, he created me last. But just because he created me last doesn't mean that he didn't love me like he loved everything else that he created." And so, it's like all of this over the years has just started making all this sense to me. Then when Randy came up with these 10 values, it all made sense. The appropriation thing is as long as we see who we are and realize that these are things, these 10 values are things that we can do as just human beings without trying to

grasp on to someone else's culture or someone else's way of doing things. It's like, "I'm just who I am." Kind of discover who you are as a person to realize how you fit into these values and how they may mean something totally different to you than they do to me, then you use that and not try to bring in my values the way I do my values, our native values into these, and do your own values with these as like a little-

Randy Woodley: You're talking about the cultural expression of those values.

Edith Woodley: Yeah. Do it in your culture and not try to take my culture or anybody else's culture to make you feel better. Just discover who you are in your culture and use those values in your culture.

Brian McLaren: So, beautifully said. Thank you so much. Randy, anything you'd want to add to that?

Randy Woodley: Yeah, I think people are drawn to this, we're a highly, highly symbolic people, native Americans are, so we have symbols for everything. And everything is very tangible, right? So, the pipe and the sweet grass and the sage, the tobacco and the circle and the colors and so many things. And we all have this journey that our ancestors made, and we all need to know what that journey is. Even if you're adopted, you can find out some stuff through your ancestry by taking the test and all that sort of thing, and find out there's so much rich spirituality throughout the world, and there always has been. So, I look at the way that the, what would we call it, we call it Christendom, condemn native Americans, right? They said we were devil worshipers. They said everything we did was evil. They burned our sweat lodges, they made us cut our hair, all these things to be acceptable to God, so to speak.

And if they did that to us, did they also do that to the Irish? Did they also do that to the Scandinavian peoples? Did they do that to the African peoples? Yeah. People have a tendency when they're trying to go on this spiritual journey to go, "Well, but they were all pagans." Well, no, they weren't. Paganism, that can actually have some good things, too, right? But this spirituality is in all of us, and if we can express the values but then in our own culture and then find like-minded people in those cultures that we can express them with, I think that's a better way of doing things. But I'm not as hard. I realize that people appropriate and all that, and they're just trying to connect spiritually, which is not a bad thing, right?

Brian McLaren: That's a gracious way to see it. Well, in closing, I want to tell you, Edith and Randy, something I don't think I've told you before. In fact, it may have just sort of come back to my memory in the last few days, but we share a mutual friend named Richard Twist, and Richard was a Lakota man who had his own amazing story and journey. Years ago, Richard went with me to Rwanda. And I was able to bring him there, and then he brought so much to the groups that were assembled there in Africa facing these commonalities in our story and history and an amazing experience. But along that trip, Richard was talking to me about what books he wanted to write, and he was asking me what books I thought he could make a contribution with. And we had a deep talk about what I thought would really, really help people. And he of course died of a heart... It was a heart attack, right?

Randy Woodley: Right.

Brian McLaren: Way too young and never got to write the book that we talked about. You have

written that book. This book Journey to Eloheh is exactly the book that we talked about, that was so needed. I have this feeling that part of what's going to happen if we make it through this tough time with any grace and wisdom at all, is that everyone on earth is going to have to become indigenous again, in the sense that they're going to have to rediscover that we do not exist separately from the earth, that human beings don't live on some upper plane where only their own media and laws and culture and all the rest is important. We're going to rediscover our place with the council of the animals and the council of the plants and the ancient witness of the rocks and mountains. And I wondered if we could just close, I would just love to hear if you could say something to us about how do you think we will see the natural world when we all become more truly indigenous to planet Earth as a whole?

Randy Woodley: Yeah. Well, I think first of all that we are all indigenous. We had a wonderful intellectual poet in Native America who died also too early. John Trudell. And John used to say that we're all indigenous, that somewhere in the back of our DNA and our mind somewhere is this dusty boxes that we've forgotten about, but we need to dust those off and come into all of our own indigeneity. And in my book, Becoming Rooted, I talk a lot about in the beginning introduction that we're all indigenous from somewhere. So, we were meant to live as indigenous people. And as you know, and there's a little bit of this in the book, part of my sort of foment is against the Western worldview because I think it's contradictory to everything we've talked about today, so much of the Western worldview. And so, I lay those out in different books and things.

So, if we can begin to decolonize and deconstruct that Western worldview and realize that there is something that Creator has made for us that comes from the earth, that comes from our ancestry, that connects to all of these natural things of who we were made to be and then find our own indigeneity, it will be like... You probably remember, Brian, because I think we're near the same age. I remember the show Bonanza when we had the little TVs, and it was in black and white for a while. And then, they made it in color. And oh my gosh, to have a color TV at that time was incredible. It was like, "Yo, this is real reality." Well, that's what it's like when we begin to connect with our own indigeneity, is that the whole world becomes a colorful, wonderful, vivid living experience.

Brian McLaren: Let me just say, I am so grateful to you both. I love you so much and I'm grateful for your work. If there were two books I could recommend to people, one would be Journey to Eloheh and the other would be Becoming Rooted. It's a short book with a hundred short readings that are about helping us become re-indigenized and enter into relationship with the earth and one another and our plant and animal relatives. That is the only way forward for us through the trouble we're in. So, thank you both.

Randy Woodley: Let's keep doing what we're doing, eh?

Brian McLaren: That's right. Yeah, exactly right. Thank you so much.

Randy Woodley: All right, Brian. We love you too.

Edith Woodley: Thank you. Bye.

Brian McLaren: We hope that this season of Learning How to See will inspire you to vote wisely,

to walk upon this earth gently, and to speak up with grace and clarity whenever you can about our need for a new way of seeing this sacred earth. We hope you'll become part of the growing movement to forge this new relationship among our species with a larger web of life and as part of our living planet. I believe this is holy work, and it's what Jesus meant when he spoke of the Kingdom of God. I think you can see why I want to introduce everyone I can to Edith and Randy Woodley and why I am so enthusiastic about all their books and work, but especially their new book, *Journey to Eloheh*. I hope you'll pick it up and read it. I'm quite certain you'll be glad that you did.

You may be interested to know that Randy is a frequent contributor to the CAC's new course called *Essentials of Engaged Contemplation*. Stay tuned. You'll be hearing more about that soon. If you'd like to learn more about why I care so deeply about helping us live into a new human-earth relationship, I hope you'll check out my new book, *Life After Doom*, and also my book, *The Galapagos Islands: A Spiritual Journey*. Sincere thanks to our guests, Edith and Randy Woodley. You'll find links to more about them in the show notes. As always, sincere thanks to Corey Wayne and Dorothy Abrams who produce *Learning How to See*. Thanks to April Stace for her musical support and to Sound on Studios for their support with post-production. Thanks as always to the Center for Action and Contemplation for making *Learning How to See* possible. And thanks to you for your interest and investment of time.

And we hope you'll share *Learning How to See* with others if you find it meaningful. As a parting moment of contemplation, I'd like to offer a slow reading of the 10 indigenous values that Randy and Edith write about. As I read them, you can hold them, welcome them, allow your desires to appreciate and attach to these values. Harmony, seek harmony that comes from balance. Respect, honor the sacred everywhere. Accountability, be accountable to our relationships. History, move forward by looking back and learning from the past. Humor, laugh at ourselves. Don't take ourselves too seriously. Authenticity, speak from your heart. Equality, listen to everyone. Community, widen the circle of friends and family. Balance, work hard and rest well. Generosity, share what you have been given.