

Share the dream

Kenneth Lechleitner Pangarte

I appreciate this opportunity to speak and share a little bit of story. I share this story firstly with the prisoners. With the prisoners, our men in prison, we've been quite successful in unlocking the men in regards to asking them the question 'Who are you?', 'Where is your country?', and 'Where's your cultural responsibility?'

Now this is where the culture and the country are all intertwined in the way that it makes the person.

When we do that exercise in regards to 'Tell us who you are', 'What is your language', 'Where's your country?', and 'What's your responsibility for which Dreaming?', we are making them consciously dream about 'What are the responsibilities that you have abandoned?' The way that we design the courses are that we don't want to talk to the average Jo Blow. I want to talk to the man that has the responsibility *in language* as the the owner of the story, and the *in language* of the story. This means that we play that role in regards to being the owner, but also being in relationship to your *in language* that actually *in languages* you up to do the performance.

They also become your quality control – making sure that you do the right thing because it's their mother's story. That's why they're the workers. So we all have that role of being the boss but also the peasant. It all comes down from, you are born into the country, influenced by whichever supernatural being animal creation either large or small which then encompasses you. It's like the cosmos which allows you to then understand your place.

By us asking the question to the men 'Who are you?', 'What is your language?', 'What is your skin name?', 'What is your story?', we are finding that a lot of men in prison have become disconnected. They don't know who they are. They don't know what their Dreaming is. They don't know what their roles and responsibilities are in regards to this particular songline or story.

We are finding a generation that are not educating themselves culturally and not educating themselves seriously understanding the mainstream world. It's like a slate that's messy really. We go through a lot of unpacking. They don't understand what is the historical context of anything – so when we say our pigmentation is much fairer than others this is because of interaction. Now we can't blame our forefathers for that, for we are just a product of what happened. But what we can do is look at where do we want to go from here. And how do we want to navigate that space? We highlight that we are very very rich in culture but if we don't do anything with it, we are going to lose it.

We are at the crossroads right now in regards to what are we going to do?

For some, we give them a sense of ownership for their particular predicament not to blame the alcohol or the drugs but to understand that drugs and alcohol are a part of other cultures. But these other cultures actually have rules and laws that were given by supernatural beings, like the written document, that gives instruction on what to do. Like in the paintings with documents. It also requires a scholastic type knowledge to unpack the code messages. This is becoming a narrow space too where an Elder would say *in language* 'I've got the story but there is no one that is interested in receiving the knowledge'.

This is where we have a dilemma – knowledge in a traditional setting is only given to you when you have earned your rights to receive your knowledge by doing all the right civics or the right things. Looking after your Elders, others, doing that extra thing. These are the civics that allowed to be brought in and demonstrated that you were a sound citizen and now we are going to give you this knowledge that takes you to this next level. If you didn't do anything like and you were quite destructive, the Aboriginal culture works like a pendulum – it swings one where it is actually really caring and swings the other way where it is quite brutal, e.g., you are not given knowledge as to where get water, how to access certain things. That in itself requires discipline to understand that.

People found that getting into the mainstream way of living everything is accessible easily. There is no one that you have to be accountable for. It's provided. There is no one that you have to demonstrate like a master and apprentice relationship. It's pretty much open slather. Therefore, we have this confusion in regards to 'How do I participate in this space without offending?' For example – you can go to the library, you can read – learn how to make explosives – you can knock yourself out doing that. There are no restrictions. Where in a traditional setting, you've got to earn the knowledge and you are given rights on how to live and how to experience intimacy and all of that as part of the gifts in living and being part of society. The ultimate gift was being able to have a relationship with the opposite sex. That in a simple nutshell allowed for people to experience that because that was sacred. It was one of the sacred things that allowed for people to be controlled and managed.

Where in today's setting, unfortunately with the technology – while it is all good, we as Aboriginal people have come in through the side with technology. If you look at 1984 is when we had the last lot of desert people walk out from the area that Craig was talking about, the Pintupi Nine walked into civilisation, and then 1986 when the Challenger exploded with the first female teacher onboard. That is a short span when it comes to looking at life. It's only 30 years ago. That's not long at all but as a group of people in this region we were then catapulted into a technological world to go to a hole in the wall, punch in numbers to get money out without any real explanation of how all this came to be. This is where the intricate teaching of knowledge for the right use is not

taking place. In this mix, I can really see Kumanjayi Spencer saw that the red snake has become so dominant in the space simply because we are not sharing knowledge.

There is another painting which you will see at the Alice Springs airport, which was done by another old *in language*, which is Clifford Possum – about two brothers who went hunting and didn't share. They got a kangaroo but didn't bring it back. Their father suspected that they were consuming this kangaroo so he started a whirly wind, lit a fire and the fire engulfed them as part of punishment for not sharing. Because for the survival of the collective we have to share. We have to share not only food, we have to share knowledge.

This is where when we apply it to the modern situation we have to share the right kind of knowledge for us to survive in going forward. Otherwise we are going to lose ourselves in this mix. In saying that, Clifford Possums *in language* Fire dreaming says, that we have to share for survival. It's much like a parable – it sets the precedent in what's going to happen if we don't. Creating mayhem is simple because they haven't been introduced to protocol. They haven't been taught the cultural or modern civics. The closest thing we can articulate to this is football. It's a great game when we all follow the rules. We understand them and the game is fantastic. If you mess up (start lifting the elbow), and we can have games like that if you want, but is it a safe game?

How do we understand little rules or laws that translate into how we live in this modern society. There are a lot of things that we touch on. How harsh was the colonisation process. Some don't have a clue. Wow – I've never really heard this. We need to be truthful in our story telling process about relationships in going forward because that gives us a better foundation to go on.

This opportunity I had sharing with kids today talking about NAIDOC – what does NAIDOC represent today? It's about us having the opportunity to dream about what our future looks like together. An elder said 'Any little children that are born in this town are *in language*'. This statement wasn't made lightly, it was made with real intent to say 'get your head around this because it is about all of us together, in this place and space for us to go forward – we've got to own it'. How country, culture, supernatural beings influence conception and birth. Therefore it's inclusive of all other human beings in this area so it doesn't exclude anyone. We have a unique responsibility to share the right knowledge and share the dream. What do you want it to look like going forward.