



## **Returning To Spirit**

### **Residential School Healing and Reconciliation - Non-Aboriginal Workshop Star of the North Retreat Centre, St. Albert, AB – January 20 to 23, 2017**

**13 Participants from:** St. Albert, AB, Edmonton, AB, Leduc, AB, Saskatoon, SK, Vancouver, BC and Strathmore, AB

**3 Trainers from:** Nanaimo BC, Lorette, MB and Winnipeg, MB

**Coach from:** Hollow Water, MB

**Host Community:** Star of the North Retreat Centre

**Host Coordinator:** Lucie Leduc

**Workshop Coordinator:** Gigi Jakobs

**Participants were asked to evaluate their experience of this RTS Workshop by answering the following question:**

**How has this workshop made a difference in your life?**

First of all, I am very grateful for the time, pace, and space created for me to engage in deep facilitated reflection on my life. This intentional space was so necessary at this moment in time and I would say life-saving. My mental and emotional health were very quickly spiralling down a whirlpool. The safety of the space enabled me to present myself authentically, uncover hurt, and address fundamental challenges. The life skills offered and modeled for dealing with pain, interpersonal challenge, and uncertainty have already enabled me to reconceptualise myself, my relationships, and my environment. The completions have already proved to be tools of liberation and have altered negative micro-dynamics. The process of reflection that was started and supported will certainly catalyze some major shifts in my life – personal and professional. Thank you!

***Anonymous Vancouver, BC***

This workshop came at an incredibly relevant time in my life, when a lot of stressors were provoking a negative self-understanding and understanding of my life and others. Returning to Spirit gave me the space and tools to understand my own reactions and copying mechanisms, and how they were contributing to my life negatively. RTS gave me the opportunity to unburden myself of many unfulfilled events, experiences, and relationships, and to create space and opportunity to move forward more authentically. Arriving at the workshop on Friday vs. leaving on Monday, I feel more prepared and confident in bringing more trust, love, confidence and joy into my self, my life, and others.

***Christina Kruszewski Edmonton, AB***

The past four days have given me great insight into the ways that I deal with triggers and how I can approach conflict/criticism in a much more positive and mature way. I always thought that forgiveness was a 2-sided process requiring negotiation and reconciliation. It is eye-opening to see that I am able to forgive others in my own time and space. I really see the damage to myself and to others from my

controlling behaviour. I hope to put into practice many of the empowering practices that we learned in this workshop. Working with and getting to know the other participants was a great gift. Gigi and Jacques were excellent trainers. Dianne showed good insight and helped me several times in small group activities.

***Nora Parker Edmonton, AB***

RTS has given me further tools towards recognizing my own pain and reaching out of it to seek healing. A renewed focus on what triggers are prompted and when gives me the choice and power to become more healthy. For the first time in my life the statement “your weakness is your greatest strength” is not a mere accolade but a truth at the core of who I am. The greatest gift of the workshop was the renewed possibilities at becoming more present to the pain and healing of others by using my own pain and healing as a step towards reconciliation This is very liberating!

***Myron Rogal Saskatoon, SK***

This workshop came at the right time in my life. After a major “shipwreck” and time of truly grieving accumulated losses, I have tools with which to let go of the past and embrace the future full of possibility.

***Susan Barylo Edmonton, AB***

Tragic things happen in everyone’s life, but we do not need to let it make victims of us. We can choose to become healed and live a more positive way. The facilitators were excellent listeners and guides on this journey.

***Blake Sittler Saskatoon, SK***

I have clarified, underlined and committed myself to a new path for my life that was already beginning to form in the forest. I have learned to identify and let go of the interpretations/stories I formed about negative events in my past. They no longer need to define my future, and I can choose to react in different ways than I have previously. The future is my oyster and it is up to me to crack open the oyster and rejoice in the pearl that I find within.

***Anonymous Edmonton, AB***

It gave me more insight and reinforcement to things about me and where I need to go.

***Anonymous***

Returning to Spirit has grounded me in self-awareness, self-responsibility and creative responsibility with others. It has improved my relationships with family, friends and co-workers. The experience of living the work is liberating and empowering. I am grateful for the gift of RTS and the possibilities it opens up for creating a future with Aboriginal partners.

***Lucie Leduc St. Albert, AB***