

## Lakota Language - Jesse Taken Alive - OSEU 3

So to see that rebirth...to feel that rebirth...to understand the spiritual connections with our language...and to see it was outlawed...and it was...attempts to banish it about a hundred years ago through governmental processes...to really appreciate the sacrifices our elders made. They said, "We're going to continue on." Whether you call it "going underground" or however you want to call it, we're going to continue to share that and the language is here. There was a time...and here and there...we still hear, "The language is gone. It's going to be lost." And I understand that. I understand the reality of that. On the other hand, to hear all of the young people...a lot of little children beginning to speak and relearn our language. It's an awesome time to be a Lakota as they say. It's really exciting. I always tell my colleagues in the tribal government that we should probably draft a lot of our policies...everything in writing that we deal with...in our language. Understanding that our language, back in the day, wasn't written. For the purposes of advancement and growth as a society, we see the need to write it. We've developed a way...along with some linguists...to write it in a different fashion where non-speakers...once they read the way it is written...when they read the sentences or say a word...the way it is written makes it sound like they've been speakers for a long time.

And we're happy and we just want to make certain that we continue to see it grow. There is a difference between speaking our language...as a fluent speaker...and being able to actually teach it. We feel humbled that we are on a track of a teaching way that's being proven effective through the mouths and minds of our children. It's truly exciting. It's a spiritual language of course. To see that connection...as spirits...to see the number of relatives being given their Lakota names and what that means for them...is awesome. And to see that growth is really really awesome.