

The Gifts of Language and Heritage - Kevin Locke - OSEU #3

You know one of which of course is this Lakota language revitalization. That takes a lot of resiliency too. A lot of times people feel linguistically challenged. For instance, if you speak two languages it's bilingual, but if you speak three what is that called? How about more than three? How about one? That's American, right? We have that fossilized in our mind that we can only use one language. But the rest of the world isn't like that. The rest of the world is very adaptable and can use many languages with facility. I like Lakota because I can use it. It's great.

I'm a second language learner. I'm not a native speaker of Lakota. I always thought I was all alone. And I think I was for many years. But now I can see that there is this movement. And to me, I'm relatively detached from whether Lakota language becomes fully revitalized. I think it would be nice. But, the exciting thing to me is that it represents a shift in consciousness. It represents...like coming into wakefulness...people realizing there is something beautiful in the heritage. People realizing that we have something wonderful and essential to contribute to an emerging global civilization. And that some of that is connected to our ancestral heritage. In a way, that's linked to language. Although we do know, you and I know, the human spirit transcends language and culture and gender and geography...everything you see.

And yet we know there is something there that is a priceless heritage that we can bring with us now and contribute in this world in which all people are bringing their gifts.