

Cultivating Imagination: Leading Towards a Just Future Transcript for Episode 8

From Ancestral Strength to Modern Resilience: How Imagination Supports Equity with Sandeep Kaur Glover and Heidi Wood

Stephen Hurley:

So today on the podcast, we are happy to welcome back Gillian Judson and Meaghan Dougherty and a couple of very special guests. And because it's now her job, I'm going to turn it over to Meaghan Dougherty to introduce those guests.

Meaghan Dougherty:

We are thrilled to have two amazing scholars joining us today. We have Sandeep Kaur Glover and Heidi Wood joining us to have a conversation about imagination and social justice. So Sandeep Kaur Glover notes that her earliest recollections of learning took place in a garden alongside her Babaji, who indelibly shaped her reverence for the land by encouraging her to connect with all its vitality through her own sensing souls and fingertips. Now, as a doctoral candidate in arts education at Simon Fraser University, Sandeep returns to these ancestral teachings that foreground bodily knowledge through embodied ways of inquiring. Sandeep's transdisciplinary research interweaves art based approach, decolonizing perspectives, Sikh Punjabi onto epistemologies and trauma informed literature to reimagine pedagogical pathways for healing, wholeness and social justice activism in education research, and community based engagement. Sandeep has been enriched by pedagogical experience in various contexts, including international education, the pre-K twelve school system, and the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University. We're so excited to have Sandeep joining us today.

We also have Heidi Wood joining. Heidi is an Indigenous education curriculum coordinator on the traditional territories of the Tsawwassen Maseteo and X'Muzk'l'Um (Musqueam) Indian Band. She honors the deep connection to place on these territories and of all people who have been caregivers living in relationship with this place since time immemorial as a way to show honor and respect for the teachings of the ancestors. She continues learning and walks forward in a good way. In recognizing her own privilege as an educator and learner with mixed First Nations and European ancestry, Heidi's used the foundations of imaginative ed and imagination focused pedagogies to bring a deeper understanding of connecting place and Indigenous perspectives to BC curriculum. We're so thrilled to have both Heidi and Sandeep joining us today. Welcome.

Heidi Wood:

Thank you.

Stephen Hurley:

I wanted to begin our conversation and perhaps, Sandeep, we could begin with you just telling us about your current context and especially as it relates to leadership and the type of priorities that you maybe wake up every day with or put your head on the pillow with. What are you doing now? And how does leadership figure into all of that? Sandeep, welcome.

Sandeep Glover:

Thank you so much for having me. Stephen, Gillian, Meaghan, and so lovely to meet you, Heidi. So in terms of my leadership, I was reflecting on the word leadership itself and in my journey and how I got to this place. And I realized that I am following in my ancestors footsteps and they were fierce leaders. And the reason I am here, I realized, is because of social justice and imagination. So my ancestors were among the first wave of Punjabi Sikh migrants to arrive on Coast Salish lands in the early 1900s. And they embarked on a treacherous multi-month— I think it was a three month long voyage— to lands unknown, to arrive on Coast Salish lands. How do you do that? How do you leave everything that you know to embark on an unknown voyage that is very dangerous. But what brought them was that seed of imagination for a better life, for their kin, for equitable opportunities. And that was so resolutely, deeply rooted in their bones. That's why I'm here and I want to honor my ancestors. And even in considering myself a leader, it's a bit difficult for me. For some reason, I realize there's some tension there because our family has been here now for five generations and very few of us have been considered leaders due to systemic barriers. And so there's a tension there. But at the same time, I know that my late father, whose life was robbed by these systems, must be smiling from ear to ear, or as I picture it, from edge to edge of his handlebar mustache, because our family is at the table. So I just want to thank you. Thank you for the opportunity to have that seat at the table. So, in terms of my role as a leader, I will say leader. My area of leadership is in knowledge creation and translation. As a doctoral candidate in the arts education program at Simon Fraser University, as Meaghan mentioned, I'm investigating embodied pathways to support wholeness, healing and social justice activism. And my research draws from many disciplines, arts based, decolonizing, Punjabi Sikh and trauma-informed perspectives. And central to my work is the role of the body in knowing, being, reclaiming and reimagining. I first learned about embodied ways of knowing and being in my master's program in contemplative inquiry through Dr. Celeste Nazeli Snowber's concept of the body as a place of wisdom and integrative site of knowing that connects us with our hearts, minds, bodies and spirits. And what's really beautiful and what's emerged through my research is my reconnection to ancestral knowledge and Punjabi Sikh wisdom in decolonizing and feminist approaches. In my research and my research journey, it's been so transformative and healing. But what's been most rewarding and remains a priority is the ongoing creation and translation and its iterations on the ground within the community. So it's really amazing to witness participants awaken and become curious about the messaging of their own bodies and the stories stored in their cells, often for the first time. Because the body continues to be absent and sidelined in research and education.

Stephen Hurley:

I just feel I'd need to leave some space there. Thank you for the depth that you've brought to not only the question, but your response to it. Heidi, I wanted to move to you with the same question about your current context and how you see your leadership in that context.

Heidi Wood:

Yeah, thank you. I'm really happy to be here. And Sandeep, I need a moment to process. I'm sitting there nodding, realizing no one can see me going, oh yeah, I understand where that's

coming from. My work currently as a teacher, I consider myself a teacher 100%. It's my passion. I work with the students. I am in a leadership role as a curriculum coordinator with the school district that I'm with. And what that means is I work with the culture, the curriculum and success for students with Indigenous ancestry. So part of that process is looking at the different types of cultural opportunities that we provide with students as the teacher, bringing them into the schools, bringing them into the classroom, but also outside with the families, and really thinking about what options we are able to provide for success and equity with our students. The biggest part of that role for me is really making sure that the students are connecting back with their own teachings. Here in the lower Mainland, we have many nations that make up the dynamic population within our school districts, so we can't teach one specific teaching with our students. We need to be able to provide multiple opportunities. And so my role is to be able to bring those opportunities together and make sure the students and the families are getting what they need to be successful. That's sort of the student end of it. And then there's the educator end of it, where I have to go in and work alongside teachers and educators in the school system to ensure that that equity and inclusion is happening for the students with ancestry, but also helping them to develop a bigger understanding around Indigenous ways of being and the pedagogy within the curriculum. For me, that has multiple layers and it provides many different challenges, but also a lot of really wonderful opportunities. So the priority that we sort of focus and set on is making sure that there's possibilities and allowing these students to really direct what they need to be successful. It's not me telling them what it takes to be successful, but them telling me what they need so that I can put that together and ensuring that there's some change in the context around how students are viewed within the school system to ensure those successes are happening. There's a lot happening right now within our curriculum and within the Ministry of Education around Indigenous pedagogies and embedding Indigenous ways of being within the curriculum and new Indigenous focused grad requirements. And how do we change that so that these amazing students have the same opportunities and abilities as everyone else? So that's kind of where I head in terms of the leadership.

Stephen Hurley:

Well, you've both given us some very rich, I guess, threads to draw on for this conversation before we get into the application and how you use imagination in the work that you do. And I know it's very much part of that. I wondered if we could pause and talk about what you mean when you use the word imagination. Heidi, I'm wondering if we could start with you to sort of unpack how you talk to yourself about imagination or maybe even how you talk to other people about imagination.

Heidi Wood:

I really learned about imagination when I was doing some master's work and I did my master's in imaginative ed, and it really resonated with me. Everything that Kieran Egan was talking about, everything that we had learned, it just felt right because there were so many direct connections to indigenous ways of being. And I was raised in Haida Gwaii. My ancestry is from back east, and I'm not connected to my nation. And so for me, having the culture of this incredible heart culture of the Haida and know protocols that were followed and then to learn about imagination and imaginative education, everything really connected. It just felt so right on

so many levels. And what I ended up taking away from that was understanding that for me, imagination really is about a story of possibility. It's about the relationships that we create that allow us to feel safe, included, without judgment. And we hear it's being creative and it's about having curiosity, but for me, it was really about providing possibility and not feeling that you didn't have options. So for me, imagination meant about connecting what you are deep down to all the possibilities that are around you and being able to live in that relationship.

Stephen Hurley:

When you say it's a story of possibility, are you talking about the story that you tell yourself or the story that you tell other people, or is it a little of both?

Heidi Wood:

It's a little bit of both. You know, when, when working with the families and the students and in grad programs, we— you can't just be a solo act. You have to talk about who you are and what your belief systems are. You need to be able to bring that to the surface, to be able to engage. And I think being able to share that story of yourself with others allows others to become engaged and understand where you're coming from, but also make those same connections and maybe find some of those deeper feelings that go with the idea of imagination.

Stephen Hurley:

Sandeep, I wanted to ask you the same question. You may want to pick up on a couple of the things that Heidi has said, but when you explain imagination or try to talk to others about imagination, what are some of the words that you hear yourself using?

Sandeep Glover:

I find it challenging to describe. But it's interesting because as I was listening to Heidi and I can't see her because we're on a podcast, I can only hear her. But the warmth in her voice and the way she was speaking about supporting students and supporting them and connecting with community and connecting back to their teachings, I was transported. I couldn't help but imagine what this looked like. So I think for me, imagination, I connect to imagination through my senses. And I thank you, Heidi, as well, for the work that you're doing. My heart is full. I think part of the reason it's so hard for me to describe what imagination is is because I think there's a mystery to it. When I'm dancing and all of a sudden images are coming up and I'm listening with and through my gut and my heart. And as Heidi said, there's a feeling to it. When something feels right and it clicks, and that's hard to explain. It's a visceral experience. And one thing I've noticed, though, it's not as though I'm reaching for anything. When I'm imagining, it's almost as though my senses, I'm open. So I'm primed for what is to come. So in many ways, imagination happens to me, if that makes sense. But in another way, I think imagination, it's beautiful, but it also can be dangerous. And I was reflecting on this when I was reading Ruha Benjamin's book *Viral Justice* and *Imagination: A Manifesto*, where she talks about how imagination empowers us to challenge systems of oppression and to imagine new worlds. But at the same time, imagination has created systems like racism. So I question sometimes, where are we imagining from and the way I've conceived it. And looking at the word imagination, I notice that when it's a capital I, I get uncomfortable. And this is just a personal experience where I was looking at it

and I was thinking, okay, what is the difference between imagination with a capital I versus a lowercase I? And within my intergenerational experience, where our imagination has sometimes been subsumed by the capital I of imagination. And what I mean by that is the capital I that stands taller, that has elevated stature, and has a perch vantage point in looking at the smaller characters, the eye that continues to replicate imperialistic and colonial legacies of othering through false narratives of separateness and self worth. And although the imagination with the lowercase i sounds the same, I don't think it is. The lowercase i, for me, has been informed by ancestral wisdom and Sikh philosophy, where the lowercase i is embedded and it acknowledges our interconnectedness. The lowercase i realizes that it's much larger than itself and it exists because of the other. So when I connect with the lowercase i, it's through my imagination, where I dance between the infinite inner and outer, and I know I'm not alone. So, for me, imagination is the visceral knowing that the soles of my feet are rooted in ancestral love. And when I'm inevitably gutted by grinding systems, imagination allows me to decompress into blue sky possibilities that are stored in my cells. And that's how I would describe it.

Stephen Hurley:

When you talk about dancing, you're not using a metaphor. You actually dance.

Sandeep Glover:

Yes, that's a great question. I am dancing.

Stephen Hurley:

So you have me thinking. And Meaghan, when she presented your bio, used a term that I got very excited about, and that is onto-epistemology. And I'm wondering whether, in fact, you're pointing to the problem that occurs when we separate ontology and epistemology.

Sandeep Glover:

Yes, in the zone, you're on point. And I love that you mentioned this, because in Sikhi, and I say Sikhi because Sikhism is a colonial rendering, and I won't get into that, but Sikhi is a decolonizing reclaiming of our cultural knowledge. And within Sikhi ontology and epistemology cannot be separated. So a knowing of oneness versus— again, aesthetics cannot be separated. So you feel, as Heidi was saying, it feels so right. That feeling is the ontology of connection. And it's through that feeling and the strength of that connection that actions and ethical actions flow out of that. So relationality is a flow, and I'm going to metaphorically say a dance, a dance between inner and outer, because it cannot be separated. And that's part of the reason sometimes within conventional research, it's hard to talk about that because of how it's so interconnected, even within, when we're talking about ways of knowing and being and walking in the world.

Stephen Hurley:

I know that Gillian and Meaghan are wanting to get in on this, but I'm going to hold them off for just a bit longer if I could. And at the beginning, you both talked about some of the challenges, but also the opportunities that you meet in your work and in your work as leaders, informal or otherwise. I'm wondering if we could bring this conversation about imagination to some of those

challenges and opportunities, maybe using an example or two of how you as a leader employ imagination or put imagination to work for you in thinking about and addressing some of those challenges and opportunities you find in your own learning communities. Heidi, could we begin with you on that?

Heidi Wood:

Yeah, absolutely. I think for myself, I don't want to always focus on those challenges. And so I always try to find the successes, those positive pieces first, because that's what I want to grow from, specifically thinking about what it is that is working and where are we able to grow from that, and how are we able to take that learning and allow others to step into a place that might be really uncomfortable? When we're talking about Indigenous education and thinking about students with Indigenous ancestry, there's a lot of bias, there's a lot of prejudice that comes with working in that community. And I always want to be able to find that positive piece to jump from first and then kind of shift things about a little bit more subtly so that it's a bit more comfortable and starting where people are at, as opposed to sort of like really acknowledging this isn't working but what is working. So that being said, there are those challenges. So really thinking about the engagement, sometimes the engagement is that positive piece where we get full engagement and people are excited. Oftentimes for educators, that's the performing piece, where we're asked to come in and maybe perform. And I'm saying this with quotations, air quotes, something cultural, but not specific about what it is that they need to learn or want to learn, or what it is that is driving them to invite us to come in and do some of that work. So there's that level of performing that always happens. And sometimes we choose to. I'm saying this carefully, sometimes we choose to really amp that up a little bit and do exactly what they're asking because then we can break it down for them after. So an example of this is trying to provide professional development workshops and coming in full regalia to give the welcomes and setting the protocols and really following what that looks like with a speaker and a witness to the learning and having different cultural events and hands on experiential pieces and what that might look like, and then actually stopping them and say, now, what is it that caught your attention? And of course, it's always about, oh, wow, I love the costume. And we're like, it's not a costume. And talking about what is it about the regalia? What is it that you noticed? And they want the visual effects as opposed to the learning. So then you have to break it down and bring in some of those teachings about why we've done that and what it is that they learned and then take it away from a different place but still offer what they asked for at the same time. So that can be really difficult. It's a balancing act, for sure. And then thinking about with students, trying to create those narratives for success for them, about whether it be through a leadership activity or providing them with opportunities to visit post secondary and showing them what they are capable of. And most recently, our district purchased a journey canoe. And this beautiful wave warrior takes our students out and really changes their learning from being in the classroom where there is bias and prejudice and where they're struggling to find a place for their voice in the school system, we take them out onto the water and it's out on the water that they find their independence and they really are able to demonstrate what it is that they feel in their possibilities. So that's been a big part of us having to explain that. There's a quote that we use talking about learning and teaching. It has to occur at the speed of trust with many people. And sometimes that takes a long time and sometimes it requires a budget. Our school districts, you

know, it's hard. The budget isn't always there and money needs to be put at these things so that's a big challenge for us is trying to explain that it does take time to do these pieces and that there needs to be money put at them so that they can be done right.

Stephen Hurley:

So you can't imagine a budget into existence. It actually has to be—

Heidi Wood:

Exactly.

Stephen Hurley:

I love what you said about highly constructing an experience in order to— you didn't use the word deconstruct, but take it apart. And I think that's something I hadn't thought of before. And I'm wondering, in those two contexts that you spoke to, where do you find imagination being at its highest? Where do you leverage that imagination the most? Is it at the beginning? Is it in the planning? Is it somewhere in between? You're going to say, everywhere. I know.

Heidi Wood:

So when I am doing my planning, I am mindfully putting in the pieces that I know through imagination that I need. I'm constantly engaging those cognitive tools, and it's just a part of how once you've done the work, it becomes a part of your life. Right. But it's actually in the beginning where we need to really evoke those emotions with whoever it is that we're working with and that change of context. Those are the two pieces that we work with on a regular basis when we're talking with teachers, when we're talking with students, when we're talking with families. So the very first thing is, what can we do to engage that emotion so that they are connected to what we are doing and that they're feeling it in their heart? And then the second thing is, how do we take them out of that place of discomfort and put them in a place that they can learn and share voice?

Stephen Hurley:

So you've tweaked something in Gillian's imagination. She wanted to jump in here.

Gillian Judson:

Hi, Heidi. And Sandeep. It's fantastic to be here listening, madly writing my notes here. I have a quick question, or maybe not so quick question for you, Heidi. And then, of course, I'd love to hear your answer, Sandeep, to the same question that Stephen asked. But in this case, I'm really listening to that capital I imagination and the small i imagination that you spoke of, Sandeep. And I'm thinking that when you talk about the tension between the expectations of what your Indigenous introduction or welcome will look like is very much an expectation rooted in this sort of colonial imagination. And your role, as far as I understand it, is to really move from the capital I to the small i imaginations of all the Indigenous children that you work with and try to introduce educators to that much broader sense of how people envision the world that have Indigenous ancestry. So please correct me if I'm wrong there in that interpretation, because my

next question relates to it. My only question, my question is, how important is it that you're outdoors to do some of the work you do and to engage imagination in the ways you do?

Heidi Wood:

So, first of all, you're absolutely right about the I. It really is moving from the capital to the smaller i. And some might say that's decolonizing the curriculum or it's decolonizing the work that's being done. And we know that that's not really actually possible within a colonial framework, a system of school and being in a classroom. So leading into your next part here, it's absolutely vital we be on the land. It's absolutely vital that we connect to that relationship that we have in living and nonliving so that the teachings are actually a part of what is happening. They're embedded in the soul of the student and the soul of the family, because that's what makes sense and that's what engages, and that's where those emotions come from. That's where we feel most connected. So I absolutely agree with the small i imagination. It needs to be embedded. That's what we embody, and that's what we're trying to do when we do the imaginative through Indigenous perspectives.

Stephen Hurley:

Sandeep, I wondered if we could come back to you on that question that we asked Heidi about how you use imagination to address challenges and opportunities in your learning community.

Sandeep Glover:

Thank you. Thank you so much. I just want to thank Heidi. My heart is full. Thank you for the work that you're doing. And as you were speaking, I was thinking about the paradoxes within our education system, the joy and how you are fostering the strengths and building on the positives. And there is so much joy and possibility. Yet with the capital I, there are constraints and there are limitations. And as you were speaking, I was sort of feeling some tension, because where I'm at in my work and research and looking across generations and my experiences, education in particular, being in the classroom with my students, has been my greatest joys, building community, the greatest joys of my life. However, there's also been the other side of it, and there's a rawness that comes up. And so I find myself speaking from that rawness, and it comes back to the question of where are we imagining from? And I feel that in a broader sense, if we're challenging systems of oppression and reimagining these very systems, we need to know what the problems are in how colonialism and these systems of oppression look, smell, sound, taste, feel, and shapeshift on the ground before we can reimagine. So, in my particular work, in my research and the work that I do in working with faculty and graduate students, I look at how the sensorial—how our senses reveal the structural, and how the truths in our bodies reveal the truths of systems. And that's because, as Celeste Nazeli Snowber says, the body knows what the mind may not. And healing is not something that happens in our heads, but in our bodies, where we can metabolize the pain. I think Resmaa Menakem talks about that. And bell hooks comes to mind, too, that in order to reimagine these systems, we need to confront the pain and want to do something about it. So I'm finding that I'm speaking more from the pain. And part of that is because of the impact it's had on my body. I haven't shared this before, but I struggle with chronic health issues. And for over a decade, I've been trying to understand what's happening with my body. I've been in and out of specialist offices,

and these health issues began around the time I was diagnosed with PTSD, following a soul sucking series of events that happened at my workplace. And since that time, I've been struggling with really debilitating head pain. And specialists thought that I had chronic migraines. But during my research, as I was listening to and from the pain, I sensed that something was wrong, and I trusted my senses. So I pushed specialists to acknowledge the intensity and specificity of my pain. And finally, a few weeks ago, I was diagnosed with a rare, lifelong neurological condition called trigeminal neuralgia. It affects every, I think, five in 100,000 people. And it's very strange that I got this condition in my 30s, when it's almost always diagnosed much later in life. But I also know through the symptoms that I have that my body mirrors external conditions, just like it does for many people. So it does not come to a surprise to me that the largest nerve in my brain is being severely compressed between a vein and an artery, to the point where it's becoming deformed and screams in agony. So I think it's important to speak from these places, because trauma disproportionately causes illness and disease in women and people of color. And I think it's important for us to come together and for there to be spaces for us to acknowledge what's coming up through our bodies, the truths, the stories, not just in textures of pain like I'm speaking here, but also in joy, in the struggle, in the ambiguities and the paradoxes and the full messiness and dimensionality of human experience. So I think if we want to imagine in ways that serve communities, we need to start from the intimacy of ourselves, and in that way, we can name and reclaim and reimagine otherwise.

Stephen Hurley:

Thank you both for those, again, rich responses. Gillian and Meaghan, I wanted to go to you. You have insights, you have questions.

Meaghan Dougherty:

I would love to pick up on some of the pieces that have been talked about so far. Thank you both so much. Thank you for sharing about that recent experience, Sandeep, as well. One thing that's kind of standing out to me in our conversation, maybe compared to some of the other conversations that we've had in other episodes— I really like this idea of the big I and the small i. And I'm noticing a lot of our previous conversations have really focused on, what can we imagine for the future? What will the future look like? And I think that's a big part of Kieran Egan's work and even like the “what if-ing” that Maxine Greene talks about. But I notice in both of your discussions, there's a real richness in terms of the connection to the past. And that brings to mind ideas of kind of what Barad calls like time space mattering, this idea of past, present and future all being kind of entangled together, not linear kind of configurations of time, but past, present and future all connecting and influencing and co-constituting one another. So I'm really curious about kind of the role of imagination and kind of, I guess, writing the history of the future, if that makes sense. How do we bring the history and the richness of the history into imagining a new future? Heidi, can we start with you?

Heidi Wood:

I'm just, I'm thinking of some of the conversations with some of our elders and our matriarchs and, and this reminder of seven generations, and we talk about seven generations back and what do we learn from those seven generations? How do we take those seven generations and

walk forward with that knowledge and with those teachings, and then what can we do now in preparation for seven generations in the future? And I think that's where a lot of our mindfulness comes from, when we're thinking about what is it that we're doing right now? And I kind of lean into that when I'm doing the work about how are we walking carefully now, so that the relationship that we're having here in this moment allows for seven generations in the future to be stronger, not the same, but stronger, and to have more opportunities and to have more possibilities and really thinking about what is it that was taken away from the past that we need to bring back now that we need to reclaim and revitalize so that those seven generations have those same opportunities of strength and success through their culture. And I think about that through making those connections around some of the different work with, like Dr. Brokenleg, with the Circle of Courage, or the Four Pillars of the longhouse. And we use those to help guide us. And each of those were able to make connections directly with different cognitive tools and to some of that work of what if. So that's kind of where I go when I'm thinking about that past—how is the past teaching me to move forward? And what will those seven generations ahead of me look like?

Meaghan Dougherty:

Lovely. Thank you. Sundeep, what's the history of our future?

Sandeep Glover:

I love that question. And, Heidi, thank you so much. The seven generations— in terms of— I'm thinking about past, future, past, present, and future, and the construct of those different— the way we've constructed it as separate, when it's really not in terms of our bodies, we carry our ancestors within us. We carry their love and resilience. It lives in us and their trauma. Resmaa Menakem talks about this, and even epigenetically. Right. We carry their biology. And in terms of present— the history is always with us, and our present is always connected to the future. But this is where I think the body and imagination, you can really experience the porousness between these different dimensions. And through my research, I've been developing a research sensibility called the sensorial snapshot. So when I'm dancing, I'll try to describe this. This will be some good practice for me. When I'm dancing, and I've been dancing since I was a little girl, and there's been great joy in that. But it used to happen when I'd go to school and kind of feel condensed in my body, and I'd come home and unfurl through my dance. And it's always been medicine for me. But now, as I research and become more conscious of what's happening when I'm dancing, I notice sensations in my body, but particularly the paradoxes, the flow, the ease, what's happening in my breath, how I'm feeling in my gut, how the soles of my feet are in contact with the ground. And when I go into that zone, sort of like a flow. There are words and images. I have, like a poster paper next to me. There are words, images, memories that come up, and it's my body's wisdom speaking to me. But I don't think it's just me. I feel like it's my ancestors. I feel like it may be messages from future generations. It's a sacred cellular experience. I can't separate that. And when I'm in those moments, I capture what is arriving. And then I have moments to dance. Literally, as Stephen was asking. Dance with those moments if I choose. Sometimes I don't want to go to those places, but if I choose to, I can continue to go there. And I really think that this practice, these sensibilities where I'm listening to and from my body, I can't say that they are from the past, present, or future. It's a concoction

between all of them. And when I'm creating, I feel as though this is the architecture for future reimaginings, if that makes sense.

Meaghan Dougherty:

It absolutely makes sense, and it's just a beautiful image that you've created. So thank you so much for sharing that. That really got at the heart of what I was wondering. So thank you. I'm going to turn it back to Gillian for another question.

Gillian Judson:

Thanks, Meaghan. Question for you, Sandeep. Going back to where you began, talking about the stories being stored in the body, not everyone is a dancer. Maybe we are all dancers. We could have a whole podcast about that. We are all dancers. We are musical animals. But many people may not feel as comfortable dancing as a way of connecting to the body. So in terms of the folks that will be listening to this podcast, leaders in all realms, all kinds of leaders, different positions, small i leaders, capital I leaders, whatever we want to say about their positions aside, how does one connect to the body and release those stories if one isn't a dancer?

Sandeep Glover:

Such a great question, Gillian. And I don't think it's necessarily dance. I think everyone— Vidya mentioned flow. I think everyone has a practice, or they notice their times, and often it includes movement, whether it's walking or it could be something else, where there's this expansion of time and a sense of flow. And for everybody, it's beautifully different. But in terms of listening to and from the body, I think it's a capacity that we can cultivate within the classroom. For example, when I was teaching in the K to 12 system, what was really amazing, and I used this actually as an intervention because students were coming to the classroom late, and instead of penalizing them, I started creating a couple of minutes at the time at the beginning of class where I said, this is not clock time, this is your time. And I provided them with a contemplative exercise and offering. If they didn't want to listen, they could put in their headphones or do something else, but their time. And I'd lead them through a breathing exercise. And it just started with noticing their breath and noticing what was happening in their bodies. And some of the students started to come up to me and say, this is the only time of my day where I feel settled. And more and more students were showing up on time, and there was no more issue with lateness. And the reason I mention this is when we start to just name the body as a site of wisdom, when we start by noticing our breath, and as Richard Wagamese says so beautifully, it's from our very first breath, we realize that we're in relationship with everything. And I think the breath is sort of an entry point into listening to and from the body and even just naming. When Dr. Celeste Nazeli Snowber said, the body is a site of wisdom, I had never heard that before. And suddenly I went, wait a second. This is how my ancestors would sing together. This is how my bubbaji was in the garden and talking to the tomatoes. Naming it, I think, is a really important starting point and meeting people where they're at. I realize that this is not our conventional way of being due to mind body split, dualism, legacies. So we have to kind of cultivate that and sadly reintroduce something that's one of our greatest resources. But it can start with our breath.

Heidi Wood:

I really so appreciate that. You know, when we're working, I'm thinking of my secondary students— It's so hard sometimes for them to name that part of the body that they want to share their wisdom through. And not everyone is going to dance, but being out in nature and having that moment to have that breath, that is exactly what the students are craving. And that's why we take them out on the water. That is why we change it out of the classroom and the walking practice for sure. When we apply those First People's principles to the walking curriculum, it really does make that incredible difference. And I just so appreciate what you had to say there. Thank you, Sandeep.

Sandeep Glover:

Thank you, Heidi.

Stephen Hurley:

And Heidi, I wanted to turn to you on the theme of this podcast series around social and ecological justice and how we might employ the tools and the perspectives, the dispositions around imagination to that, and I'm going to give you a two part question, although I'm always counseled away from two part questions, but I'm going to do it anyways. What do we mean by social and ecological justice? And the second part of that is, how can imagination be used to move us towards a more ecologically and socially just future?

Heidi Wood:

It's so hard because there's not actually one answer for me. When I think about social and ecological justice, I think about living in relationship with the land, about the cultural teachings that we have that focus on community and place. And when I say place, I'm talking about place with a capital P, much like our capital I and small i. In this case, Place with a capital P embodies history, territory, land, people, language. It's the community of care and that relationship of community of care that we have with the living and the nonliving. And when we think about social and ecological justice, for me it's all about where does that living relationship, where is it centered, where is that balance, and how do we take that and bring it into the work that we do around equity and inclusion? And how can we make that a part of the work that we do naturally, as opposed to having to say, okay, well, this is social justice, or this is ecological justice, or this is something else, but how do we do it as a whole? Because there is no real separation. It needs to be together. It's a one, it's that oneness that we talk about. And I'm grateful for this idea of being able to think about where that relationship actually creates different opportunities for students and for educators. And when we bring in, instead of having to say, this is social justice or this is ecological justice, we talk about living in relationship. Then when we bring in that in and we talk about just relationships, we're able to engage those sort of deeper emotions and connect on a different level. And we talk about everything is connected to everything. And that to me is the social and ecological justice that we work with within the school system is making sure that what we do has impact everywhere. And that the choices that we're making, both within the community or within our own learning cohorts, then those choices, they have

tentacles that reach out. And so we need to be so careful about those choices that we're making. And making sure that that place with the capital P is at the center.

Stephen Hurley:

And, Sandeep, I wanted to give you an opportunity to weigh on that same thing. Social ecological justice and the role of imagination.

Sandeep Glover:

Thank you. Thank you so much, Heidi. There is just so much resonance there. Whole worlds have been opening up as you speak and place with a capital P community relationship, tentacles that reach out, and we need to be careful and caring. And I just want to thank you about that and thank you for that. And I find so many beautiful parallels within Sikh wisdom. And Sikh wisdom is rooted in one phrase, which is Ik Onkar. And Ik Onkar means there is one reality, and there is one essence that connects all of us, and that essence is creatively manifested in our multiverse. And so there was resonance there. But also, I was thinking about— I was taken to a story. So my father dropped out of school in grade nine, and he did not belong. And he experienced a lot of racism. And what became his teacher was the land. And a lot of his good friends were from the Squamish nation. And when I was born and growing up, I spent a lot of time with my dad and his friends from the Squamish nation. And I remember once when I was a little girl, my dad was joining his friend who was fishing, and I said, dad, why do people call your friends Indians? And why are we called Indians? And he smiled and he looked at me, and he said, it's because we're family. There are many similarities between us. And now, as I was listening to you and thinking about Sikhi and how it lives and breathes through my life and how even when I struggle or even when things— there was perpetrators of violence, I always think to myself, that person is still part of me, and it creates a complexity, but there's also a beauty and a truth to it. And I think there's so much violence that happens when we are not connected, not only relationship to the external world, but to our own whole selves internally. And when we're not connecting to our holistic selves, our hearts, minds, bodies, and spirits, I think that's when people are more likely to inflict harm on others. So I think that social and ecological justice is the radical act of waking up to our full selves and to one another and then acting from that place.

Stephen Hurley:

I'm pausing here to see if Gillian or Meaghan wanted to follow up with anything.

Gillian Judson:

I have so many things I'm thinking about. It's just been fabulous. I'm really reminded of when I'm reading— It seems like we're both reading Ruha Benjamin's *Viral Justice* work at this moment. Sandeep, so I appreciate all the ways in which you and Heidi have expressed that, that very personal, that very individual, yet relational and situated nature of what we can do to address the injustices around us. So thank you.

Stephen Hurley:

I wondered in the final reel here, and I'm going to suggest 45-second responses just to make it more difficult for you in the work that you're doing. What is it that gives you hope? This is tough

work. There's a long game and some short games in between. But what gives you hope? What allows you to get up in the morning and look forward to the sunrise with that type of hopeful perspective? Sandeep, let's begin with you.

Sandeep Glover:

Wow. Yes. Yes. What a great question. What gives me hope? Hope. Sometimes I wake up and I'm not hopeful. Sometimes the world feels really dark. But what gives me hope is. And the way I generate hope is through my practice. Every day. I wake up and I dance in the morning, and that's the first thing I do. And through that, I connect through the resiliency of my ancestors, and I feel the expansion viscerally, like through the expansion of my spine. And it's through my body that I generate hope. During the day, when I take a breath and I inhale, I think about Richard Wagamese, and I'm reminded that I am connected, that I am part of what I see externally, and I'm interconnected. And when I breathe, I also think about my inner values aligning with my external actions. So it's with and through my body that allows me to connect with my whole self. And when I do that, that's where hope is generated. But sometimes I'm not hopeful. There are times that are dark. But knowing that I have ways to generate and connect with sources that are bigger than myself gives me hope.

Stephen Hurley:

Heidi, final real question to you. Hope.

Heidi Wood:

Yeah. I find hope in the joy of the students. I know that sounds like such a cliché, but it's absolutely the truth. When you go in and you're working with a bunch of students and you've taken three years to develop these relationships, and you walk in and they're excited for what they might be able to do that day with you, and they're excited to try something new, and the families are reaching out, and they are seeing themselves as part of this learning community that they never thought that they would be a part of. That just gives me such joy to walk in and see those smiles and that excitement and to see it in my own children, to see how the change is happening, where they come home and they say, there was a voice today for Indigenous students in my classroom that gives me joy. It gives me hope.

Stephen Hurley:

Well, Sandeep and Heidi, thank you so much for this conversation. I leave with hope, and I appreciate it. And Gillian and Meaghan, as always, thank you.

Heidi Wood:

Thank you so much.

Sandeep Glover:

Thank you so much.