

Why Story: Connecting The Dots

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residential school, generationally, disconnection, connecting the dots

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Speaker 1

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It doesn't matter out of like, say ten sessions of doing cultural safety education, there will always be that one person who also says, well, I have a friend who's Indigenous and their experience at residential school, they said, was great. And I had that one not too long ago, and I just smiled, because I was only there for a short amount of time. So I was like, I don't really have time to get into this. But I left and it percolates and every time something really makes me percolate and has landed on me. And when I say lands on me, it's like, ugh, something else I have to unpack, to be able to articulate what is wrong with that?

And so on the one hand, I'm not going to discount that Indigenous person's experience. You know, there there are a very small percentage who do say that. It's not about not acknowledging that and it's not about not allowing that to be somebody's truth. What never gets looked at, though, is how many people went to school with that person? And what percentage had good experiences and what percentage had not good experiences? So there's no thinking about, you know, was it 90% of the people had horrible experience, and they were the 1%? You know, the one person who had a good experience? Or was there five, like, let's be, let's give it a lot, there are five people who had good experiences out of 100 people who had horrible experiences. There's no looking at those parts.

And then the other piece is, this person is here, and is a certain age, like maybe say, the age of my father. And so, okay, that person had a good experience. And I'm not discounting that. But let's look at it historically. Did their parents go to residential school? Did their grandparents go to residential school? Because if we start to look at it generationally, because it wasn't just here for one generation. Then yeah, they come home, there's alcoholism. We also know that people who have been perpetrated against can sometimes become the perpetrator, and violence and all these pieces from this disconnection that happened. So that by the time it got to this generation, three generations later, leaving to go to a school, where maybe they didn't experience all of those pieces, is a good experience. But there's still no connecting the dots that, why was that a good experience for that person, what happened to their family and their kin, for the residential school to be a good experience?