The Garrison Institute Presents: The Common Good Podcast Transcript Tiokasin Ghosthorse: Intuition and Our Relationship with Earth (Episode 31)

[Please note: Although the transcript is largely accurate, in some cases it may be incomplete or inaccurate due to inaudible passages or transcription software errors.]

[00:00:00] **Tiokasin Ghosthorse:** Wachekia is acknowledging relationship. 'Cause prayer means that you're asking for something. It's kinda like a lack of something. But when you're acknowledging relationship, you're just, uh, recognizing something that, that, you know, whatever it is that, that's there, it's, it's, uh, quote, unquote, "equal to you."

[00:00:29] And so you're just as bold as, as that tree or just as bold as the air, the wind. And so we understand these energies. So it's acknowledging the relationship. So when we do prayer, it goes along with teachings

[00:00:56] **Jonathan Rose:** Welcome to the Garrison Institute presents The Common Good. I'm [00:01:00] Jonathan F.P. Rose. My guest today is Tiokasin Ghosthorse, a member of the Cheyenne River Lakota Nation, an educator, musician, and the founder of First Voices Radio. His work invites us to question the language and assumption that separates us from the living world.

[00:01:18] Together, we'll explore listening, responsibility, and relationship, and ask whether the common good can truly be common if it leaves the rest of life outside of its circle. And I think the answer is that there's nothing common unless it's everything.

[00:01:51] So Tiokasin, welcome to the show.

[00:01:54] **Tiokasin Ghosthorse:** Well, thank you, Jonathan, for asking me to come here. I feel very privileged and, uh, very [00:02:00] lucky to be here. Thank you.

[00:02:01] **Jonathan Rose:** You're welcome. So one of the things that we, you and I have known each other for some time, but you recently sent me a book that you've been working on. The book's not out yet, Earthmind.

[00:02:12] When is the book coming out?

[00:02:14] **Tiokasin Ghosthorse:** Well, the, the book will be available May of 2027.

[00:02:20] **Jonathan Rose:** Fantastic. So we should do something when it comes out, but I wanna talk about some of the ideas that are in it because they're quite amazing ideas. You wrote this with John Briggs and Robert Toth, two other colleagues, and the subtitle of Earthmind is What Indigenous Holistic Consciousness Teaches About Loving Earth and Living Beyond the Human-Centered Thought.

[00:02:42] So let's begin with this human-centered thought, which has so trapped Western civilization and Western culture and is something that simply was not a major focus of indigenous thought. So tell us just, first of all, you were born into this [00:03:00] life beyond human-centered thought. So I'd love to know your parents and grandparents, what was their worldview as you were growing up?

[00:03:08] What was the, the worldview that surrounded you, the waters of thinking that nurtured you?

[00:03:17] **Tiokasin Ghosthorse:** Wow, this is a good question and a broad question and probably will always be asked since, uh, human time and the longer we live as humans. So I'll begin with this. I think a lot of indigenous peoples, and once we as human beings realize the fact that the center of the universe is everywhere, it's not just one place.

[00:03:40] So, and it's not just one. And there's a sense that it has to be in relational value, which means a lot of concepts and words and ideas do not exist in certain languages. And one is, uh, domination. It doesn't exist. It doesn't have a, a, um, word [00:04:00] or concept because we have to have everything in relational value and intuitive values, intuitive cultures, intuitive languages, you know, intuition, everything comes through.

[00:04:13] And that's our communication device, if I could say it that way, our technology. And, uh, once I understand these from the old folks that I grew up with, uh, back on the reservation, they were using this energy of, um, a metaphor of silence which is intuition very well. They didn't reply or chat as quickly, but they would leave spaces in between.

[00:04:42] And I came to realize that they were also working with energy at the same time, because the language of Lakota is all about energy and the energy of what nature is already saying to us. And, um, when, [00:05:00] when I was growing up, I was very little confused because I had to grow up and learn Western thinking patterns and the concepts of it where things were all backwards for me to understand, uh, even how to say a sentence and diagram it and put it back together and then hook it on to the next concept, which became a very linear thought, which would-- to me would be, um, very, uh, conceptual.

[00:05:30] And I-- it's almost like I had to create something and are-- inherently knew that the thoughts were already available, and they came easier as they do now to me since I'm coming from a place, not going to a place. I, I haven't a destination because we know rather than believe that we are already here. We're not in the future or in the past.

[00:05:55] We could string it along the line of linear thinking, but we're here. [00:06:00] And, uh, once I understood that growing up, I could see the generational dimensions, if you will, to understand that this has always been going on, and I, I would think that it has been going on for everyone. It's just that we have lost our closeness, our, our ability to relate to nature.

[00:06:21] I think we have gone through a place where we have suffered now from a nature deficit disorder, and we're looking for a, a process to heal ourselves, but it's an ongoing healing. It's, you know, thinking we are healed. It's rather we are-- healing thinking is involved always

[00:06:46] **Jonathan Rose:** I wanna go back to this idea the center is everywhere because I think a part of that also is that consciousness is everywhere, that every single [00:07:00] part of being is also consciousness, is also conscious.

[00:07:06] **Tiokasin Ghosthorse:** That's beautiful. That's beautiful. Yes, that is available 'cause it's based on intuition. Now, we want to conceptualize what consciousness is, and so I'm gonna do a little bit of that and maybe take it outside that, that box that renders us to, well, we have to think logically about things. And so I will say that intuition is free.

[00:07:31] You don't have to pay for intuition. But yet, because we are getting away from nature, we cannot see that nature itself is conscious. Why not? If I grew a garden and the garden is actually growing me because it's giving me the intelligence and the consciousness. So what is my body made up of but it-- the conscious elements?

[00:07:52] Now, what we do with that thought is put it into a conscience where we have to measure, we have to, um, [00:08:00] begin and end it, we have to grade it, and we also are putting it into the binary of right and wrong. Is my conscience, you know, based upon morality? But if your consciousness is intact, there is great respect for all life.

[00:08:18] Now, this has to be lived and not practiced. Living reality is different than using reality. You know, where we're living temporal worlds. And there's a difference between that and spatial reality, spatial worlds where it's all inclusive, but not in the sense that it's all one inclusive. It's a relationship.

[00:08:41] So we can understand the temporal, the timing, uh, reality that we are using in order to kinda go through a history. But I also understand that in a sense, short, simple ways that we can, we can love those who [00:09:00] are temporal thinkers. They're using time and, and they're adept at, you know, clocking things. But I also understand we have to unclock our lives.

[00:09:12] And, and then we find ourselves in a place that maybe we're so a little, uh, timid because we don't understand life without a clock. This is how I grew up understanding life without a clock because things happened just the way they did, and I didn't have to force myself. I didn't have to force life upon me or let, allow it to happen in a, in a forceful way.

[00:09:38] You, you, you really didn't have to think about living because you were doing it. You know, how am I gonna make things better? I must have more money. I must do this, make the grade, and be liked by people. I couldn't understand that. But there came a time when in this society I had to understand the different value system that's been set up.[00:10:00]

[00:10:00] And, um, I still, uh, adhere to that intuitive cultural value set that I came with. Um, I think everybody came with it actually, and that we just haven't remembered how to do that. So when we're conscious, Jonathan, I always remember that when I step outside the door here, that the tree already knows I'm there before I notice it.

[00:10:24] We're stepping into consciousness, but also coming from it at the same time. It depends how far we've been and long we've been separated from it

[00:10:36] **Jonathan Rose:** I think this is a really important practice because what we're seeing in Western culture as people are trying to reconnect more with nature, they are doing forest bathing or they're attending to nature more. But that's not a reciprocal relationship and a deeply reciprocal relationship is [00:11:00] recognizing, and by the way, this is just scientific fact too, that every plant, every species, every thing is attending to us too.

[00:11:09] And if you shift your consciousness, so I want you to talk more about this, but the bird songs change when they know that you're there The trees send out chemicals when they know that you're there. The plants feel your footsteps in the gr- Yeah ... I mean, they, they really, really, really know you're there.

[00:11:28] Yeah. And there is this reciprocity which we tend to be mute to. And so what happens when we actually open up and, and participate in this multi-way relationship with nature? What, what does that then bring?

[00:11:46] **Tiokasin Ghosthorse:** Well, I think that's the coolest way to think, uh, to be in the field. I was talking earlier about how the garden grows you, and, um, this is my experience with the older people back home.

[00:11:59] Very [00:12:00] small, one of my earlier memories was when Grandma would take, and with other grandmas, would take their seeds in the early spring and go out, and of course they'd, they'd tend to the gardens. They had four giant gardens, 'cause back then we were more self-sufficient. We didn't have to go to the grocery stores and all that to depend on Sears Roebuck catalog or anything like that.

[00:12:25] We lived in g- log cabins that were off the grid already. So we learned, we know, knew how to live off the grid and store food. But she would take her friends with her, and they would plant. But I always sat there and listened to them and eat. They'd, well, they'd say, "Well, this is a pumpkin seed. This is a certain squash.

[00:12:48] These are beans. This is corn." And they had maybe, from what I remember, maybe 10 to 12 different songs. And e- these songs were in the old language, and [00:13:00] they were addressing the very vibration that that seed was singing. So they learned over time through the history of who we are as Native people here that that certain plant sang this song at this tone or this note, and that's how they would sing to it.

[00:13:20] And then, and of course, the corn would say something else, and they'd make a different sound. And I was very interested in this. And growing up it's like, "Why are you singing to the plants?" You know? And then, as, just as you say, science is the fact that, wow, these plants make sounds. They make vibrations.

[00:13:40] They make songs And this is what it kicked in and I realized this is what the people without technology, they understood this so well that they actually lived with spiritual technology that that was given. That was the highest form of intuition to me that [00:14:00] they learned by living with the plants, with nature.

[00:14:04] And they were so peaceful when they lived with nature. They lived with Earth, you know, peace with Earth, rather than trying to establish peace on Earth, which seemed to be a very stratified way of, of anthropocentricity. Yeah. Like we're the only ones who knew peace, and yet we're, we're cutting off, we're separating ourselves from a very peace that we, we all could attain.

[00:14:31] But it has to be lived and not just talked about. I, I know I have a book coming out. I have to talk about it because that's the information communication this society and modern world is right now. But just think, if we didn't have to write books and we also-- it was common knowledge amongst all of us

[00:14:53] **Jonathan Rose:** So maybe your book will be a way to help make this more common knowledge.

[00:14:58] But you're absolutely right. Our [00:15:00] cultures are-- the cultures carry the seeds of our ways of being. They carry the seeds of our relationships. You know, we're at a, a very vulnerable time now, you know, with, uh, the Western human destruction of biodiversity and of the climate and of each other, the lack of trust, the violence, the materialism, the selfishness.

[00:15:23] In the more traditional native Eastern cultures, there's this prophecy of the Seven Fires, and we have come to the time of the Seventh Fire. And the key to the Seventh Fire, as I understand it, is if the indigenous people have maintained enough of their wisdom, if we have not so destroyed it in their culture, and if we, uh, have reached a point where we, the white and Western culture, have reached a point where our hearts and our ears and minds are open enough to listen, maybe we could put with our advances in [00:16:00] technologies and, uh, indigenous wisdom that could help overcome our blind spots, might we together create a path towards peace.

[00:16:09] And that's why the communication is so important. But the problem is, if you communicate in the mindset in ways that has been the destructive path, then it's not gonna solve the problem. So you have to figure out how to communicate to us in this holistic whole worldview way, but using words and books and the things that we-- that are how we access things.

[00:16:35] **Tiokasin Ghosthorse:** Yeah.

[00:16:36] **Jonathan Rose:** You've spent a big chunk of your life communicating. So what have you found that works the best?

[00:16:44] **Tiokasin Ghosthorse:** I think it's an ongoing struggle. It is meant to be that if we don't struggle, it's like the Earth has a wobble, and that wobble is not perfect. But I think we-- my experience in the Western world that [00:17:00] everything has to be perfect.

[00:17:02] And, uh, it seems to me that's austere thinking and very, um, sterile. And once it gets perfect, if the Earth was just a perfect circle and never wobbled or gave us seasons, then it would be very, very still and different parts of the planet I think we couldn't go to. I don't know.

I'm not a scientist. But there's certain parts of the planet we couldn't go to because we were honed into that, that type of gravity, I would say.

[00:17:33] Birds know this gravity. They use it through magnetism. So, you know, are parts of that learning experience. So we know why do native peoples use a lot of, um, communication, people call it animism, with nature. We never worship nature, ever. That's a Western thought. Ours is to relate to nature because [00:18:00] obviously Earth is more intelligent than humans, and we are proving it so.

[00:18:06] And, uh, so this, uh, the birds such as the eagle, we know the eagle flies high. We know that all birds work through magnetism of the North and South Poles, and that that tells them when to fly So that's an intuitive value. So what we do is use that same magnetism to dance with as feathers upon ourselves.

[00:18:30] And you find this among a lot of Indigenous nations across the planet. And even in modern culture, people like feathers, you know, the turn of the 19th century to the 20th, that happened. You see a lot of people walk around in feathers and feathered hats. I think it was there something ancient in that, that they're reminded that, look, we are in equilibrium stance or we are equilibrium with nature.

[00:18:57] But yet we've got into this [00:19:00] equality thought process that everything has to be equal, everything has to be perfect, and we have equal rights. But we're not understanding the equilibrium that Earth is always showing us, that she also struggles to keep balancing, that things will never be balanced as equal.

[00:19:18] But equilibrium means that we understand that the communication, it's like undulating. It's like a, how do you say when a wave goes up in oscillation? So it's oscillating. And so are we. And the Earth identifies in what they call rock medicine, they call water medicine or healing with our hands. But these are old practices.

[00:19:46] And as far as I know, where they come from and how they are used properly by the old ones that I know that are not shamans and they're not getting paid for it. So this is the big difference is that things [00:20:00] that are free to us should not cost anybody free. I mean, it should be free to everybody else. Yeah.

[00:20:07] **Jonathan Rose:** Ooh, so tell us more about rock medicine.

[00:20:10] **Tiokasin Ghosthorse:** Oh Oh boy. I'm not a shaman or a guru or a spiritual leader or a scientist or any of that, uh, knowledgeable. All I know is I-- what I witnessed and the little information that I was able to gather. The stones that people are using themselves in, in this society, they put on them-- their parts of their body, but it stops there.

[00:20:36] And, um, we know that a lot of the stone medicine comes from, we use it in our lodges, the inipis that people call sweat lodges, but they're not sweat lodges to us. We just don't go there and effuse, diffuse sweat. It's much deeper than that. So you see how surface level this language is. So rock medicine, [00:21:00] stone medicine, the stone people, the stone oyate,

uh, stone nations, there are many of those, and they have placed themselves upon Earth, within Earth, to know what that, that magnetism is about.

[00:21:13] And they actually communicate. It's, it's... How do you say? It's, um, quantum entanglement at its best And when we're into that, we understand Mitákuye Oyás'i and we understand the center of the universe is everywhere better. And, and that has to be stringing along the linear thought process with that, and that's, that's something I'm still learning how to do.

[00:21:35] So when it comes to rock medicine, we know that there are certain elements, metals that work, work on the body, that we need more iron, we need more of this and that, and the magnetism of, of these rocks. And this is an old, thousands and thousands of years old practice, especially in South America, where the rocks and stones are old and new at [00:22:00] the same time.

[00:22:01] Because if you understand it in relationship, Jonathan, it's more about exactly that, relationship with something, not trying to connect ourselves with a rock so that we can, you know, hone into self-service type of transactional, transcendent language or thought. It's actually here. It's this level. It's this consciousness, not a higher consciousness.

[00:22:26] It's the one here that we are working with. And that's dull to a lot of people because it doesn't have that heaven or hell, um, scare within it. It's not binary as such, but it's all these other older oyate, the rocks, ancestors, stones, the water. Everything is an ancestor to us. But yet because in a human form, grandma and grandpa have gone ahead, they died before I did.

[00:22:55] So they've gone ahead into the future, and then I'm following them. So they are in the [00:23:00] future, and this is where we always walk backwards into the future and trusting the future because we know where we've been, and we know who's ahead of us. And so we're going to trust grandma and grandpa. You see how this thinking is, is more extension than just a one way to heaven or one way to hell, you see?

[00:23:20] Uh, yeah.

[00:23:22] **Jonathan Rose:** In Buddhism, there's this idea they call all-pervading consciousness. That it-- so rather than it's in heaven and hell, it's just all pervading throughout everything.

[00:23:33] **Tiokasin Ghosthorse:** Yeah Yes. Uh, uh, that's, that's an old, as you would call it, a wisdom, right? But what if it was common knowledge, so common that we all lived it, and it doesn't have to be practiced or even termed that?

[00:23:51] It's just like, "Wait, this is, this is already a given, you know?" I think this is why sometimes we ... If you run into [00:24:00] Native people, we don't have a word for nature, because it's already given. We are nature. We're not pointing at ... Even when I say, you must have read this in, in what I refer to the difference between the Earth and Earth.

[00:24:15] When we say the Earth, we're tending to distance and objectify, the Earth. When you say just Earth, then it's first person. It's right here. It's available, and you're making it e- the, uh, equilibrium is right here. 'Cause you see her as an example telling us how she has equilibrium, and so we follow that example.

[00:24:40] 'Cause obviously she's been here longer than we have. And so everything is, our lessons are all from nature. And, uh, yeah, even a great-grand, great, great-grandfather of mine has given us a, a great prayer about ... Yeah, I would say it, but, uh, I have to remember it correctly. [00:25:00]

[00:25:00] **Jonathan Rose:** But what's the essence of the prayer?

[00:25:03] **Tiokasin Ghosthorse:** Oh, the, uh, essence is the prayer. Um, it's basically that we don't ... Uh, this is the thing that I know, and other, uh, modern-day Lakota may disagree, and that's okay. They may be know- knowing more. As far as I know, wochekia is not exactly prayer. Wochekia is acknowledging relationship 'Cause prayer being said, you're asking for something.

[00:25:29] It, kinda like a lack of something. But when you're acknowledging a relationship, you're just, uh, recognizing something that, that, you know, whatever it is that, that's there, it's, it's, uh, quote, unquote, "equal to you." And so you're bold with, just as bold as, as that tree, or just as bold as the air, the wind.

[00:25:54] And so we understand these energies, so it's acknowledging the relationship. So when we [00:26:00] do prayer, it goes along with teachings, and teachings are, are different in this society. This society has, uh, prophecies. But you see all these, all these, um, these words that were misinterpreted, not fully understood from the, the languages of, of Native people, have been put to something conveniently termed and defined with losing meaning what they are behind it.

[00:26:30] As you know, Jonathan, how we like to describe water is we don't have the word for water, so what do we say? We say M-N-I. We use the, the alphabet M-N-I, mni. And that simply means, I is like voicing, N-I is living or life, and M part, like when you chant and when you go om. So it's that part. But even that sound means [00:27:00] that which is in relationship with all things, you and me.

[00:27:06] So when I put n- the I, the, and the me, M-N-I, mni, uh, t- voicing the living relationship between you and I and all things. And to you, that's water, or this language, it's water. But we don't have that. It, in the morning when I get up, in English I say, "Good morning," but it's, uh, it almost becomes casual. But each of us experiences the morning different, 'cause according to that, they may be good for some people, and some people not so good.

[00:27:38] But there is definitely something happening. So we say, "Ihañle waštélo." Men say, "Ihañle waštélo," which basically means something beautiful is happening. It doesn't matter whether it's snowing or raining or, you know, there's a storm outside or it's hot, but we wake up and we know that, and we see it because you look at the sunset, and [00:28:00] something i- beautiful is happening.

[00:28:02] Because that, that's nature again. So it's, uh, there's a difference there.

[00:28:11] **Ad Break:** We'll be right back after a few announcements

[00:28:30] **Jonathan Rose:** So clearly the, uh, indigenous languages and the Lakota language have words that speak of a different consciousness, a consciousness that is much less material than, than transactional than Western language and much more relational. And your example of the difference between good morning and, and how you greet the day is beautiful.

[00:28:53] What are some other lang- what other words in the Lakota language that represent [00:29:00] this fullness of relationship that in our noun-verb structures we can't get to?

[00:29:07] **Tiokasin Ghosthorse:** Originally in 1926, a Catholic priest named Father Buchel, he went among the Native peoples in the early 1900s, 'cause then we were not supposed to be speaking our language.

[00:29:22] And, um, when, when we, um, spoke, he knew that, that the idea was the vanishing Indian idea. And so he wanted to capture, in this case, Lakota Dakota language. And so he would be able to, um, go among the people who spoke, and they were, like, in their seventies, eighties then. These people were born in the mid-1800s.

[00:29:50] And so he went and tried to understand it with his little knowledge of English that he could translate much. And [00:30:00] he said, "Well, what does this mean? What does that mean?" And so they would tell him, but it didn't make sense to him, so he made, he made the language put into English bigger, and it lost the meaning of it.

[00:30:11] So when you read, uh, the, the new Lakota dictionary that's out there, there's a lot of lost nuance in it. So it really can't translate directly. It's not objectified or subjectified, so there's a lot of loss going on there. And so this is why I'm saying, no, this is part of because we're not able to... And he added, I think it was 178,000 more words to the Lakota language, you see.

[00:30:42] And I'm thinking that we only had probably 4 to 8,000 words, 'cause they contained the meanings that I described to you as water, as the sunrise. Yeah. So you understand that by just the same word. So there, there are inflections. And what I was [00:31:00] told by an elder of mine who's not here anymore, Virgil Killstraight, who told me about domination, is that we have no word or, or concept for it.

[00:31:09] Well, I've asked him several times, "What does this mean? What does that mean?" 'Cause he spoke that older language. And he would go through and say, "You know, a good way to learn Lakota is, uh, not out of curiosity or that you wanna control energy or anything like that." But he said that if you take the English alphabet, the Greek alphabet, and you go through and there's A, B, C through Z And he said, "You put the word or the sound ah in front of each letter or behind each letter, depending," he said, "That's an energy.

[00:31:47] We're describing an energy." And so you're using this, the language in energetic form to speak about everything has energy. And this is why they [00:32:00] banned our languages,

our culture, because we couldn't understand what God meant. So they said, "Well, this, uh, we can't understand. You guys are devil's people." So we went underground a lot.

[00:32:13] So Father Bouchell, being the, the dogma that he brought in by saying there was a supreme being and all this, and a great spirit, these are all Westernized thought processes. So when, when it comes to things like the interpreting and translating, I can come to one word that means a lot to people. I'd say Wakan.

[00:32:36] You could extend it to Wakan Tanka, which, which some people say it's a great spirit. And yet if you really try to translate it, uh, I can say the wa, wa is purity. Kan is that type of energy. So we say Wakan, and so we're ty- technically saying pure energy, and the society interprets it [00:33:00] as God. But that dogma of higher consciousness and applications of rules and regulations and worship and rites or, uh, rituals come with dogma.

[00:33:14] But ours is working with intuition and the seasons and the wobble of Earth. And so we know there is this intuitive feeling when you're speaking Lakota. My mother, who passed recently as a 90-year-old, years before she passed away, she, she said, "Son, we cannot speak Lakota without intuition." So and that really blew my mind.

[00:33:41] Here I was struggling. So I listened for the intuitive words in English, because it's still there somewhere, but it's just lost meaning, and we learn to define it and make it temporal language and efficient language to get thoughts across when we're [00:34:00] losing the core meaning and nuance of it all.

[00:34:03] **Jonathan Rose:** Hmm. So another word that you have in Earth Mind, I'm probably gonna mispronounce it, is Lakol Wowikana?

[00:34:12] W- W- Lakol Wowi Yukan?

[00:34:16] **Tiokasin Ghosthorse:** Uh, I think you're trying to say Lakol Wichohan. I think that's what it is. It means life ways

[00:34:24] **Jonathan Rose:** You say it kind of falls apart when I try to explain it in English. Consciousness in your heart, but life ways I think is a great one. So talk more about life ways.

[00:34:36] **Tiokasin Ghosthorse:** Yeah. It's the life ways, and it's not a nationalism.

[00:34:42] It's not a race. It's not marginalized to measure up what a human being is. And so if I'm hearing the word right, Lakota Ichoha means, uh, the... I guess in the sense-- See, this is where it's difficult. To [00:35:00] me, it's the magic of how one lives, you know, and that's recognizing the energy. And what does magic really mean?

[00:35:10] Is, uh, the magi, we think of a genie rubbing the lamp and poof, there is instant wish. But we are not magi. We can't be that. But the geese that are flying over at this time of the year, thousands of geese flying south, they're magi. They are making the magic, which really means to use the energy, the tools of the earth correctly, and that's what they're doing.

[00:35:38] They're using the magic of the wind and the magnetism and the sun and the temperature, and they're, and they're seeing this and knowing this. But we as humans, we fool ourselves. We think we can, by technology, we are becoming magicians and giving the illusion that we know. And so [00:36:00] who's really making true magic here?

[00:36:03] So when you come to living with earth, that's the Ichoha. It's a way to live with earth. And yeah, that's where I would, I would describe that. And, and Wakan, again, going back to pure energy, Wakan to me in, in longer meaning would mean, um, to consciously apply mystery to everything

[00:36:31] And that, that's understanding you're in, in a way people understand dogma, God, to consciously apply mystery to everything. So everything is, is full of awe. So you never lose the enthusiasm for life. Even when, when you move on from this body, there is still that energy there. We didn't, we didn't create it.

[00:36:54] We didn't destroy it. It just changed. We-- Our recognition of it changed. So when we [00:37:00] look at Earth in this society, ours-- is our recognition being lost 'cause we don't understand that energy anymore? And I think we all long for that, you know? And we don't have to speak a, a very, uh, codified or academic language terminology to sell our points because it's already there.

[00:37:19] We just need to live with Earth more, be at peace with Earth more. And if, if it's done religiously, that's fine, 'cause I can never see myself as a leader, Jonathan. Uh, I never have. It's always-- I was taught from young that I always walk with people, not in front of them or behind them. Then when I'm called upon to speak, I will.

[00:37:44] And so this is how I work with it. I'm not trying to say, "Well, I'm gonna protect my group from so and so," but it's the idea of protecting Earth 'cause that-- when we protect Earth, that's for everybo- all life, you [00:38:00] see? So I think, uh, the language, the meanings and purpose and the nuance of life is we're getting there again.

[00:38:09] As you say, we're, we're starting to, um, be stirred a little bit. I don't know about wake-awakened yet 'Cause that, that's gonna take a, that will take a shock if people were to really understand where we're gonna be in 200 years or whatever. But yet that's forward thinking is that look at where we're at now.

[00:38:29] Would you believe we are, we are this way? You know, there's just, wow, what happened here? Then you could say, "Wow, what, what is happening?" And wow, what will be happening? But we're doing it from here. We're present. But you need a, a present language to be here and not somewhere other than here. So it's, it's speaking in the terms of you and I are first persons, right?

[00:38:57] And we're gonna speak to each other. Even if it's [00:39:00] through this technology, we are still doing it. Although it su- it suffers as, wow, we can't meet in person, but we, we do it this way 'cause it's convenient. But if we really were serious about this, I would come down there and talk to you straight up, and you'd get a different feeling.

[00:39:18] **Jonathan Rose:** Yes. So we both live in the beautiful, uh, Mid-Hudson Valley. It's really a place of incredible traditions and nature. And, um, and as you, you mentioned the shocks that are coming, there are a lot of shocks that are coming, uh, with the political perhaps crises coming and economic disturbances. But the big one is the climate crisis.

[00:39:44] And, um, it's very interesting because Rebecca Solnit wrote a book called A Paradise Built in Hell, and she observed that when the crises come, sometimes people, their hearts open, and they pull together beautifully. Like this whole other [00:40:00] mind comes, and they all pitch in and, you know, save each other. And sometimes the opposite happens.

[00:40:07] So how do we prepare this beautiful region that we're in? What are the cultural preparations we can make so that we are more resilient and we are more open-hearted and more relational, which to me is, is the, the pathway through the shocks that are coming?

[00:40:26] **Tiokasin Ghosthorse:** This is very important, a very important question.

[00:40:29] Um, it's, uh... I think, again, I think it's part of the, the Western story that we are told to accept. It's meant for us to give up our reality and live in anxiety and feeding frenzied behavior as if there's nothing left, and our privilege is going to crumble, which again enacts the, the taking of Earth for granted, and that we're still taking Earth for granted.

[00:40:56] It's only about humans again, us panicking. [00:41:00] Earth is not panicking. And it, it removes us from the consciousness of our consciousness, but it places, again, into static and equally based binary conscience and derails, uh, equilibrium of what I say natural multiplicity balance. And like, like Earth, we need to understand it.

[00:41:21] So we cannot give in to this Westernized apocalyptic programming where this expectation is to either remain the same or, if I can say this, make America great again, or even maintain a liberal status to control the money on both sides of the systemic bird, 'cause that bird feels losing privilege and its false power-based fear if it were true power.

[00:41:47] And I can only bring this from my individualized growing up materially poor. Information was available, not as far as books and schooling, but nature [00:42:00] was giving me the learning processes to accept all of this and to know that nature is not really panicking. She's not going through a panic stage. She's readjusting.

[00:42:13] Um, how does that go? That, um, she's behaving normally to an abnormal situation And that's what we do-- that's what she's doing. But if you go among the Native people, we can, we can, you know, uh, make that voice amplify that we're, we're in climate change and all this. But we're, we're actually saying like we're going through this already.

[00:42:37] We've seen this happen already. And she changes because if we're uncomfortable, and we're not able to take our vacations anymore, we can't... You know, we're talking weird about the weather and all this, of course, 'cause we haven't adapted. We're always trying to adapt Earth to our privilege. And so [00:43:00] she's gonna s- teach us this lesson that we have

to adapt now, and it's gonna take a lot of so-called trauma for people who are trying to avoid reality of that, where, you know, there may not be the things on the shelves so available.

[00:43:15] You'll have to learn how to make a garden again. And then even then know how to even petition the energy of rain and all this that I know Native people are still doing because they still have the, uh, spiritual technology available to them through song and dance and the culture and the way they live.

[00:43:34] It's not a convenient weekend warrior attitude or go to a retreat to get my fill and to keep going to retreats. It's more about, yes, this is it. We are accepting this, but we're-- we've been so linear and above shoulders about this that we're forgetting that we've been separated. And a lot of people don't feel the mind, body, and spirit are different [00:44:00] because it's all the same, you know.

[00:44:03] And I think there's great differences in thinking, and that's all it is. One is not better than the other. We're only saying from our point of view, this is what this is. It's different. And what's the panic? 'Cause we see her adjusting maybe to what we've done, but maybe she needs to do that from time to time, is, uh, uh, adjust.

[00:44:25] And, uh, that's where I, I come in with trying to understand this panic that's happening. Um, you know, that we could say it's, uh, who's got the best, biggest guns, the best technology, who's got the best bunker, or who's got control of Wall Street. But it's all to me that we've taken Earth for granted, and one must never do that

[00:44:52] **Jonathan Rose:** You said in a way she is adjusting, but it, I, I, I love you said, uh, her [00:45:00] be-behavior is normal because, uh, she is adjusting to an abnormal situation.

[00:45:05] And I guess my question is she's adjusting, but I think we need to adjust also

[00:45:12] **Tiokasin Ghosthorse:** Exact- we need to adapt, even adopt sometimes. But we need to adapt in a hurry, and we could, we could practice that to, to prepare ourselves because we may have to live this way again, which, which in a modern context is, well, I don't wanna be poor or I don't wanna be hungry.

[00:45:33] I don't wanna be on the street. So we, we give panic crisis thinking to that. And, and I grew up without having anything, and I'm very grateful for what was given to me. I still am. Um, and this is how the being in me, the Wichasha in me. The Wichasha is a gift of the stars. We don't have a word for human being, so we say Wichasha.

[00:45:59] [00:46:00] As a male, I say Wichasha. And gift of the stars, meaning that's how we greet each other. When I, I'm gonna be interviewed by Jonathan, I see, oh, I'm gonna be interviewed, talk with another gift of the stars, and then Jonathan, and then the American, and then the whatever else comes after that. But I'm talking basically to the human beingness of Jonathan Yeah, so this, uh, there's more to this that there's, there's other things other than crisis thinking, 'cause that's just saying it loud when we have to pray for our wellbeing and

[00:46:39] But when, when you truly know something intuitively, Jonathan, you often don't need to explain or defend it yourself. It carries this quiet stillness of truth, huh? This is ultimate intuition, which is basically, again, like I said, a metaphor for silence. I'd rather not discuss it and [00:47:00] let the internal noise of this mind settle down and let deep insight work, the deep insight work.

[00:47:09] And we call that Mitakuye Oyasin, you see. And I think that in relationship, we're gonna understand that, and I think that's what Earth has always been telling us. Yes, always telling us this, this, that it's gonna be okay if we trust her again, because then we won't have to put up fences and walls and, you know, boundaries and even guardians of what's right and what's wrong.

[00:47:39] I think there's, there's a lot in there I've said, but, um, this is only my, my thoughts because of my experience. I've heard many stories of struggle, trauma, and I understand it because I've been there also. I'm not saying stop trying. I'm saying keep [00:48:00] trying. The intu- there will be a different way that comes and, and you understand that we are living in this

[00:48:08] This way of living now is a reversible movement disorder And there's no breaks to it. So, uh, we have in our cultures, have you ever heard of un-baptizing ourselves and things like that? They came and forced this on us. And now you see other natives, we actually have un-baptizing ceremony now because we want to take that off because we already have our ways.

[00:48:38] And we were trying to accommodate the younger brother, younger sister, because they thought they knew better for us than, than we did for ourselves. So I think that's what's happening now. And, and we weren't the first to be colonized. We were here before America and before America, right? So I- I'm sad sometimes that the [00:49:00] peoples don't understand their own colonization.

[00:49:03] They invent disorder because maybe they are disordered from the get-go, that somewhere along that line of Greek, Greek pacification of separating the human mind and, and the spirit and saying only the mind scientifically understand, analyze things to death until there's no life, and then the other part becomes boo-boo.

[00:49:27] So we are all indicating that we're indigenous before the introduction of colonization. So, you know, acknowledging land is, is a nice thing to hear, but it's empty talk of land acknowledgments because I don't want to hear that I was here as a native . You know, I'm here, and you happen to be using and occupying this land.

[00:49:53] Maybe we can show you how to live with it, right? And this is, this is the wisest thing, the [00:50:00] most pressing thing where we can look at where the real monstrosity lies. We can't deny that anymore. And as you know me, I've, I've always come this way. I have to say it simply and straight up, and sometimes that is, uh, very non-agreeable with people.

[00:50:18] And, and I don't mind. I don't mind. It needs to be said, it seems like. And your interview is-- 'cause I've listened to the other interviews too. And I said, "I'm gonna listen to this more. I won't listen to this one," but I, I've listened to your others too, so yeah. Thank you.

[00:50:35] **Jonathan Rose:** So thank you. So just, uh, on this idea of land acknowledgement, do you like the idea or you don't like the idea?

[00:50:43] **Tiokasin Ghosthorse:** I don't agree with it. I think there has to be more. If you're gonna acknowledge the land, then where are the people?

[00:50:50] **Jonathan Rose:** Right.

[00:50:51] **Tiokasin Ghosthorse:** Where are the people?

[00:50:53] **Jonathan Rose:** Right.

[00:50:54] **Tiokasin Ghosthorse:** Because it's, it's, it's not going further, not far enough.

[00:50:57] **Jonathan Rose:** It's an empty gesture.

[00:50:58] **Tiokasin Ghosthorse:** Yeah. It, [00:51:00] it's fine. It sounds good, and let's get down to business now. So it, it's that way.

[00:51:05] If you go home and... 'Cause it's, it's a Native idea, actually. They did it in Australia. We do it amongst our people. But now it's just gone into the mainstream where people are using it to make themselves feel good. And therefore, you know, it's like reading one page of Native history when it's-- that goes only as far as 1492, but what about the eons of history that they're missing?

[00:51:32] So a lot of Native people still know that history before 1492, you see. So we can say, "Oh, we acknowledge, uh, you Americans." But, you know, we can't say it's your land in that vein of thinking, you know, and things like that. So it's, it's, uh, again, the dominant and the, uh, imperialistic thinking that's, that's happened.

[00:51:57] Yeah. I'll say enough. I said a [00:52:00] lot, yeah.

[00:52:00] **Jonathan Rose:** So I actually think that this country should claim itself-- that we should embrace its whole history, and we should say that we've been here for thirty thousand years. The, uh, you know, why, why would we, why would we pretend that history started five hundred years ago when-

[00:52:22] **Tiokasin Ghosthorse:** Yeah

[00:52:22] **Jonathan Rose:** human history-- And by the way, you know, Australia is the oldest place of human occupation, but most of Europe was not human occupy... Anyway, this is one of the oldest places of human occupation, and I think we limit ourselves in our vision of what our country-- We should extend our vision all the way back in time.

[00:52:41] I mean, I think we should- Yeah ... extend it way beyond the human, before the human occupation. Yeah. But certainly to, to appreciate and acknowledge and, uh, and benefit from all that wonderful time that was here before the Europeans showed up.

[00:52:56] **Tiokasin Ghosthorse:** Yes. Yes. That indeed. I think [00:53:00] this is a shared logic, and we, we have to stop erasing cultures or...

[00:53:06] 'Cause, you know, colonial expansionism, a romantic environmentalism too, how to think about nature and not manage nature, but they're the same mythical bird. Silly people to me. But, uh, we have to stop erasing culture. Allow us to speak no matter how long it takes, right? Not because I'm gonna speak for five minutes on the five hundred-year history.

[00:53:32] No. It has to be lived again. We're li- have to start living with each other. So I, I agree with you.

[00:53:44] **Jonathan Rose:** Thank you to our guest, Tiokasin Ghosthorse. The Common Good is a production of the Garrison Institute and is hosted by me, Jonathan F.P. Rose. We'd love to hear your thoughts about the podcast. Please send us a note at [00:54:00] podcasts@garrisoninstitute.org and let us know what you think. If you've enjoyed this episode, please consider leaving a positive review on Apple Podcasts.

[00:54:08] This show is produced by the Garrison Institute with production and marketing from The Podglomerate. Its theme music was composed by Jonathan F.P. Rose and performed by Jog Blues. We look forward to being with you again soon.