

## IF IT FEELS GOOD, IT'S NOT RECONCILIATION—Dr Pam Palmater

Dr Pam Palmater was the University of Regina's 2018 Woodrow Wilson lecturer (February 15, 2018). She is a Mi'kmaw lawyer, author, activist and Chair of Indigenous Governance, Ryerson University. Here is a link to the complete lecture: ***Truth and Reconciliation in Canada: If It Feels Good It's Not Reconciliation***: <https://youtu.be/89s3l2mYGWg> (1 hour 30 minutes)  
*If you missed the lecture be sure to listen. It's also well-worth a second, third or fourth listen. If you are not ready to listen to the lecture, have a quick look at these notes, and accept my sincere apologies for any errors in understanding reflected here ...Jane Knox*

Dr Palmater:

Straight talk is what will bring about a radical departure from what we are doing now ... as well as action by each of us. ... Hang on to HOPE ... Start with prevention.

Reconciliation is:

1. part **apology** with recognition of what wrongs were done, and that someone was harmed
2. part **listening** to a person explain what harm was done (TRUTH)
3. part **promising** never to do it again, ever...with awareness of harm caused (EDUCATION)
4. part making **reparation** (JUSTICE)

Do not rush to indigenize with art and building-names...first we must ensure:

- HARMS MUST STOP - get children out of care, get people out of prison
- EDUCATE - most Canadians know about land issues, treaty problems, justice issues ...education is not enough although still need to clarify facts. Not everything is unintentional. Governments intended harm.
- RACISM MUST STOP ... no excuses any where, anytime

### TRUTH

Indigenous Peoples have strong family history and strong laws and governance practices. Indigenous Peoples are strengthened by humour, connections to land, ceremonies, and spiritual presence of ancestors. Indigenous Peoples honour treaties and welcome opportunities to work together with others to implement them.

### EDUCATION

Government had a policy of genocide and assimilation. History includes many abuses. Every government agency was involved and many still are today (e.g., unequal funding for education and welfare of Indigenous children). Laws made it illegal for Indigenous Peoples to pray in ceremony, to visit their relatives, and even to feed their family (hunt, fish, sell produce). This is *criminal victimization*.

In addition, governments failed to respect treaties that promised protection, friendship and support. Learn the treaties so we can implement our treaties fairly. We are treaty partners, it is time to protect our partners. Indigenous people have been protecting water, environment, democracy. It is time to use our combined efforts.

### JUSTICE

Do not pay for more police [or better courts], pay for family supports so that children can stay with their family, not be put into care, abused, and moved constantly through multiple foster homes. Pay for education. Employ Indigenous people. Pay for Indigenous art work you use.

Truth, Education, Justice, then RECONCILIATION. Reconciliation will be uncomfortable

because it is about *reparation*. We can do this.

**Be an ally.** We have the foundation to move forward. **"Help us and we can help you."**