

Editor's Introduction

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Warren Weir

When you read the biographies of incredible individuals that have changed the world, or do a quick search of the Internet for inspirational thoughts on “learning by doing”, you will inevitably encounter a countless listing of quotes, attributed to notable people such as Doris Lessing, Albert Einstein, or Nelson Mandela. Lessing, for example, winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature, and leader of campaigns against nuclear arms and South African apartheid, once said that “What matters most is that we learn from living.” Albert Einstein, physicist, creator of general and specific theories of relativity, and probably one of the greatest — if not best-known — scientists of the 20th Century, stated that, “Setting an example is not the main means of influencing others, it is the only means.” Nelson Mandela, anti-apartheid activist and leader of the African National Congress, is credited with saying that “Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world.”

And while the words from these and other outstanding leaders are motivational, Aboriginal leaders and community economic development officers and change agents continue to add to the growing list of experiential commentary and inspirational quotes. Many of these may be found in the materials published in JAED’s “Lessons from Experience.” In this section we hear from Canadian Aboriginal leaders, educators, and development officers about learning from living, setting healthy and sustainable examples, and changing the world through education, among other quotable-quotes.

In the first interview of JAED, Sherry Baxter questions Clarence Louie, long-time Chief and Aboriginal leader, about the successes of the Osoyoos First Nation, located in southern British Columbia. Chief Louie — who often looks to inspiration from world leaders such as Nelson Mandela and Muhammad Ali — shares information with Baxter about successful projects he has led over the past two decades, including the Nk'Mip Resort, Nk'Mip Cellars, and the recently signed mining agreement. But he is thoughtful about these projects, and has quotes of his own for us to remember and reflect upon. For example, he promotes the value of education, recommending that young people and community workers “go to school and educate [themselves] about other people and other experiences.” At the same time he notes that “I’ve never met someone who knows it all. I don’t care how many degrees you have behind your name, you’re not a know-it-all.” For Chief Louie, it is about financial success, education, participating in the “real” business world, and balance.

In the second interview, Baxter talks with long-time CANDO advocate and Board member Vaughn Sunday. Sunday, from the Akwesasne First Nation, Ontario, describes a number of his community, business, and economic development success stories. He focuses on relationships, noting that education and mentoring are key factors in any successful partnership. But he doesn’t forget about acknowledging and appreciating those community members that help make economic success through culturally sustainable relations happen. For Vaughn, “it is give and take. You have to know that and you have to recognize those (people) that help you along the way, and acknowledge those people.”

In her last article, Ms. Baxter profiles the winners of CANDO’s 2007 Economic Development of the Year award recipients, and asks them some revealing questions regarding their role(s) in Aboriginal economic development in Canada. The award winners, as well as the recognition award winners profiled in this section include: Ruth Williams, the Little Shuswap Indian Band, Verna Billy-Minnabarriet, and the Andrew A. Manitowabi Group.

The CANDO editorial committee would like to thank Chief Louie and Vaughn Sunday for sharing their success stories and experiences. In addition, we extend our congratulations to the CANDO’s 2007 Economic Development of the Year award recipients. A very special thank you goes to Sherry Baxter for taking the time to bring these real-life and inspirational stories to print.