



**FourSimpleWords.ca**  
@The4SimpleWords  
info@foursimplewords.ca  
519.580.9725

# Acknowledgments

January 2023 | We start each of our talks and learning sessions with three important acknowledgements.

## Land Acknowledgment

No matter where we are sitting today it is important for us to remember that long before our community was here there were thriving peoples, cultures and traditions on this same land. These cultures tried very hard to teach us how to steward our land, water and air. Unfortunately, we did a terrible job at listening to their wisdom and our environment is now paying that price. Even worse, we have not acknowledged that our communities are literally built on top of these strong cultures. We cannot hide from the social, emotional and economic damage this has done to generations of families across Canada. It is important for us to recognize that the strength of our community today comes from those who were here before us. It is also our responsibility to remind future leaders they are part of a continuum of leadership that started with Indigenous culture. Finally, each of us needs to remember that truth must come before reconciliation.

## Curt's Personal Acknowledgment

I was born white, male, middle class, in southern Ontario, in the 1970's. When you combine that with the fact that I am happily married to my beautiful wife Melanie, I check just about every box of privilege there is. What I have come to learn is that this means that my journey to our time together today has likely been radically different from many of yours. Doors that have opened to me just because of the way I look, may have in fact closed on you for the exact same reason. What is really maddening and a reminder of the learning I have ahead of me, is that I didn't even know there was a door! I understand that I can never understand what it is to live a life with that type of pressure or burden. Nor do I think that I have the physical, emotional or spiritual strength to do so. I am a work in progress and continue to learn about what oppressive systems really look and do and how I have benefited from them. Please know this difference in how we have been treated angers me and has inspired my career path to help other voices sing as loud as mine. If there are learning opportunities for me and my privilege during our conversation today, I welcome your feedback and I am grateful for your grace.

## A Mental Health Acknowledgment

It is hard to believe that it is [date] and we are years living through a global pandemic. I'm not sure about you but for me, since March 2020 there have been a real mix of days over this past year. Some good, some OK, some really quite terrible. If today is a good day for you, the sun is shining and you are joining our call ready to learn and engage, I want you to know how welcome you are and how excited I am to learn with you. If today isn't such a good day, the clouds are blocking the sun and the weight of it all seems overwhelming, I want you to know that I am also glad you are with us today. You are not alone in how you are feeling and it is ok to be in the place you are. You are an important part of our learning today and I invite you to participate as much or as little as you like. If there is anything I can be doing to make this day better for you and your learning more productive, please drop me a private note in our Zoom chat. If you would prefer I not call on you today at all, just drop me a private note in our chat with the word 'pass' and I will be sure not to call on you. No matter how you are feeling today, it is my hope and prayer that sunny days are on the way for all of us soon.

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