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Ancestral Science Podcast

The Ancestral Science Podcast explores scientific topics through conversations between Knowledge Keepers and Scientists, while *experiencing* the origins and depth of science on and with “the Land”. Join us as science COMES ALIVE when knowledges are shared alongside ancestor plants, rocks, animals, and rivers, creating connections between personal, Indigenous, and global science. The Ancestral Science podcast is a place for *everyone* to see themselves in science, to be inspired by the SCIENCE that is all around them and expand the definitions of both *ancestor* and *science*.

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## SEASON 3: Episode 4 with **Alycia Two Bears** “Decolonizing Blood & Birth”

The Pod was grateful to learn from **THE Alycia Two Bears**, a 2 spirit Mixed Cree educator and author from Misatawasis Nêhiyawak First Nation, about her journey to become a midwife, what is a land-birth, how to decolonize and de-stigmatize blood, reconnecting ceremony and community with birthing, reproductive justice and birth sovereignty, caregiving roles of men and partners within pregnancy, birth, and caregiving, and of course...moss bag science, adult moss bags, and one comfy swaddled podcast host!

Remember to check out Alycia's new poetry book "[The Feast](#)" about love, loss, sex, and ceremony through an Indigenous feminist lens.

Grab a tea with honey, snuggle a small human or fluffy pet, and join us in this incredibly important conversation for EVERYONE (not just women) with ALYCIA TWO BEARS.

Remember, you can support the pod and rock some unique Indigenous Science merch at [www.relationalsciencecircle.com/shop](http://www.relationalsciencecircle.com/shop), all proceeds go towards Knowledge Keeper honoraria, following protocols, and keeping the pod going.

Please like, share, follow, and rate the pod, it goes a long way to share this knowledge.

Thanks to Emil Starlight (@emilstarlight) of Limelight Multimedia for editing, videography, and editing as well as support from [Bespoke Productions Hub](#).  
Intro composed and performed by [Walter White Bear](#), Sharon Ann Foster, and Emil Starlight.

Questions for the Pod? Email us at [relational.science@gmail.com](mailto:relational.science@gmail.com)

## **SHOWNOTES:**

**-Alycia Two Bears:** a mixed-blood iskwew from Mistawasis Nêhiyawak First Nation, calls Mohkinstsis home. Alycia holds degrees in General Studies and Education from the University of Calgary. She combines her expertise as a certified yoga instructor with Traditional 2 Spirit Métis-Cree teachings in her Land-Based Yoga practice, fostering a connection between body, breath, and ceremony.

A mother of five, she is a passionate advocate for birth sovereignty. Alycia practices Birthing as Ceremony and aspires to become a midwife. She supports pregnant and birthing bodies, working to ensure accessible, dignified care. Through grassroots initiatives and collaboration, she co-created the Moon Time Bag Initiative. To end period poverty, Alycia redistributes donated menstrual health products to houseless and housed kin.

An award-winning poet and writer, Alycia has contributed to publications such as Red Rising Magazine, MBC Magazine and New Tribe Magazine. Her work often centers on decolonization, mental health, and Two Spirit advocacy. Recognized for her community impact, she received The Advocate for Equality Award from the Calgary Single Mother's Society and USAY Change Makers award. Alycia's passions include decolonizing systems, uplifting her community, and nurturing her family's connection to nêhiyawân language and culture.

### **-What is science to you?**

Alycia- How you fit in relationship with the rest of the world around you. From small to large, the relationality from big to small and how do you move through the world at every level?

### **-The loss of culture within birth:**

- “modern” birthing education focus on “academic” science, through standardized methods, removed from community or the human (never mind spirit or ceremony).
- community has become disconnected from family and childcare, we outsource for childcare without community.
- perception that you need to be a “hard scientist” to be a midwife, and that emotional support and caregiving is less important.
- not all great midwives have strength in science or academics! Balance is important
- the Ancestors guided Alycia's journey.
- you have to be comfortable with death to go into birthwork.

-“we surrender to life and death as a pact, an understanding, a cycle” -Alycia

-“During birth, the only thing you have to control is your breath,” Alycia

### **-Birth and Death:**

Alycia; birth is like ceremony, in the third round, you are tired and want to leave.

-but how many 3<sup>rd</sup> rounds have we all gotten through?

-Kori- this part of the conversation reminded me of our chat with Terri Cardinal about the similarities between death and ceremony. The 3<sup>rd</sup> round is the most difficult.

Check out Terry's episode: “*Nêhiyawak Science of Life & Death from Grandmother Scientists*” on the Ancestral Science Podcast, Season 2, episode 17.

### **-Intuition:**

- guidance through ceremony is a valid way of learning and understanding that is not “as” accepted as scientific knowledges or methods.
- remembering and understanding the significance of these protective ancestors and their knowledges. Give back, offer tobacco.
- remember all the ancestors that birthed to get you here.
- intuition is that veil between this world and the ancestors. Our dreams are thin.

### **-Birth as Sovereignty:**

- “if we cannot birth as sovereign beings on our own land, we are not free people” Alycia heard this from Melissa Rose (Kahnawake midwife).
- this is why we have to fiercely protect birth.
  - eating well, prenatal care, bring housed, being surrounded by people that love you. Having the ability, accessibility, and choices to birth where you want, how you want, and who you want to be with.
- how do you raise your children in relation to the land?
  - this has been violently removed through colonization through sterilization, [60s scoop](#), and the more current foster care system.
    - “[Forced Sterilization of Indigenous Woman](#)” Jennifer Leason
    - “[Sterilization of Indigenous Woman in Canada](#)” Canadian Encyclopedia.
- have to change the narrative and actions that Indigenous babies and children belong to us, to their family, and NOT to the Indian act.
- “[Reclaiming Birth Sovereignty](#)” Maymangwa Flying Earth & Nia MacKnight, Nov 2024

### **-Lack of Trust:**

- we no longer trust our bodies, the healthcare system, our doctors, our intuition...
  - but so many decisions are made FOR you, made for the kids, made for your body, we have lost body and life sovereignty.
- this makes sense though, as we reflect back on the Indian Act, Sterilization, [Medical Experiments on Indigenous Peoples](#), the 60s Scoop, the Child Welfare
- When all decisions are made for you, or your decisions (if they are based within culture, the land, the ancestors, relational and/or spiritual methods) are deemed invalid, then who do/can you trust?

### **-Conception as intentional:**

- as Nehiyaw people, travelling a lot meant you couldn’t travel with anything more than you could carry, Therefore, children were purposefully spaced 10-14 years apart.
- this also gives time for everyone in the community (parents, uncles, aunties, grandparents ect.) to support and nourish the unique gifts of each child.
- how do YOU nourish and develop relationships with your own kiddos, with their own gifts, with their own intuition? Asks Alycia.

### **-Land Birth:**

- often a “dreamy version” of birthing their baby in a tipi, on the land, and all will be right if we follow our intuition.

-but remember, colonization and capitalism has dramatically affected everyone's health, response to inner voices, and ongoing trauma. These are critical and can negatively affect someone's experiences.

-yes, when we lived on and with the land, got all our nutrients from plants and animals naturally (without pesticides, chemicals, hormones, ect) and we used our bodies regularly, in general our bodies weren't affected by high blood pressure and diabetes.

### **-Community and Birth:**

-be careful of who you invite into your home. You and your baby are an open vessel.

-be aware of the importance of parental bonding and how that has been disconnected from Indigenous people through the Indian Act, Residential Schools, 60s Scoop, foster care ect..

-supporting new mothers and babies is important for other parents and community. Bringing hot food, doing chores, making bone broth, listening to needs for both space and bonding, and supporting spiritual and emotional needs.

### **-Decolonizing Blood:**

-this is about your relationship with your body

-this is not about only those with menstrual cycles or give birth as understanding blood, but everyone. All humans bleed. When hunting or cooking, you risk bleeding, but do you know medicines that move blood?

-plants are not male or female, nor are they categorized as female or male medicine, they are human medicine. "Plants love you."

**-moontime/menstrual cycles:** your first cycle, within Nêhiyaw communities (and most, if not all, Indigenous communities) you are welcomed into a lodge, cared for, fed, prayed for, allowed space and time to rest.

-this is the time your body needs to rest, it is its job.

-capitalism and moontimes are contradictory. Capitalism requires a set schedule that doesn't include space for rest during bleeding, this is not a valid sick day.

-track your moon, DO NOT USE AN APP! Look at when you are most creative and when you need to rest, try to balance your everyday around your bodies needs. This is your birthright to participate in life like this!

-listen to your body during your moontime

-red meat and red blood cells, rest, connection, bone health and bone broth

-eating from and living with the land, while listening to your body and community is the biggest FU to colonization!

### **-Moss Bag Science:**

-adult moss bag- to feel like a baby again, feel like being wrapped in love.

"re-babying"

-moss bags are an extension of the womb after being born. When you come down from the stars, you were in a similar shaped vessel, like a canoe.

-when you arrive on earth, its new, its loud, its bright, its disorientating. The moss bag regulates this, allowing babies to feel less out of control.

-the moss acts like a diaper, it is sterile, antibacterial, antifungal, and reusable.

- when you put moss bags on cradleboards then put on now mothers back, it helps a postpartum body to re-build core strength which is balanced according to your baby's weight.
- in cradle boards, they are not being ignored, they are learning and listening, absorbing knowledge from their surroundings.
- moss bags are being deemed unsafe. This is a racial bias, but we need to open our minds and hearts to the depth of scientific knowledges of Indigenous peoples, which go beyond the universal, objective methods.

**-Additional Links:**

-[The Caregiver Collective](#) mossbag [intake form](#)

[@the\\_caregiving\\_collective](#) on Instagram

-gift moss mags to families who cannot afford them

-create ceremonial wear for Two-Spirit, trans kin who may not be able to afford it. This allows them to attend ceremonies, feel welcome and held, nourished, and validated in their identity.

-[“The Feast”](#) by Alycia Two Bears (top selling poet in Calgary!). Poetry collection that is about her Two-Spirit identity, motherhood, grief, sadness, relationship-driven, and heartache mixed with celebration. Go buy the book! And watch out for her next book!

-[“Poet puts her scholarship award to work by publishing second collection”](#) article by Shari Narine, Windspeaker Radio, August 2025.

-[“Reimagining Native Motherhood”](#) Lia Pa’apa’a, April 2024

-Caregiver area at [TELUS Spark Science Centre](#) which includes an Adult Moss Bag created by “The Moss Bag Project” highlighted by a gorgeous mural by [Keegan Starlight](#)

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Want more Indigenous Science Resources? Check out [Relational Science Circle](#).

Want to learn more about Indigenous Science, Indigenous Science/Mathematics Teacher PD sessions, or have an idea for a guest or topic for the Ancestral Science Podcast, email [relational.science@gmail.com](mailto:relational.science@gmail.com)

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