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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*.

SEASON 2: Episode 17 ([audio/video](#)) with **TERRI CARDINAL** “Nêhiyaw Science of Love & Death from Grandmother Scientists”

The Ancestral Science podcast was honoured to be gifted some time with **TERRI CARDINAL** from Saddle Lake Cree Nation. We chatted about Nêhiyaw teachings of death and dying, the science of soothing when grieving, connection between hair and senses / love and grief, death as a transition not an end, disconnecting fear from death, and the how jokes and laughter at the seemingly most inappropriate times is incredibly healing.

Terri donated her honoraria to [Good Hoops](#), a grassroots basketball program out of Edmonton Alberta, creating opportunities through basketball.

Remember, you can support the pod and rock some unique Indigenous Science merch at 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.

Check out Terri and Amber’s podcast called [2 Crees in a Pod](#), where they have created space for Indigenous resurgence and stories!

Hand to heart to [Indigenous Screen Office](#) and [Bespoke Productions Hub](#).

SHOWNOTES:

-About TERRI:

- [Associate Vice-President, Indigenous Initiatives & Engagement](#) at MacEwan University

-Lakeland Today Article:

[“Saddle Lake’s Terri Cardinal is new VP of Indigenous Initiatives at MacEwan University”](#) (2024)

- “[Going Home to do the emotional and important work of Truth and Reconciliation](#)” (article) , going back to [University of Blue Quills](#), a place that has much significance to Terri.
- host of the podcast “[2 Crees in a Pod](#)” with Amber Dion

-Ceremony, Dying, Healing:

- “Knowledge and Science in Ceremony” Roxanne Tootoosis
 - CBC article, “[Culture as Medicine](#)”
 - “ [Roxanne Tootoosis Nêhiyawêwin Scholarship](#)”
 - “[Roxanne Tootoosis Two Spirit Bursary](#)”
- end-of-life is about supporting the journey of the physical into the spirit world. Terri is looking deeper into this through Nêhiyaw (Cree) practices, ceremonies, science, and worldviews.
- connection between Nêhiyaw/Indigenous and Western Science
 - there is a connection here within the lodge
 - the brain is the computer, and it creates predictions
 - these predictions can see tomorrow in connection with death
 - there are patterns within the explanation of this within Western science within the brain, but also spiritually within Nêhiyaw ceremonies.
- significance of Nêhiyaw teachings of death and dying
 - put away pictures for one year, to help with grief. This also allows the brain to better process this loss. It is a way to retrain the brain.
 - “healing” is not necessarily about time, but about experiences.
 - knowing how to care for self within these difficult times

-Grandmother Science

- rocking and shhhh-ing from grandmothers is naturally soothing
- this is a way to regulate senses and emotions

-Hair, Death, and Healing:

- the cutting of hair during times of loss means different things to different people and communities.
- and sometimes you don’t know what this means or its significance at the time.
- hair can be seen as an extra sense, being more sensitive to the external work. Cutting hair can remove that sense, helping heal other senses and cope better with loss.

-Community access to Knowledge:

- teaching youth this important knowledge, how to learn from it, heal through it, and pass it on. This is incredibly important.

-“[Death Interrupted](#)” (book) by Blair Bigham

- explains the importance of someone dying at home.
 - they are comfortable, in a familiar place
 - they have less fear
 - this changes the narrative from fear and disconnect to relationality, comfort, and acceptance.
- the most important role is to help someone transition to the spirit world

-we need to teach people how to do this

-Relationships with Death

- how do we create relationships with death so to protect us?
- “Transition Education”
- need more scholarly research on this
 - more about protocols and passing on knowledge than it is to publish
- focus on community-based teachings
- how can we support young people to deal with fear so it doesn't consume them
 - so it doesn't take over and lead to feelings of un-aliving themselves, but reach for learnings, ceremony, and support.
- beauty within prayers, ceremony, and relationships through transition to spirit world.
- relationships to death are based on experiences. These experiences have changed based on situation
 - last four days before death can be like a ceremony.
 - fasting, meditative, difficulties, hope, humour
 - importance of humour at the “seemingly” most inappropriate times, but as [Dr. Michael Yellowbird](#) also said, the frequencies laughter is healing.
- Nêhiyaw End of life and Identity: A conversation with Terri Cardinal. [Article](#)

-Research Rabbit Hole:

- Brain science in connection with Mental Health
- “[The Awakened Brain](#): The new Science of Spirituality and Our Quest for an Inspired Life” (book) Lisa Miller
 - the significance of spirituality
 - how spirituality is the protector against depression

-What is science to you?

- our grandmothers were scientists
 - they knew the science within the changes and flux
 - of the heart, the brain, and ceremony

-Additional Links:

- Terri Cardinal (video) “[Fireside Chats: A Tale of Two Journeys: Terri Cardinal on Learning through Social Work](#)”
 - The Conversation: Terri Cardinal [here](#)
 - “Honoring Residential School & Holocaust Survivors: A conversation with Carol Wylie and Terri Cardinal” [here](#)
 - “[The Auntie Dialogues](#)”
 - “[What is Home? Wisdom from Nêhiyawewin](#)” Cheyenne Greyeyes and Celina Vipond.
 - “[Death Interrupted](#)” (book) by Blair Bigham
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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

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