MEETINGS WITH REMARKABLE EDUCATORS

PODCAST TRANSCRIPTION OF

Four Arrows
AKA: Don Trent Jacobs, Ph.D., Ed.D.
with host
Ba Luvmour

A Production of
Luvmour Consulting II, LLC
Portland, OR 97221

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Ba Luvmour:

Welcome to Meetings with Remarkable Educators. Each podcast is a dialogue between me, Ba Luvmour, and an educator who sees the greatness in their students and touches the whole of their being. These educators defy generalizations. So here’s a bit about what they’ve done and how I came to know them.

I knew of Four Arrows through his books and his comments on Josette’s book, Grow Together. They’d each attained their PhDs at the highly regarded Fielding Graduate Institute. Fortunately I wasn’t trapped into believing I truly knew the man. Four Arrows is a brilliant expositor of indigenous education and its relationship to holistic education.

He has a profound appreciation and participation in indigenous spiritual practices. He’s a talented piano player and exudes bright energy and incisive almost fearsome intellect. So I was a touch intimidated when I asked him to join me for a podcast. Adding to my concern, he was my first guest ever. And I wasn’t even sure how to run the equipment.

Within ten seconds my concerns evaporated. Four Arrows warmth and enthusiasm just carried us along. I’m sure you’ll feel it as you listen.

Four Arrows also known as Dr. Don Trent Jacobs is faculty at the School of Leadership Studies at Fielding Graduate Institute, is formerly dean of education at Oglala Lakota College, and tenured associate professor at Northern Arizona University. With doctorates in health psychology and in curriculum and instruction with a cognate in indigenous worldview he has authored 21 books and numerous other publications relating to wellness, critical theory, education, and indigenous worldview.

His publications have been praised by a number of notable thinkers including John Pilger, Greg Cajete, Noam Chomsky, Thom Hartman, Henry Giroux, Sam Keen, Bruce Littman, Dan Millman, Vine Deloris Jr., and many others.

AERO elected him as one of 27 visionaries for their text Turning Points and he is recipient of a number of recognitions for his activism. Including the Martin-Springer Institute’s Moral Courage Award.
Four Arrows was the first alternate for the 1996 Olympic equestrian endurance team and placed fourth in world championship old time piano contest.

So here we go.

Four Arrows: It's good to be with you.

Ba Luvmour: So thank you and I am in awe here, I'm a little bit nervous because of all you've done and your great unbelievable commitment to life, to truth, to wisdom. It's just so inspiring.

Four Arrows: Oh that's so gracious of you. I just think I'm lucky because in holistic education we have interests in lots of things. I've been interested in lots of things so I wind up doing lots of things. But I think I'm really more of a, what do they call it, a jack of all trades and master of none, right?

Ba Luvmour: Yeah. When you said this morning the one thing that struck me is when you were including the other people's perspective and you talked about a different worldview is necessary. And this is something that's troubled me, or I've been concerned with for 30 years really. What allows the switch to the perspective?

Four Arrows: What a beautiful starting question. Robert Redfield in 1950 at the University of Chicago, really the first social anthropologist, he said essentially that there were originally only three worldviews operating in the 20th century. And he said that was the Asian-Eastern worldview, the Western worldview, and what he called the Primal worldview.

Later in life he began to change that and he said there's only really now two historically observable functioning worldviews because the Asian-Eastern one has really been subsumed under the dominant one. So we've got a dominant one that's maybe eight or nine thousand years old and in my most recent book Point of Departure: Returning to Our More Authentic Worldview for Education and Survival I place it around 9,000 years ago. But for 99% of human history we lived according to this other worldview that we can refer to here as an indigenous worldview.

Now keep in mind that most scholars do think that there are hundreds of worldviews and that's how they refer to worldview. I agree with Redfield that there are just two and that under the dominant worldview there are thousands of cultures. There are tens
of thousands of belief systems and there are hundreds of religions. And they're very unique and diverse.

But they have a common set of assumptions—such as hierarchy, and anthropocentrism, and a number of other things. Under indigenous worldview there are a reduced number unfortunately but there are many many diverse, very diverse cultures. But they also have common themes and their common themes stand in stark contrast to those themes in the dominant worldview.

So for me that's what I in my work and what the spirits have told me to study is all about. I always try to preface by saying ultimately indigeneity is not about this Pan-Indian broad view and the common themes. It's ultimately about the power of being in one place for many generations and learning how that one place works. And that's where languages emerge from. And unfortunately that form of indigeneity is dying.

Our languages are dying. 80% of the biodiversity on this planet is on only 20% of the land that's still occupied by those few cultures that still have that wisdom. So ... But I don't have that local wisdom and so my job is to try to talk about...well let's at least do some worldview reflection and see what it is in our dominant worldview that is causing us to destroy every life system on the planet.

Ba Luvmour: So to paraphrase then you're saying that a way into a holistic understanding is to look at the dominant worldview and notice its defects and ... Well I'm ... You have such a global and transcultural perspective. My work's ... or ... my own sense of self has always been from the individual out. By that I don't mean separate I mean just within us and so on.

Is education of people enough about the indigenous perspective? Is there something in consciousness I mean ... You know do we have to do a vision quest? Do we have to ... What do we have to do because there is a switch in consciousness.

[silence (about 9 seconds) between 00:7:42 – 00:7:50]

Four Arrows: ... you ... and that can be brought into education, experiential education, holistic education of course. But I really believe that for all of indigenous histories of our ... And when I say indigenous, again I'm talking about us as indigenous to the planet. If we can stop killing the indigenous and start supporting those that are still struggling to hold onto these old values that would be good. But we
have to also learn again how to be indigenous to wherever we are living. And we can't do that with willful determination. For most of our history we knew if we wanted to be more generous, if we wanted to hunt better, we had to go into an other form of consciousness. And that other form of consciousness, we got into it through chanting, through dancing, through Haŋblečeya or vision quests. Sometimes plant medicine. The plants would teach us. But we knew that just our ... the brain wave frequency that we're probably in right now, which is Beta, and of course we didn't know...we didn't have that kind of jargon, but we understood we had to shift. And that's, I think, how we were able to maintain. Because the foibles of jealousy, and greed, and whatnot are in everybody and always have been...but the cultures that watched nature and observed nature and saw how nature worked created cultures that were able to sustain balance and relative flowing harmony. But we had to use this, let's call it hypnosis, because that's the term nowadays, for this phenomenon.

Ba Luvmour: I prefer different states of consciousness myself.

Four Arrows: Yeah mostly ... Yeah and because hypnosis in my book that Prentice Hall published called, *Patient Communication for First Responders*, it's all about how people at the scene of emergency are in spontaneous hypnosis. And that what we say to them can have the same effect as hypnotic work on the autonomic nervous system. So you can save lives with it right?

And but I wasn't allowed to use the word hypnosis because of the rhetoric of ... the background rhetoric is so negative.

Ba Luvmour: Sure.

Four Arrows: But if you want to have people go study this in the annals of medicine and psychology you know that's the word that really describes the phenomenon, right? And to say change of consciousness, well consciousness is all over the place, right? Whereas you can teach techniques of self ... Cause all hypnosis is self-hypnosis when you're in control of it.

The problem in our world is we have taken and subjected hypnosis to such a distance in Hollywood or whatever that we don't know about it and we are susceptible during times of fear to the rhetoric.
of people like Rush Limbaugh or whomever understands techniques like, "You wanna use my pen or yours to sign the contract?" Right?

And so we are, how else can you explain that in the short 1% of human history we have destroyed every life system on this planet if it's not a hypnotic trance logic that we're using?

Ba Luvmour: I totally agree. I've spent many years working in Rites of Passage. I've done it with whole families together. I've done it with many young people. I've done it with groups of young people. And there's a wonderful group here in Ashland called Boys to Men. Oh I want to tell you about this, see if it's interesting to you and I believe deeply in rite of passage also for children around 10 ½ or 11. My understanding of human development says that a window opens then for feeling transcendence.

And so this group, the man in charge, agreed to that and for five years been doing a rite of passage for boys and it's really pretty powerful. But this year I said I want to do it for boys and girls together. And we did it for 18 children, nine boys and nine girls together for a three day rite of passage.

Now this is not in the Native American ... in the indigenous tradition because I'm not of that culture.

Four Arrows: How did it work out?

Ba Luvmour: It was amazing. It was fantastic, and this idea for me of bringing the boys and girls together at this very vulnerable age to see one another and to have trans or non-ordinary experiences from a positive platform. Is that? ... Do you think, and let's be really honest here, do you think that's going to be a legitimate attempt to move people to a more indigenous perspective?

Four Arrows: Well from an indigenous perspective, you're right. That our Rites of Passage ... There's Rites of Passage of for boys and then Rites of Passages for women as separate events. But that was in a very different milieu of where there was a high degree of respect for women. I know that in the book called, a chapter in my Unlearning the Language of Conquest book, Bruce E. Johanson writes a chapter called Adventures in Denial about the Iroquois Confederacy as being a foundational reason for the United States constitution. And he talks about how when Benjamin Franklin had invited one of the Iroquois men to come in to talk about their form of government which had all the different systems like we have

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today, the first words recorded were when he looked around at the seven men with wigs on were, "Where are your women?"

Right? And so I think in this environment, in the Western culture, when the role of women has been so diminished on so many levels that there aren't many opportunities for the kind of learning that would allow all male rite of passage to include the solar and lunar dynamics that relate in honor of the feminine, I think it's a brilliant idea, from an indigenous perspective to be able to bring these two things together.

Ba Luvmour: Thank you. And but to the essential question I'm sorry if you want to change the subject that's fine...but what allows the switch? What allows the switch to that different perspective?

Four Arrows: Oh we're back to the trance based learning. I don't think that you can do it with all the knowledge and talking that there is. I think that... and it's so simple. You know, I was diagnosed with terminal cancer in March of 2008. And I'll show you how this is relevant to your question. And, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, and I adopted not to do the chemo, not to do the surgery for the tumors. And part of my exercise, organic food, all that kind of stuff, Vitamin D from the sun, but self-hypnosis.

I think it was an important part of the equation. And so all hypnosis like I said earlier is ultimately self-hypnosis but we have lost the skills. But it's so simple to do. I mean if you... all the definition... and I taught this at UC Berkeley... All you have to be able to do is believe in an image.

So if I could sit here right now and imagine my hand lifting, and I could use various techniques depending on myself...maybe helium balloons tied to it or a beautiful nurse coming in and lifting it up. You know. And so I can sit here right now as I'm talking I can double task. And I can begin to imagine it. And I'll use the beautiful nurse. And so I'm imagining this beautiful nurse coming in as I'm talking to you and it's starting to actually lift up.

And there are a lot of things you can imagine that can make things lift up, right? Okay. So... and as soon as it starts to happen I know that the ideomotor neurons are really what's happening. But ideomotor neuron activity like a pendulum swinging back and forth don't happen until we shift into a different brain wave frequency that we know allows us to have open heart surgery. Right?
And so wow. So now if we can get through the education the wisdom that we’re talking about with holistic education, and we go okay so I really want to be less anthropocentric, I want to stop being so human centered and really start learning and understanding that other creatures and entities have a wisdom and are our relatives.

I’m going to stop referring to natural resources. I’m going to start calling them my relatives but I’ve got to be authentic and right now that doesn’t make sense. So what’s the trigger point? What’s the turning point that can do this...is your question. And the turning point is that okay once I have the cognitive truth and I’ve really studied it enough to go okay it’s got enough credibility for me to want to process it.

Now I’m going to have the beautiful girl come in. Or I’m going to get the pendulum going in a major circle. Or I’m going to do whatever it is that I do where I know that I feel that I'm in the ... and I'm going to begin to imagine being that way in a particular situation that day. Where I am actually now seeing the non-human world in this indigenous way.

And then you do an In Vivo Exposure by actually practicing it and go wow I felt a little different. And then you practice that. But I believe that without the Trance Based Learning, let's call it ...

Ba Luvmour: Sure.

Four Arrows: Without ... let's call it TBL. Without that we ... That education alone is just going to keep bumping into walls.

Ba Luvmour: It's teaching story time. Briefly teaching stories invite us to see the world with a new perspective. Often featuring a wise person, a wise fool, or a trickster animal, they can be humorous and often have many shades of meaning shining throughout the story. I have told teaching stories for the past 40 years and I love them and I have to tell you each time I tell one I learn much more of myself. Today our story is from the indigenous education community. And it involves a trickster animal.

Once upon a time a long time ago a horrible monster stole all the buffalo from the plains and put them in his mountain hideout. "There," beamed the monster, "I have enough food to last forever." Coyote, a wild dog, called all the people and all the animals together.
in a great meeting to figure out what they could do. No one had an idea. They were too afraid of the monster to think at all.

"I scouted the monster," Coyote spoke up. "He lives with a very small boy."

"We cannot hurt a child," said one of the people. "Not even to get back our buffalo."

"That's understood," Coyote nodded. "But I was thinking a small boy must be very lonely with no one to love except a horrible monster. I think we should give him a pet to love. When the chance arises the pet we send can set the buffalo free."

All the people and all the animals thought this was a marvelous idea. First they sent mouse to win the heart of the small boy, and the small boy liked mouse and took him home. But the monster told the boy to send mouse away. Next the people sent kill-deer, a bird. But the bird fared no better. Coyote called another meeting. I think coyote told all the people and all the animals that I must go myself. That very day coyote set out for the monster's lair. When the boy saw coyote his eyes brightened. The boy loved coyote immediately and took him home. The monster was very angry. Get that mangy dog out of here before I eat you both. The boy and coyote ran out of the lair. The boy sat down. He tried not to cry but a tear ran down one cheek. Coyote licked it away.

"Poor dog," sighed the boy, "I bet you're hungry." Coyote put back his head and howled. That is the sound coyote makes to comfort you. The buffalo heard coyote's cry. It frightened them. They began shuffling and stamping their feet the way buffalo do when they're nervous. The more the boy cried the more coyote howled to make him feel better the more frightened the buffalo became.

One buffalo became so afraid that he began to run. The other buffalo ran after him. They ran and ran until they scattered all over the plains. The monster ran after the buffalo. When the monster was gone coyote took the small boy to live with the people. The monster hunted and hunted but the buffalo had scattered.

Late that night when the monster returned to his lair, young warriors were waiting. They killed the monster much to the relief of one small boy and all of the people and all of the animals.

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Can you find meanings in this story about education? If so send your insights to ba@luvmourconsulting.com. A three person panel will select the most relevant stories and they will be read at the end of a subsequent podcast. Again that’s ba@luvmourconsulting.com.

I look forward to your insights and to learning from you. Those insights selected will receive a copy of the award winning book so valuable for parents and educators, Grow Together: Parenting as a Path to Wellbeing, Wisdom, and Joy by Dr. Josette Luvmour.

Yes, we have the same last name and we are married and we have been working together in holistic education for more than 30 years. But that's not the reason I offer this book. Check out her many accolades and the book reviews on our website www.luvmourconsulting.com.

You probably know with your vast knowledge but do you know the quote from William Blake where he says, "I got down on my knees and called the worm mother."

Four Arrows: Yes. Isn't that honest?

Ba Luvmour: That's just a killer isn't it?

Four Arrows: that’s right, that’s right, and then also the one from D. H. Lawrence that said, "Oh dear rose that is planted in the vase on the table, we’ve cut you from your roots and thus from the love," D. H. Lawrence. But poets get this, right? And unfortunately politicians get it and religions get it. But they take it in the wrong direction.

Ba Luvmour: Yeah. So there'll be lots of people who hear this podcast who are inclined towards holistic education. The distribution that we’re intending is through all of us. This is an all of us process. What is the principle message you would like to get to them if you can leave them with one message what would it be?

Four Arrows: I guess the one message is one that came to me in a vision after a near death experience on Rio Urique River in Mexico. And it was a cat and a fawn, a mountain lion and a fawn that we had come upon. And they turned into the letters CAT FAWN and CAT concentration activated transformation is Trance Based Learning. And it's affected
by four major things and if we could just get in touch with those four things. FAWN - Fear, Authority, Words, and Nature.

And Fear, in the indigenous perspective, and Authority and Words and Nature are very different from dominant. Fear, and I'll say this real briefly, fear becomes ...

Ba Luvmour: Take your time.

Four Arrows: Alright so in ... If can understand and change our worldview of Fear, Authority, Words, and Nature, and then take the new worldview and replace the hypnotic programs that we now have with the new hypnotic programs I think that that's a major good starting place.

And so we know the dominant culture or view of fear is we don't like it. We avoid it at all costs. When it happens we freeze, we whatever, right? Alright. In the indigenous worldview once the fight or flight mechanism does its thing, Fear becomes an opportunity for practicing a virtue. Okay so patience, fortitude, generosity, humility, honesty.

Alright. Authority. In the dominant culture Authority comes from everywhere external to us. The preacher, the peddler, the papa. Everywhere. The books, the pope. Whereas in the indigenous culture there's only one high authority for decision-making and that's personal lived experience and reflection on it. Okay. Under the umbrella of recognizing everything is connected. People think that indigenous cultures are collective and dominant cultures individualistic. No, no. There's nobody more autonomous and individualistic than an indigenous person. It's just that the goal for that is for the greater good.

The third one is Words. In the dominant culture Words have become, and even in our book that Greg Cajete and I wrote a book called Critical Neurophilosophy & Indigenous Wisdom, we started out thinking that by coinciding it with brain science everybody would jump onto indigenous wisdom.

Ba Luvmour: I've thought that too.

Four Arrows: Yeah. Opposite happened. The institute of Noetic Science did an article on this. What we found was that the Western world, or the worldview lens that the neuroscientists look through biases, like for example they give monopoly game money out in a setting in a lab
and they whisper to some people “I want you to be generous and hand out your money to this guy” - while they're looking at their brains. And because a part of the brain lights up, when they give the money away, that's the same part of the brain where they had noticed, in a previous experiment, that selfishness exists, they conclude there's no such thing as altruistic generosity. It's all self-serving to get something in return right?

I guess and same thing with honesty. We did all these major core values of indigenous people and we found this across the board right. So we changed the title of the book rather than rewriting it to Critical Neurophilosophy. So words are used for deception. And one of the ... Neuroscientists, you know, say oh that's a natural human attribute for survival. No, no, it's not, right.

And so that's another one. You know, and with the English language which is noun based compared to our indigenous languages which are verb based, it's much easier to categorize and into deception.

Final one is of course, Nature. Nature is to be utilized only for human benefit is the primary function of our economic system. Whereas looking at as a teacher when I was at Standing Rock, you know, Mní wičhóni, the definition of that in Lakota is, this is water, this is the essence, of what you and I are like the mother's milk. When you drink that it's a whole different phenomenon right?

So if we look at how we think of, well we have a problem in life or a challenge in life. What am I afraid of and how can I practice a virtue? On whose authority do I believe that? Was it early childhood hypnotic belief? What words do I use when I talk about that to myself? Do I look in the mirror and say I am fat? Is that true? If it's not true then I've got to change it.

And if I'd really gone out and watched and anthill and seen what's going on there and tried to learn from that and then how can I put all those things together with Trance Based Learning.

Ba Luvmour: Wow thank you so much. Do you have another minute or two? I know you're so busy here and I'm so honored by your time.

Four Arrows: Sure, sure.

Ba Luvmour: Well at this Rite of Passage that I was mentioning to you, Josette and I were the elders there. And so each of the parents and staff had time during certain activities to come and talk with us and to a
person they saw themselves as broken. And it just struck me I have to tell you, Four Arrows, my heart was just weeping.

Four Arrows: Our world is broken.

Ba Luvmour: It's broken but they see themselves as broken. They've forgotten. They don't even have any notion and these are people who got it together to come to a rite of passage.

Four Arrows: But see those are the people that are actually, have a head start. because they recognize it. Once you recognize you're broken, that's why they came to the Rites of Passage, right? That's actually a step in that direction. It's the arrogance of not recognizing that you're broken because you got so much money for example. That's where the damage is really happening.

Ba Luvmour: Thank you and I have one more question just personal and we can edit this out later if you like but I was at a conference, Jack (Miller) was there to in Kauai, Hawaii. And on the presenters with us was a man from the Lakota Nation who was I don't know how to say it I'm sure I'm saying this poorly in charge or the head or the wisdom of the educational approach in the Lakota Nation for the children.

Four Arrows: Formally on the reservation in terms of the school system?

Ba Luvmour: Yes.

Four Arrows: Okay so yeah, go ahead.

Ba Luvmour: So and he happened to hear me talk about our understanding of development and how it goes and he brought out a shield and he pointed to the shield was divided into four quadrants and he said these quadrants are what you're talking about. Then he had to leave because there was a family emergency and he couldn't stay for the whole conference. And I never had a chance to ask about it and it just has stayed with me for so long.

Is there in your understanding a developmental, ... A developmental understanding of children? That's what he seemed to indicate.

Four Arrows: Oh absolutely. The best research that you can find on this is Darcia Narvaez. She's at Notre Dame and she's a specialist in child development. All her work now, she just won a major award for it, is looking at the difference in developmental approaches of
indigenous children who are nurtured much longer and you know all this kinda stuff.

So that's really good scholarly research. There's the Eight Shields program that breaks the four quadrants of the shield into eight places that is a nature based thing that's really a wonderful program that people can look at. But we're really essentially I think whoever this was; I was dean of education at Oglala Lakota College on the Pine Ridge Reservation.

Ba Luvmour: What year was that?

Four Arrows: I was there around when I told my story in 1999 I think from 1999 to...

Ba Luvmour: Oh this was earlier than that this was probably '94, '95.

Four Arrows: Yeah no so I would have been there after that. But keep in mind all of the reservations, all of the education in the United States is dictated by the state. And it's always a struggle to bring in the indigenous wisdom. It's a very small part of the day unfortunately. And I've had children at Northern Arizona University, children I'm sorry, young people who will be teachers in one semester, and on Columbus Day I gave them an assignment to go read from the primary documents of Columbus's own logbook.

They came back in shock because in all their education on the reservation, these are full blood Apache, Hopi, and Navajos. They had never learned untoward about the legacy. And that was ... I'm talking now this was 18 years ago. But still, right? So,...there were people on the reservation when I got there who were really fighting to bring cultural relevance into the curriculum. And he may have been one of those.

But essentially it seems like you're talking about the medicine wheel. And the medicine wheel learning is a developmental thing that once we do once cycle at another age level we start it again.

Ba Luvmour: Really I'm a grandfather now and I can tell you that's absolutely true.

Four Arrows: Exactly.

Ba Luvmour: Alright.
Four Arrows:        Good. It was a wonderful, uh, conversation.

Ba Luvmour:        Thank you so much.

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Ba and Josette Luvmour would also like to thank Self Design Graduate Institute. We teach there and at Self Design we nurture each learner’s ability to explore inner and outer worlds and discover his or her own deep understanding and vision. Go to the SDGI website and see for yourself. That’s www.SelfDesignInstitute.org.

This is Ba Luvmour reminding you that holistic relationships with children leads to joy and self-knowledge with the adults in their lives. With respect for you and for children everywhere, see you next time.