

## The Route to Understanding

Once, in Central Park in front of tens of thousands of rapt listeners, the Dalai Lama was asked, "What is the fastest way to get enlightened?"

In response, the Dalai Lama simply started to cry – His reaction was to put his face in his hands and weep. After a few moments, he said that this was not a question a practitioner (of meditation) would ask, and that if he knew what enlightenment was, there would be no hesitation to do what it takes to attain it.

Once, I went to a workshop through my employment in order to have an introduction to Native culture. We were seated in a huge circle and a Native woman in first nations garb began telling the story of her life. I listened and it was very interesting and intriguing but I kept wondering when the real workshop was going to begin with handouts and maybe a power point and a Q &A session. Then it dawned on me. This was how Native culture was shared. Through her stories I was witness to how residential schools affected her and her people, how Native spirituality is part of everyday existence, how they view Elders and so much more.

Sound bites are a media invention and are not conducive to learning the ways of a people or their struggle. We can not learn from sound bites. Stories are the basis of First Nations culture. They use stories to disseminate information, to provide guidance, to reinforce values, to convey their culture and way of life. The truth is absorbed slowly, steadily, constantly and holistically. The quick response , the sound bite is not useful or appropriate. The thoughtful descriptive narrative is more their way. Justice - seeking people must be motivated to look at the stories, the full story and history which brings us to the movement we see today. The "Why", the "How" and the "What" needs to be understood fully and cannot be distilled into a mere sound bite. Therefore as in the search for enlightenment, we must do what it takes to attain the knowledge and understand the history and the struggle of our First Nations people. This takes time, commitment and listening to their story.

Some sites to help understanding (for printing in the bulletin)

<http://ldcc8.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/LDCC-Information-Page.pdf>

<http://therealaboriginalcanadianfoodguide.wordpress.com/2013/01/25/dear-anothony-sowan/>

[idlenomore.ca](http://idlenomore.ca)