

# The Importance of Identity

**Norman Meade, Métis Elder:** Where I work today at the University of Manitoba as an Elder in residence there, one of the first questions I the students when they come and sit with me, is “do you know who you are?” And sometimes they say “yeah” and then the tell me and then I know either they either know or they don't know for sure who they are. And so we talk a bit about the roots of our family and why it's important to know that history of who you are. And I always tell them if you deny who you are or don't know you are it is kind of hard to start a young life when you don't know who you are because the world tells us something different you know. I always tell them “don't believe who the world tells you” who you are because they are probably wrong. They probably don't know you and they tell you who you are - you have to know who you are and that's where you get your strengths from. As an elder it is my work now at my age and with the knowledge and wisdom that I have, it is up to me as a n elder to help young people whoever they are, my grandchildren or somebody else's grandchildren to understand who they are and to just inspire them in a good way. I always tell them, because my mom always told us when you go out in the world she says take love with you because the world is short of love and that's the strongest of the emotions and if you have nothing else to give – give love to those you meet.