

# [ What Kind of Ancestor Do You Hope to Be: Responses to Elder Brenda Mason Part 2

## AECEO Guiding Committee on Truth and Reconciliation

Elder Brenda's beautiful and meaningful piece: *What kind of Ancestor do you hope to be?* was published in the Fall/Winter 2022 issue. The questions asked by Elder Brenda Mason, "What kind of imprints am I leaving?" and "What kind of footprints do I want to leave for those that are coming behind me?" are essential for self-reflection and human growth. They encourage us to consider how our words, actions, and behaviours impact others and how we can positively influence the people and the World around us.

The Committee asked for responses to these questions, which were published in the Spring/Summer 2023 issue, and we are pleased to publish Part 2 of the responses, which will finalize this collection.

In our final submission part two, we are honoured and very grateful to have a written contribution by Inuit Elder Ina Kuluguqtuq Zakal where she contemplates the kind of ancestor she will be—sharing that she will be someone leaving behind not just lessons from the past, but joyous moments for the future. She is rooted in pride and strength, sharing cultural stories and turning memories into lasting inspiration for generations. As she invites colleagues into her world, from snowy seal hunting scenes to the warmth of a qulliq-lit room, she empowers them to be sharers of Inuit knowledge, fostering a legacy of celebration and pride.

---

### Becoming Ancestor

#### Ina Kuluguqtuq Zakal

In thinking about the kind of ancestor I want to be, I know that I want to leave something fun.

Something children and youth can enjoy. What happened in the past, happened in the past. We can learn from the past and we can look forward to the future in a good way. Make it more fun.

I am proud and strong. I want to share my culture and knowledge with joy from a place that is both strong and fun.

From my ancestors I heard and hold stories that I learned, based on our real lived experiences. I use this learning to make activities in the classroom. The ideas come from the past and the content is lived in the present. The past and present experiences are the same and different.

The children love me when I am not just talking. The children love me when: I am moving, I am acting, I am storytelling, I am showing. For example, I remember, being dressed in a parka with snow pants, ready to go seal hunting. The children see my clothing, they see me. This is a time when all the staff, without an invitation, come to my room, to watch and learn.

In that moment, as the children and teachers watch, I have gone back to my childhood, when my dad, taught me to seal hunt. I act out looking for the small seal. I dramatize looking for the lake. I feel my dad, in my memory.

In that moment I give my co-workers permission to try living cultural knowledge. Some want to try, and some want to watch. Then I give my knowledge to my co-workers both Inuit and non-Inuit, to take what they have learned from me and to use this knowledge in their work with children.

Through my work, I am giving tools and permission to my colleagues to become sharers of Inuit knowledge.

Recently, I visited a teacher in the toddler room, where the qulliq was shining bright. There were no Inuit in the room. The RECE smiled at me with pride, and I knew I had done something good.

Thank you to all who have contributed to this series. The committee aims to foster a diverse and inclusive dialogue that can contribute to meaningful change and reconciliation. To connect with the guiding committee please email [info@aeceo.ca](mailto:info@aeceo.ca).

For more information: [https://www.aeceo.ca/ecelink\\_articles](https://www.aeceo.ca/ecelink_articles)