



Theory of Transformation

We understand that the world—Mother Earth, humanity, and all life—is in crisis today and humanity needs to change our current course. Societies and institutions change only when people change. And people change through transformative experiences, the power of creative imagination, and the transcendence of spiritual insights—all inspired by a sense of the sacred. Visions, experiences, teachings, and *a-ha* moments change our way of looking at the world and ourselves. Once we taste *Te Ha*, “the breath of life that connects us all” (Maori language), we gain a larger vision, and there is no turning back. Then we have an obligation and responsibility to live and act with that new vision in mind.

TCC understands that to accomplish our mission, we must inspire these types of transformative experiences through innovative programs. Therefore, we are committed to facilitating, producing, convening, building, nurturing, and funding learning communities and programs where holistic Indigenous knowledge and lifeways are at the forefront. We understand that Indigenous cultures and their ways of knowing and being are critically important and need to be protected and nurtured by their own culture bearers and leaders and by allies such as TCC. We utilize a “solidarity not charity” strategy in our partnerships with tribes and Indigenous communities, knowing that we, as native people and inter-cultural allies, have much to learn from the communities we partner with. We are committed to a process of reciprocal transformation where we (native nonprofit, grassroots Indigenous communities, and funders) can mutually learn and gain from each other.

TCC is committed to a process of inter-cultural cross-pollination – where ideas, languages, models, skills, teachings, technologies—can mix together in fertile and beneficial ways. That’s why all of our programs focus on strengthening and building reciprocal relationships and “weaving the web” to make strong communities, networks, and movements. All of our programs are also committed to education (native and Western forms) so that we can branch out to new communities and continue learning together to solve our most pressing eco-cultural issues and better protect Indigenous cultures.

Melissa Nelson, 2013