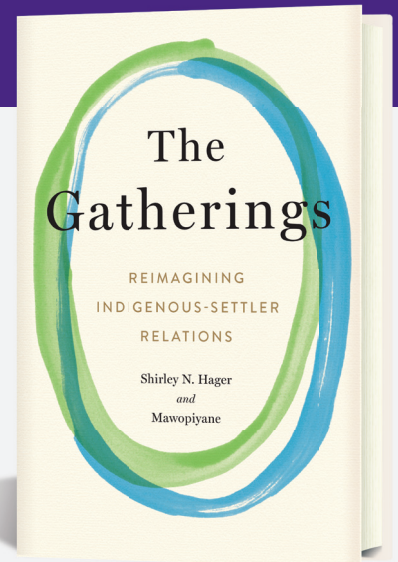


# *The Gatherings: Reimagining Indigenous-Settler Relations*

By Shirley N. Hager and Mawopiyane

In a world that requires knowledge and wisdom to address developing crises around us, *The Gatherings* shows how Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples can come together to create meaningful and lasting relationships.



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## Discussion Guide Questions

1. How did the author and other non-Natives in the Center for Vision and Policy begin to connect with Indigenous individuals? What did you notice about how the Gatherings were first formed? What decision enabled them to continue after the first two events?
2. What do you think the author means when she says that the colonization of America is “a trespass and a violation that North America has never come to terms with, neither in relation to the original inhabitants of this land nor within our own souls?”
3. In general, how did the topics that the Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants raised in the Circles tend to differ? What are your thoughts about these differences?
4. Wayne talks about some of the elements of the Circles that served to make him comfortable being there. What were some of these elements? How could these elements apply to other circles you find yourself in, particularly those that consist of people from different cultures or socio-economic backgrounds?
5. In his story, Dana suggests to a group of students that our world would be very different if, seven generations ago, we had been thinking about “the seventh generation,” which would be those of us living now. What do you think the world would be like now, if seven generations ago everyone had been thinking that way? Why didn’t we?
6. Barb shared her observations of the White people in the Circles, and reflected on how she thought their experience in the Circle was different from the way Wabanaki people experience being together. Did any of her reflections resonate for you? How did she witness the non-Natives changing? How did her insights and feelings change over time?
7. Marilyn describes how her worldview has changed, especially about land and land ownership, based on her connections with Indigenous peoples. What are some of the differences she describes between Western and Indigenous perspectives concerning land?

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8. What do you think kept people, Native and non-Native, coming back to the Gatherings? And why?
9. Alma says, “You don’t control a Circle. It will do its work. You just have to leave it alone and stop trying to manage it.” What do you think of this idea, and how is it different from usual Western ways of meeting?
10. What do you understand cultural appropriation to mean? What is the difference between appropriation and appreciation?
11. Studies show that, even when people of unequal societal privilege and position meet, if they are open to learning and being changed by the other, a sense of mutuality can still exist. The key is that what each has to offer is acknowledged and valued; in other words, there is an exchange. What helped a sense of mutuality and exchange to develop among participants in the Gatherings? What examples show that development? What was exchanged and how was it acknowledged and valued?
12. What does “colonization” mean and what were its origins in terms of the colonization of North America? What forms did colonization take when Europeans first came to this continent, and what forms does it take now?
13. How can non-Natives “belong” to the land they live on? Put another way, how can non-Natives be here in North America “legitimately?”
14. For White non-Natives: What is “White guilt?” If you think you’ve experienced this, what does it feel like? How might you deal with this feeling so it doesn’t get in the way of your relationships with Indigenous people and other people of color?
15. What did you learn from *The Gatherings* that was new or surprising about Indigenous peoples, about non-Native peoples, or about yourself? Did anything challenge or change an assumption that you had?