

Murray S. Ritchie

Biography

Outside the Box Activator 2015 - Now

Following the last downturn in oil and gas prices Murray found himself with some time on his hands and began consulting to small businesses and communities in British Columbia where he had made his home base for the past 35 years. One client he worked for was a First Nations community in the process of expanding their economic development into logging, mining, and tourism.

During this same time the government of BC was promoting foreign student enrollment in colleges and universities and hiring temporary foreign workers for their oil and gas projects in the north. This continuous promotion seemed out of step with the demographics of BC whereby the largest growing population of new and young workers were represented by First Nations, Métis and Inuit youth. This led Murray to investigate where they fit in the foreign student/worker programs.

Not surprisingly he discovered that this demographic was being passed over in both education and work opportunities with companies citing, among other things, safety training or lack thereof and lower education as the reasoning for passing them by. This was something Murray had been aware of following his consultancy with Global when he would travel to camps in the north and find indigenous youth working in the menial and low paying jobs such as catering or housekeeping.

Confirming this with youth from various First Nations communities Murray enlisted the help of 10 well respected and knowledgeable people from 10 First Nations communities in BC and the First Nations Safety Council of BC was incorporated under the societies act of BC in March of 2015. It was his involvement with the council that would lead Murray to be invited to sit on the program advisory board for the Occupational Health and Safety diploma program at BCIT.

While researching the failures of Joint Health and Safety Committees and through his involvement with various First Nations communities he quickly learned that Joint Committees needed to be reworked to be more organic and inclusive rather than committees governed by regulation. This would lead to speaking engagements at several regional chapters for professional organisations in North America which in turn led to an offer to work as a contract instructor at the University of Alberta.

The involvement with the University of Alberta would eventually land him a position at a college in the Maritimes. Faced with having to work within a very narrow curriculum being utilized at the college he began investigating how we educate, train, and test competency in the safety

profession. This became the springboard for the book *Seven Bad Habits of Safety Management – Examining System Failures* (Taylor & Francis CRC Press). Another bonus for making the move to the east coast is that it allowed him the opportunity to return to school at the University of Prince Edward Island and begin a diploma in Adult Education. The classes were cut short by the 2020 COVID pandemic, however, in the classes that were completed, he was introduced to the concept of UDL (Universal Design for Learning). From these concepts grew ideas for rethinking safety training development, delivery, and implementation.

Today Murray continues to be sought after as a presenter, guest lecturer, and committee facilitator. Having turned keynote speeches into keynote conversations, he engages audiences via Bluetooth technologies allowing them to participate in the keynote. This leads to a memorable experience and helps to start conversations he hopes will continue when he's done.

As for his first loves, drumming, he continues to play music with various friends and shares a beautiful home in Mexico with the only woman who can help him turn the pages.