

A DAY TO LISTEN - DJ O SHOW

My name is Orene Askew, also known as D.J. O Show. I'm Afro Indigenous and two-spirited from the Squamish Nation in Vancouver, British Columbia. I want Canadians to understand what we've been through in Canada, and I want them to know the truth. And while they do this understanding, because I have a lot of allies and they understand the ripple effects of residential school and what's coming out right now and what it means and what we need to do to move forward. And I want Canadians to know that, you know, we're not sitting here trying to lay a guilt trip on them. We're wanting them to know the truth and to spread it to their families and friends and understand where we're coming from.

And my mother is actually a residential school survivor, she went to day school about 5 minutes away from my house, and she's been hit pretty hard with the news that came out of Kamloops lately. And she just keeps sharing, sharing stories that she remembers. And I'm learning a lot from her and learning how to be strong, and something she said to me is that her tear ducts are pretty much dry, like, she's just so numb from crying. And it's really amazing to see her strength and to listen to what she's saying and taking mental notes of what we need to do as generational offsprings, basically, because I'm the first generation in my community that did not go to residential school. So that just goes to show you how far off we are from our parents going, our grandparents going, our aunties, our uncles, our cousins, our kin just going to residential school.

And people think that residential schools are just out in like rural Indigenous areas or reserves, but they're not like, we have one in our backyard. And I've been learning lately about what the processes to dig up bodies and how long the process is. And I think the numbers are just, the numbers are really going to increase. And I've been saying it lately, it's like I've just I've been so numb to the number count because our elders have said this to us since we're a little that they were there, the bodies are there, but now they have the data. So it's like, what do you do next? How do we move forward next? I think it's learning the truth as we talk about truth and reconciliation. The truth is the first part. You have to learn the truth about what happened, what the real numbers are, and how we can move forward.

For people to understand the truth, I think it's about educating themselves. Like from personal experience, and I'm an Indigenous person. I didn't learn about this in school. It's almost like we learned the opposite and this was just kind of put under the rug. Like I remember in social studies in high school, I learned about John A. MacDonald and the Confederation and how it was just a great experience and it really wasn't. So it's up to us to do the research ourselves, because if they're not teaching it in schools, hopefully I hope they do, we have to Google it ourselves, if that explained it in the best way. It's all about educating ourselves and other people too, and listen to the people who are in the public eye. Like there's so many influencers who are out there right now - they're teaching people like on social media. Social media is so powerful and there's just so many different influencers and educators and people in leadership who are talking about this right now.

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So it's really important for people to educate themselves and listen and don't come back with like a counterpart or an argument - it's about listening. Because what I've seen lately is people are trying to some people are trying to argue like saying, you know, they don't have all the data, you know, those kids or those bodies, they could have been sick, you know that's not how they passed away. And I'm just like, whoa, like what else do you need? The truth is there. The data is there. We've been saying it for years. What else do you need? So I think it's really important for people to educate themselves.