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One of my favorite *On Being* episodes is with [Layli Long Soldier](#), an Oglala Lakota poet. In her conversation with Krista, she references activist Faith Spotted Eagle on the importance of discussing America's history of colonialism:

“She was saying, for Native people, talking about these things is important to a process of healing. For me, I think it’s not just healing. I would add to that a sense of justice, being heard. And then, on the other hand, she said for non-Native people, hearing and listening to these narratives, these histories, and engaging in a conversation — it is not about guilt, and it’s not about shame. It is about...freedom from denial. It allows a liberation.”

I found this to be a powerful starting point when we first discussed writing a Native land acknowledgment for our central office in Minneapolis last year. Though the United States government issued [an official apology to Native peoples in 2009](#), we still live in a culture untrained in, and maybe even uncomfortable with, asking the question: Whose land are we on?

Land acknowledgments invite us to change this. Often shared at the beginning of public gatherings, a land acknowledgment is a statement recognizing the people indigenous to the land where you're gathered. They can take many forms and contexts: from a statement as simple as “The On Being Project is located on Dakota land” to an invitation to reflect deeper on histories of colonialism and displacement. When embraced and made commonplace, a land acknowledgment can help center a critical piece of our legacy that is often masked or minimized.

In the process of researching and writing the [land acknowledgment](#) for The On Being Project, I talked to Dakota and Ojibwe community members and elders, learned about the history of Minnesota, and cultivated deeper awareness of the great work of reclamation and activism going on now in the Twin Cities. Minnesota is a state with a complicated and layered history: It is both the site of the largest mass execution in United States history — of 38 Dakota men in 1862 — and now home to one of the largest urban Native American communities in the U.S. I am grateful to all the individuals who so generously contributed their perspectives and stories.

Of course, land acknowledgements aren't enough on their own. As the Archbishop [Desmond Tutu](#) says, “Reconciliation is a process. It's not something that is just an event.” Similarly, land acknowledgments are only one small piece of a path Americans have yet to genuinely or wholeheartedly unfold. But our hope is that they will eventually become commonplace — and that they will open us to do the work of reconciliation, healing, and community building that lies ahead.

Starting this week, we will include our land acknowledgement at the end of all our podcasts. You can [read the full text of the acknowledgment](#) at onbeing.org, where you'll also find a list of resources should you wish to write your own and learn more about the Native tribes and land where you live.

This is an evolving project for us. We'd love to hear your thoughts and feedback about how we can continue to grow and learn in this process — write to us at mail@onbeing.org.

Yours,
Kristin Lin
Editor, The On Being Project

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