

champions for poor people and ^{few} ~~no~~ champions for powerless people. Individuals have to go through a process of liberation where all of a sudden a light comes on and they say to themselves "this is not my fault, the situation I find myself in." Where they are ~~oftentimes~~, particularly ~~with~~ Native people, is the result of a lot of historical factors, ~~that spun them out~~ — a whole set of complex issues and concerns.

I don't think that ~~that~~ ^{knowing that necessarily} absolves people from them taking responsibility for their lives and themselves. But it helps them understand where they are coming from. If, when talking with people, you can put their problems in some kind of national or international or historical context, they stop ~~hating themselves and~~ blaming themselves for the situation they find themselves in. I think that there is a process that people have to go through so that they reach a point where they can stand up and take charge.

Interviewer:

You've talked recently about this notion of healthy communities, how do you see your work being tied to creating healthy communities?

Wilma:

I think, in a nutshell, that healthy communities are communities where people feel some sense of of interdependence. Not only are we living in a time where there are few national champions for poor people, and for people that are politically powerless — but there aren't that many people or leaders that are saying that interdependence in community is important. And so when I say "whole, healthy communities — I don't mean that all the social problems are solved or that there is a perfect economy or that everybody is happy. When I say whole, healthy communities, I mean communities that are healthy and strong and interdependent, I mean communities where people understand their connection to one another and when one falls, another is there to help pick them up. And in my mind, when I think of a whole, healthy community, I sort of see people holding hands or linking together