



## ***Chris Corrigan Biography***

I was born and raised in Toronto, Ontario and lived there for the first 18 years of my life, with the exception of three years spent in the United Kingdom. On my father's side, my ancestry is upper and middle class Irish and Scottish and on my mother's side farming and working class Irish, Manx and Ojibway. This particular mix of histories and legacies has inspired me and allowed me to be comfortable in a variety of settings and in the spaces in between diverse people and groups. One of my traditional teachers, [Paul Mishcogaboway Bourgeois](#), once called me "a living treaty" and the phrase still sticks decades later.

When I was 18 years old I moved to Peterborough, Ontario where I pursued a degree in [Native Studies and Native Management](#) at Trent University. While I was there I worked in the Native Management and Economic Development Program as a researcher and writer. I developed a set of two dozen teaching cases, and completed an honours thesis that looked at new models for studying organizational culture in Aboriginal organizations. My primary teachers while I was at Trent were [David Newhouse](#) and [Marlene Brant-Castellano](#).

Living in Peterborough was a seminal period in my life, and I began writing and performing music while I was there. I played in a variety of musical endeavours, wrote a soundtrack for "Glass Walls", a play by Stephen Couchman about homelessness and composed a series of pieces for a performance poetry piece called "Rumours of Detah" by Louis Fagan. Also in Peterborough, my writing blossomed as well, and I served in a number of editorial capacities with [Arthur](#), Trent University's student newspaper. I wrote concert reviews for two years for the [Peterborough Examiner](#) from 1989 to 1991.

In 1991 I moved to Ottawa Ontario and began working as a policy analyst with the [National Association of Friendship Centres](#), a national Aboriginal organization. It was here that I first became interested in working with groups. As a policy analyst, my job was to respond to federal government discussion papers and help represent our membership's interests in government policy development. I gradually learned that it made more sense - and resulted in more influential work - for me to collect stories from our members and our people to share with government rather than providing conceptual responses to federal ideas. I started working with groups to develop national programs including the [National Aboriginal Head Start Program](#) and the Community Safety and Crime Prevention Program as well as strengthening and devolving the Aboriginal Friendship Centre program to our organization's membership.

In 1994 along with my partner Caitlin Frost, I moved to Vancouver and continued working with the Friendship Centre movement through the [BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres](#). From 1994 to the end of 1995 I served as a negotiator for that organization in an off-reserve self-government framework agreement process.

When that was completed I took the dive into working with the federal government and spent three years as a Public Information and Consultation Advisor for the [Federal Treaty Negotiation Office](#). My job was to consult with non-Aboriginal people and organizations who were affected or interested in the BC Treaty Process. This job gave me tremendous experience in facilitating in complex, diverse and highly emotional environments and it exposed me to a side of British

Columbia that I never would have discovered otherwise. I worked closely with ranchers, loggers, corporate executives, local government representatives, environmentalists and regular citizens who were curious, and in some cases, fearful of the change happening in their communities.

As a member of the Aboriginal community however, I was not keen to stay in government for the rest of my working life, and so I left in 1999 and began my consulting practice focusing on bringing high quality facilitation skills to the Aboriginal community and others. By this time I was an experienced practitioner of Open Space Technology and very involved with that particular community of practice. I have designed and co-hosted dozens of Open Space Technology trainings since 1999 with Birgitt Williams, Michael Herman, David Stevenson, Wendy Farmer O'Neill, Tenneson Woolf and others and I have led over 120 Open Space Technology meetings in all kinds of settings. Many of my publications have been about Open Space, as well, including a book on the [Tao of Holding Space](#) and a co-edited collection of conversations with Michael Herman called "[Open Space Technology: A User's NON-Guide.](#)" In 2001, with Laurel Doersam, I co-hosted the [ninth annual international Open Space on Open Space conference in Vancouver.](#)

In 2001 I moved with my family to [Bowen Island](#), BC, near Vancouver and continued to operate from there. My facilitation practice and client list continued to grow and I became interested in the family of facilitation and leadership tools that were similar to Open Space. This led me into the [Art of Hosting](#) community of practice following a meeting with and an [invitation from Toke Moeller in 2003.](#) That association has led me into years of wonderful work teaching, learning and working with friends and colleagues across North America and Europe. I am deeply involved in this community of practice, co-hosting a half dozen or more Art of Hosting workshops a year and using these patterns, practices and methodologies in the work I continue to do with communities, businesses and organizations.

In this time period my work has been varied in scope and scale. I have worked everything from single two hour meetings to large conferences and long term systemic shifts. My work has continued to focus on Aboriginal communities and I have a conscious practice of bringing wisdom from that world to my work with non-Aboriginal organizations and communities and vice versa. I am a strong believer in connecting people and groups who are doing similar work and increasing the capacity for organizations and communities to engage in their own change initiatives. In this respect, combining the teaching and learning work I do with the organizational consulting has resulted in sustainable results on large scales and over time with several organizations. From a practice of facilitating groups my work now encompasses organizational learning, leadership support, community development and systemic change. [I have learned much over the years.](#)

In 2007 my life and business partner Caitlin Frost and I and our children Aine and Finn began [Harvest Moon Consultants, Ltd.](#) Harvest Moon combines the facilitation and coaching capacities of Caitlin and I to provide a full scale coaching and facilitating offering to organizations and leaders. This new chapter in our lives continues the story of our work and life together and invites our children into our business as well.

My work and life are deeply integrated, and clients are often exposed to various aspects of my "non-professional" life, including [martial arts](#), [juggling](#), [rock balancing](#), [poetry](#) and [music](#). These artistic activities keep my practice ground in the arts, and inspire me to continue living my life as a work of art, constantly revised and changed and improved for the benefit of all who come in contact with it.

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