

I contribute my way of thinking and living my life to a few different women who really brought some focus and development in me. In particular, my mother, I think that she was a strong, very strong, woman who lived a life that wasn't that easy. She grew up at the time that the signs were out, that there's no dogs or Indians allowed. She had her mouth washed out with soap for speaking her language. She was taken away from her family and brought to a mission home to be brought up by missionaries, and it wasn't because she didn't have family, and I don't know why that happened. So I look at my mom and she's a role model of strength and integrity. I was living in California for a good number of years and I went to an Elders conference, and there was a woman there, an Elder woman from Angoon, Lydia George. Things weren't starting off at the convention, the conference, very timely, and she said to me what's the matter with you womenfolk? The men never ran anything. They never ran anything. Why are you guys sitting back? Get up there! And so that was really, really, influential part for me. She said the men were always out hunting and gathering; they weren't in the villages doing the politicking and taking care of the community. Women were the ones that were in charge, and we have a history of that. When Westerners came here, and they wanted maps drawn, they gave credit to the male, but it's the women who took the stuff up into the interior for trading that helped draw those maps out.