

Insights from The Circle's All
Members Gathering 2025

WHAT'S EMERGING?



As we welcome the Spring Equinox, The Circle's team is reflecting on the soil we tended together during the fruitful harvest at the All Members Gathering (AMG) 2025. We trusted the seeds we planted and the care we gave, knowing that even under the snow, their roots were nourished by abundance. Now, as the snow melts, we're noticing the rich, fertile soil and the new growth that is emerging — the ongoing life of the work we began together.

Haley Lauten, The Circle's Membership Coordinator sat down with Ron Gamblin and Ash Mercredi of the National Learning Community (NLC) to explore how these seeds are sprouting in practice, and to share insights with our wider network.

The following reflections grew out of our conversation — invitations to pause, notice, and turn into a new season of learning and action. If you joined us at AMG 2025 and have insights or “aha” moments to share, we'd love to hear from you!





Ron Gamblin and Ash Mercredi, co-leaders of the National Learning Community and members of The Circle, arrived at AMG already wrestling with a question many Indigenous-led organizations know well:

“What does genuine partnership with non-Indigenous allies actually look like — and feel like?”

From the moment they walked through the door, met with warmth and laughter and the ease of a relative's home, something shifted. The Circle wasn't just talking about reciprocity — it was demonstrating it, deliberately and in every detail, including through the Wisdom Catchers whose role centered Indigenous voices and ways of knowing at the heart of the gathering. That modelling mattered. Since AMG, Ron and Ash have moved from a scarcity mindset into something more grounded: seeking out funders and partners who genuinely listen, engaging from strength rather than survival, and building the kind of relationships where their truth — including the ways reconciliation has been failing Indigenous youth — can finally land.

Q&A Highlights

What does reciprocity actually look like when it leaves the gathering and enters real life?

Ron

The Circle did a really beautiful job of sitting us in transformational moments, asking some big and hard questions in a way that felt joyful and safe. This is the first kind of “conference” where I walked into the room and was immediately greeted by smiles, warmth, and silliness. The same feeling you get when visiting a friend’s or relative’s house.



Ash

The Circle was very intentional about weaving that [theme of reciprocity] into the gathering and it was very apparent. I also really appreciated the Wisdom Catchers, the opportunity to call on folks and their gifts to capture the wisdom that was being shared at this gathering in a way that really centers Indigenous people and our perspectives.

Since AMG, what's happening? What cool thing is growing or being expressed in how you show up?

Ash

Around the time of AMG Ron and I were already starting to think about ways to be in meaningful relationships with partners, especially non-Indigenous partners, and the All Members Gathering was a very eye opening time to see how The Circle engages in those relationships, and I think that's a really big thing that we took forward from The All Members Gathering.

I know as Indigenous people, the way we are in relationship is really centred around reciprocity but being able to see how it's done in a way that doesn't feel like it's transactional, that is something I've been reflecting on a lot more since AMG.



What are the results? What change or transformation are you seeing—in yourself, your relationships, or your community?

Ash

It's easier for us now to feel more confident in how we are engaging funders or potential partners, we're working from an abundance mindset now instead of a scarcity mindset.

Ron

The Circle showed us what a healthier ecosystem could look like as we seek support for our community. The space they created also allowed us to get our truth out about how reconciliation has been failing the Indigenous youth organizers in our community. This isn't due to a lack of importance for Indigenous youth, but because those with power over reconciliation, including the philanthropic sector, haven't been fulfilling their roles meaningfully.

We stopped trying to push against closing doors. Now we only enter relationships with those willing to listen to our community's truth.



Ron & Ash's growing practices since AMG that can help us all be wiser:

- Choosing relationships that listen — and letting go of the ones that don't
- Engaging funders from an abundance mindset, not scarcity or survival
- Modelling reciprocity in how they show up with partners, not just naming it as a value
- Seeking ecosystems of support that reflect what a healthy, accountable relationship actually looks like
- Holding funders accountable — "funding and resourcing without question" as a measure of real reconciliation commitment

