Interviewer: Still trying to find out. Then, oh there's six in your home?

Interviewee: Yeah there's five kids and me.

Interviewer: Yeah. Okay thank you. And I want to apologize a couple times in the email XXX gets spelled wrong, I did catch it and I tried to fix it and I missed one.

Interviewee: No people do that because they're not used to it.

Interviewer: Yeah I figured but still it's not okay. At least, I try to make an effort and I have a little goodie bag for you. I know it's probably not enough because you have five little ones with you but maybe you get to enjoy this.

Interviewee: And it's good because there's no Pilot bread in town.

Interviewer: It's so hard to get it anywhere and like last time we thought it was easier to get it here and we had to run around everywhere. So, what I found out is only Walmart has it now.

Interviewee: Oh right now? This woman said she just went over there and they were out.

Interviewer: And it could be that it's out. So this one I brought from Anchorage but if you need any Pilot bread, let me know and I'll send it to you.

Interviewee: Okay I'll let you know.

Interviewer: If I can, okay if I can find it I'll send it to you.

Interviewee: Yeah. I was thinking I'll just order it from Amazon. I order everything from Amazon.

Interviewer: That's what I thought too and it was unavailable when I needed it. I was like you got to be kidding me. I've been through five different stores and finally found it in one of the Walmarts. Not every Walmart had it, just one.

Interviewee: One oh.

Interviewer: And there were three left. Like okay we'll buy all of those.

Interviewee: Sunday we went to Costco and this gal who was in front of me in line she said that she'd been to both Safeways, both Fred Meyers.

Interviewer: Fred Meyers doesn't have it anymore.

Interviewee: Oh.

Interviewer: Yeah they said they got rid of it. But Cars still has it.

Interviewee: That's Safeway yeah, that's Safeway here. And then Walmart didn't have it so her last bet was Costco. Because they usually have a bunch, Costco was out too.

Interviewer: Oh my gosh, how was that, I don't know, what is that? That's interesting.

Interviewee: Yeah we use it in pot latches. We have lots of Pilot bread so I don't know if everybody just.

Interviewer: Well let me know. You can get all comfortable now. We can.

Interviewee: You don't eat meat huh? Thank God, you know what I was going to make was a beef stew? And so, but I got, you know I just got behind and so I cooked the meat and let it cool so I could get all the fat off. And then I cook it some more with everything in it, so thank you Jesus, I knew there was a reason.

Interviewer: You know if you would have given me more I would have eaten it. Because I usually eat whatever is being served but usually I am a vegetarian but I was like you know it's okay.

Interviewee: Yeah I was thinking that when I was cooking and then we were going to go to the store and grab a salad at six but the car was so cold and I was like oh, so we had the two different vegetables so yeah.

Interviewer: This worked out perfectly well. Thank you I didn't want to make it so much trouble. Alright shall we get started then?

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay. Would you mind telling me a little bit about yourself? How did you get to where you are now an elder?

Interviewee: How did I get here. I was born and got old. Well, yeah, you know it's just a part of life. It's going to hit all of us. I had a very very dear friend who hated it. She hated it and she ended up dying really young. We were in our 40s. She got cancer. And so, but it's just something that you have to

accept. We all are going to be here, I couldn't wait to be an elder. Excuse me, I'm an elder over here.

Interviewer: First in line.

Interviewee: Not so much in line but you have to listen to me.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: So yeah no, and yeah and so like during the pandemic towards the end of the pandemic I decided just to go and grow my hair out, let it be gray. I'm 63 and I know that you know, things come back to you. I was raised for a while by my great aunt and great uncle when I was little and so I was very fortunate because they would have been my grandparents age and I didn't have any grandparents. And they, so I learned a lot of native things from them. My culture, traditions, and some of the things that we do. So I was very fortunate that way. And then living from rampart during the summers, during the fishing we learned how to cut fish and do all that kind of stuff. We stayed in my grandfather's old camp that my mom grew up in, fish camp. So, that was all good.

And yeah then I think that I really just didn't think about being native until I was in college, then it had become a big deal. I kind of didn't in high school but I'm a half breed. So, when I was going into high school there was a lot of racism, blacks and whites, natives were really out there. And then if you were a half breed, you were even more out there because you know, even the native people, I went to, they had a club in high school and it was native kids. And I walked in there and I was really quiet and shy, so quiet and shy.

And I walked in there and they were like what is she doing in here? And my cousin XXX from Steven's Village, he said that's my cousin, she's native. But I never went back. So, it was just, back then it was just hard. So, yeah.

Interviewer: Rough on either side.

Interviewee: Yeah. So I didn't know what else to say.

Interviewer: No that's perfect. How does it feel to be aging successfully or aging in a good way and what does it mean to you?

Interviewee: It means accepting it. You have to take more care of your health. You're going to get things that you never thought you'd get. I had a triple bypass

three years ago, four years ago. Didn't even know I had blockages. I was 99% blocked.

Interviewer: Oh wow.

Interviewee: And you know, diabetes. So now I have it where I'm prediabetic and it's just different things that you've got to do to take care of yourself and you've got to be willing to do that. You don't always get wiser but you try. That is a farce.

Interviewer: Well sometimes it's just the looks. What do you think successful aging means and what does it mean to you?

Interviewee: Successful aging is, I think, accepting it. Just going with it like we talked about my girlfriend who her looks are really important. And then my mother. My mother dyed her hair into her 70s and it was like Mom, you should just let your hair go. And she wouldn't but then finally she just did. I don't know what happened but she finally just did. And she had the most beautiful silver white hair. And she said everybody, they can't do enough for me. She said if I had known this, I would have went white a long time ago. Because I couldn't quit dying my hair until she quit dying hers. And then when I was letting mine go out, I said oh I'm hoping my hair comes out just like yours. Well it wasn't like hers because it was, it has too much gray in it and black. But she says on no you don't. I said oh yes I do. But yeah she's just kind of, my aunt, I have one aunt left but my aunts they were kind of vain but the thing is your body just can't hold up. It just is going to age and then to me, always as a young child and it probably is because my great aunt and uncle took care of me is that old people's faces to me are beautiful. You see all these different kinds of lines and character in their faces that they're just beautiful.

And so I think that's, you look at them and they just keep doing what they're doing and your body gets older and you do it a little bit slower but they just keep going and I think that's successful aging. Just keeping up and doing what you can do and talking to younger people, helping younger people. I think that's what our job is, is to teach, to be there to support and encourage young people.

Interviewer: Thank you. And how did you learn about aging well? From whom? Do you have an example?

Interviewee: Well I did that home care program, and I started working with older people. And not only that, I took a bunch of classes, we talked about dementia. What do you do? The girls that were in the classes learning to

be a certified nurse's aide. I would go after and let them practice on me so I learned a lot of tips from them. And I think just being around that, and then I did 42 page interviews.

Interviewer: 42 page interviews?

Interviewee: On all the elders in all our village. The only village I didn't go to was Beaver.

Interviewer: Oh wow.

Interviewee: So I went to all 30 something villages in the region.

Interviewer: Wow.

Interviewee: And saw all the elders and that's when we had a lot of elders that were still at home and they were the ones that aged successfully. They weren't drinking, weren't doing stuff, smoking. Mine was smoking. But you know, they were doing things, eating healthy food and that kind of stuff. But I think that's where I learned the most. And then their wisdom because you go visit them and you're doing 42 pages you're going to be talking about other things too. But I also knew there was certain things you couldn't ask. Your clan, you don't talk about death and dying for us. That's just you don't talk it, so people don't usually do a living will and you just don't ask questions about it. So I needed to leave those questions blank. But, they had sex questions on there. And I thought oh, well they never said anything in your clan about that. I'm a college graduate. Oh my God I don't know where the heck I was, but it wasn't a village that I knew my mom knew anything about. They were on the phone to my mother. I got home and my mom says.

Interviewer: Seriously?

Interviewee: Seriously. What are you asking people?

Interviewer: And quickly too.

Interviewee: So, that was the end of those questions. It was like no.

Interviewer: I can only imagine.

Interviewee: You're getting too big for your britches.

Interviewer: That is funny.

Interviewee: So, no. It got around. Oh my God that was awful.

Interviewer: I was going to say I can only imagine.

Interviewee: And it was embarrassing to ask them but then it was even worse when you get home and they've already called your mom and you're in your 20s. oh my God.

Interviewer: I'll make sure I never ask about that.

Interviewee: Not about death and dying and nothing about sex.

Interviewer: Okay. Good to remind me. Okay. And how does aging affect your day to day life? Do you have an example?

Interviewee: You're more tired. You're more tired.

Interviewer: Yeah with five little ones they take a lot of energy.

Interviewee: Right but you're more tired then I think. I think since, I don't know my heart had been bad for a while so that probably is part of it but yeah. You just, and then you can't do, this is what my dad told me too. He said you can't do the things you used to be able to do without thinking about it you know? And, are you okay?

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: So, yeah. And so, you know there's some things that you know, exercise is harder. I need to do more exercise but I don't. And it's just hard. Your body just can't do those things. So I think those are the two. And sleeping less.

Interviewer: Okay. And oh, this page, sorry missing one but I got it.

Interviewee: It's okay.

Interviewer: How did that happen? Just a second. Okay well that's embarrassing on my part. Let me check the other one I have a couple more. My goodness. One more.

Interviewee: Okay if you don't have it we can always answer those questions tomorrow too.

Interviewer: Yeah exactly if nothing else we'll finish up these because I do have, let me check this one. We prepared these in advance. Well, okay so maybe we do that. Just, plan B.

Interviewee: There's always another way around doing things.

Interviewer: Goodness. Alright well let's go ahead with this one. How do you know if someone is regarded as an elder or not? Is there anything that happens to mark this transition to a certain age?

Interviewee: No. Because there's two researchers at the university and I was helping them work on it and I wanted to be a part of it and they're doing elders in training and I thought, I want to do that. She just looked at me and she said XXX, you're already an elder. Oh. Well no one told me.

Interviewer: You don't need any training. How did they determine though?

Interviewee: And I've supported these girls since when they started, after their bachelor's degrees to encourage them to go further, get their PhDs in their research and I don't know if it's because of that or what because it was like, you know when developing homecare and involved in all the elder stuff, tribal people outside, I think it's more outside than it is here, say that 55 is when you become an elder. And that was a while ago because everything was so hard and we didn't live as long.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: Okay. So now, it's not, and it's different people. A friend of mine, he's a year younger than me and he's going to be 63 and I'll be 64 pretty soon. Anyway, and he's like nope, 65. And he probably would change it to 67 or 70 if he could but he can't get past 65. So yeah I think it's for different people, you just don't know. I think it's when people start regarding. So now my aunt would never say I was an elder. And she's like you know, she's quite a bit older than me, 20 years older than I am. Yeah it just depends.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: I think for different people it's different things. And then some people they're old enough but they don't have the same lifestyle, they don't have a good lifestyle so they really are not given that. They're treated with respect but they're not really given that title of elder because elder means more than just being old. It means, I don't know how to say it. It just

means supporting the youth. Sharing, living a good life and trying to do what you're supposed to do and you know. Trying to walk the right walk.

Interviewer: Okay. Do you think elders in your community are aging successfully and how has this changed compared to 20 years ago?

Interviewee: It is such a different world than 20 years ago. I think they are, most of them are. In the villages, from what I've seen because when they develop, it's been 30 years since I developed Tandechief's Homecare Program and I'm thinking the elders then, they were more outside though. When you live in towns and cities you're on the inside. But when you have to cut your own wood and you have to do those kind of things and you're outside, you're healthier I think. And I guess successful aging is just knowing your place. Just feeling comfortable in your place in life. And now you know, everybody has got TV, they sit in front of it. You're not busy doing the things that you used to. You're not visiting people. You're just isolating yourself more I think. So it's not as healthy as it used to be.

And the foods too. You know you got processed foods and everything else instead of eating off the land. So and that's a big difference.

Interviewer: Yeah so do you think with being outside more in villages and sometimes still even up to now, you feel that's helping them to age well?

Interviewee: Yes. Because I think, because we're connected to the land and to the water. And when you look, if you get a chance, go to our clinic because on the floor, have you been to Chief? They have a circle and it's all the seasons. So, for us, we follow the seasons and the food that was available. And it's all outside, it's all on the land, it's on the water. That's where our spirituality comes from. That's where everything that we have is outside on the land or on the water. And on the water. And that makes us stronger, that makes us healthier. It makes our minds better.

Interviewer: Okay. Why do you think elders move away from their communities?

Interviewee: Because they're old and it's harder. You know it's harder and people are not, they're not the same like, this was before I was born. My grandfather was alive. And some places they do now, they still do it but not always. They really took care of their elders. They would go over and do what was needed, no one had to pay. It was like okay I started homecare, I called Rampart to see if they had anybody they wanted to change. One of my aunts said what the heck, we take care of our own. And that's what we did and we don't do that now. We don't do that. So, we give a lot of lip

service to taking care of elders actually and respecting them and all that kind of stuff but actually doing it, no. It's less, it's so much less.

Interviewer: Yeah. Do you think it's only in rural communities?

Interviewee: No it's all over.

Interviewer: It's all over.

Interviewee: It's even worse in town because people can't even go across town to the nursing home to visit. And it really shows the different things. My mom and dad would always go over to Denali Center once a week if not more and they would go to the hospital and just visit old people or people their age.

Interviewer: Yeah just to be with them.

Interviewee: Yeah just to be with them, just to visit.

Interviewer: Yeah. Interesting. And that doesn't.

Interviewee: And we don't do that anymore and we should.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: So, and I think that's true in all cultures. But the more acculturated you get, the less you do that which is really sad because you would think that you would be more helpful because it's easier.

Interviewer: Yeah. Depending on what gets acculturated. Sometimes good things make it in but not always.

Interviewee: Not always.

Interviewer: How do you think aging is different in rural and urban settings?

Interviewee: That's really different. I think they're a little more connected to their families and to people in the communities than you are in urban settings. You're not as connected because you have community out there and we don't have community here in Fairbanks. There's no getting together, we may have a tribal hall but that's used for family pot latches, that kind of stuff. Not community gatherings where the whole community. Hawakaket, basketball games man they're all there. I went out, I worked for Big Brothers Big Sisters and did their rural expansion. I do ice cream socials

everybody in town was there. Fairbanks, you know, it's not like that and so native people are disconnected.

Interviewer: You think it's because they're all from different areas and they just don't?

Interviewee: Yeah and it's just different. Life here, yeah we all live in different areas but even if we live in similar areas, I don't know how can we do that. See when I was growing up in Fairbanks, I had one aunt on this side of the street, one aunt on this side. Then the next street was another and we were over here so we were all in the same subdivision, we were very close. And so we all grew up together. It was like you know, we all did everything together. And so, it was like being in a village, we had our own community. But people don't, they don't get to do that. That was because they all moved to Fairbanks for work and stuff.

Interviewer: Yeah. It's probably more so that families get more, one is over here, one is over there, one over there.

Interviewee: You're right. And that's what happened, the flood came and then we moved out to Fox and we had another family that moved out there too so there was two sisters out there. My mom and my aunt XXX and them. And then, two that stayed in that same neighborhood but we'd always go over and visit the one. My mom was really close to her older sister. And they were both very religious because they gave up alcohol for God which for us, we were very fortunate. And the other two aunts drank. They would get together sometimes but not often.

Interviewer: Yeah makes sense. Do you have any advice for people in your community who want to age successfully?

Interviewee: Try to be healthy, try to get out on the land or the water or whatever. Even if it's just walking around your backyard. Be there for youth, volunteer. If you don't have youth around you, volunteer. Fairbanks Associations have different programs for youth. Just being, give over yourself, do things. Do the lunch program. Because then you're all together. The more you can have that community, that is one community that goes on is the lunch program. So, have you been there?

Interviewer: Not yet no. I've been only to that conference.

Interviewee: Okay they have a native lunch program.

Interviewer: Is it every day?

Interviewee: Yes. Except for weekends. Carlo building. XXX runs it.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: I don't know her number. I'll give you the place to call.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: XXX bring me my computer bag.

Interviewer: Yeah I cleaned up my bag because otherwise I would have had my computer with all the questions. Of course I took care of it. But you know what? I may be able to pull it up on my phone. Let me check on that.

Interviewee: You might want to put some milk in XXX's cup. What's that cup there then. Okay so put that cup in the sink. Allakaket everyone will show up to do stuff, or at least they would when I worked way back when.

Interviewer: Okay thank you.

Interviewee: Oh let me put that. Yeah and you can do, usually you can go up there and eat and just pay for lunch and talk to people so just give her a call because you guys have time at 11:00.

Interviewer: Yeah I have time all day actually. XXX is the one who's a little bit scattered throughout the day but yeah I have time. Yes.

Interviewee: And you'll just have to come back because I was in Anchorage all last week and so, it wasn't on my mind and my boss got sick, got me sick, and the kids got sick and it was like oh my God please. And then when you called me I was like what? Oh shoot yeah.

Interviewer: Oh I'm so sorry.

Interviewee: And then I realized that XXX never called you and then after she went, she got rid of her home phone so in her house her internet doesn't always work. But she was at the doctors but I got ahold of XXX but I didn't get to talk to her, I just text her. And XXX and so I will talk to them again.

Interviewer: Oh goodness.

Interviewee: I said they'll met you anywhere. They were scared to have you come to their homes it's crazy, it's two gals, they're not going to do nothing to

you. But maybe if I go with you and introduce you and leave or something, they'll figure it out.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: And it's so cold right now too.

Interviewer: It is, cars don't start. XXX was saying I can meet you when it's zero degrees.

Interviewee: See yeah. But you can do them also over the phone so that's what I need to tell XXX and XXX too that they can do it over the phone.

Interviewer: Yeah we can do that.

Interviewee: And where is XXX from?

Interviewer: She grew up here.

Interviewee: In Fairbanks. Is she Alaska native?

Interviewer: She is not Alaska native but she grew up here. Alright I have a couple more questions and I'm going to check one more time, I should be able to access it. Are you getting tired.

Interviewee: No just go ahead.

Interviewer: Yeah okay. If we can meet tomorrow and just finish up those other questions.

Interviewee: We can just finish these.

Interviewer: Do you have any advice, oh no you already answered that one, advice for people who want to age successfully and how do you feel about sharing your knowledge with the next generation? What are the benefits and challenges?

Interviewee: Oh I think it's really really important especially anything we know about our culture. Like I said we work with suicide and a lot of kids it's because they don't have an identity. They don't know who they are, where they come from. And when you think about it, any Alaska native comes from a hell of a long line of really strong people because who could live here with no transportation, no guns, no nothing, just living off the land. We are strong, resilient people and our youth need to know that. And we need to

share everything we know. I work with the _____ [0:34:34] and they teach ice safety because that's so important and it's the same for us. There's different things growing up when you're traveling the Yukon River you have to know where sand bars are, you have to know where different things are on the river, Yukon River so you don't get hurt or something doesn't happen.

Interviewer: Exactly.

Interviewee: And so there's all this knowledge that we know and you never know what's going to happen in the world you know, XXX he wanted to teach people and kids and he would be so disappointed because all of the white people wanted to learn but none of the native people wanted to learn how to live off the land because his mother told him at one time, sometime we will have to go back to that. And he wanted people to be able to. And so it's important. Everything that we can, how do you start a fire. All those kind of things. It's so important. So I think that's the most important thing that we can do is from our experiences they're going to be different for kids of today. But it gives them some insight and they're hungry for it. They may act like they're not listening but they're listening because I bet you everybody's got the ear halfway down here.

Interviewer: Yeah. That was what was shared just being in their moods with other older folks and just listening in and hearing everything and that's later on that's what comes back and not that I participated a whole lot but I do remember.

Interviewee: And it's the same thing for them and you never know when something that you've done is going to save somebody else's life or their heart emotionally or whatever.

Interviewer: Yeah. And why do you share your experiences with youth? What motivates you? And in a way you kind of answered that question.

Interviewee: Yeah and that's why. It's because it's a help.

Interviewer: Okay and what is the most important thing you want to share with youth?

Interviewee: Be honest, be true to yourself. Know how to, have part of you that knows you can depend on yourself and you don't have to depend on other people. And that's the strength and resilience that our people have done all through the ages. There was a story, I went to Allakaket and I always say who I am, I'm XXX. My parents are XXX from Rampart, my father is XXX from Texas. My great grandmother was XXX. And then they knew

because she had, because this was in the 1800s, early 1900s. She had helped the people in Allakaket. People were nomadic. She had helped people from Allakaket. They were traveling and they were starving and her and this other old lady they had food put away and so when this band of Allakaket people came through, they fed them and saved their lives. So they knew her so that was a story. And that's how our people were.

So that, to me, we all have stories like this that we don't know about. And it could be, you need to find out.

Interviewer: Yeah and tell those stories.

Interviewee: And tell them, and tell them. And share what you have, don't be greedy and keep everything to yourself because it comes back to you.

Interviewer: Yeah. Can you give me a second and I can see if I can find the rest of the questions.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: I'm so sorry.

Interviewee: No don't worry about it.

Interviewer: I have no idea why that happened.

Interviewee: Don't worry about it.

Interviewer: And I think I have it. And I will just have a few more questions and then we're done.

Interviewee: Yeah it's not that late anyways. I got another few hours.

Interviewer: Oh okay I go to bed at 9:00.

Interviewee: Oh so you got ten minutes. I'll just make a bed for you.

Interviewer: Alright I'm staying. Okay so, you're still okay right?

Interviewee: I'm fine.

Interviewer: Alright. So we'll kind of switch around a little bit. So how has aging affected your relationships with family, friends, with community? Do you have some examples?

Interviewee: I don't think it's affected much. Because they don't see me as old. And to me that's a problem. I am old. Cut me some slack. So, yeah. But I'm the same way, I have a girlfriend, a lot of my really close friends are older than me. And so my girlfriends are like ten years older than me.

Interviewer: Yeah so you're the baby.

Interviewee: But when we get together it's like we're the same age and we just do, we went on vacation not last summer but the summer before, me and the kids and my girlfriend XXX, to Seattle. And man we walked like crazy. And her hips hurt too but you just do it and we don't, it doesn't register that we're, yeah we're old. And XXX is like ten years older than me, I need to take that into account. But those two they're young so they don't think about it. My daughter doesn't think about it. They think of you as just being a part. Even if you remind them and remind them.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: If you're apart for a long period of time and got back together and there would be a visual difference. Because it's just happening day to day.

Interviewer: Yeah takes some time to recognize it.

Interviewee: Yep.

Interviewer: How have your relationships affected your understanding of aging?

Interviewee: I think one are my mom and dad. I think working with elders to begin with when I was younger, understanding dementia, watching my parents age and what they could do and couldn't do. I was a little different than, let's say, my brother and my sister. Because I had all this training in elder care and that kind of stuff on how we saw our parents. Because I could tell and I knew, you have to give them a bunch of slack because they're old. And my mom had, not Alzheimer's but the dementia that when you're veins in your head get.

Interviewer: The cardiovascular?

Interviewee: Yeah she had that. And then my dad had bypasses and stuff so his mind was kind of going a little bit. And yeah and watching them and living with my great aunt and uncle you just knew because to me they were really old when I was little. So, yeah. So I think being around them.

Interviewer: Okay. And what supports you in aging well and how are you able to age successfully?

Interviewee: What supports me? Doctors.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: Doctors I think. That's what supports you. Because then you know what's going on with you and what you need to do.

Interviewer: Why do you think some elders age well and some do not?

Interviewee: I think it's whether you accept it or you don't accept it. If you want to fight against it, it's going to happen no matter what. And if you can accept it then it's just a part of life. It's like you know, growing up. No matter what, it's there and you just need to say okay here I am.

Interviewer: Yeah. How can you tell that an elder is aging well? Do you have an example?

Interviewee: You know when I look at the elders that I used to visit and they're still going out hunting, they're still going out fishing. They're still doing the things they used to do. They're a little bit slower but they're still going out and they're taking people with them, younger people with them. That to me is, or they're out berry picking or they're making bread. And they have kids in their house that are learning. That to me is successful aging and those are my examples.

Interviewer: Okay and how can you tell that an elder is aging poorly?

Interviewee: When they're drinking and all that kind of stuff. Because they're trying to hide the pain. Whatever the pain was and however long they've had it.

Interviewer: Yeah. What does a person need to do to age well? To prevent poor aging.

Interviewee: Need to not drink. I mean I guess it's okay to drink socially or occasionally but not to be an alcoholic. You need to take care of your health. That's the main thing and when you're drinking you're not doing that.

Interviewer: And you said something about emotions.

Interviewee: Yeah your emotions, being on the land and all that stuff for your emotional health, your mental health, taking care of those things. Those are just as important as your body.

Interviewer: Yeah. What does it mean to be an elder and what is an elder's role?

Interviewee: Well one thing you got to be old. That is not just being old and it's not always about wisdom because we are not always wise. We're just human beings. But, say it again?

Interviewer: What does it mean to be an elder and what is an elder's role?

Interviewee: An elder's role is to teach and be supportive and to be, yeah, be connected to youth. Kids really need us. And the other, what does it mean to be an elder? It means to be walking on the, trying to do what you're supposed to be doing, walking on the right road. Trying to be like we should be throughout our whole life. The best that we can be. And we're not always going to make it but we're going to have some things that are blah but that's just being human beings.

Interviewer: How do you know what is the right, like walking the right walk or being on the right path?

Interviewee: When you're true to yourself. And you're not doing anything that really harms yourself or others. Those kind of things. Yeah. I think those are the things if you can be true to yourself and things happen to us when we're young and we have to deal with it or get past it somehow so we're not trying to cover the pain of whatever it was. Otherwise, we have emotional issues and mental health issues. And we're trying to cover it up and not feel it and that's why people drink and do those kind of things and we need to be as whole as we can be and as balanced.

Interviewer: Okay. And how do you know if someone is regarded as an elder or not?

Interviewee: I don't know, I think it's how they live their life and there are some people, even when I was young, you knew that some people were just good. And you would listen to them and their stories and you would know if someone is not, even if they weren't drinking and stuff, you knew like there was this one guy we knew that he gave you a vibe. And he was one of the molesters. So you know, you just kind of know.

Interviewer: Do you think there's something that happens to mark this transition or a certain age that leads into being an elder? I know we had the age earlier.

Interviewee: Yeah this is like when those girls told me I was an elder. I didn't even know I was. I thought I still needed training to go through. I think you really just don't know. I mean when people start being different to you, like those girls just flat out told me. Like I probably wouldn't have ever known I was an elder. I was like that was during pandemic and so that's when I was like oh well I'm supposed to look the part now. Don't have to go to the hairdresser every four weeks.

Interviewer: Yeah that's the best part.

Interviewee: Yes and trying to keep on top of those white ones. Yeah crazy.

Interviewer: Well that's all the questions I had. Sorry for a little bit of a jump but we did get it all done.

Interviewee: That's okay. That's okay and then I want to see what time, what I have tomorrow. I should be at the office by.