Elders in many Aboriginal communities across Canada often indicate the need to think in terms of “seven generations”. Mi’kmaw Elders are no exception in this regard. And, in recent years, the expression has found its way into mainstream usage, in discussions about sustainability, economic development, environmental management, ecosystem science, green energy, etc. Frequently, this mainstream usage does not agree with the way the concept is understood by Mi’kmaw Elders. Thus, Mi’kmaw Elder Murdena Marshall and Canada Research Chair in Integrative Science Cheryl Bartlett thought it timely and necessary to create visuals to depict the Mi’kmaw understanding. These are visuals found on the next pages.

Since the mid 1800s, the toe of the Athabasca Glacier in the Columbia Icefield, a UNESCO-designated World Heritage Site in Western Canada, has retreated more than 1.5 km across the valley floor ...
a Mi’kmaw understanding

How many years?

“TIME”
in terms of

“SEVEN GENERATIONS”
a Mi’kmaw understanding

ONE GENERATION ≈ 120 years

3

you or me

3

Great Grand Parent
Grand Parent
Parent
Child
Unborn
Unborn of Unborn
Unborn of Unborn

20 yr 20 yr 20 yr 20 yr 20 yr 20 yr 20 yr

a Mi’kmaw understanding

SEVEN GENERATIONS ≈ 840 years

ONE GENERATION ≈ 120 years

Great Grand Parent
Grand Parent
Parent
Child
Unborn
Unborn of Unborn
Unborn of Unborn

20 yr 20 yr 20 yr 20 yr 20 yr 20 yr 20 yr