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### Indigenous Values and their Place in Contemporary Discussions of Sustainability

Joey Miller

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# **SUSTAINABILITY RESEARCH and PRACTICE SEMINAR**

**OCTOBER 11, 2023**

**Professor Joey Miller**

*Philosophy*

Indigenous Values and their Place in  
Contemporary Discussions of Sustainability

## **Why Care About Values?**

Definitions & Practice

## **Indigenous Values**

Examples

Contrast: Western Ethical Frameworks

## **Role of Indigenous Values in Sustainability**

Skeptical Argument

Optimistic Argument

# Outline

Why  
Care  
About  
Values  
?

Definitions

Practices

Aims

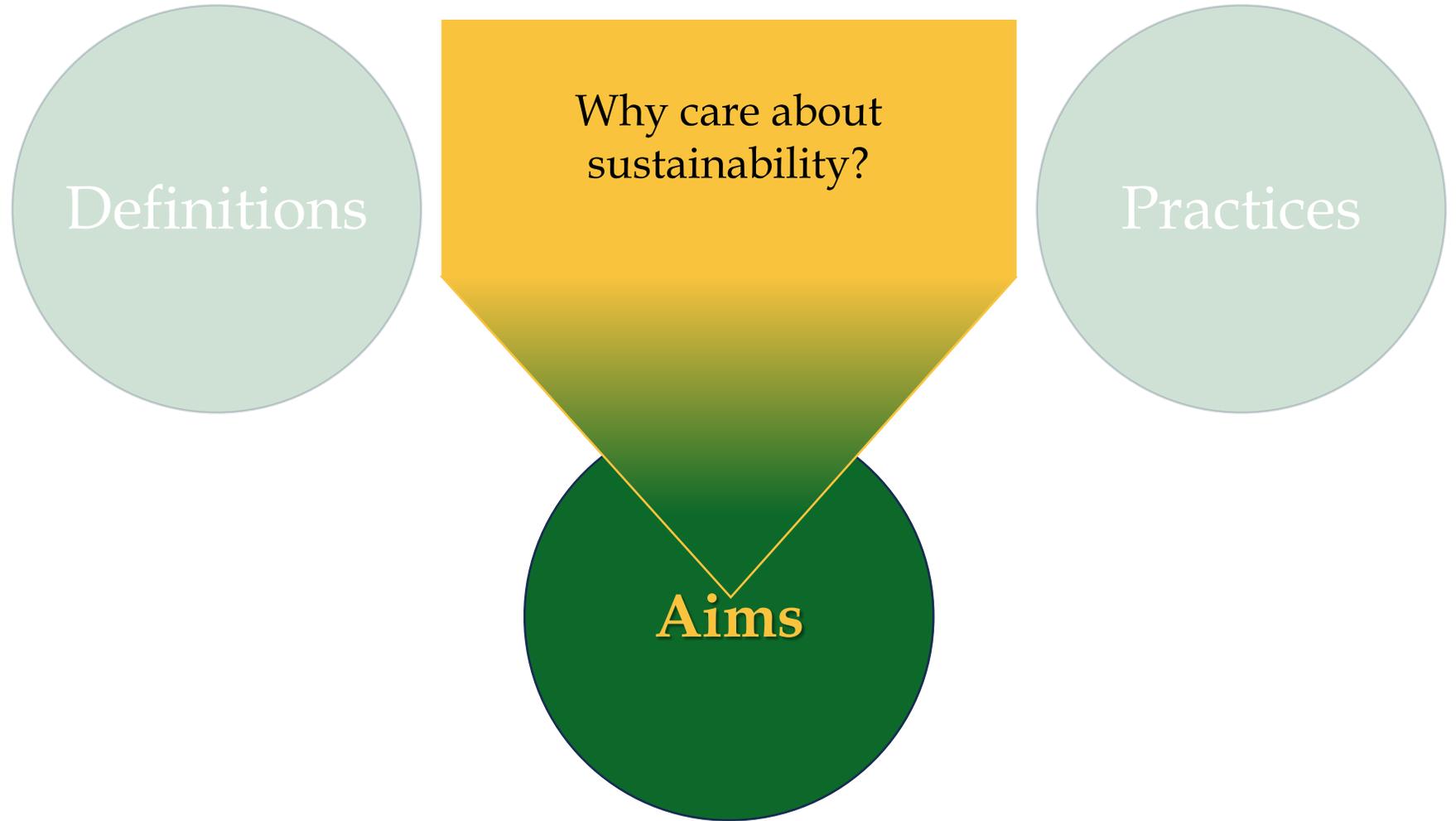
# Why Care About Values ?

Definitions

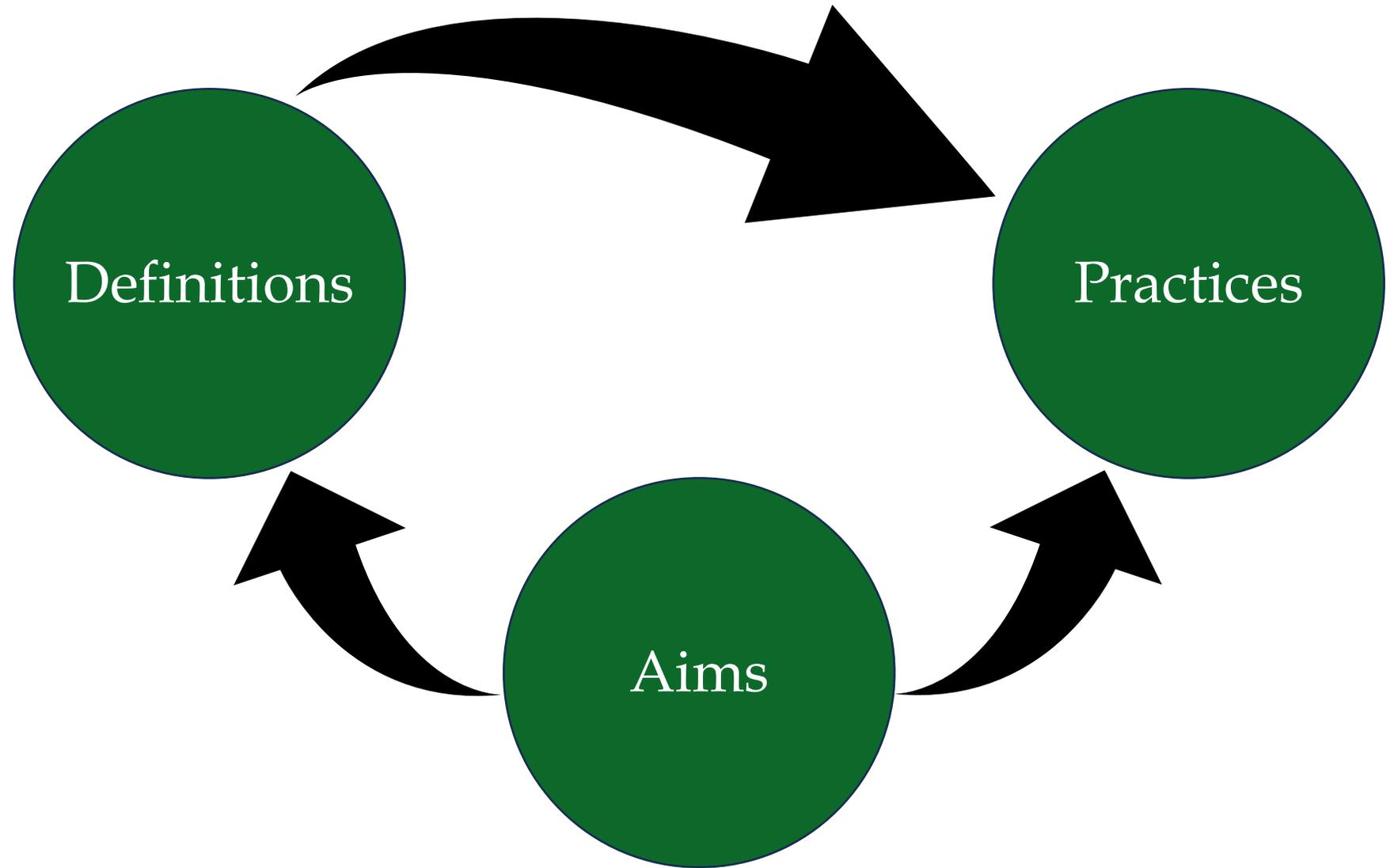
Practices

**Aims**

# Why Care About Values ?



Why  
Care  
About  
Values  
?



Why  
Care  
About  
Values  
?

**Definitions**

Practices

Aims

# Why Care About Values ?

**Definitions**

“meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” (U.N. Brundtland Commission, 1987)

Practices

Aims

# Why Care About Values ?

## Definitions

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graph LR; D((Definitions)) --- Q1["meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." (U.N. Brundtland Commission, 1987)]; D --- Q2["Everything that we need for our survival and well-being depends, either directly or indirectly, on our natural environment. To pursue sustainability is to create and maintain the conditions under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony to support present and future generations." (EPA)]; P((Practices));
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# Why Care About Values ?

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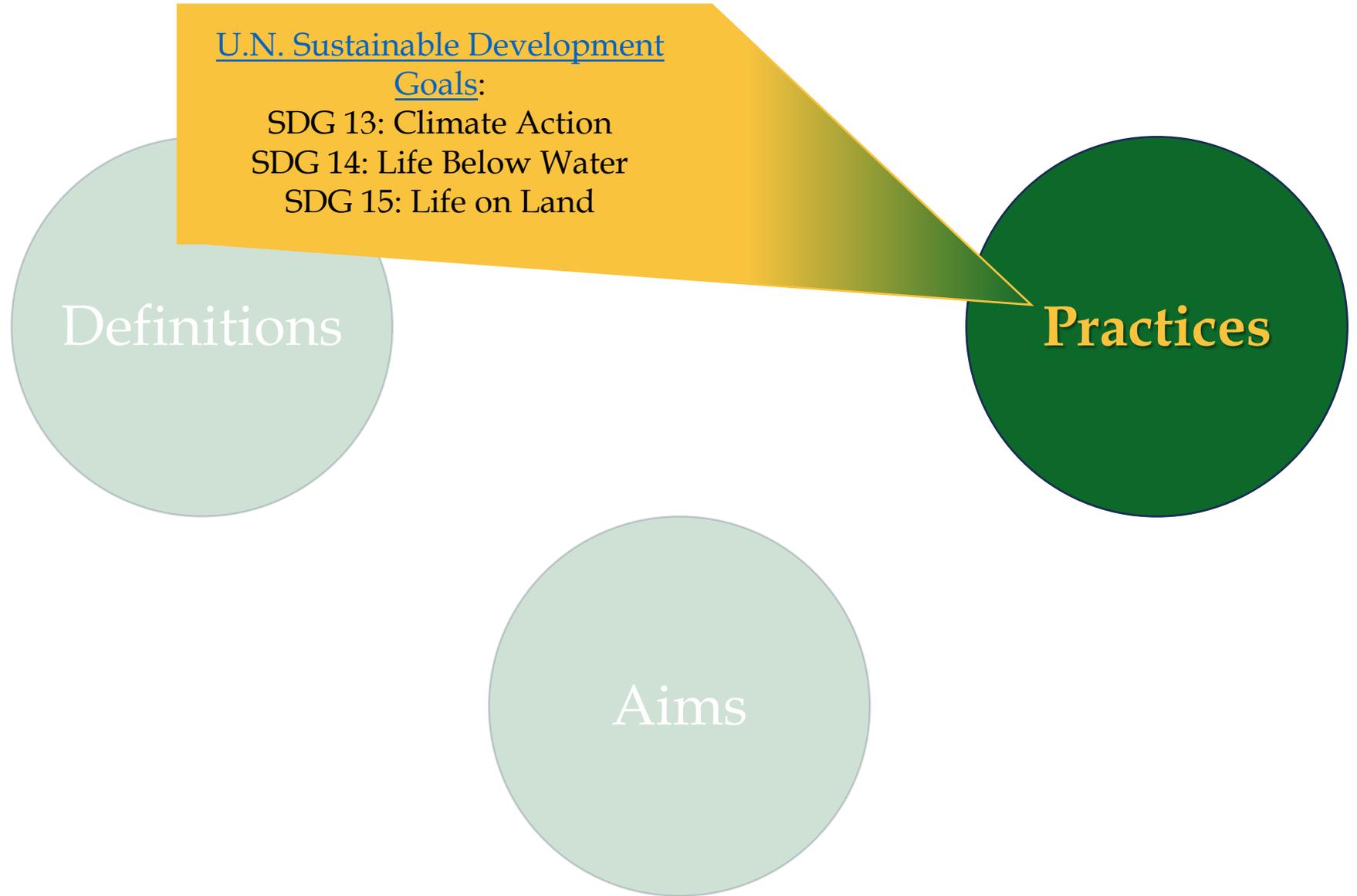
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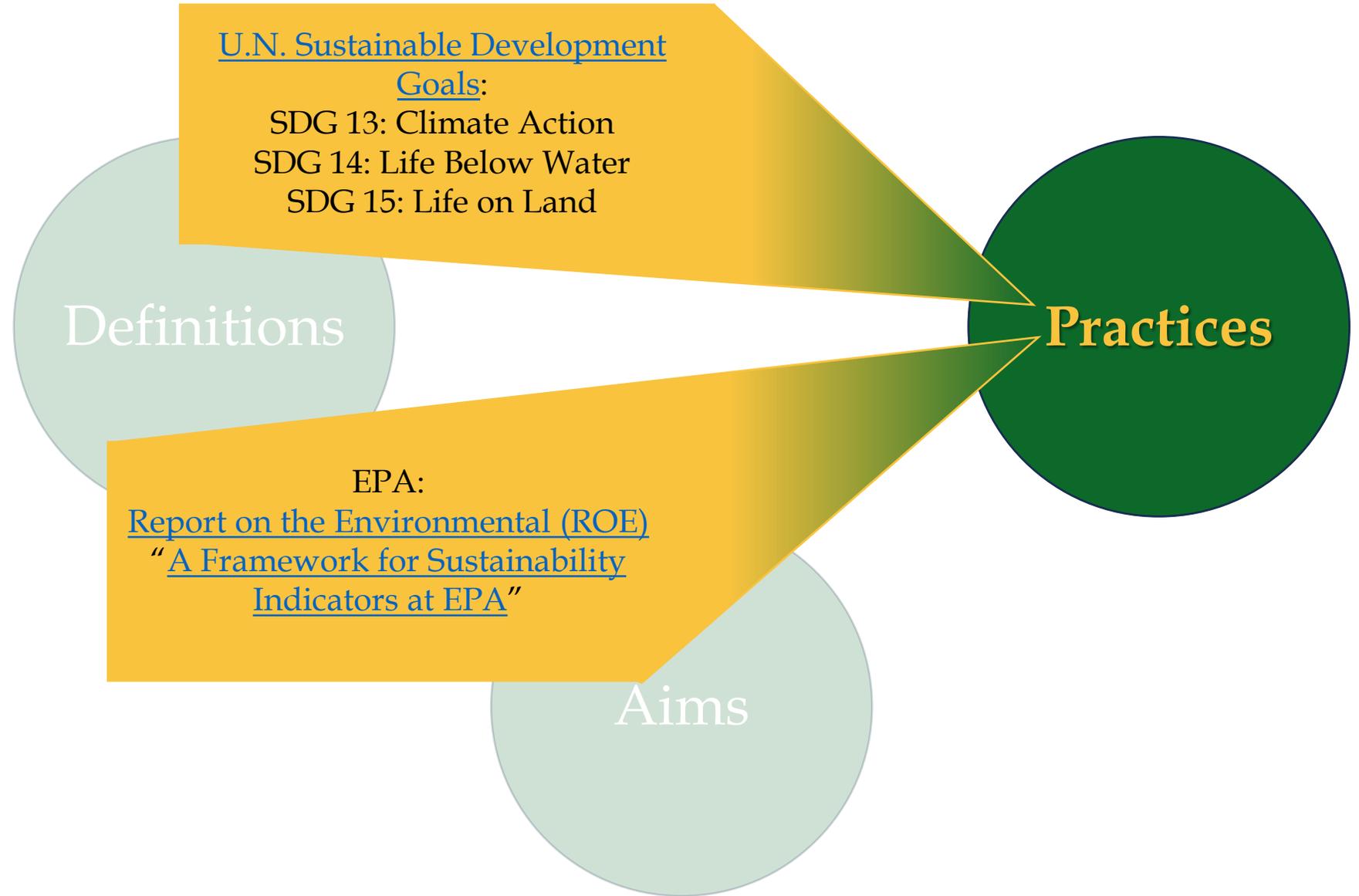
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**Practices**

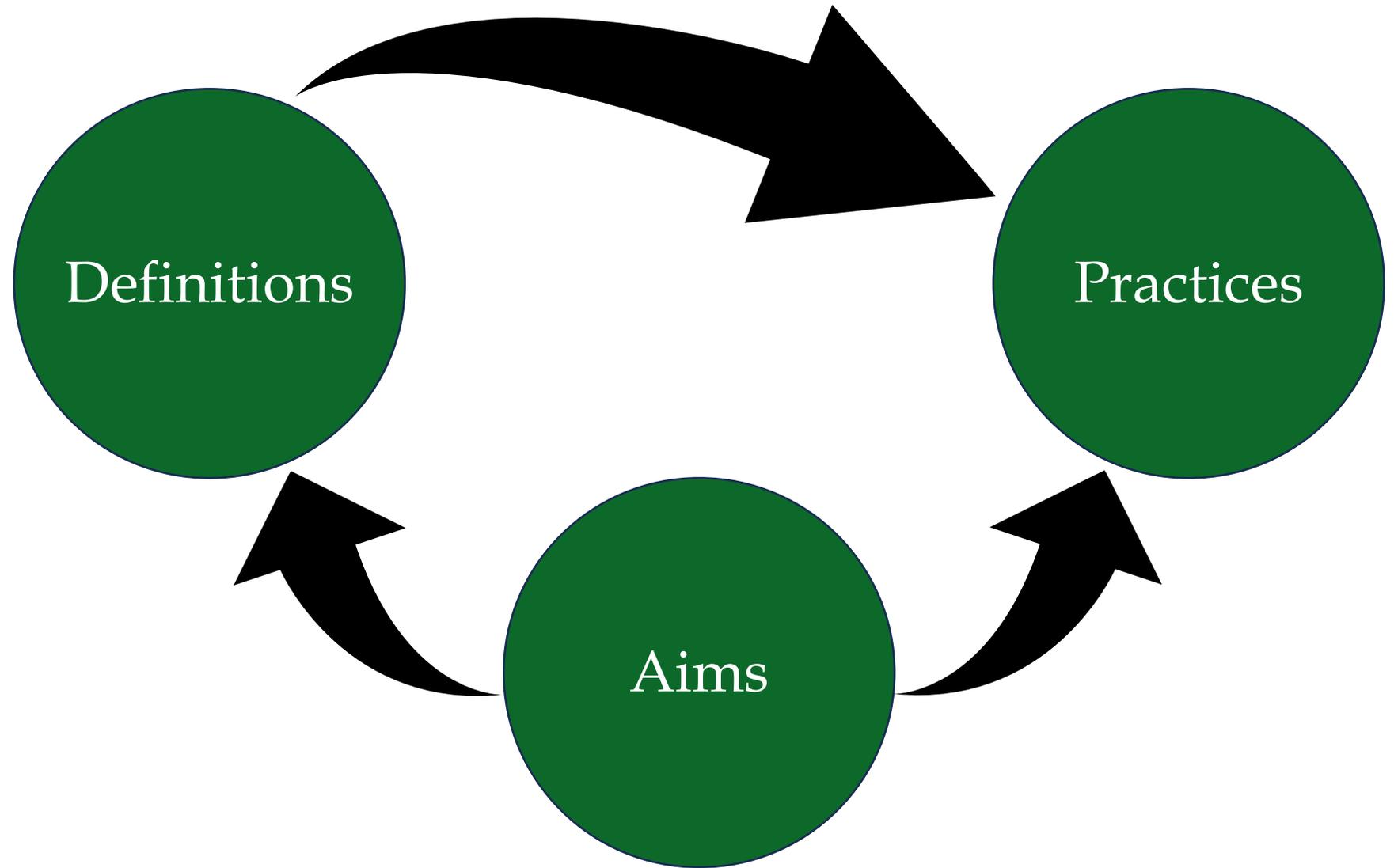
# Why Care About Values ?



# Why Care About Values ?



Why  
Care  
About  
Values  
?



# Indigenous Values

## **Foundational Concepts**

Harmony

Reciprocity

## **Examples**

Gratitude

Humility

# Indigenous Values

**Contrast:**

Western Ethical Frameworks

# Indigenous Values

**Contrast:**

Western Ethical Frameworks

Cooperation

# Indigenous Values

**Contrast:**

Western Ethical Frameworks

Cooperation  Consent

# Indigenous Values

## Contrast:

Western Ethical Frameworks

Cooperation  Consent  Agency

Is it possible for Westerners to adopt – or “live” – these values?

Role of  
Indigenous  
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Is it possible for Westerners to adopt – or “live” – these values?

**Brief Skeptical Argument:**

1. For Westerners to adopt, or “live” according to, Indigenous values, they’d have to remove the concepts from their contexts (i.e., their worldviews or matrices).
2. When concepts are removed from their contexts, their meaning is lost or altered.
3. If the meaning of a concept is lost or altered, then you can’t adopt *that* concept.

**Therefore,** Westerners can’t adopt Indigenous values.

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Is it possible for Westerners to adopt – or “live” – these values?

*Westerners can't adopt Indigenous values.*

If Westerners can't “live” these practices, what should they do?

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Is it possible for Westerners to adopt – or “live” – these values?

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**Brief Optimistic Argument:**

1. If Westerners support these values, then they should support Indigenous fights for sustainability and environmental justice.

2. Westerners should support these values.

**Therefore,** Westerners should support Indigenous fights for sustainability and environmental justice.

Role of  
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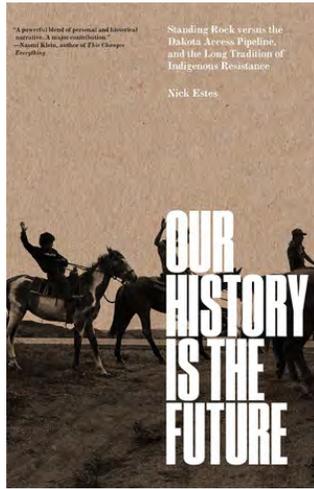
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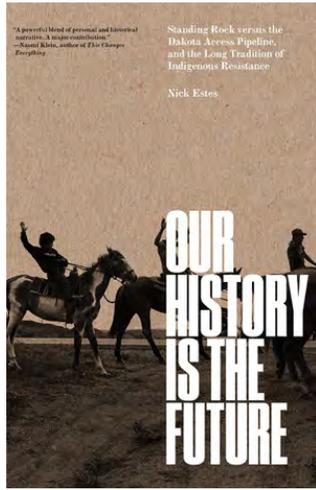
*Westerners should support Indigenous fights for sustainability and environmental justice.*

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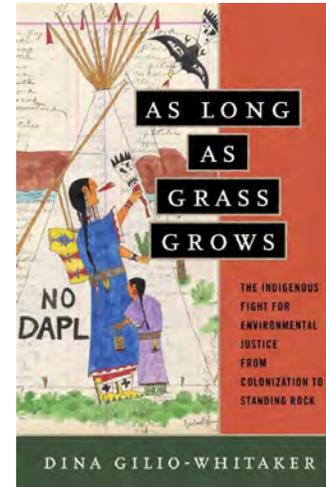
*Our History is the Future: Standing Rock Versus the Dakota Access Pipeline, and the Long Tradition of Indigenous Resistance* (Nick Estes)

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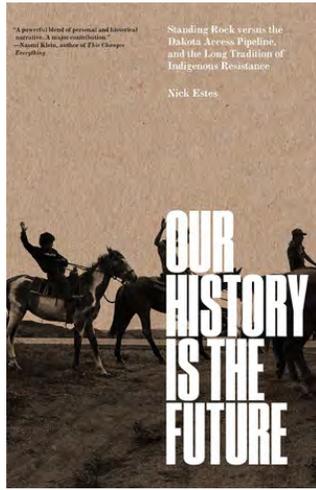


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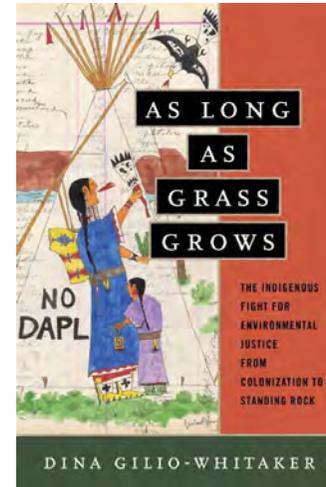


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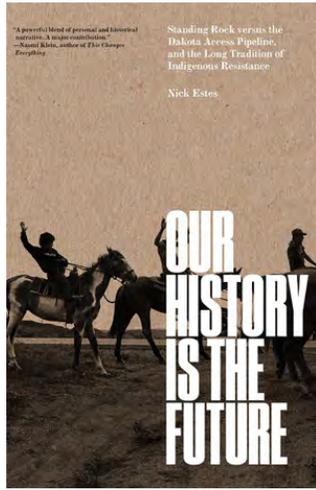


**THE RED DEAL**  
INDIGENOUS ACTION TO SAVE OUR EARTH



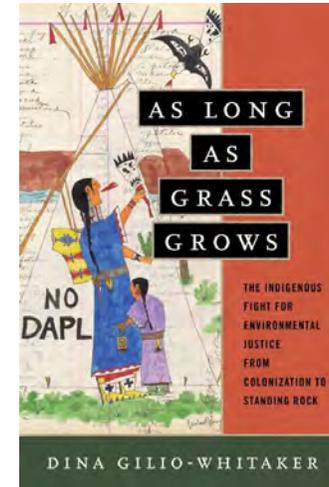
*The Red Deal: Indigenous Action to Save Our Earth* (The Red Nation)

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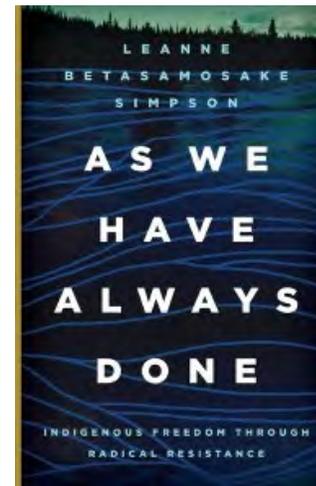
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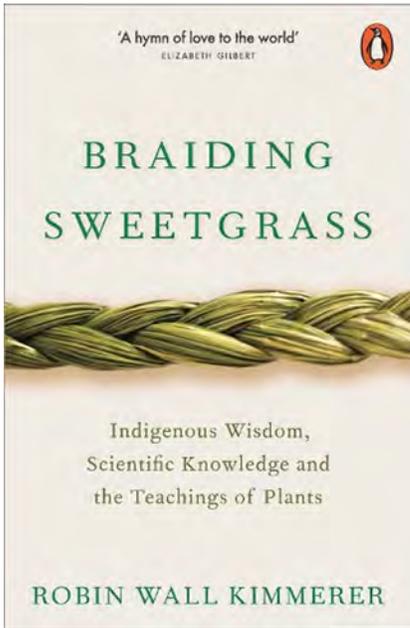


*The Red Deal: Indigenous Action to Save Our Earth* (The Red Nation)

*As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom Through Radical Resistance* (Leanne Betasamosake Simpson)

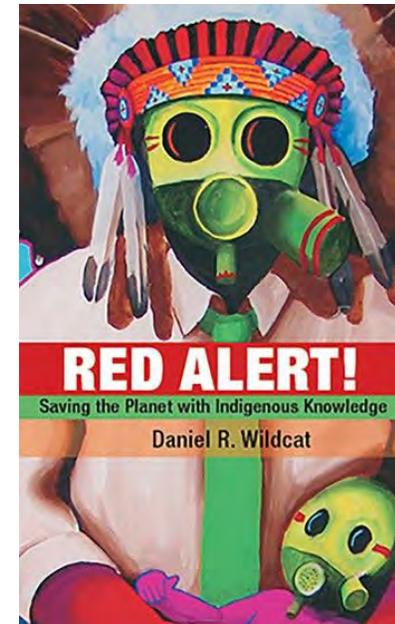


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“For all of us, becoming indigenous to a place means living as if your children’s future mattered, to take care of the land as if our lives, both material and spiritual, depended on it” (p. 9)

“The most difficult changes required are not those of a physical, material, or technological character, but changes in worldviews and the generally taken-for-granted values and beliefs that are embedded in modern, Western-influenced societies... The web of life, if taken seriously, implies that our human intelligence must be framed in the context of learning how to live well and sustainably as one small but powerful part of nature, as opposed to strategizing how to manage nature” (pp. 5-6)



# Role of Indigenous Values in Sustainability ?



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**Mvto! (Thank You)**

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