

Writing a Commitment Statement

Created by [Beth Godbee, Ph.D.](#) | Shared March 2020

What mobilizes and energizes your everyday actions and interactions? What underlies all your work—in your career, at home, in the community, throughout daily life?

Here, I share my commitment statement, which is always in draft form so that I revisit and revise it often. And I invite you to write one of your own. 😊

Commitment statements can take many forms, but need to address the question of what motivates a life's work. I find it helpful to link commitments with [land/water acknowledgements](#), because both remind us of what's meant to be invisible when living in systemic oppression. Both ask to be lived out and made actionable: not as statements that are made and left behind but as living articulations of everyday actions (both immediate and long-term).

As a friend has taught me: these aren't statements we write; instead, these are statements that write us. If you have feedback on my statement, I'm open and listening. Here's where I am at the moment—in an ongoing process of learning and unlearning.

With love,

Beth (she/her)

SAMPLE:

Beth's Commitment Statement and Land Acknowledgements (Revised February 2020)

I begin by acknowledging that where I'm writing—Washington, D.C.—is the ancestral, unceded territory of the Nacotchtank (or Anacostans), also identified as the Powhatan Confederacy and [the Piscataway Nation](#).

Growing up in Tennessee and then living in Georgia and Wisconsin, I'm shaped by many relations to land and peoples. [In Milwaukee](#) (my home as a faculty member), I was rooted in place inhabited by the Potawatomi, Menominee, Ho-Chunk, Ojibwe, Sac and Fox, and Mascouten people and joined today by the Oneida, Stockbridge-Munsee, and Brothertown people (with gratitude and acknowledgement of the [CCCC American Indian Caucus](#) for the work of teaching about history, place, relations, relationship-building, and accountability).

I continue to learn from [colleagues working with and through the CCCC Caucuses](#) and commit to the ongoing work of [learning and unlearning](#), [redressing harms](#), situating myself and my work within larger webs of relations, and honoring ancestors and elders in the work for [justice](#).

I believe it's important to start by acknowledging Indigenous peoples' land/water rights and to tie the history of place with the continuing violence we see in everyday life of settler-colonialism, white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, and interlocking systems of oppression. I act from acknowledgements that:

