

## Nérée becomes radicalized and increasingly critical of institutions

I think I mentioned earlier that I'm from a traditional value family and culture. Where we believed in the Church and in institutions. My father quite active, as a farmer, he was pretty active in his community and building institutions and trusting institutions. My mum was quite a fervent Catholic and believed in the Church et cetera, et cetera. And so that's how I come from, and I remember the first--when I arrived in child welfare in Campbellton, I think the first call I had was from this woman, this young woman, a young girl, she says, "Can you tell me where I can get an abortion." Well, I was working in a child welfare agency and we needed children, we needed babies for adoption. She wanted to go for abortion, didn't go well together with me. Plus, in my family, abortion is not an option. I realized that we all have values, it's too late probably to realize, but anyways that's when I realized, "Wow, my values, there's something that's not clicking right here." But it took me a long while to put all that together. But anyways, so that was a shocked little example, and I had many, many of these shocked, shocking little examples in my little life. And at some point, I started to put them together, and one was my--by that time I had children, okay, so a bit later, and they start school, and my son in school is always distracting others and disturbing the teachers, and he's sent to the hall all the time, so I guess he spends half of his grade one in the hall. And then my daughter enters school and my daughter's, like, nice and obedient and cute, et cetera, et cetera. She's the pet of the teacher and I could see the difference between boy and girl, between two different behaviours, and what happens to you if you're submissive and obedient, and what happens to you when you're not. And you could see the delinquency process starting in Francois and the conformity process already existing in Julie. So, for me, the school--that was hard, because the school then, for me, was put into question drastically. And I had also--so that's the school unit, now the church unit we discussed before, okay? So the church institution, the school institution, and then the health institution. I had serious back problems, long story short, I was supposed to have an operation, and that's what they wanted to do with me, and that's all they could do for me, is to operate me. But then I realized that operation would have serious consequences on my back and on my life and I was a young man still, I was 30 some years old. And I then realized, with the help also of my wife, who was studying some of the issues in the health field, in terms of penicillin, antibiotics, and ADHD. So you have this system, this so called health system, it's a disease system, but the so called health system, that's supposed to help people, and they probably make them sick more than helping them. And in the process, they have this whole business with pharmaceuticals, and doctors, and all of the institutions that go with that, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera--the whole big thing. So health, okay? Education, and religion, and with my thesis mental health. So, it took a while to put all these things together and say, "Well, there's something wrong with the institutions of our society." And that's when I realized that. Then I also realized that social work is part of this. And I realized that I was part of this, and that's where it really hit home, and I said, "My god, what business are we in? What are we teaching our students?" Because I was a professor! What do you teach your students when you don't believe in institutions, and when you believe that institutions are detrimental to society. What do you teach your students? So I was--it took

my quite, quite a while to get around that, and to come to the idea--now we're kind of jumping 15 years there, to realize that there's alternatives to all this, and that we have to turn to alternative ways of thinking, and also what we promote as a society. And that process, a trip to Nicaragua, was quite illuminating for me. I don't know why, but the government of Quebec, I was from New Brunswick, invited me to be a representative of whatever, Canada or Quebec, I can't remember, in an anti-psychiatry conference in Managua, Nicaragua. And, so I was there with one of the most eminent psychiatrists in Quebec, we were rooming together. And then I realized in Nicaragua how they had evolved from, or separated themselves from the system. Because at that time Nicaragua was the only country in the world where electric shock treatment were not only banned, but illegal. And in the process, they also were emptying the jails and emptying the psychiatric institutions. And what they were doing is that a person that had been committed for a crime, his or her sentence was to rehabilitate someone that had been, for a long time, in a psychiatric institution. And when Joseph, who had committed the crime had rehabilitated Peter, who was in a psychiatric hospital for 15, 20, 25 years, when that process was finished, the sentence was over. So it was an open jail system that they had, and psychiatric institutions were relatively open too. They had 60-some people left in the institution when I came there. For me, it was incredibly, incredibly illuminating to see that a culture can change so drastically, and how you can go about that and how so many things evolved from there.