

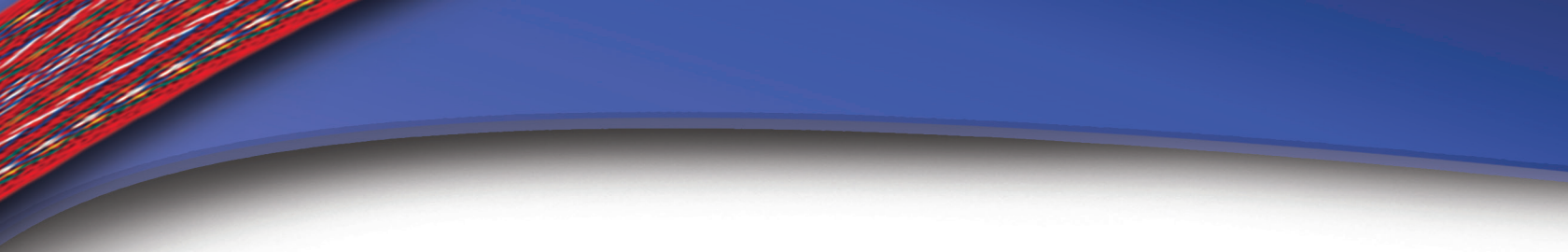
# Shining Mountains Living Community Services

## 4th in Series



## Ethics, Respect and Values








## Table of Contents

ABORIGINAL ETHICS AND VALUES .....	3
ETHIC: NON-INTERFERENCE .....	3
ETHIC: TRUTHFULNESS .....	5
ETHIC: NON-COMPETITIVENESS .....	5
ETHIC: SHARING .....	6
ETHIC: EMOTIONAL RESTRAINT .....	6
ETHIC: RESPECT/PRAISE/GRATITUDE .....	7
ETHIC: CONSERVATION-WITHDRAWAL TACTIC .....	8
ETHIC: TEACHING .....	9
ETHIC: RIGHT TIME AND RIGHT PEOPLE .....	10
NATIVE CODE OF ETHICS – Author Unknown.....	12
Common Aboriginal Values and What They Mean. ....	14
ABORIGINAL VALUES .....	15
PERSONAL INTERACTION .....	19
TEACHINGS from TIPIS .....	21
Indian Prayer .....	24



## ABORIGINAL ETHICS AND VALUES

In order to survive as a group, individuals needed to be continuously cooperative and polite with each other. This was established and maintained through the development of a belief in conflict suppression. The suppression of conflict, within members of the extended family/band, was achieved largely through the practice of values or ethics of non-interference, emotional restraint, restricted or non-competitiveness, sharing, attitudes toward gratitude and approval, teaching principles, protocol and a concept of timeliness. These ethics were important factors in promoting harmony and goodwill among the family/band members, and still have significant impact upon the way aboriginal people view the world and others today.


Many of the values are still transmitted, often non-verbally, even though the lifestyle that gave rise to them has altered dramatically. A second factor in the transmission of these values is that they have not been transmitted intact, valuable and necessary components of the beliefs were lost due to interruptions in the transmission of values. Additionally, many of the habits or behaviours that supported the ethics and gave them balance have also been damaged or changed due to the impact of residential school teachings upon generations of aboriginal people. The following are nine general ethics.

### ETHIC: NON-INTERFERENCE

Europeans have a belief in “personal freedom of choice”, however, they also have a competing or opposing value in the belief that “I am my brother’s keeper”. This being the case, people of European descent do not abstain from offering advice or taking action when he/she feels their “brother” is mistaken or in error in thinking or behaviour. In fact, if you attend any social, professional, or family function, you are sure to hear someone offering unsolicited advice as to the merits or benefits of one course of action over another, one product over another, and so forth.

Non-aboriginals have a basic ethic of non-interference that is likely to be one of the oldest and most pervasive ethics of all of the ones that native people live by. This ethic means that an aboriginal person traditionally would not interfere in any way, shape or form with another’s individual rights, privileges or activities – regardless of the

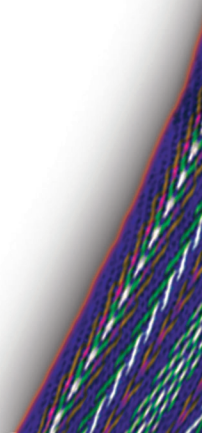




potential for mistakes and irresponsibility displayed. This ethic is often still reflected in the lack of interference in personal choices of life style, parenting and so on.

Aboriginal people are very reluctant to confront people directly and reluctant to give advice to anyone, unless that person specifically asks for the advice. To interfere or comment on another's behaviour was and is seen as being incredibly rude. This ethic prohibits criticism to such an extent that it is very difficult, if not impossible, to breach it, even when such a confession or statement is encouraged by a professional counsellor or helper, for example, in domestic violence. The wife may discuss what happened within her circle of closest friends, or even to a counsellor, but is often extremely reluctant to confront her husband's behaviour in front of him in a court of law. Another instance of this ethic producing conflict within the expectations of the non-aboriginal world, is in the area of child-rearing. Non-aboriginal people see it as their right and obligation to set boundaries, enforce rules of behaviour, and guide their children's thinking and actions from birth to adulthood, and often beyond. Aboriginal parents see that as totally improper and wrong. Their value of non-interference forbids such intrusiveness into the life of another human being, even that of a child. This includes attempts to sway the child one way or another with punishment, praise, cajolery, promise of rewards or privileges or withholding them. Native parents expected their child to continuously observe the world and people around him or herself, to study what happens and then to make up his or her own mind as to the best or proper course of action. This value has continued to be a part of Aboriginal society, however, supporting values such as responsibility to the community, good role modeling etc have not been maintained.

Native people do *care* a great deal about what happens to their children, families and friends, and give a great deal of thought to events and situations. They hold very definite views as to appropriate behaviour and responses, and desire the best for all concerned. However, their ethic of non-interference frequently restricts them from altering another individual's chosen path, and confines their ability and willingness to exert control strictly to themselves. The traditional native person does not, and probably will not, give voice to their views or opinions directly. When one takes the





time to “listen” though, one will hear the advice given through subtle emphasis on certain facts rather than on others. Concentration or careful thinking about the emphasized facts will naturally tend to lead one towards one sort of conclusion for a course of action over another. This allows for guidance to take place, but also allows the decision to remain with the person needing to choose.


### ETHIC: TRUTHFULNESS

A supporting ethic is that of truth-telling, that is to say, making a voluntary, personal acknowledgement of your misdeeds, and in this way, to seek to restore or maintain your place and welcome within the group. Not telling the truth, or lying, includes the attempting to deny or minimize one’s behaviour and is looked at with utter contempt. First nations groups had no “right to silence” such as non-aboriginals have. We see this right in the Caucasian right to refuse to incriminate themselves, a right that is held up in the court system. Native “law” requires full disclosure and acknowledgement of all wrong-doing. This is seen as an essential and crucial beginning step towards re-establishing harmony, the rehabilitation of an individual, and to achieve community reintegration. In this way, “face” is saved by the person who has made an error, and the person is not viewed as an “offender” in need of “punishment” to redress the issue. Nor is the person to whom the affront was given viewed as a “victim” in need of rescuing or helping, other than in the context of guiding that person to feel well again inside his/herself, regardless of what the other person might or might not do. It also assisted in not breaking the ethic surrounding non-interference through judgement or criticism of the other.

### ETHIC: NON-COMPETITIVENESS

The ethic of not competing with other family/band members assisted in suppressing conflict by diverting inter-group rivalry and prevented possible humiliation that a less able member might feel in a group situation. This value is often seen during sports when members of aboriginal soccer teams rarely cheer team mates for scoring a goal, as this might embarrass another who had missed the goal posts. This belief in non-competitiveness extends into employment despite the fact that non-aboriginal employers often view it as a lack of initiative and ambition. However, during distinct





and planned competitions such as warrior games, riding, gambling (sticks) etc. fierce competition was the rule, as each band sent its best competitors to defend the honour of the band. Much was at stake then, such as horses, community pride and bragging rights.

### ETHIC: SHARING

In traditional aboriginal communities, sharing, the act of generosity, discouraged hoarding of material goods by an individual when group survival was more important than individual prosperity. As a result, individuals were expected to take what was needed, and no more than that, from nature, and to share what bounty they had freely with the other group/family members.

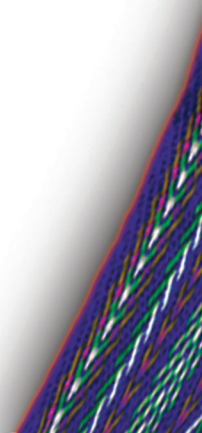
This ethic is still seen in many aboriginal families and communities. For visitors to aboriginal communities, they usually see an economic and social homogeneity, so that there are few people who are very rich or very poor, and every member is considered to be as valuable as any other. Only the elders are given special favours or consideration, and everyone is expected to do their fair share of work.

### ETHIC: EMOTIONAL RESTRAINT

This belief or value had at least two bases of reason for its development.

- 1) The belief in shamans/little people/tree people who often lived in the woods and did not always show themselves, so it was wise and necessary to be agreeable in nature and keep one's temper, and;
- 2) Living for prolonged periods of time in a relatively close space (i.e.: smokehouse, wikiup or igloo) necessitated the restraint of one's personal feelings in order to maintain both harmony and a sense of privacy.

It was a survival tactic in a hostile environment, when each individual's existence depended on the cohesion of the family/tribe/band. The prohibition against displaying anger also extended to other emotions such as sorrow, grief or sadness, as they are all emotions which could endanger the group if they incapacitated the individual from maintaining his/her full attention needed to ensure survival and overall awareness. These prohibitions were for the survival of the group and were wide in application



often to the point of including excessive thinking, talking, or meditating about one's own personal losses, confusion, turmoil or hurts. The belief was that talking to another about such things placed a "burden" on them with the knowledge of your pain, therefore, it was not proper or right to discuss personal, painful problems. The place for this to occur was in the "healing circle" with an appropriately skilled elder, with the required rituals of sweetgrass or sage to smudge and send the pain to the Creator. In the circle was a safe place to acknowledge difficulties – it was similar to taking your concerns to God in prayer, also, native people used the sweat lodge to similarly cleanse the person of grief, bad feelings of any kind, worries, and so forth.

On the positive outlook, this promotes self-control and discourages expression of violent feelings. On the other side, however, joyfulness and enthusiasm are also suppressed along with the destructive impulses and hostilities. These types of strong feelings, whether positive or negative, traditionally had healthy outlets such as the dances and tales of bravery or honour within the community or the sharing with a skilled healer.


The residential school in conjunction with the Indian Act regulations broke the traditions without removing the underlying values and ethics. The surviving ethic of suppression and repression of anger without the "traditional corrective measures" leads to a number of emotional and social difficulties apparent within the aboriginal communities today. Repressed hostility frequently explodes under the influence of alcohol, and is targeted onto innocent bystanders such as children, a mate, or community members in outbursts of family or community violence. The repression of emotions also seems to give rise to a high occurrence of grief reactions following loss or separation.

#### ETHIC: RESPECT/PRAISE/GRATITUDE

The "proper" or right way to show a traditional person praise, gratitude, or respect is to ask them to continue doing what they're doing. So, in the event of sitting in a discussion with a person, instead of telling them how smart or good their verbal







contribution is, a person would ask them to talk some more, to share more knowledge, and then thank them for doing so. In doing this, the person is being told that what they are doing or contributing is important and valued.

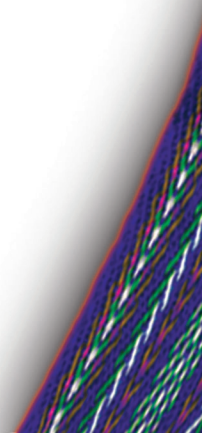
Personal or direct praise is often viewed as embarrassing and difficult to know how to respond to without feeling like one is bragging or being improperly proud. The reward of doing a good deed or job is considered to be sufficient as that is what is expected to do, in addition, to be less than adequate is a great embarrassment for the individual, and so that is not pointed out either.

Since excellence is expected of individuals at all times, many aboriginals are reluctant to try new things until they feel confident that they can do them well. Often, a deep anxiety develops about making mistakes, being teased or ridiculed and publicly judged leads aboriginal people to avoid taking chances with unfamiliar behaviour or activities.

A similar ethic is seen in thanking an individual for doing what they said they would do. It is viewed as very respectful to give something, for example, a gift of tobacco, when asking a traditional person to do something, like attend a council or planning meeting on a regular basis, or to help out in some other way of sharing wisdom. In this way, one is not asking for something without giving in return (the asker does not have to feel like he/she is begging for help). Likewise, when something has been given or provided, it is honourable to give something in return. The expectation was always that an individual would put forth their best effort in any activity. Survival dictated that excellence in any endeavour was a necessity, so praising a person for doing what was required of everyone was not seen to be needed or logical.

#### ETHIC: CONSERVATION-WITHDRAWAL TACTIC

In traditional times, it was necessary to think things through completely before taking any action. The basic needs of survival depended on this type of thinking in all individuals as hasty action could result in death or serious harm to oneself or others. Aboriginal people were taught to consider all aspects of a situation before making any form of response. It was a matter of necessity and also of respect. When a person sought the advice of another, if it was of serious enough importance to discuss a



concern with another person and ask for their advice, then it was only respectful that the person give serious consideration and time for thought before providing their input or advice. The behaviour then, of children when removed from their relatively remote reserves and placed in care, is logical. They do not try to instantly prove their dominance over their new surroundings or environment. They try to avoid drawing attention to themselves as they retreat into a position of careful observation and quietness, trying to make sense of the new “rules” and expectations. This is often interpreted and judged as “sullenness, passiveness, or unresponsiveness”. Those individuals who, thanks to the socialization knowledge gained from television teachings, act out, are often viewed as typical or normal behaviour, and their disruptive actions are discounted.


Many current or mainstream assessments, however, judge a person to be “uncooperative, unresponsive, undemonstrative” when expected to disclose innermost feelings and thoughts. The problem this raises, however, is that for many aboriginal people it is rude, wrong, and exceedingly uncomfortable to do so. Asking aboriginal people to disclose personal hurts, thoughts, feelings and do on, requires the breaking of multiple ethics for them;

- a) the ethic of not burdening another;
- b) the ethic of not belittling or putting down another, and;
- c) the ethic of non-interference

### ETHIC: TEACHING

In keeping with the values against interference in another’s choices as well as beliefs about rewards or praising, aboriginal parents almost exclusively used the concept of “modelling” in raising their children. A child was shown how instead of being told how. This gave another form of conflict repression in that teachers did not assume to know more than the pupil, but rather showed through actions and behaviour, useful and practical information that the child/youth had the choice of adopting or rejecting. The child was placed on the spot and required to demonstrate a skill before he/she had been adequately taught. This





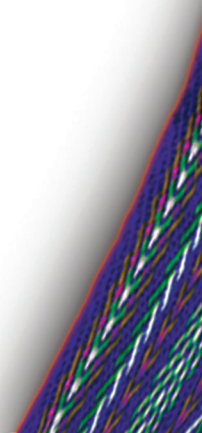
method reduced performance anxiety, and increased loyalty to teachers, usually members of the extended family.

### ETHIC: RIGHT TIME AND RIGHT PEOPLE

Due to living a hunter-gatherer lifestyle, native people traditionally had to wait patiently for all variables to be met in order to achieve the maximum beneficial results from their efforts for that season. During this waiting time they prepared their tools, weapons, storage baskets or pits, and their strategies. The time being right was a very practical, down-to-earth survival tactic. It involved the ethic of excellence, the danger of unconsidered responses, earth stewardship and community team effort. The right time also included the mental and spiritual readiness of the band, the mind of each member had to be focused on the task at hand with the common best interest of all paramount in their thoughts. The spirit had to be that of proper gratitude for the gifts of life being obtained from the Creator, through Mother Earth. Thanksgiving for nature's bounty was not a day of celebration, but involved, instead, an ongoing philosophical viewpoint that natives demonstrated every day in all their activities.

The concept of "right people" indicated that those who were ready, mentally and spiritually, as well as those people whose skills and effort were necessary for the job at hand, would be available and gathered for the occasion, whether that meant a hunting party, war party or harvesting event, or a time of celebration such as the Sun Dance. It meant that each person had a place there, and gave a sense of purpose and value to all concerned.

Today, this joint concept of "right time, right people" seems more a result of the need for harmonious relationships within the community. For example, if several individuals are known to have a particular involvement or interest in a topic at a meeting, and yet have conflicting responsibilities, the meeting may not start until they get there or send word that they are not coming. To start without them would seem rude, and the other community members may not be aware of the importance of their input into the topic under discussion. Aboriginal people almost never seem annoyed or inconvenienced if meetings or other social functions start even hours after the scheduled time.



The traditional belief system was very comprehensive and each ethic was complementary and supportive of the others. There was not an internal sense of conflict that arises from opposing values/ethics and the dilemma of choosing which value was most important at any specific point in time. The ethic/belief system was geared to living in harmony with nature, gained from close observation of natural laws that governed interactions of the species, it was not given to encourage a domination of the land or nature or even one another, but simply to adapt to the changing circumstances of the seasons and environment.



## NATIVE CODE OF ETHICS – Author Unknown

Throughout history Native people have lived according to a code of ethics. A central aspect of this Code of Ethics is to LOVE, CARE FOR AND RESPECT CHILDREN. However since Native people, often express feelings in ways different from non-Native people, cultural customs and traditions have often been misunderstood.

Native Elders have taught us discipline, respect for the land and how to survive under difficult circumstances. These aspects of heritage are passed down from one generation to the next through the use of stories. The stories that are told by Elders and the best of actions/behaviours from Native people reflect the following

### *Code of Ethics*

1. *Giving Thanks:* Each morning upon rising, and each evening before sleeping, give thanks for the life with you and all life, for the good things the Creator has given you and the others, and for the opportunity to grow a little more each day. Consider your thoughts and actions of the past day and seek for the courage and strength to be a better person. Seek for those things that will benefit everyone.
2. *Respect.* Respect means to feel or show honour or esteem for someone or something to consider the well-being if, or to treat someone or something with deference or courtesy. Showing respect is a basic law of life. These are 12 ways that we understand respect is shown
  - \*Treat every person from the tiniest child to the oldest Elder with respect at all times.*
  - \*Special respect should be given to Elders, parents, teachers and community Elders.*
  - \*No person should be made to feel “put down” by you: avoid hurting other hearts as you would avoid a deadly poison.*
  - \*Touch nothing that belongs to someone else (especially sacred objects) without permission or an understanding between you.*
  - \*Respect the privacy of every person. Never intrude on a person’s quiet moments or personal space.*
  - \*Never walk between people who are conversing.*
  - \*Speak in a soft voice, especially when you are in the presence of Elders, strangers or others to whom special respect is due.*
  - \*Do not speak unless invited to do so at gatherings where Elders are present (except to ask what is expected of you should you be in doubt)*
  - \*Never speak about others in a negative way, whether they are present or not.*
  - \*Treat the earth and all her aspect, as your mother. Show deep respect for the mineral world, the plant world and the animal world.*
  - \*Show deep respect for the beliefs and religions of others.*



*\* Listen with courtesy to what others say, even if you feel that what they are saying is worthless. Listen with your heart.*

3. Respect the WISDOM of the people in council. Once you give an idea to a council or a meeting, it no longer belongs to you. It belongs to the people.
4. Be TRUTHFUL at all times and under all conditions.
5. Always treat your guests with HONOUR and CONSIDERATION. Give your best food, your best blankets, the best part of your house and your best service to your guests
6. The hurt of one is the hurt of all, the HONOUR of one is the honour of all.
7. Receive strangers and outsiders with a LOVING HEART and as members of the human family
8. All the races and tribes in the world are like the different coloured flowers of one meadow. All are beautiful. As children of the Creator, they must all be respected.
9. To SERVE others, to be of some use to family, community, Nations or the World is one of the main purposes for which human beings have been created. Do not fill yourself with your own affairs and forget your most important task. True HAPPINESS comes only to those who dedicate their lives to the service of others.
10. OBSERVE moderation and balance in all things.
11. Know those things that lead to your WELL-BEING and those things that lead to you.



## Common Aboriginal Values and What They Mean.

<b>Show respect to others</b>	Each person has a special gift to share with the world around them.
<b>Share what you have</b>	Giving away to others makes you richer in spirit.
<b>Know who you are</b>	You are a reflection on your family; the way you behave shows how you were raised and what kind of people you come from.
<b>Accept what life brings</b>	There are many circumstances in life that you cannot control or alter.
<b>Have patience</b>	Some things can't be rushed – they will occur in their own time.
<b>Live carefully</b>	The things that you do, how you behave, and words you say will come back to you.
<b>Take care of others</b>	You cannot live without other people in your life, so care for those that are there, sharing life with you. Cherish them and ensure their safety.
<b>Honour your elders</b>	They have lived a long time and will show you the way in life. They teach you through their successes and mistakes.
<b>Pray for guidance</b>	There are many things in this world that are not known.
<b>See connections</b>	All things in the universe are related, no matter how small and insignificant they appear to be, what happens to any one thing has an effect on everything else.

## ABORIGINAL VALUES

**COURAGE** is a value which aboriginal people have always stressed as it was needed for survival. Today, we must also be courageous as we struggle to maintain/retain our culture and to learn the lessons needed to succeed in the mainstream world, as well as our cultural world. Courage used to be displayed when faced with daily survival struggles such as hunting in dangerous territory. Now, courage must be displayed by learning academic lessons for children, learning the art of diplomacy and hunting for the words to ensure the cultural and social survival of our families.

**SELF-PRIDE** is reflected in the peace of mind developed by the aboriginal person – it reflected his attitude toward his people, his environment (nature) and his concept of the Great Spirit. It did not affect his ability to “do better” than someone else.


**INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM** and individual responsibility for one’s own choices was seen as vital in the natural development of all people. This belief was reflected in the respect for the worth of each individual person and the importance of each person to the entire well being of the community.

**SPIRITUALITY** was an integral part of all life, aboriginals held an unshakeable belief in the existence of an all powerful God, who was respected as the Creator and ruler of all things, both seen and unseen. Nature was therefore deeply respected as part of the Creator’s pattern for life and it was expected that aboriginals were to live in harmony with their environment, not control or alter it, but to adapt themselves when necessary. The environment was to be protected and resources were to be used only to the extent that it was necessary for survival. Excess hunting or gathering of harvestable goods was seen as wasteful and disrespectful to the Creator’s gifts.

**PERSONAL WEALTH** or accumulation of individual goods was not of primary concern, instead, the benefit to all of the family/community was important.

**ELDERS** were seen as vital to the well-being of the community, as they held the information necessary to train young people in the ways of the community. Elders





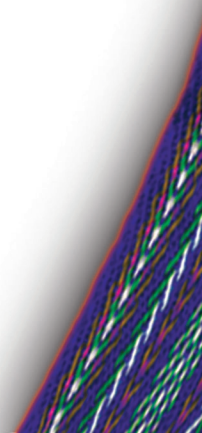
were the history keepers, the teachers, and the law givers. Their wisdom was what gave the community its knowledge of culture and its guidance to face the future.

**RESPECT** is integral within aboriginal culture, it is reflected in care for the body, that what is put into the body (mentally, physically, spiritually or emotionally) needs to be “good”, in the worth of all other things/people, in expectations of how to treat others, to care for the environment, in the importance of all life. Among aboriginal tribes, certain persons, for example, veterans (warriors), animals (eagle/bear) and items (pipe) are greatly respected because of their symbolism in aboriginal culture. Respect was very clearly taught and defined in a wide variety of ways. *\*Insert Respect Teachings\**

**NATURE** is seen as more important than individuals, as individuals are only here on earth for a short time, but nature (Mother Earth) will always be there. Mother Earth (nature) provides food, clothing, and shelter for generation after generation, thus, we must thank her and care for her to ensure all that is life of earth continues.

**EXTENDED FAMILY** is an idea that is still common today. The extended family includes parents, children, grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. It includes those related by blood and those related by importance without any separation. The extended family provided children with “parents and protection” even in a parent’s absence (often still does). Grandmothers, aunts, and older sisters or female cousins often raise a child in the natural mother’s absence. For this reason, some children feel closer to the relative than to their birth (natural) mother.

**PHYSICAL FITNESS** – Aboriginals traditionally did not make a special effort to keep their bodies strong or fit – their strength and good health came naturally as a result of their daily activities in the struggle for survival. The change in lifestyle and in dietary habits has made it necessary for aboriginals to re-evaluate their requirements of living in order to maintain physical fitness.



PLAINS ABORIGINAL	CONTEMPORARY
<b>Interference</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-interference is good</li> <li>• Instruction/coercing limits independence</li> <li>• Avoid direct confrontation</li> <li>• Defer issue to someone else to act on your behalf</li> <li>• Encouragement, praise for non-exceptional accomplishment is interference</li> <li>• Responsibility limits independence.</li> </ul>	<b>Interference</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advice/coercing/persuasion is acceptable</li> <li>• Confrontation is permissible</li> <li>• Deal with issue directly yourself</li> <li>• Constant encouragement/praise</li> <li>• Tight role expectations are assigned</li> <li>• Roles and responsibility maintain “order”</li> </ul>
<b>Family</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extended family is important (widely defined)</li> <li>• Family roles are flexible (aunts and uncles are mothers and fathers, cousins are siblings, etc.)</li> <li>• Children are shared with community.</li> </ul>	<b>Family</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biological, nuclear family most important (narrowly defined)</li> <li>• Distinct family role assignment</li> <li>• Ownership of children</li> </ul>
<b>Child Rearing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children allowed much freedom – short of serious harm</li> <li>• Learning based on modeling rather than shaping – shown, not told</li> <li>• Examples of successful role models</li> <li>• Activity based on observation and practice</li> <li>• Storytelling as example and motivation</li> <li>• Overt punishment/direction seen as interference and frowned upon</li> <li>• Discipline often comes from other family member or elder rather than the parents</li> <li>• Humour, tease, embarrass or shun</li> </ul>	<b>Child Rearing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discipline training begins at infancy</li> <li>• Learning is structured</li> <li>• Activity is clearly “permitted” or “forbidden”</li> <li>• Punishment is direct</li> <li>• Parents enforce discipline</li> <li>• Shame</li> </ul>





<b>Time</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many tribes have no word/concept of “time”</li> <li>• Process determines time needed</li> <li>• Things get done when time is “right”</li> <li>• “Now” is most important</li> <li>• Work to satisfy present needs</li> <li>• Patience is good, respectful</li> </ul>	<b>Time</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time determines process</li> <li>• “Never put off until tomorrow...”</li> <li>• Future focused</li> <li>• Work is to get ahead</li> <li>• Quickness is admired</li> </ul>
<b>Decision Making</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consensus</li> <li>• All members must agree</li> <li>• Not time limited</li> <li>• Talk until agreement is reached.</li> </ul>	<b>Decision Making</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consensus rarely possible or sought</li> <li>• Majority or leadership decides</li> <li>• Deadlines to be met</li> <li>• Information given, then vote</li> </ul>
<b>Property</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharing and giving are important</li> <li>• Group survival</li> <li>• Success is measured by wisdom and personal conduct</li> <li>• Ownership of land and personal property is very new and uncomfortable</li> <li>• Person who tries to accumulate goods are often feared and rejected.</li> </ul>	<b>Property</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Saving, limited sharing</li> <li>• Personal gain</li> <li>• Success measured by wealth and public recognition</li> <li>• Wealth measured by amount of possessions.</li> </ul>
<b>Nature</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People are part of spiritual balance between all things and the Mother (Earth)</li> <li>• Preserve the gifts of the Creator for future (awareness that overuse causes future shortages)</li> <li>• Spiritualistic</li> </ul>	<b>Nature</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People have “dominion” over Earth and Nature</li> <li>• Use natural resources to develop wealth and maintain economy</li> <li>• Materialistic</li> </ul>
<b>Age</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age is revered</li> <li>• Ultimate respect for elders’ wisdom</li> <li>• No effort made to hide age</li> </ul>	<b>Age</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age/getting older is to be feared</li> <li>• Respect is given for youthfulness</li> <li>• Conceal age through all means</li> </ul>

## PERSONAL INTERACTION

PLAINS ABORIGINAL	CONTEMPORARY
<b>Eye Contact</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very little eye-contact; not considered disrespectful; less intrusive; especially with elders/cross gender</li> </ul>	<b>Eye Contact</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eye contact continuous</li> <li>• Signifies honesty</li> <li>• Disrespectful is no eye contact</li> </ul>
<b>Voice</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speaks slow and soft (easily interrupted)</li> <li>• Very little emotion</li> <li>• Non-anxious</li> </ul>	<b>Voice</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speaks loudly and fast</li> <li>• Often emotional</li> <li>• Intense</li> </ul>
<b>Greeting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soft but firm handshake (one or two shakes only)</li> <li>• Shakes hands with everyone (especially men)</li> <li>• Good natured ribbing at greeting conforms communality and familiarity; humour</li> <li>• Greeting for someone who hasn't been seen for years same as person that was seen yesterday</li> </ul>	<b>Greeting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Firm and prolonged shakes mean sincerity</li> <li>• Handshake gender and status based</li> <li>• Use of ribbing and humour similar</li> <li>• The longer the time between meeting, the "bigger" the greeting</li> </ul>
<b>Conversation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relaxed, no rush to begin</li> <li>• Silence is normal and comfortable</li> <li>• Informal</li> <li>• Gets to the point eventually</li> </ul>	<b>Conversation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must get conversation going</li> <li>• Uncomfortable with silence and often rambles to fill gaps</li> <li>• Formal</li> <li>• Gets to the point right away</li> </ul>
<b>Conflict</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid if possible</li> <li>• Remove oneself from situation or "clam up" and not answer when addressed</li> <li>• Ostracism rather than confrontation</li> </ul>	<b>Conflict</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enter into head on</li> <li>• Feels conflict can be beneficial</li> <li>• Avoidance shows weakness</li> <li>• Embarrassment is a "learning experience"</li> </ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoids embarrassment at all costs</li> </ul>	
<b>Responses to Questions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reply is delayed while thoughts are processed</li> <li>• Often no reply if answer not readily available/known</li> </ul>	<b>Responses to Questions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reply is immediate – thinks while talking</li> <li>• Answer given even if inaccurate</li> </ul>
<b>Nodding, Shrugging, Shaking Head</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gestures mean “I’m listening” or as acknowledgement of what was said</li> <li>• Nodding does not necessarily indicate agreement, nor does head shaking mean disagreement</li> </ul>	<b>Nodding, Shrugging, Shaking Head</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Means “yes”, “I don’t know” or “no”</li> </ul>

*\* Adapted from information supplied by Lyle Keewatin Richards*

## TEACHINGS from TIPIS

These teachings are invaluable for understanding the spirit of what used to be taught regarding behaviours, personal interaction and responsibilities of all members in a community/home or in many instances now offices. There are thirteen tipi poles, a cover and flaps each having its own lesson or significance.

### ***TIPi POLES***

#### *OBEDIENCE/LISTENING*

Obedience means accepting guidance and wisdom from outside of ourselves, using our ears before our mouth. We learn by listening to traditional stories, by listening to our parents or guardians, and our teachers. We learn by their behaviors and reminders, so that we know what is right and what is wrong.

#### *RESPECT*

Respect means giving honor to our Elders and people in general, to the strangers that come to visit our community, and to all of life. We must honor the basic rights of all others.

#### *HUMILITY*

We are not above or below others in the circle of life. We feel humbled when we understand our relationship with Creation. We are so small compared to the majestic expanse of Creation, just a “strand in the web of life.” Understanding this helps us to respect and value life.

#### *HAPPINESS*

The fourth pole completes your doorway. This fourth pole teaches us happiness. We must show some enthusiasm to encourage others. Our good actions will make our ancestors happy in the next world. This is how we share happiness.

#### *LOVE*

If we are to live in harmony we must accept one another as we are, and accept others who are not in our circle. Love means to be good and kind to one another and to our selves.

#### *FAITH*

We must learn to believe and trust others, to believe in a power greater than ourselves, who gives us strength to be a worthy member of the human race. To sustain our Spirituality, we need to walk it every minute of every day. Not just sometimes, but every day. It’s not just once a week; it’s your life.





## *KINSHIP/FAMILY*

Our family is important to us. This includes our parents, brothers and sisters, who love us and give us roots that tie us to the lifeblood of the earth. It also includes extended family: grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins, and their in-laws and children. Kinship includes those with whom we Pray and participate with in Ceremony. They are also our brothers and sisters and give us a sense of belonging to a community.

## *CLEANLINESS*

Today when we talk about cleanliness, most people think hygiene, and that's very important. But years ago, when old people talked about cleanliness, they meant spiritual cleanliness. Clean thoughts come from a clean mind and this comes from our Spirituality. With a clean mind and sense of peace within we learn not to inflict ills on others.

## *THANKFULNESS*

We learn to give thanks: to always be thankful for the Creator's bounty, which we are privileged to share with others, and for all the kind things others do for us.

## *SHARING*

We learn to be part of a family and community by helping with the provisions of food and other basic needs. Through the sharing of responsibilities we learn the value of working together and enjoying the fruits of our labor.

## *STRENGTH*

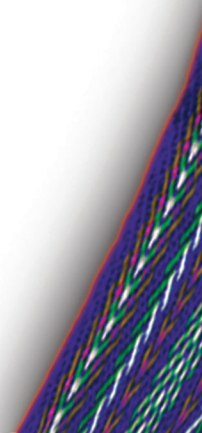
We are not talking about physical strength, but Spiritual strength. We must learn to be patient in times of trouble and not to complain but to endure and show understanding. We must accept difficulties and tragedies so that we may give others strength to accept their own difficulties and tragedies.

## *GOOD CHILD REARING*

Children are gifts from the Creator. We are responsible for their wellbeing, spiritually, emotionally, physically, and intellectually, since they are blessed with the gift of representing the continuing circle of life, which we perceive to be the Creator's will.

## *HOPE*

We must look forward to moving toward good things. We need to have a sense that the seeds we are planting will bear fruit for our children, families and communities.





## ***THE COVER-***

### ***PROTECTION***

This is the ultimate responsibility to achieve the balance and well being of the body, mind, emotions and spirit for the individual, the family, the community and the nation.

### ***CONTROL FLAPS***

The control flaps on a tipi teach that we are all connected by relationship and that we depend on each other. Having respect for and understanding this connection creates and controls harmony and balance in the circle of life. When we don't know how to use the flaps, it gets all smoky inside the tipi, and you can't see, which is like life – because if we can't live in balance, we can't see clearly where we're going.

## ***THE TIE/ROPE***

### ***CONNECTIONS***

For every time that a pole is added, a rope goes around to bind that pole into place. That rope is a sacred bond, binding all the teachings together until they are all connected.





## Indian Prayer

Author Anonymous

Oh Great Spirit

Whose voice I hear in the Wind

Whose breath gives life to the World

Hear Me

I come to you as one of your many Children

I am small and weak

I need strength and wisdom

May I walk in beauty

May my eyes behold the red and purple sunset

Make my hands respect the things that you have made

And my ears sharp to hear your voice

Make me wise so that I may know the things

That you have taught your Children

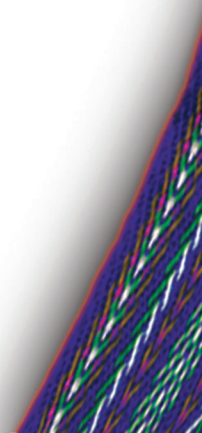
The lessons that you have hidden in every leaf and rock

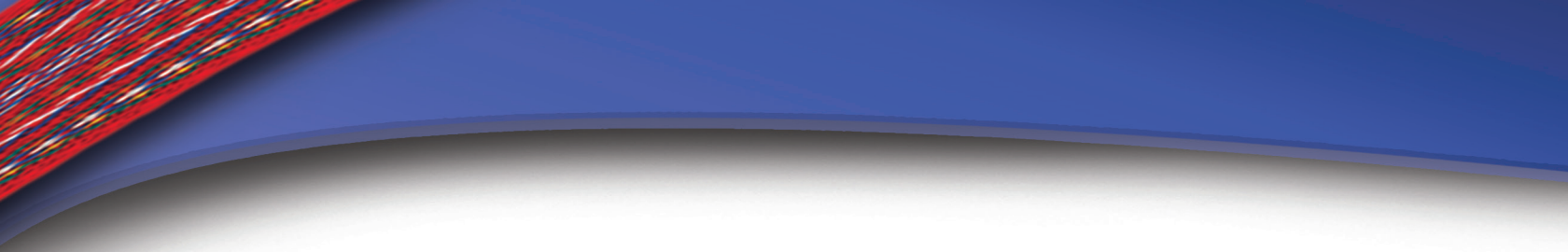
Make me strong, not to be superior to my brothers, but to be able to fight my greatest enemy:       Myself

Make me ever ready to come to you with straight eyes so that

When life fades as the faded sunset

My spirit will come to you without shame.









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