

SEVEN GRANDFATHER TEACHINGS

FEB 2021

The Seven Grandfather Teachings have always been a part of the Native American culture. Their roots date back to the beginning of time. These teachings impact our surroundings, along with providing guidance toward our actions to one another.

According to the story, long ago, a messenger sent to see how the Neshnabék were living, discovered that the Neshnabék were living their life in a negative way, which impacted their thoughts, decisions, and actions. Some had hate for others, displayed disrespectful actions, were afraid, told lies, and cheated. Others revealed pride or were full of shame. During his journey, the messenger came across a child. This child was chosen to be taught by the Seven Grandfathers to live a good life. He was taught the lessons of Love, Respect, Bravery, Truth, Honesty, Humility, and Wisdom.

Before departing from the Seven Grandfathers, they told him, "Each of these teachings must be used with the rest. You cannot have Wisdom without Love, Respect, Bravery, Honesty, Humility, and Truth. You cannot be Honest if you are only using one of the other teachings. To leave out one teaching would be embracing the opposite of what the teaching means." The Seven Grandfathers each instructed the child with a principle. It was then up to the child to forget them, or to put them to use.

Each one of us represents the child. We must faithfully apply the teachings of our Seven Grandfathers to our own lives. We must place our trust in the Creator. We must also never forget to be sincere in our actions, character, and words.

The first Teaching is Love.



LOVE

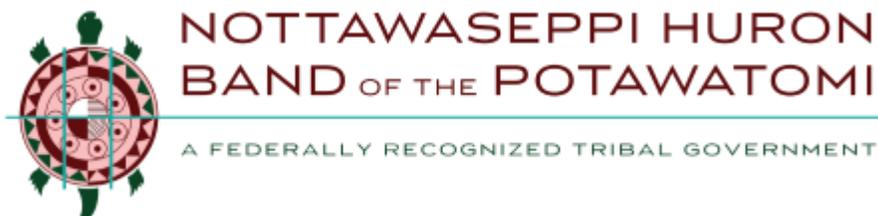
Knowing love is to know peace.

Our love must be unconditional. When people are weak, that is when they need love the most. Love is a strong affection for another. This can form between friends and family. Love is an attachment based upon devotion, admiration, tenderness, and kindness for all things around you. For one to love and accept themselves is to live at peace with the Creator and in harmony with all of creation. Love knows no bounds. We must accept it sincerely and give it freely.

The Eagle represents Love due to its unique relationship with the Creator. Only the Eagle has the strength and ability to fly higher than all others placing it closer to the Creator than any other being. Eagles are loving parents and protect and guide their young.

Thoughts to ponder:

What does Love mean to you? Who and what do you love? Who and what don't you love?



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RESPECT

A way to honor creation is by showing respect.

There should be no part of creation that should be excluded from the honor that we are to give. We demonstrate respect by realizing the value of all people and things, and by showing courteous consideration and appreciation. We must give respect if we wish to be respected. We honor the traditional roles that we fill and the teaching we have been given. We honor our families and others, as well as ourselves. We are not to bring harm to anyone or anything. Respect is not just an action, but a heart-grown feeling.

The Buffalo represents respect. Through giving and sharing every part of it's being, it shows great respect for the people. Native people have always considered themselves the caretakers of the great herds and developed sustainable relations with the Buffalo resulting in true respect.



**NOTTAWASEPPI HURON
BAND OF THE POTAWATOMI**

A FEDERALLY RECOGNIZED TRIBAL GOVERNMENT

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BRAVERY

Facing a problem with integrity is a true demonstration of bravery.

We do what is right even when the consequences may be unpleasant. We face life with the courage to use our personal strengths to face difficulties, stand tall through adversity, and make positive choices. We must stand up for our convictions and have courage in our thinking and speaking. All of these actions together will lead to ceaseless bravery.

The Bear provides many lessons in the way it lives, but courage/ bravery is the most important teaching it offers. Though gentle by nature, the ferociousness of a mother Bear when one of her cubs is approached is the true definition of courage. To have the mental and moral strength to overcome fears that prevent us from living our true spirit as human beings is a great challenge that must be met with the same vigour and intensity as a mother Bear protecting her cub.



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TRUTH

Truth is having the knowledge of our cultural teachings.

It gives us the ability to act without regret. We must understand, speak, and feel the truth, while also honoring its power. Truth should not lead us to deceptions. We know who we are in our heart. By knowing that, we also know the truth. Our emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual gifts will guide each one of us in our journey.

To know truth is to know and understand all of the original laws as given by the Creator and to remain faithful to them. It is said that in the beginning when the Creator made man and gave him the seven sacred laws, the Grandmother Turtle was present to ensure that the laws would never be lost or forgotten. On the back of a Turtle are the 13 moons, each representing the truth of one cycle of the Earth's rotations around the sun. The 28 markings on her back represent the cycle of the moon and of a woman's body. The shell of the Turtle represents the body and real events as created by the Higher Power serving as a reminder of the Creator's will and teachings.



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HONESTY

Facing a situation is to be brave, but having the courage to not only do the right thing, but also saying it, is honesty.

We must allow truth to be our guide. We must first be honest with ourselves. This will allow us to be honest with others. We must give full value to both the efforts of our own and others. When we walk through life with integrity, it is then that we know honesty. Be truthful and trustworthy. We must also remember to accept and act on truths through straightforward and appropriate communication.

The Sabe represents honesty. The Sabe is a huge furry creature. Elders say that when a person is honest and has nothing to hide their spirit grows to the size of the Sabe. When one lies or cheats the spirit is not allowed to grow. It eats away at the spirit (conscience). To be Honest means to keep promises made to Creator, others and self.



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HUMILITY

Humility is to know that we are a part of creation.

We must always consider ourselves equal to one another. We should never think of ourselves as being better or worse than anyone else. Humility comes in many forms. This includes compassion, calmness, meekness, gentleness, and patience. We must reflect on how we want to present ourselves to those around us. We must be aware of the balance and equality with all of life, including humans, plants, and animals.

The Wolf represents humility because of its giving nature and devotion to the protection and the good of the pack. The Wolf mates for life and is a generous and loving parent. The expression of humility is manifested in the consideration of others before ourselves. Wolves bow their heads in deference in the presence of other wolves. After the hunt the Wolf allows the pack to feed before feeding itself.

“Being humble means recognizing that we are not on earth to see how important we can become, but to see how much difference we can make in the lives of others.” George B Hinckley



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WISDOM

The mixture of these teachings, combined with the experiences of life, is what we refer to as wisdom.

It is given to us by the Creator to be used for good. Wisdom carries other meanings, which also include intelligence or knowledge. When we cherish our knowledge or intelligence, we are also cherishing our wisdom. We must use sound judgement along with the ability to separate inner qualities and relationships. We must use a good sense and course of action to form a positive attitude. We must remember to listen and use the wisdom that has been provided by our Elders, Tribal leadership, and our Spiritual leaders. We must also always remember that Wisdom comes in all shapes, sizes, forms, and ages.

The beaver represents wisdom.

The building of a community is entirely dependent on how each member uses the wisdom and gifts they have been given by the creator. The Beaver's example of using his sharp teeth for cutting trees and branches to build his dams and lodges expresses this teaching. If he did not use his teeth, they would continue to grow until they became useless, ultimately making it impossible for him to sustain himself. The same can be said for human beings. One's spirit will grow weak if it is not fulfilling its use. When used properly, however, these gifts contribute to the development of a peaceful and healthy community.



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