

Circles of Meaning, Cycles of Life

Seeing from Where You Stand

Seeing from Where You Could Stand, but Have Not Yet

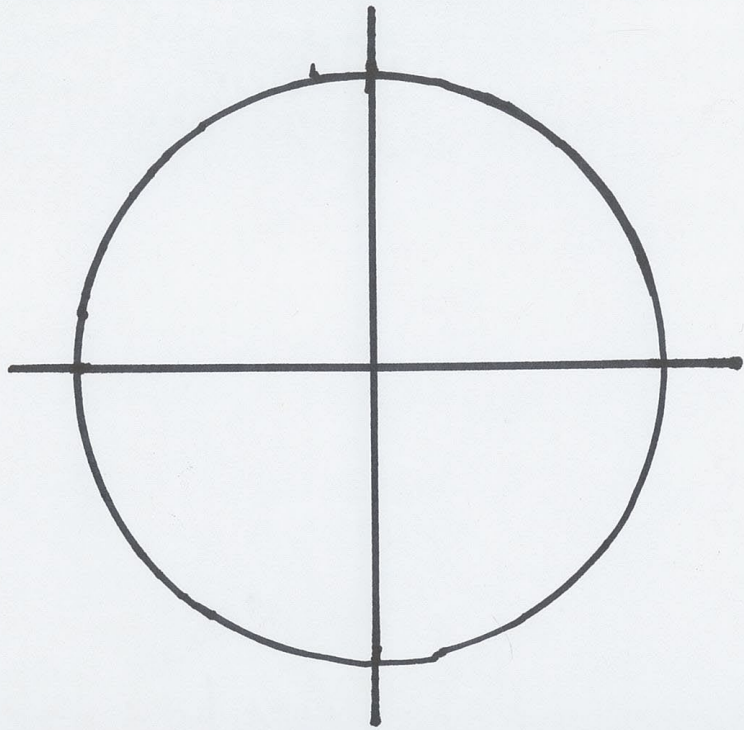
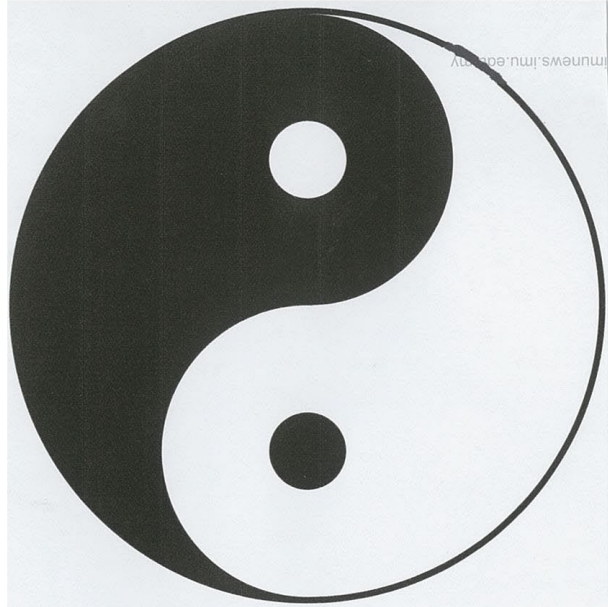
Seeing from the Hawk's Eye View

Choosing the Ancient Good Way

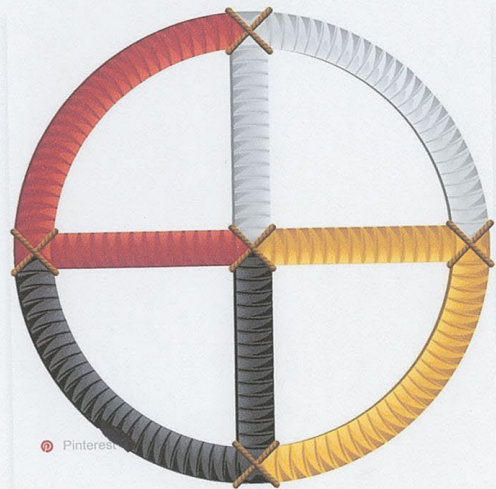
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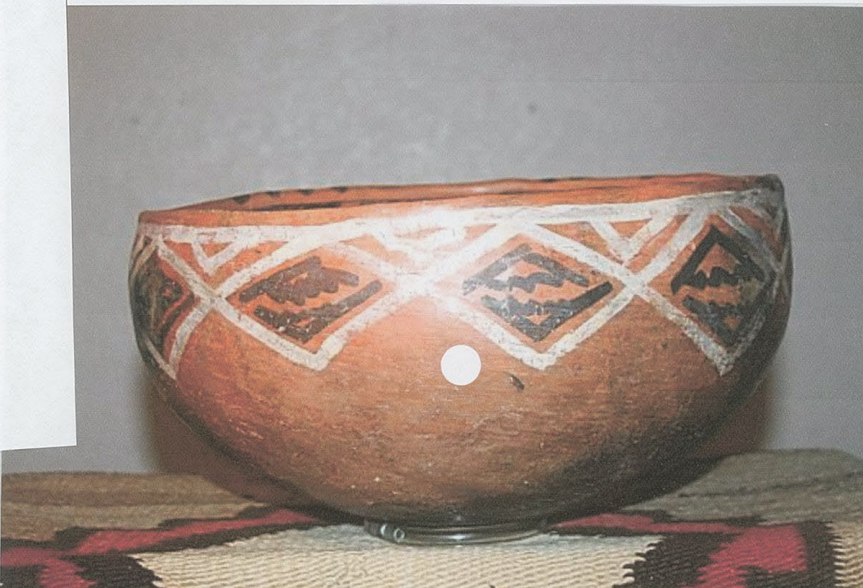
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a Medicine Wheel Art Medicine Wheel Dream Catcher Lakota Colors Lakota Sioux Medicine Wheel



Pinterest



Superordinate Group (Cultural) Identity

- Understand, value and seek to learn the wisdom of your own *Way*.
- Understand, value and seek to learn the wisdom of another's *Way*.
- Create together a *Way* that is inclusive but transcendent to differences. A *Way* that honors both, trusts both, and learns from both for shared benefit.
- Stand together to champion the rights, dignity, justice, and fair opportunity for all.

A Simple Lesson About Building Trust

- Listen as if you actually want to understand, not just to placate the Other.
- Cultivate a gentle, teachable spirit. Leave your “ego” at the door.
- Take off your shoes, you’re standing on Holy Ground.
- Know that America is not a true meritocracy. (P.S.: I love my country.)
- Watch out for Stereotypes, Myths, and other Lies. Example: “War Paint”
- Do not project your agendas onto People who walk a different path.
- If you are seeking to climb ladders, lean them against corporate buildings.
- If you are seeking to love and heal the People, immerse yourself in Nature.

Nature Heals and Teaches

- Ants and Bison
- Wolves, coyotes, eagles and hawks, rabbits & mice & squirrels & salmon
- “Civilization” will never know what the destruction of the forests, the glaciers, and the seas have cost us, until it’s too late.
- Vision Quests & Sweat Lodges
- Access to nature is directly related to healing and quality of life.
- Every day, every year, every life is a circle.
- Stand at the crossroads and look. Ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is, and walk in it, and find rest for your souls. (Jeremiah 6:16)



Wondering through the Woods: The Healing Power of Nature

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What is *nature deficit disorder*?

Nature Deficit Disorder describes the human costs of alienation from nature:

- ❖ Diminished use of the physical senses
- ❖ Attention difficulties
- ❖ Higher rates of physical illness (Ex: obesity, heart problems)
- ❖ Higher rates of mental and emotional illness
(Ex: depression, anxiety, spiritual anomy, stress)
- ❖ Decrease in learning from creative play
- ❖ Magnification of social/community problems
(Crime, DV, substance abuse)



Some relevant findings from science.....


- The more access to nature (green inside and outside the home), the better children seem to cope with adversity. Rural children got highest stress management scores. Nancy Wells, Columbia University
- Children surrounded by nature have longer attention spans. (Wells)
- Post-surgery patients who could see trees vs a brick wall went home sooner, had less pain and needed less narcotic pain relief. Patients who watched a nature video vs daytime television had lower blood pressure and pulse rates. Ulrich, University of Delaware
- A daily dose of walking outside can be as effective as taking antidepressant drugs for treating mild to moderate depression. Walking in a mall did not have the same effect. University of Essex, England
- Currently, more than half the world's population lives in urban, rather than rural, areas. However, connection to nature is vital to our psychological and physical health. (Francis Kuo, Director of Human Health Laboratory, University of Illinois)

And that's not all.....

- Children diagnosed with ADD functioned better (symptom decrease) after a “green” activity (outdoor access to nature) than those with a “non-green” activity (TV & video games). (Kuo)
- Women in public housing who could see trees and grass (vs a barren courtyard) reported fewer aggressive conflicts (including DV), less procrastination on major goals, and more hope re: ability to solve their problems. (Kuo)
- Prison inmates who looked out on far fields needed far less health care than those whose cells faced a bleak inner courtyard. *Psychology Today*
- Elders in Tokyo who had walkable parks and tree-lined streets in their neighborhoods lived five years longer than those who did not, even when SES was taken into account. *Psychology Today*
- Health disparities normally seen between the wealthy and non-wealthy disappeared when access to green areas was factored in. (U of Essex)



Revisiting the Problem.....

- We are evolved/designed to interact with and be at home in the natural world.
 - The world around us has changed much faster than we have.
 - Because our senses and information processing ability are geared to dealing with the natural world, we have not changed enough to be able to handle the noise, traffic, hurried pace, media arousal, and stress without adverse effects.
 - Being cut off from the daily experience of the natural world harms us and blocks the learning, healing and wisdom that nature brings.
 - Resolving this disconnect can have a substantial impact on healing our spiritual, emotional and physical selves.
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Suggestions for Natural Healing

- Turn off your phone, computer, television. (If anxiety or boredom result, you're on to something!)
- Get an outdoor hobby or activity. This is best done in solitude or with people you like.
- **Pay attention** to what is around you. Being connected to it all is your natural state.
Follow an ant. Learn to watch the sky and its weather. Watch a spider spin its web. Notice the wind. Listen to birds. Stand in the rain. Smell blossoms. Walk barefoot in the grass or at the beach. Take a hike. Watch the sun set.
- Do a little gardening, or just care for a plant. (Cycles of life, death, renewal)
- Be with animals, or at least be around them. Also children who play freely outside.
- Practice yoga to become more aware of your own body and tranquil mindfulness to be aware of your senses and feelings.
- Don't forget to see yourself.

Lessons from Nature

- ⊕ What do you see in the water?
- ⊕ Do you know what you're made of?
- ⊕ When you see a tree, what are you seeing?
- ⊕ When you grow a plant, you grow yourSelf. When you heal an animal, you heal yourSelf.
- ⊕ What maple leaves know.
- ⊕ We are earth, wind, water, and fire.
- ⊕ Getting close to nature means going home.