



Seven Philosophies for the Native American Man

The following was from the Gathering of Native American Men in June 1996 at Colorado:

The wisdom of Native Elders is contained in the Seven Philosophies and is offered to Native American men so that they may be better fathers, sons, husbands, uncles, relatives, friends, Tribal members and citizens of the countries in which they live. The Seven Philosophies point the way towards a return to the values of Native American culture for the healing of individuals, families and Native Communities.

First Philosophy TO THE WOMEN

The cycle of life for the woman is the baby, girl, woman, and grandmother. These are the four directions of life. She has been given by natural laws, the ability to reproduce life. The most sacred of all things is life. Therefore, all men should treat her with dignity and respect. Never was it our way to harm her mentally or physically. Indian men were never abusers. We always treated our women with respect and understanding. So from now on:

I will treat women in a sacred manner. The Creator gave women the responsibility for bringing new life into the world. Life is sacred, so I will look upon the women in a sacred manner.

In our traditional ways, the woman is the foundation of the family. I will work with her to create a home atmosphere of respect, security and harmony.

I will refrain from any form of emotional or physical abuse. If I have these feelings, I will talk to the Creator for guidance.

I will treat all women as if they were my own female relatives. This is my vow.

Second Philosophy TO THE CHILDREN

As an eagle prepares its young to leave the nest with all the skills and knowledge it needs to participate in life, in the same manner so will I guide my children. I will use the culture to prepare them for life.

The most important thing I can give to my children is my time. I will spend time with them in order to learn from them and to listen to them.

I will teach my children to pray, as well as the importance of respect.

We are the caretakers of the children for the Creator. They are His children, not ours.

I am proud of our own Native language. I will learn it if I can and help my children to learn it.

In today's world it is easy for the children to go astray, so I will work to provide positive alternatives for them. I will teach them the culture. I will encourage education. I will encourage sports. I will encourage them to talk to the Elders for guidance; but mostly, I will seek to be a role model myself.

I make this commitment to my children so they will have courage and find guidance through traditional ways.

Third Philosophy TO THE FAMILY

The creator gave to us the family, which is the place where all teachings are handed down from the grandparent, to the parent, and to the child.

The children's behavior is a mirror of the parents behavior. Knowing this,

I realize the importance for each Indian man to build a strong and balanced family. By doing this, I will break the cycle of hurt and ensure the positive and mental health of the children, even the children yet to be born. So from now on:

I will dedicate my priorities to rebuilding my family.

I must never give up and leave my family only to the mother.

I am accountable to restore the strength of my family. To do this, I will nurture our family's spiritual, cultural, and social health. I will demonstrate trust, respect, honor and discipline; but mostly I will be consistent in whatever I do with them.

I will see that the grandparents and community Elders play a significant role in the education of my children.

I realize that the male and female together are fundamental to our family life. I will listen to my mates council for our family's benefit, as well as for the benefit of my Indian Nation.

Fourth Philosophy TO THE COMMUNITY

The Indian community provides many things for the family. The most important is the sense of belonging; that is, to belong to "the people", and to have a place to go. Our Indian communities need to be restored to health so the future generation will be guaranteed a place to go for culture, language and Indian socializing. In the community, the honor of one is the honor of all and the pain of one is the pain of all. I will work to strengthen recovery in all parts of my community. As an Indian man:

I will give back to my community by donating my time and talents when I am able.

I will cultivate friendships with other Indian men for mutual support and strength.

I will consider the effects of our decisions on behalf of the next seven generations; in this way, our children and grandchildren will inherit healthy communities.

I will care about those in my community so that the mind changers, alcohol and drugs, will vanish, and our communities will forever be free of violence.

If each of us can do all these things, then others will follow; ours will be a proud community.

Fifth Philosophy TO THE EARTH

Our Mother Earth is the source of all life, whether it be the plants, the two-legged, four-legged, winged ones or human beings. The Mother Earth is the greatest teacher, if we listen, observe and respect her. When we live in harmony with the Mother Earth, she will recycle the things we consume and make them available to our children and to their children. As an Indian man, I must teach my children how to care for the Earth so it is there for the future generations. So from now on:

I realize the Earth is our mother. I will treat her with honor and respect. I will honor the interconnectedness of all things and all forms of life. I will realize the Earth does not belong to us, but we belong to the Earth. The natural law is the ultimate authority upon the lands and water. I will learn the knowledge and wisdom of the natural laws. I will pass this knowledge in to my children.

The mother Earth is a living entity that maintains life. I will speak out in a good way whenever I see someone abusing the Earth. Just as I would protect my own mother, so will I protect the Earth. I will ensure that the land, water, and air will be intact for my children and my children's children - unborn.

Sixth Philosophy TO THE CREATOR

As an Indian man, I realize we make no gains without the Great Spirit being in our lives. Neither I nor anything I attempt to do, will work without the Creator. Being Indian and being spiritual has the same meaning. Spirituality is out gift from the Great One. This day, I vow to walk the Red Road.

As an Indian man, I will return to the traditional and spiritual values which have guided my ancestors for the past generations. I will look with new eyes on the powers of our ceremonies and religious ways, for they are important to the very survival of our people.

We have survived and are going to grow and flourish spiritually. We will fulfill our teachings and the purpose that the Creator has given us with dignity.

Each day, I will pray and ask for guidance. I will commit to walk the Red Road, or whatever the spiritual way is called in my own culture.

If I am Christian, I will be a good one. If I am traditional, I will walk this road with dedication.

If each if us can do these things then others will follow. From this day forward, I will reserve time and energy for spirituality, seeking to know the Creators will.

Seventh Philosophy TO MYSELF

I will think about what kind of person I want to be when I am an Elder.

I will start developing myself now to be this person.

I will walk with the Great Spirit and the grandfathers at my side. I will develop myself to remain positive. I will develop a good mind.

I will examine myself daily to see what I did good and what I need to improve. I will examine my strength and weaknesses, then I will ask the Creator to guide me. I will develop a good mind.

Each day, I will listen to the Creators voice in the wind. I will watch nature and ask to be shown a lesson which will occur on my path.

I will seek out the guiding principles, which guided my ancestors. I will walk in dignity, honor and humility, conducting myself as a warrior.

I will seek the guidance of the Elders so that I may maintain the knowledge of culture, ceremonies, and songs, and so that I may pass these on to the future generations.

I choose to do all these things myself, because no one else can do them for me.

I know I cannot give away what I don't have, so I will need to walk the talk.