

Native Lifeway – The Circle Way

An excerpt from Tamarack's upcoming book:

Spirit Fire: A Course on Kindling the Flame of Vision and the Voice of the Ancestors

Introduction

The rituals and relationships we are about to immerse ourselves in, spring from a way of living with Earth Mother and Sky Father that is quite different from that of the Civilized Lifeway. Perhaps it would be easier to see the difference if we were to think of Civilized Lifeway as a lens through which we have been taught to view The Mother and The Father. Many of us are not aware that the lens exists. If we cannot recognize it, we cannot look around it. It then keeps us blind to the intense beauty and profound teachings of our Intrinsic Lifeway.

In this section we will peek over the lens, so that we may come to know some of the basic precepts of Native Lifeway. Perhaps the most alienating distortion that the lens causes is the view that material and spiritual existence can be separated from each other. This allows us to think that Native spirituality can be practiced, like a Civilized religion, outside the context of Native Lifeway.

As you will see, the spiritual basis of Native Lifeway manifests itself in everyday life as much as it does in ceremony and ritual. In actuality there is no distinction between spiritual and secular life. To the Native, all is related — life is ceremony and ceremony is life. This is the Circular way of things; it is the essence of the Old Way. Any approach to the Old Way needs to begin with an awareness of the Circular view of life, which is shared by all Native People. You'll see it emerging continually throughout this book, boldly in places like the Sweat Lodge Ceremony and Passing Over, and subtly just about everywhere else.

The following is only a brief introduction to a way of life that would take not only a lifetime, but access to many lifetimes of memory, to know. Yet I trust that these words can provide a clear view around the lens, if not actually shattering it. Then you will be able to much more easily connect with the adventure of discovery that awaits you...

The Old Way and how we lost it

I refer to the way of living which is common to the Indigenous Peoples of The Earth as the Old Way. It is old only in the sense that the vast majority of Humans no longer live it. Yet it is alive and well, as it is also the way of all things natural — every brother and sister, whether they be furred or feathered or scaled, whether they be of Stone or Fire or Air or Water. In fact, it is the way of the Cosmos. Only those few but unfortunate plants and animals the Civilized People have domesticated, no longer live the Old Way.

The Old Way is the Circle Way — the way of interdependence. Honoring comes easy in the Circle, because everybody faces everybody, and everybody touches, and is touched, by everybody. Our Ancestors who lived the Old Way of hunting, fishing and foraging, left us a verdant legacy pleasing to the eye and to the soul. The Streams ran clear, the Rain fell clean, and the seed grew of itself and died and grew again.

And then a few of our Ancestors chose to sow the seed themselves, and agriculture — the basis of Civilization — was born. They sought to control and regiment The Mother's benevolence. They traded Earth sufficiency for self sufficiency, and in doing so found themselves moving from a life of interdependence to one of dependence.

With agriculture came the necessary support structures of ownership and hierarchy. The Earth became 'property' — a secularized, inanimate commodity. A resource. A food factory. An investment. An inheritance. From this basis grew the society we have today, complete with concentration of wealth and power, predatory trade and warfare, and the enslavement of Humans (nobody works voluntarily) and animals (Chickens have no choice), and plants (nor do House or Garden plants), and Water (nor do dammed Rivers or pumped Groundwater), and minerals.

The Old Way economy, which is based on the flow of foraging, cannot support the above-

mentioned Civilized traits. Instead, its small interactive groups, which share in spirit, strife, and pleasure, encourage a more personally involved, less structured lifeway.

Structure is not needed when there is Balance. When Keewaydinoquay, my beloved Elder, still Walked amongst us, she was fond of saying:

Blessings and Balance
Balance and Blessings
for out of Balance
flow all Blessings

She repeated it often, I believe so that we could reflect upon the wisdom therein...

The term 'Balance' at first glance appears to be linear, as in balancing the two sides of a scale, or balancing work and family time.

A Native Person knows Balance in a different way, as a characteristic of flow rather than as a comparative measurement. For her, Balance is Life's rhythm and spiral. For example, she will watch the plants grow, die, and grow again... in a continual spiral, in rhythm with the Seasons. The Civilized Person will plant seeds, then harvest the plants. Period. If he does not plant again, there are no more plants.

The major difference between the two Balances is that Civilized Balance is controlled by the individual, and Native Balance dwells outside the self. More specifically, it resides in the Greater Circle. The Native can feel this Balance, she is the Balance, in the same way that the Flower is the Meadow and the Meadow is the Flower. In this place of Balance, she breathes and is breathed in, she has two hands and two thousand hands, she has talons and fins and a brow of clouds. Like the Flower, she has no bounds. She is the Circle, and the Circle is her.

Chapter One

The Native "Commandments": Life in the Web

In Civilized cultures, Balance is achieved by means of religious and political laws. The manner of Old Way living renders governance, redundant. Balance is maintained by Honoring the Circle. The only "laws" in the Old Way are natural laws. These laws (or more accurately, Awarenesses) are no more than observations of the Circular nature of things.

In the Judeo-Christian tradition, the primary laws governing individual and social behavior are called "Commandments" — rules for living commanded by God. There is sanction to punish those who would break the Commandments. This relationship of law to life reflects the pyramidal structure of Civilization — a small group sets the terms of the majority's existence.

In Native Lifeway, seldom does anyone command someone else to do something. Because natural laws are neither directives nor ideals to be lived up to, there is no meted punishment for not following them. They are simply the way life is. They are as intrinsic to life as breath itself — one can hardly help but follow them. Life goes on in endless Balance when the Awarenesses are Honored. When People attempt to deny them and live by others which they have created, they cease to live in Native (Circular) Balance and begin to live in Civilized (linear) Balance. Some who Walk the Old Way, say that those who lead linear lives are no longer living. At best, perhaps they merely exist. In exchange for control, the Civilized Way has traded a long-term Life of Balance for its short-term existence.

In many ways the "Native Commandments", the Balance Awarenesses, are Honored by Native People, both consciously and in spirit. The Awarenesses reflect throughout their everyday lives. In rituals, the Awarenesses play central roles, and they are echoed daily whenever Thanks is Given for Blessings received. This active voicing of the Awarenesses keeps the People mindful of them and helps keep them from being the taken for granted.

The First Awareness: *The Great Mother provides all that is needed within one's Circle of Existence.*

A Native Person walks literally on the breast of his mother. He knows The Earth Mother as a living being who provides all of his needs — food, clothing, shelter, comfort, and warmth, as well as emotional and spiritual sustenance. He trusts implicitly in this, just as when he was a babe and trusted in his birth mother to provide these things. He knows that he will always be a child of The Mother, and thus be provided for until his last breath and beyond. He does not fear hunger or cold or loneliness, because his Mother is always with him.

He knows that he does not belong to his birth mother, that she was but a surrogate, caring for him in The Great Mother's name until he was ready to be presented back to Her.

This is the basis of his Respect for all Life. Every being — every Two-Legged, and Winged and Scaled and Leafed — is his sibling. To unnecessarily hurt one of them would be to draw grief upon their Mother-in-common. To take more than he needed would amount to plucking from the mouth of his brothers and sisters. To dig wantonly into the Earth would be to rip into the skin of his Mother, causing her to wail in anguish.

The Second Awareness: *Giving is Receiving.*

The common belief is that when you give, you lose, and when you receive, you gain. You keep first for yourself, to assure that you and yours are taken care of. That is linear Balance.

From the perspective of Circle Balance, there is no difference between giving and receiving — they each nourish both the individual and the Circle. Let me illustrate...

Imagine you are one of your body's organs, let's say the liver. You take care of the wastes from the rest of the body and you store energy for it — for the heart, the lungs, the muscles, and so on. In turn, they provide you, the liver, with blood, oxygen, mobility, and so forth.

It may appear that the liver is giving only in order that it might receive — the same old cause-and-effect Civilized Way of getting things done. In actuality there is a sharing of energies going on that is so complex that giving and receiving cannot be distinguished from each other. As the liver, you are just a link in a Circle, Walking your intended Path by allowing to flow through you what you are being given by the Circle. Is that functioning as a distinct entity, primarily concerned for you and yours?

Let's look at it in another way... In a linear sense, a gift that I receive is mine. In the Circle Way, I receive the gift in order that it may be gifted again. And again... Only from ego perspective is a gift for receiving; most Natives know that a gift is for giving. In order to Honor the Journey of a gift, Natives harbor no expectations over where a gift is to eventually go or how it is to be used.

Nor do they have expectations about receiving in return. Yes, things come to us, but that does not necessarily mean that they are coming because we have given. We receive because we are children of The Mother and the beneficiaries of Her Love. And we give because we are a facet of The Mother's Giving Flow.

This form of giving cannot necessarily be called generosity, because we have no choice but to give. Nor do we need to receive with graciousness, because we have no choice but to receive. Whether or not we are consciously involved in the giving and receiving, we are giving and receiving.

To help you gain a feel for this form of giving and receiving, imagine it to be more of a Web than a Circle. Most of you are familiar with the circular giving-receiving concept — “What

goes around, comes around,” “Give unto others as you would have them give unto you,” and the concepts of karma and redemption through reincarnation. A Web has many interconnected strands which come and go in myriad directions, and create a plethora of varied forms and shapes. Which strand comes and which strand goes, or from where to where it goes, is nearly impossible to decipher. Many strands support a single strand, and a single strand supports many. All co-mingle in a complex, symbiotic relationship. Every strand functions as a giving-receiving organ within the greater organism the Web. The Web is then a giving-receiving organ within an even greater organism, and so on.

As you can probably now see, there is no real distinction between giving and receiving, no matter which way you look at the web. The concept of giving and receiving is an artificial construct. In reality, sources, directions, and intentions are near-impossible to identify, much less trace. Without the ability to separate giving from receiving, the sources of gifts and the directions of their flow seem to blend together and lose their distinction. That’s why giving is receiving.

The concept of giving and receiving is based upon another artificial construct — the concept of surplus and want. It seems to fit that if I have surplus, I give, and if I have want, I receive. Our Ancestors who became agriculturalists developed these constructs in an effort to find Balance with agriculture’s perennial boom and bust cycle.

A Native has no use for surplus; it bogs her down. The wealth a Native has use for, the wealth that makes sense in her life, is that of character and Vision. Material wealth gets in the way of that, so material things in and of themselves hold no value. Their value is in their sharing.

Material goods are shared with those in need, whether or not they are surplus. The Native does not give out of some altruistic sense to provide for the needy. She gives for herself, because it is her nature. It is the nature of all things. She is like Wolf, who leaves what he does not need of his kill, for Raven and Fox and Chickadee to feast upon.

Like Wolf, the Native does not need to herd animals (i.e., give) in order to have them available to eat (i.e., receive). The Mother takes care of those particulars (the first Awareness — The

Mother provides). Here we can see how the two Awarenesses are so related that they are actually reflections of each other. They form a Circle. That is how a Native might describe the relationship — if he even distinguished one from the other! For him, Walking the Awarenesses in his life is innate behavior, so he might, as I sometimes do, merely explain them as the Circle

Way.

Chapter Two Honor and Respect

Reared through childhood in interdependence with all their Relations, Native People grow up naturally Honoring that Circle, and naturally Respectful of all who dwell within it. This includes showing Honor and Respect for themselves. Because of the circular nature of Native Lifeway, it is near impossible to Honor and Respect others and not self, or vice versa.

These principles are so intrinsic that when they are breached, the shame experienced, and the self-imposed retribution, are often so intense that any disciplinary action would pale in comparison. The worst punishment for such a socially conscious people as Natives are, is ostracization, and that is usually also self-imposed.

This universal regard permeates the fabric of their lives and reflects in their everyday activities. I'd like to show this by using the example of a Native meal. In particular, note the manner in which Guardians (mistakenly called Warriors by Civilized People) help to maintain the traditions of Honor and Respect through their behavior:

In Native bands of my knowing, Honor is given to Elders at mealtime by serving them first. This is out of Respect for the wisdom of their years and their esteemed place in the Kinship Circle.

There is also a practical consideration: Elders are the carriers of the Clan Knowledge — the lessons of experience that have been passed down through the generations. This gives Elders an indispensable role in the survival and longevity of the Clan. In times of privation, they are least expendable, so all effort is made to ensure their survival. The passing on of the Clan knowledge, rather than the survival of the Elders *per se*, becomes the reason for their eminent consideration. Were it not for the Clan knowledge, good arguments could be made to prioritize the survival of other Clan members over Elders.

Visitors are served directly after the Elders. If the meal be a Feast and there be Guests of Honor, such as couples being Wed or someone being Honored for special service, they are also served directly after the Elders. It is customary that Visitors and Guests of Honor be given the best of everything, including the place of Honor beside the Elders. (Mealtime or not, and whether or not there is enough food to go around, Visitors are Honored by being offered food.)

The Women are served next, along with their Nurslings, for together they are the progenitors of the coming generations. If there be scarcity, Women, the Unborn, and the Very Young are first in need of steady nourishment.

Next come the Men. They give Honor to the Women by following them and, by being between the Women and Children, are in good position to be a help to both.

The Children gain their food following the Men. This usually includes Toddlers, as they are often under the care of their older siblings. Children practice patience and exercise humility by waiting until after Elders, Guests, Women and Men have their fare. In this way they also give Respect. The objective consideration is that if there be shortage, Children can better do with less than their Elders or Mothers. And in dire straits — as heartless as it may sound — children are more expendable.

Last are the Guardians. If food is in short supply, they sit in pride and contentment, even with empty bowls. Forgoing their share gives them great Honor and good feeling, because in doing so they fulfill their calling to serve their People by guarding their welfare and assuring their well-being.

They are the Clan members who can best take care of themselves; they are in prime condition, having been trained to thrive on little and creatively gain what they need from diverse and uncommon sources. If need be, they can quickly secure food for themselves after the communal meal. Or they can just as easily Fast and gain strength from their giving (whereas Fasting might weaken others).

When it comes time for the Guardian to fill his bowl, he assesses how much food will be left for others. He will check to see who may wish for another serving, and if there is anyone who is infirm or otherwise not present and may arrive hungry later. He will also take into account the unexpected later Visitor and the possibility of carry-along food being needed by those going out to hunt or forage. If he is eating alone, he will still exercise the same

considerations.

When he can confirm that everyone is provided for, he will then take a share. He will still will not take the last of something, because he has been trained to ‘be as a question’ — in this case to take into account the possibility that someone may have escaped his attention.

If in kindness he is still offered the last of the food, he may yet take only half. In this way he Honors the gesture, and at the same time allows for the possibility that the offer was an expression of selflessness and Honoring more so than because there was food enough for him.

Such caring and generosity of spirit, which the Guardian is particularly trained to exemplify, is typical of Old Way Peoples in general. To carry the well-being of your People uppermost in your heart is the epitome of Circle Attunement.

Chapter Three The Cradleboard: First Step in Awareness

Awareness brings perspective; Attunement brings focus. The Circle Way is to approach Attunement within the context of Awareness. This is essential for the Journey of Knowing that you are undertaking. It will allow you, once you reconnect with yourself, to live in Balance with your surroundings.

We Walk our Journey not so much to find life’s meaning as to find its richness. This is the gift of Attunement. To become Attuned is to become fully awake, shimmeringly vibrant, and completely absorbed in the experience of the Now. Without this Attunement, our relationship with The Mother is destined to be drab and mechanical.

Attunement is achieved through mental, physical, and spiritual reawakening. The Native grows in Attunement through sensory development exercises, mental skill development, and ritual.

Awareness is the cradle of Attunement. For the Native Person, Awareness begins, literally, in the Cradle.

I can tell whether or not a young Child spent his first Moons riding upon his Mother in a Cradleboard (a Native backpack for carrying a Baby) or Baby sling (Rebozo in Spanish) by the way he responds when he enters a new room. The uncradled Child will go immediately to the things that attract him, and explore them. The cradled Child will go first to the center of the room to observe and gain perspective.

The uncradled Child may be well-suited to a Civilized life; her ability to quickly key-in and focus on a particular object is a skill she will need for the singular tasks typical of Civilized existence. The cradled Child will likely be better adapted to Native living; his ability to survey his surroundings and see a diversity of things could serve him well in his expansive World.

Why is there such a difference between the Native and the Civilized Child? For the answer, let’s look at each Child’s yearnings...

Shortly after birth, the Civilized Babe is often placed in a stationary Cradle, isolated from her Mother. Mom comes and goes; the Babe remains put. She is literally a prisoner of place, totally dependent upon her Mother to come to her and meet her needs and desires. Because Mother is not connected enough with the Child to read her needs and wants, it is entirely up to her to get her Mother’s attention if she wants to have them met.

She soon finds that her normal language — a facial expression, whimper or chortle — does not work over distance. She has to cry to get Mom’s attention. The Babe’s constant efforts to be recognized, tended to, and touched, followed by delayed gratification, create a yearning within her that becomes chronic. She learns early that contentment is only temporary, that Mother’s leaving is inevitable. She becomes chronically starved.

She ends up developing a hard, pragmatic outlook: what she can grasp, she can rely on; what is beyond her reach, she mistrusts. It is fleeting and unreliable, so she cannot risk putting faith in it. In the extreme, she may even deny its existence.

Her outlook is reinforced by encouragement to crawl and walk as soon as she is possibly able, and to explore as much as she can. This suits her well; it offers her an escape from prison! Finally she has her own way of getting her needs met! Now she can satisfy her chronic yearnings by trusting in the one constant in her life — herself.

In getting her needs met in the only way she knows, she's often perceived by others as clingy, whiny, and getting into everything. In reality, she is getting her needs met in the way that she has been trained. Because she is literally starving for constancy and connection in her life, no amount of discipline seems to sway her from her course.

The Native Child spends his first turn of the seasons or so in a portable Cradle. He goes wherever his Mother goes, which is easily accomplished because, like a backpack, he can be slipped on and off at will. On her back (or front, when nursing) he feels secure in her presence. He smells her and hears her voice and feels the rhythm of her movements. At the same time her arms are free to tend to her tasks.

His merest expression can be sensed by her, and she is able to respond immediately. Because of that, he grows to feel secure and trusting. His Mother's feet are his feet, his Mother's world is his world. He is ever a part of her Circle. When she rests or is otherwise occupied, she places the Cradleboard close beside her or hangs it from a nearby branch, so that he can watch and remain connected. Whatever the situation, she makes sure that he is involved and receives attention.

So nourished, he grows content within himself. He has little need to grab or cling to something for fear it might otherwise disappear. He does not know the chronic sickness of relentless yearning, because he is blessed to continually dwell in the Circle of Life and Love.

Now, back to the entering-a-room scenario: because of the Cradleboard/Rebozo experience, the Native Child is accustomed to gaining perspective before interacting. He can afford the time for it because he is content. Calm is his natural state, because he has not had to resort to frenetic gorging to get his needs met in limited time. And he has the patience to gain perspective, because he is centered within himself. He has not been driven to impatience by endless waiting.

He is naturally autonomous because he ventures forth from a foundation of loving presence, and he knows he has that foundation to return to. He is naturally Respectful and willing to serve, because his needs have been Respected and served. From before his first breath, he has been included and granted Respect as a full member of the Circle.

The integrity of the Native and his ability to perform feats of both character and strength, are born of his early days in the portable Cradle. Many of the neuroses of Civilized cultures, from dysfunctional relationships to conspicuous consumption, can be traced back to early patterns cast in the stationary, isolated Cradle.

I raised my child, Wabineshi, the Cradleboard way while we were living in a Cabin. It can be done virtually anywhere, because it is the way, not the trappings, that make the difference.

In the tradition of my Elders, I made his Cradleboard at the time of his Birth. The teachings of the Cradleboard are so personal and fundamental to the Babe's development that tradition suggests the Cradleboard be used only by the Babe it was made for.

Raising a child the Cradleboard way does not mean that she always has to be in the Cradleboard. When not traveling or outdoors, the Cradleboard may not be necessary. The important element is Honoring her presence by considering her immobility and keeping her involved in the moment's activity.

Occasionally we would use the Cradleboard indoors. I have pictures of times when we hung Wabineshi-in-Cradleboard on the living room wall... or was it 'off the wall'? I remember one time when Wabineshi was agitated and we couldn't figure out why. His unsettled state went on for most of the morning, and it was starting to wear on our nerves. We were indoors at the Cabin, where we seldom used the Cradleboard. Knowing how contented he usually was in the Cradleboard, we decided to lace him in and set him down the middle of our activity. His fidgetiness left him immediately and a rosy smile spread over his face!

The important element of raising a child in the Cradleboard way is that she be kept in the center of activity and be regularly and promptly tended to. Wabineshi was nearly always with one or both of his parents — he was a part of our daily activities, and he was nursed and slept with us until his fourth Winter.

Before that time he did not know a baby-sitter or the pain of separation. His first parting from us, shortly after he quit nursing, was laced with tears. However, the courage to venture forth alone followed soon behind the tears. We waited until that time so that he would be secure enough to risk the unknown and old enough to understand that he was not being abandoned. He could then personally manifest his Circle Attunement.

Chapter Four Circle-direction and Self-direction

Circle Attunement requires stepping beyond self. Unfortunately, much of the Civilized Way is preoccupied with stepping more into self. The trend is going ever more toward defining the self as distinct from the Circle — separate from Sky, Earth, and the Relations. The anthem of the day — self-fulfillment, self-healing, self-development, personal power, assertiveness — saturates the media and rolls in unison from millions of tongues.

Once The Circle is broken — once self is separated from other — the Walking is seen as separate from the goal. It is then possible to wage peace and imagine it to be different from waging war. Or even to kill for peace (or country or Earth or God), and then condemn others who kill for the same reasons.

Self-fulfillment... can we actually fulfill ourselves? Self-healing... is that really what is happening? Self-development... how are we able to develop ourselves? Is assertiveness our natural way of being? Can peace really come from war? We are on a personal Journey; does that mean we are on a Journey for self?

When we ask, "Am I depressed? Am I content? Am I healing? Am I growing spiritually?" we are looking for answers that relate to self. A Native may ask similar questions. The difference between hers and a Civilized Person's is that she would probably be asking on behalf of her People.

To dichotomize for the sake of illustration: The Civilized focus is primarily on receiving; in the Old Way, giving is receiving. Therefore, when I attend to the healing of the Circle, I am also healed; when I feed the Elders and Children, I am also fed.

From Circle perspective, focus on the individual is in Balance when it is within the context of the People. One reason Civilized People lose that context and find it hard to progress beyond 'me', is their culturally-inspired goal to feel good. That's why a Civilized person will often try to immerse himself in the Old Way by assembling a personal collection of ritual experiences and craft skills — 'me' experiences. If he had Circle perspective, he would be more drawn to the ways of Honor and Respect.

Ask yourself these questions if you'd like to know whether your life is Circle-directed or self-directed:

- Are my first thoughts of the morning on how I might Walk the Day in Honor?
- When I consider the effect of my actions, do the Ancestors and the Unborn come to mind?
- Or is my main consideration for how I might benefit?

A Woman once asked me for advice on whether or not she should look for a new job. I suggested that she could answer her own question by asking herself whether her considerations were for the Greater Good or to serve herself. Usually, when we are considering choices, we are self-serving; when we are listening to Guiding Voices, we are serving the Greater Circle.

Another way of knowing whether or not we are Circle-directed is by determining if we are living in the moment or for the moment. To live for today is to live for the moment. To be in the moment is to live as though there is no specific point in time — no moment to grab. We are then rooted not in time but in flow. We invest less in timely product and more in ageless process. Life becomes less a series of events and more like continual, endlessly varied waves of unfolding.

Someone who lives this un-relationship with time could find himself feeling like a Hawk yanked out of the Sky, when he comes in contact with the self-directed World. It's oftentimes caused not by the big differences in how life is approached, but by the affairs of everyday life. One example is commemorative celebrations such as birthdays and anniversaries. The difference is not in how they are celebrated, but in whether or not they are even recognized. Natives, not being inclined to 'capture the moment', do not to keep track of the dates of significant events. In fact, they don't know what calendar dates are! Many, if not most, could not tell you their age. When life is a continuum, there is little reason to keep track of time, and much reason not to.

If a Native were asked to chronicle the passage of his life, he would probably do so in much the way that I would describe the unfolding of a Flower, from tender shoot to bud, to blossom, and then to withered bloom and seed. For the Native, these unfoldings from one phase to another of his life would be marked by Rites of Passage (which are the subject matter of Part IV of this book). They, rather than abstract dates, are the story of his life.

Those who lead self-serving lives are often perplexed by this way of life that to them does not make rational sense. It is as though the Native 'walks to the beat of a different Drum'. And indeed he does. Because it cannot be heard by them, they tend to wonder if her unexplainable behavior might be because of lack of motivation or because she is deficient in some way. In the extreme, they might attribute her 'unorthodox' behavior to demons that must be possessing her. No wonder Circle-directed People are often at best tolerated, and more often persecuted!

Chapter Five Circle Attunement in Communication

Another prime example of the difference between Circle direction and self direction is seen when a Native person and a Civilized person engage in conversation. Civilized People are taught that in order to hold someone's attention and convey sincerity, you should stand directly in front of him and look him in the eye. In the Natural Realm, such conduct would be taken as a sign of dominance. The behavior is also similar to a predator's when stalking prey.

Understandably then, animals can get nervous when they're stared at! In fact, they will do practically anything to break the gaze — bolt, submit, or counter-attack. I used to play a game with the Wolves I lived with: we would stare each other in the eye until one of us broke the gaze. Being trained in the Civilized Way, I could quite easily win.

The game being so against their natures, they Honored me by trusting me enough to play

it with me. And yet it was usually hard to catch their gaze in order that we could play it. I most often initiated the game, but once in a while I would catch one of them looking intently at something on my body that caught their attention, and the game was on!

Once we made eye contact, I could feel the tension steadily build, until they couldn't take it anymore. Sometimes they would just turn their heads, as though something else got their attention. At other times they would whine and whimper from the stress, and occasionally they would lunge or snap at me. Fortunately for me, it was not malicious — it was just their way of saying “Enough!”

The more we played the game, the more I recognized that I was feeling the stress also. The Wolves were my mirror; they were helping me get back in touch with my innate ways. In my youth I lived between two worlds, so I never fully acculturated to the Civilized Way. Yet I was conditioned enough to think that being able to look someone in the eye was a positive trait. Still I had trouble practicing it, which left me feeling guilty and inadequate. I give Honor to my sister and brother Wolves for guiding me back to Balance. Were it not for them, I might still be struggling with alien ways of communication.

We have the innate ability to feel when we are being gazed upon, even though we don't know by whom. Have you ever felt that you were being stared at? Have the hairs on the back of your neck ever stood up because you sensed an unknown presence? This is a survival trait, evolved over the eons in response to being stalked. As with the gaze game the Wolves and I used to play, the animal being stalked becomes increasingly agitated and wants to break eye contact. Out of sight, out of consideration for dinner.

A Deer wants so desperately to know what she is up against that she will stomp and snort in an effort to entice the stalker to charge, or at least to show himself. Without knowing the whereabouts of her stalker, she would run the risk of bounding right into him if she were to bolt.

We Humans would naturally respond in the same way — become agitated, then go into defense-escape mode. So why do Civilized Humans do exactly the opposite and return the stare? Because assertiveness rules. Dominance is everything.

Old Way People come together in a Circle, where there is room for everybody. Civilized People form a pyramid, where there's little room on the top and a lot of room on the bottom. This creates an artificial competitive environment, where the dominance game is played according to 'civilized' rules.

One of the game strategies is assertiveness. Proponents of assertiveness claim that it gives Honor and Respect to self and other. From my perspective, it's still about winning and losing. Stripped of its 'positive communication technique' veneer, it shows itself to me as more of a survival technique — a bloodless enactment of the prey-predator drama. Professional liars (read:predators) know this. They train to be able to look someone in the eye while they are lying, which gives their lie better odds of passing for truth. An accepted lie means they win, they dominate.

While a Native might feel edgy sitting before a Civilized Person who has locked her in his gaze, the Civilized Person could feel disregarded, because she doesn't think she has his attention. Even though he might be listening intently, it may not seem so to her, because his senses (including sight) are also attuned to the Greater Circle.

Why the disparity in the two's perceptions? The Civilized cultural ideal is not to be present, but to be on top. The way to the top is to focus. Conquer a Mountain — focus, be successful in your career — focus, get to Heaven — focus.

From the earliest age, those of the Civilized Way are trained to focus. Mass media seduces you to focus, mass education forces you to focus. Keep your nose to the grindstone...

Keep your eyes on the road... Sit at your desk and don't look around... Finish one thing at a time... Choose a major, choose a career, choose a religion... The litany is endless. Whether it be school or work, play or pray, the message is 'focus'.

This goes against Human nature. That's why so many struggle with distraction — toddlers wandering, children fidgeting, talking, and laughing at 'inappropriate' times, teachers struggling to keep first-time students at their desks. Nor are adults immune; there is a reason 'The Grass is greener on the other side of the fence' is a popular saying. Like breaking a Horse so that she will accept a rider, Humans need to be broken in order to accept focus.

The focus on focus serves Civilized People well. In Civilization, one can be single of purpose, because life is one-dimensional. Variables have been largely controlled or eliminated, and what is left of life has been efficiently cubbyholed.

In the Old Way, that would spell death. One could not afford to have his nose up against a Tree and ignore the Forest. There is a fourth dimension in the Hoop of Life — flow. Unlike the directional flow of a River, this flow is an intermingling of energies in a constant state of transformation. Picture billiard balls bouncing one into the other, off of cushions, and then back into each other. They are constantly changing speed and direction, sitting still for a moment, then moving again, faster, slower, in one direction, then another.

Someone could not survive on that billiard table without being continuously aware of this intricate interplay, and of how it might affect you at any given moment. The instant someone would focus himself exclusively on something, he would become vulnerable.

Deer remains constantly alert, even when browsing or drinking. She will take a bite mouthful of Grass, then raise her head to chew it. Wolf keeps alert even when napping. Flock and herd animals plant sentinels at their perimeters, who act as the eyes and ears for the rest of the group.

The Native Man who has caused the Civilized Woman to feel disregarded, is doing the same thing as Deer and Wolf and the herd sentinels. Like them, he keeps watch not only for himself, but for her. Unbeknownst to her, he is acting as her Guardian.

She is not trained to keep perspective; he does so because he hasn't been trained not to. He is merely enacting instinctual behavior. If she knew that, if she were in touch with her intrinsic beingness, she would undoubtedly be thankful and Honor him for his diligence. Instead she grows frustrated, perhaps even angry, over what she assumes to be his inattentiveness.

Understandable. Trained to be focused and self-directed, she has learned to recognize her ego as her center. Her world is the world according to her ego. She can't help but be blind to his awareness. So rather than viewing his actions from Circle perspective, she will judge him according to how he is relating to her ego.

He, on the other hand, knows himself to be but a voice in a Circle-chorus of many voices. He would probably feel uncomfortable, even embarrassed, if another's focus were exclusively on him. On the other hand, he would most assuredly consider it an Honor to be recognized as a voice in the Chorus.

Chapter Six Daily Living

To see how the Circle Way is lived on a Day-to-Day basis, I'd like to take you inside a Native community. There I'll show you its Circle rootedness, and how the People's relationship with Lodge, hearth, material possessions, and work, sings of a Lifeway in Balance with All the Relations.

Community in Balance

Our Ancestors, along with the foraging-hunting Peoples of this day, did /do not see themselves as living in communities. To them, the term ‘Native community’ is an oxymoron. They live in encampments — minimalist shelter clusters which are as fluid in movement and detached from place as are the Waters they paddle and the Animals they hunt. The community they see themselves as part of is the Hoop of Life.

They often live in extended family groups called Clans, which are guided by a Guardian Animal, or Dodem (which you will learn more about in Part IV of this book). A Clan is comprised of up to 25 People, which is about the maximum number a Human is biologically capable of knowing well enough to love and trust.

Clan membership is stable, because it is based upon bonds of blood and spirit. Natives feel related also with the non-Human Kin of their community, and celebrate that relationship in a myriad of ways. A few examples are the Respectful way in which they Hunt, the holding of Honor Feasts for their Dodems, and the joining of their spirits with those of the Plants and Animals they eat and wear.

They recognize their community as having been there long before them, and as likely going to continue long after their departure. They see themselves as part of the continuum of that community, flowing through the Rocks and Plants to the Animals, then back again to the Soil and Grasses. Their political and economic systems already exist in their community, and are self-maintaining. Without the need to construct, maintain, or operate those systems, they have considerable free time and energy for the more qualitative aspects of life.

The loving, trusting relationship within a Clan precludes the need for judicial or social structures to help assure equality and fairness. In fact, equality as Civilized People know it, does not exist in the Natural Realm. In place of equality, the Native practices Honor; in place of democracy, the Native practices Respect.

Those of a Native camp function as organs within an organism, with each having their own Honored role and place. As with organs, their individual roles are not equal to each other’s; they are complementary. The heart, stomach, and liver each give and receive in different ways, yet each plays a unique, valued and vital role in their Dance of Relationship. With such inherent synchronicity, a mutual cherishing evolves that pales, even shames, the concept of equality.

So it is with a Native Clan. As with the organs, no one is distinguished as having special rank or privilege, because everyone does. It’s not that there are no leaders; it’s more that everyone is a leader. For example, on a typical Day the Medicine Woman is usually indistinguishable from the rest of her Clan members. She carries on her daily activities just as would anyone else. Until her healing touch is needed. Then she is Healing Chief — everyone Honors her position and Respects her judgement. The same is true of the Canoe Builder, the Child, the Elder, the Midwife...

Are the kidneys more important than the lungs? Without either, the organism dies. In the same way, the Child cannot function without the Elder. And vice versa. Because each and every person in the Clan, without exception, has a critically important role to play, each has an Honored place. This way of being with each other and with the Relations is often called the Gifting Way or the Blessing Way.

These roles change as a person Walks his Hoop of Life — the Journey from Birth to Death and around to Birth again. In the same way that every individual is Honored for his valued role, each individual is Honored for his time of life. There is no high or low point on the Hoop, no point in life that is more or less important than another. The Hoop spins smoothly only when it is completely round, because only then is it in Balance.

A feel for the turn of the Hoop can give precious insight into Clan ways. I would be Honored to take you on a walk through the seven realms, or worlds, of the Hoop:

As with all Circles, the Hoop of Life has no real beginning or end. Yet we need to join with the Hoop somewhere, so let's do it at the time of dwelling in the womb — what is often referred to as the first world of the Hoop. Were we of a Native Clan, we would already be Honored in the womb. The unborn, and those who have Walked On, sit in the Clan Circle right along with Children, Parents, and Elders. When decisions are made, mindful consideration is given to generations past and to come.

This is not a special Honoring; it is a natural consideration from someone whose center is their Heart-of-Hearts — that place within where senses, intuition, intellect, feeling, and Ancestral Wisdom join to form the seat of Balance. It is known to other Peoples by various names, such as the voice of soul, the Buddha within, the seat of consciousness, and a person's center. So whenever Natives speak or act, they strive to speak from their Heart-of-Hearts. Then their voices naturally reflect the needs and desires of their People, past, present, and to come.

The second world of the Hoop of Life is the prepubescent years, which run from birth until the Child reaches 10 or 12 Winters. Here we discover and develop our senses, and become acquainted with the world beyond us. We transition from being the center of the world to realizing there is no center. We are naturally Truthspeakers — we dwell in the now and speak the moment's truth. We spontaneously express our feelings regardless as to how they might be perceived or judged by another. We are natural Sages and Guides, even as we are guided. We are constant reminders of the guidance of the Wise Ones to be as little Children. In these ways we of the second world contribute immeasurably to our Clan mates.

The time of adolescence is the third world. This gradual blossoming into the fullness of adulthood continues for several Turns of the Seasons, sometimes until our 15th Winter or beyond. Known to some Natives as the Thundering Years, puberty can cause us to feel as though we are breaking out of our skin. And we are!

It is a time of extremes; in short order, feelings can swing from titanic fear to astronomical delight. We feel compelled to test and challenge things. We end up discovering the same things all over again, except this time it is as though they exist in an entirely new dimension. From Civilized perspective, this may appear to be a time of receiving. With all the space, understanding, and support we need, it could easily appear that our People are giving to us, rather than we to them. As with our infancy and youth, we give significantly during adolescence also. This is the time during which we seek our Vision — our reason for being. Here we discover our uniqueness — the special talent or mission we have been given that distinguishes us from all the rest of Humankind. It is this Gift that we will develop in the Walking of our life, in order that one day we may gift it back to our People.

Sometimes tentatively, sometimes boldly, even recklessly, we leave the third world to venture into the fourth, the time of our Personal Journey. We take the newfound awarenesses of puberty and try them out in the world. It is time to see how we fit, and where we fit.

We are now the Seeker; we search for new places, experiences, and People. We become sure of things, only to fall flat on our faces and realize how unsure we are. Yet we get up and try again, and again and again. Our egos are powerful — they want a black and white

world, in order to more easily assure us that we are Walking in a purposeful direction. Of course they do not find that.

This cycle of confidence-unsuredness can continue throughout the fourth world. For some of us, it will not be until around our 40th Winter that we find Balance with our egos.

There is no way I know of that the sort of complementarity and Honoring that we are here discussing, can be made to occur in Civilized communities. In fact, most Civilized People do not complete the entire Hoop before their time of Passing Over. Most get stuck here in the fourth world, a few progress to the fifth. Those who get stuck in this world often create illusions of surety (usually with belief systems), so that they don't have to keep falling flat on their faces. Sometimes the illusions last a lifetime.

In our fourth world, what we sought was centered in the self. Our value to our Clan laid in our Personal Journey. Now, in the fifth world, which occurs roughly from our 30th to our 45th Winter, we begin to yearn for the knowledge beyond self. Again it appears to be a receiving time, so it might seem as though we are yet caught up in our egos, continuing the Quest for self which began at puberty. Then our Gift was what we gathered on our inward Journey. After that, in the outward Journey of our fourth world, we gifted our People with the new friends, the new ways of doing things, and the visions of new places, that we gained.

In our fifth world, we now transition from that place of personal knowledge to knowledge beyond self. We begin to function more as an organ within an organism. Now that we are no longer wild with energy for growth and discovery, we become more curious about the hows than the whats. We naturally begin to understand the deeper nuances of Humility and Honoring. We grow sensitive to the differences between looking and seeing, between hearing and listening, between touching and feeling. Along with having sex, we can now also be Lovers. We can act with more a sense of serving.

When in this world, we provide an invaluable service to our Kin group by acting as a transition between those in the Receiving Time of the Hoop — the first half of life, and those in the Giving Time — the second half of life. This helps break down the disparity between the younger and the older, which in turn helps the Hoop turn more smoothly.

That sense of continuum is largely missing in Civilized communities. Because of that, Civilized People in the fifth world often experience midlife crises. They lament the passing of youth and try to hang on to it in a variety of ways that tend to run the gamut from delusional to damaging.

The sixth world begins around our 45th Winter and takes us to about our 60th. This is our time of service. We've now Walked beyond the bounds of our biological self and our ego self, and into the realm of Oneness — the realm of the Greater Self. The state of Love becomes fully known. The concept of selflessness resonates. In fact, it no longer feels comfortable to be of service to just the self. In this world, the Guardian Warrior, the Artisan, the Healer, and the Grandparent come into the fullness of their service.

This is the manifesting of our biological programming. We understand deep in our cores that giving is receiving, and that it is the Honor Way. Those in the earlier worlds do also, but being intensely involved in their Journeys of Discovery, it is just not their time to express it. Because of that, we in the sixth world provide valued example for them of the spirit of giving. Our example is valued because it is relevant — we can still resonate with them because we have just left their worlds.

The passage to the seventh world, our time to serve as Elders, usually it begins at around 50 or 60 Winters. It is often so gradual that we are not aware of it. We might notice that People are coming to us more and more for counsel. They will be looking for guidance regarding matters of heart and spirit more so than for practical advice. Those in the sixth world, the one we just left, will now be helping the younger canoebuilders and hidetanners; we will be asked more for guidance on matters such as how to live Honorably with one's mate, how to listen to the Voice of Vision, and how to resolve conflicts.

We will be inclined to take more time for reflection. As Elders, there will not be less expected of us, as some might think, but rather different things. We will have become the Keepers of the Clan Knowledge and the Storytellers. We are now to watch over the Clan, to listen to its pulse in order to help keep it in Balance. We'll find that our smile or frown, or the direction in which we look, is noticed more by others and carries a different significance than it once did.

Perhaps the core contribution of the Elder to her Clan is the perspective and depth of awareness she has gained from living all the worlds of the Hoop of Life. Her counsel comes from broad-based wisdom that spans the vested interest of any particular individual or the narrow focus from any particular world in the Hoop.

She has the perspective of the entire Hoop because, when we Walk the Hoop, we do not transition from one world to the next in the way that someone will pass from grade to grade in school. Rather, it is as though each world is a transparent dome, and as we progress through one world, we set that world's dome over the previous one. And under that one is the one previous to it. So in essence, we have not left any of those worlds; they are all equally visible to us, equally accessible. In actuality, we are still the Babe in the womb, the Child, the Thunderer, the Journeyer, and so on. We can still see and feel what each world has gifted us.

That is why the Elder has the perspective and teachings of the entire Hoop of Life to draw from; that is why she is able to embrace the well-being of all her People.

So what went wrong — what happened with this natural, Honoring state of being?
Some Humans created communities.

They were forced to do so when they became agricultural. The artificial land-support base they created, short-circuited their trust in The Mother to provide. It undermined their relationship with their natural community. They found themselves alone — they needed community. They tried to 'reinvent the wheel' by forming communities.

Now, they came to realize, they were all the more out of Balance: they had heaped one artificial construct upon another. Their new communities turned out to be even less self-sustaining than their land bases. Now they had to develop another tier of artificial constructs in order to maintain their communities — political, social, economic and religious systems.

These constructs weren't Honor and Respect, and they were high maintenance, but they did keep the new communities functioning.

After a fashion. A raft of social problems sprang up that never before existed, such as poverty, theft, and orphans. Systems of enforcement and extraction were needed to keep the communities propped up and keep their inhabitants from preying upon each other. Enter the next tier of constructs — taxation, exploitative technology, slavery (plant, animal, and Human), class systems, incarceration, and morality.

The upshot: they created something that never before existed — a sedentary, materialistic toil-based way of life. Everybody's bowl was now filled for them. No longer was there need to Quest for a personal Guiding Vision, no longer was there time to Walk the Personal Journey, no

longer was there time for the teachings of the Deer and the Squirrel.

A full bowl does a person little good. She can no longer honestly question, because she has no room for what might come. To question with a full bowl merely creates the illusion of openness. She has probably quit questioning anyway, because she has lost her hunger. Hunger encourages adaptability; she is no longer adaptable. No longer does she give (or her bowl would not be full). There is no place for the Ancestors, no place for the coming Children, no place for the Relations. There is not even room for herself. She goes through life like Fox in the following legend:

Fox was young and full of vigor. He felt fully grown, yet he did not know the world. An urge welled up from within to go on his Journey — to take what he had learned and try it out in places different from the one in which he had grown up. He could then also learn new things from other People.

So he wandered. Up Hills and through Swamps and down Rivers. He met many of his kin. One afternoon he spent in the Sun with Spider, watching for Flies. Another Day he waited out the rain under a rock overhang with Porcupine. And yet, even though his Journey took him far and he saw many wonders, he did not feel as though he was learning.

As this awareness came to him, he passed a large Willow growing on the bank of a Stream. The smell from the Willow tickled his nose with a familiar scent, and his eyes caught sight of the scat lying on one of the large fallen branches. “Ah” he said, “my sister, Raccoon, dwells here. She is wise. I will go to her and ask if she will help me to grow in awareness.”

Fox went down to the Stream and caught a Crayfish to bring as an Offering to Raccoon.

“Honored sister” he said, “This person before you is on his Journey of Discovery. He comes from a far place and he has seen and experienced much between there and here. Yet he feels that he has learned very little. He sits here humbly before you, Respectfully asking if you will guide him in ways that will sate the hunger of one who has grown up outwardly, and yet is starving inside.”

“This person would consider it an Honor to feed you” said Raccoon, “for you are my brother.”

Fox sat before Raccoon and held out his bowl. Raccoon proceeded to serve him from the steaming pot of stew that sat before her. His bowl immediately overflowed; it would not take even a portion of the first ladleful.

Raccoon dipped the ladle back into the stewpot and poured it into the Fox’s bowl. Then she served another. The scalding stew ran down the side of the bowl and covered Fox’s hands. It splashed up on his lap and formed a sloppy, growing puddle in front of him.

At first, out of Respect, Fox said nothing. After a few ladlesful, he grew so confused at what was happening, and his hands hurt so, that he finally had to blurt something out.

“Raccoon, This person is grateful for your desire to serve him, but it seems his bowl is full. It will hold no more. What you give him spills out on the ground. He Respectfully asks: ‘Why do you keep serving him’?”

“So that you will know that you came to me with a full bowl” replied Raccoon. “I have nothing for you until you fast and know true hunger. You walk through life full of yourself. Many of your kin whom you’ve met on your Journey would have fed you, had you room in your bowl. You came finally to me only because you did not have the hunger to recognize the brimming pot of food that sat before each of them.

“Now go, my Honored Brother, and fast, until you feel as a Leaf in the Wind. Release yourself, until you are ready to be swayed by the Branch, washed by the Rain, and chewed upon by the Caterpillar. Then you will be as one with your sister Leaves and know the source of the

sap that sustains you. Come then back to me, and I will again serve you.”

At this point you may be asking “OK, if Civilized community is out of Balance, how can we reconnect with our Indigenous Lifeway?”

The beauty is that we don’t have to relearn the Lifeway — we already know it! It is alive and well in each of us, imprinted in our Ancestral Memories. Every cell in our bodies screams to Walk the Old Way. If we allow it, and it will spring forth spontaneously from us. Like Fox, all we need to do is unload some of the constructs that fill our bowl, and we will hear both our voice and the voices of all Life, guiding us!

When a Native seeks guidance, she doesn’t turn to some philosophy, or to a leader, or to a book. She goes to her community. I did that yesterday, when I was looking for some way to convey to you the spirit of Native community in words. I went out into the Wilderness to spend some time with a family of Deer...

They moved throughout their territory, as freely and whimsically as the Wind through the Tree branches. They wandered where their curiosity and hunger and fear took them. When they grew tired, they set up an encampment for the Night, then woke up in the morning to wander again. Just like the Wind. Their community was Grass and Snow, Chickadee and Coyote. It is they who Deer walked and ate with, who Deer guided and were guided by.

Deer appeared to own nothing and embrace no philosophy. Their only belief seemed to be in the moment. When they left their encampment, their bed was slept in by other members of their community, perhaps Rabbit, then perhaps Maple Seed looking for a place to sprout.

Throughout the morning, Deer echoed what the Elders had taught me about Native community, and what has been reawakened in me by living it. When I came back to weave these words for you, they flowed as freely as did Deer and me through the realm of their community. Our community.

“Alright,” you say, “if we have this guidance all around us, and even within us, why can’t we just do it?”

That is our next dilemma as Civilized beings — first we think, then we assume we have something to do. We don’t have to do anything. It will spring spontaneously forth, like a Rainbow after a Storm. We just have to get out of the way. And then float with it, like Cattail fluff on the Wind. It’s that easy. And that hard. The Storm — the woundedness from a lifetime of imbalance, that keeps us bound in old reactionary-protective patterns — must be faced and allowed to have its blow before the Rainbow can reappear.

Native communities honor the individual, Civilized communities honor structure. Structure comes in all styles and colors. It might be religious or political, pragmatic or visionary. No matter how justified, beautiful or alternative, it is still structure. Structure is pyramidal, with the architect or enforcer at the pinnacle and the “masses” contained inside, under him. Being vertical, pyramids disconnect us from The Mother and The Father. They literally and figuratively remove our feet from the Earth.

Probably all Human constructs are pyramids. Less probably, they are all the way of the ego and the rational mind.

The way of the individual is the way of the Circle. In the Circle, everybody’s feet are naturally grounded. It is that simple. Yet for some it is too deceptively simple. We who have been conditioned for so long to grasp with our frontal lobes, have trouble grasping with our Heart-of-Hearts. So the Circle Way eludes all but those who can open, listen, and accept.

A few of us will try to clone some of the Circle Way to the pyramid, thinking we might then be able to have the ‘best of both worlds’. They do not wed well. In fact, the two lifeways

are so diametrically opposed that one would have better luck pairing up a Goat with a Fish.

If it were only that they had different belief systems or organizational structures, we could simply replace one system with another, such as when someone converts from Christianity to Buddhism. We would then not have to empty our bowls, because we are merely giving our stew a makeover by adding some different spice.

The problem with this scenario is that a Native has no beliefs or structures — no stew — so he has nothing to respice. As is common with natural life, he keeps a good amount of room in his bowl, so that he will approach life as a question, continually searching, ever curious and open.

That is why, when a Native is asked (or forced) to fill his bowl with the constructs of the Civilized Way, he has only one thing to offer in exchange — his Mother. In effect, he is being asked to rape his Mother, pillage his People, shame his Ancestors, and sell his unborn kin into slavery. No, the two Ways do not mix well.

And yet there is Beauty in this scenario, because the reverse is also true: when a Civilized Person empties her bowl, she has only one thing to receive in exchange — her Mother. She will spontaneously become a Guardian of her Mother, provide for her Kin, Honor her Ancestors, and ransom the unborn.

Dwelling in the Circle: The Native Lodge

The residents of those early Civilized communities developed two shelter concepts which had not previously existed: the House and the Home.

They evolved a House — a shelter that is so inclusive of Civilized Lifeway that someone could (and many do) live their entire lives within its confines. Houses have specialized rooms which, as evidenced by their names, cover virtually all aspects of life: food preparation – kitchen, food consumption – dining room, lounging – living room, bathing and elimination – bathroom, clothes washing – laundry room, recreation – den, sleeping – bedroom, storage – closet-attic-basement..., craft area – office-workshop, and so on. The House is a complete environment — energy needs are conveyed to the House, waste is removed from the House, and virtually all other needs can be ordered and conveniently delivered to the doorstep.

From the concept of the all-inclusive House rose the concept of Home. In the same way that House life replaced life on the Giving Mother's Bosom, the sense of House-based community, i.e., Home, replaced the community of Relations. The constructed communities, with their artificial support systems, could not engender a feeling of community. The fabricated/forced cooperation and isolated Households of such communities actually encouraged the opposite — feelings of isolation and mistrust. Being social creatures, the inhabitants yearned for living community. They found it in the one place where they still found love and trust — their Houses. They called their newfound community Home.

As with the greater community of old, Home became the center of life. The cultural ideal became for each family to have its own Home, its own community base. It ran a parallel with the ancestral Clans each having their own Homelands. The family Home became the family center. It was passed down from generation to generation, and those who left Home would come back for family gatherings, akin to the Clan gatherings of old. 'Home is where the heart is,' sums up the nostalgic attachment to the House where People were raised, and perhaps where their Parents were raised, or the where they, as Children, went to visit Grandma and Grandpa..

A House can be bought and sold; the passing of a Home is a mournful event in the history of a family. The family goes through the same grieving process as do Natives who must leave their Homeland. With the Home goes a family's connection with its past — memories of

weddings and funerals, family reunions, aunts and uncles and cousins. The familiar smells of kitchen and pantry and basement are forever gone, along with garden, flower beds and fruit trees. The traditional family foods will not be the same outside the Home context, nor will the old family furniture.

This Home that resides within the House involves two concepts so inextricably intertwined, that when a House is lost that is also the extended family Home, the sense of Home-community is often irreparably damaged. This sense of loss is reflected in an old bluegrass song that I heard years ago, that went something like this: ‘What became of the old home place; why did they tear it down? And why did they leave the plow in the field, to look for a job in the town?’

The living needs of Natives are for the most part fulfilled outdoors, in the context of their Greater Circle. Natives literally live outdoors, taking cover only when they must. This gives them a relationship with their shelters that is only peripherally related to the relationship Civilized People have with their Houses. Shelter for a Native is usually as minimal as climate and season will allow. If shelter is not needed, there is none. If the Tree canopy or an overhanging Rock is adequate, no additional shelter will likely be constructed. At times necessary shelter comprises no more than a windbreak or a brush arbor to protect from Sun’s intensity. At most, shelter is a small, one-room dwelling, perhaps insulated during seasons of extreme heat or cold. As soon as the weather moderates, Natives forsake their Lodges and are again outdoors.

In the area where I live, the White Season brings thigh-deep Snows and Nighttime temperatures so cold that the Trees will sometimes crack so loudly that they wake us from our sleep. The thunder from the Lakes’ rapidly freezing and heaving ice can be heard mile and more away. Yet our White Season Lodges are used just for sleeping. We spend our Days outdoors, including cooking and eating. An open lean-to with a reflector Fire provides quite adequate shelter and comfort.

Lodges are usually considered to be temporary, movable structures. They are most often of simple design, so go up quickly, and are just as easily dismantled and moved. Natives will readily relocate, as changes in weather, food sources, or other circumstances, dictate. Yet they would not describe themselves as nomadic. In the same way that Civilized People might adjust their Household usage by having meals in the sunroom rather than the porch as the weather gets colder, Natives will move their Lodges. They are still living under the same Sky roof, Earth is still their living room, so they have not moved to a new residence. They have only changed where they sleep., movable

When needed, the Lodge can serve all the roles of the Civilized House. The Lodge functions as bedroom, living room, work and storage area all rolled into one. In Civilized Houses, the bedroom is slept in, then the door is closed and the room is left for the rest of the Day. The same with the kitchen, which is used for meal preparation, then left until the next meal. And so on with the rest of the rooms.

As covered previously, a considerable House is needed in order to accommodate an indoor lifestyle. This creates a huge investiture in the House! Because of this, People become virtually indentured to their Houses — long-term mortgages, insurance, taxes, cleaning, upkeep, utility expenses, and so on. This translates to long-term jobs, consumed free time, and often chronic anxiety — a major investiture of vital energy.

The paradox is that all this is for space that is most of the time vacant!

Imagine if you were free of all that and your House played no more than a background role in your life... How pleasant might life be, and what good things could be done with all that

freed time and energy! That should give you a feel for the minor, often background, role that shelter plays in Native People's lives. And for one of the major reasons that Natives can afford to be themselves.

What makes this minimalist approach to shelter possible is a concept I call multiple usage of space. That simply means that the same area, the same 'room', is used throughout the Day for the succession of activities that comprise indoor life.

For example, after awakening, bedrolls will be rolled up against the wall to open up the floor space for meal preparation. After the meal, the area might be used for craftwork, or as a play area. In the evening the Lodge may host a social gathering. The average family Lodge, which might be two body lengths (12 feet) in diameter, can quite handily accommodate a dozen or so People. They will sit in a circle around the perimeter of the Lodge, which leaves the area in the center open for Children, meal preparation, or whatever else might be going on.

This way of using space requires that living accouterments each have their allotted place and are returned to that place immediately after being used. (Because there are usually no counters, tables, or other furniture, what is left out will be on the floor and almost definitely in the way.) This keeps the floor free and open at all times for whatever usage the moment dictates — the key to multiple usage of space.

Another reason for the large Houses of the Civilized is the sheer amount of 'stuff' that needs to be sheltered. Natives need little space for storage because there is little they need. Wardrobes and cosmetics mean little to naked People of natural beauty. When The Mother provides and there is no illusion that you need to wrest a living by toil, it's surprising how few possessions are actually needed. Or desired. They share belongings and keep only what is necessary and functional.

Native People can comfortably live in shared open space because, like the rest of natural life, they have no shame around their bodies and natural body functions. (This is one of the first things they are corrected on when they come in contact with Civilized People.)

A few Civilized cultures, particularly in the Far East, have retained the concept of multiple usage of space. Their Houses, even though they might be made of contemporary materials and located in urban areas, are usually small and contain few rooms. Bedrolls are still commonly used, so sleeping areas are available for Daytime use.

The Native awareness that there is no real distinction between the spiritual and material realms is reflected in the design of their Lodges. The door, for example, usually faces East, so that the first rays of the Sun Father will enter the Lodge and fall upon the Hearth in the center of the floor. This is in recognition and Honor of the Sun Father's gift of Fire.

This touching of Fire to Fire is also the meeting of Father and Son. The Father's Flame is captured in the Trees, which are the offspring of His mated union with The Earth Mother.

Our gift from Them is the ability to undo that union and release the Flame from their Tree Children. In the undoing, we return Earth Mother's Ash-flesh to Her, and Sun Father's Fire-spirit to Him.

East, being the source of first light, is the symbolic direction of enlightenment. We look to the East for inspiration, new ideas and fresh starts. East gifts us with the energy for cleansing. When we Walk the Path of Life (which my Ojibwa Elders call the *Giizis Mikana*, or Sun Trail) we begin in the East with our Birth and travel West to our Death.

Not coincidentally, the East side of the Lodge is the most practical place to have a door. The first touch of Sun erases the Night chill and brings the first welcome light of the Day. In most areas, the East side of the Lodge is sheltered from storms.

Most Native Lodges are circular, which, as with door placement, is both functional and symbolic. The circular shape gives the most usable space for the least amount of materials. It is

the strongest shape and usually the easiest to construct. And it is the and the easiest to heat, especially with an open Fire.

The form of the Lodge is symbolic of the Circle Way. The Hoop of Life and the Four Directions make up its walls just as much as does the bark and thatch...

The West side of the Lodge, the end of the *Giizis Mikana*, is usually considered the most Honored place. It is where the Elders reside. From that vantage point, they can keep perspective on all that goes on both inside and outside the Lodge. Sitting directly opposite the door, they are the first to be seen and greeted by visitors. Being farthest from the door, they have the warmest place in the Lodge.

Lodge guests are often given the Place of Honor beside the Elders.

Women abide in the South of the Lodge. It is the bright, midday place of the Circle. It is the realm of the Green Season, the time of lushness, warmth and nourishment, the time of fruiting — the natural place for Women to dwell.

Opposite Women is the coldest place in the Lodge; there reside the Men. Male energy is often heat-generating and far-reaching. There in the North, as the Turn of the Seasons comes upon the time of dormancy, the energy is conducive to a slower, more reflective way of being. This atmosphere helps Men balance out their heat, so they can immerse themselves in the contemplation that fosters new inspirations. Then, as the Circle turns Sunwise, from North to East, these fresh ideas are ready to be born to the new Day. Beside the door is the place of Children. Being the new light of their lineage, they are the first to be touched by the new light of Day. As with all Children, they are in and out countless times in a Day. With their place being next to the door, they cause little disturbance to the rest of the Lodge. They can also handily do errands such as fetching Wood and Water.

Home is Hearth; the way Home is the center of Civilized life, Hearth is the center of Native life. You'll remember that the Native Lodge is a secondary, sometimes dispensable, accouterment of Native lifeway. Not so with Hearth. If anything is the defining factor of the Lifeway, and perhaps of Humankind itself, it is the Hearth.

In order to gain a feel for the profound role of Hearth in the Human experience, we need to reawaken our relationship with Fire. I believe that we Humans distinguished ourselves as a species not when we began to use tools, because other animals use tools as well. And not when we began to speak, because other animals also have language. And not because of the evolution of our intellect, because other animals are intelligent in their specialized ways. It is perhaps our relationship with Fire that truly distinguishes us from our Relations. When we embraced Fire, we became Human.

Please read that last sentence again, slowly. In order to know the Circle Way, in order to feel it deep in your bones, you need to know the spirit of those words. Because that spirit is your spirit. Disconnection with that spirit is probably what drew you to read this book. The next couple paragraphs could open the doorway to a whole new awareness of self. And of your relationship with Life.

The young of other animals are fearful of Fire. They are repelled by it. Our young are drawn to Fire; they are fascinated by it. Clearly there must be something that lies deep in the Human soul that would cause this seemingly unnatural, yet universal, behavior, in those who are the tenderest of age.

Our distant Ancestors' relationship with Fire brought them to the Human frontier. Fire gave them the ability to inhabit vast new regions, to expand their diets and preserve food, and to make new tools. In this day, Fire has again brought us to the Human frontier. Fire is enabling us to inhabit vast new regions with layer upon layer of Humanity. Fire has forged us new tools —

the machinery, weaponry, and energy sources that now distinguish us unquestionably from the rest of life.

This Fire, which is so wedded to the Fire of our souls, the Fire of our minds, the Fire in our eyes, is the wellspring of our life as a species. It is the passion of the Human experience — it is our Spirit Fire.

Now let us bring the Spirit Fire back to its place in the Native heart — the Hearth. It is no coincidence that heart and Hearth come from the same root word. The saying, ‘Home is where the heart is’ could, to a Native, just as well read ‘Home is where the Hearth is’. It captures the Native experience of belonging — the same feeling found in the Civilized Home. This is because there is no essential difference between heart and Hearth — the primordial warmth of heart and warmth of Hearth are the same. We all know this on a gut level, and we express it when we refer to a ‘heart on Fire’ or the ‘Flame of passion’.

It is from the Hearth that Women, Children and Men venture, and it is to the Hearth that they return. The Hearth gives food to ease hunger, light to soften the dark, comfort to gentle the cold. The Hearth deters predators, makes possible all manner of craft, and shortens long Northcountry Nights. It is the center of social life, it is the core of ritual. Visitors often Honor the Hearth with an Offering, and are seated in the Place of Honor before the Hearth. It took only the addition of the Hearth for us to become Human. And it would take only the removal of the Hearth for us to become another animal.

The Hearth is the center, the heart, of a Native Lodge. The Lodge is built around the Hearth, rather than the Hearth being added to the Lodge. The Lodge is designed so that the Circle Way of Life around the Hearth can be continued indoors, just as it was outdoors.

The Clan Fire is the Home of a Native person. Sitting around the Fire brings forth the stories of the Old Ones, the memories of youth, the recounting of adventures had, and the visions of times to come. The draw of the Clan Fire is the same as that which lures the Civilized person back to the ‘old Home place’.

When The Native is away, she longs to return to the Clan Fire. No matter where it has been moved, she will follow her Hearth. For wherever the Clan Fire abides, so abides her heart.

Property is Theft

Knowing a Native person’s relationship with her Lodge, you already have some awareness of her feelings toward what the Civilized call ‘personal property.’

To give you better feel for that, imagine you are moving to a new location. It’s not such a big ordeal, because you can pack all your belongings on your back. You don’t try to sell your House, you just abandon it. Or pass it on to someone else who could use it. If, when you arrive at your new location, there is a vacant House, you just move right in, no questions asked. If the previous occupant left anything behind that you can use, or even if a neighbor has something that is not being used, it becomes yours for as long as you have a need for it. If you are hungry and unable to provide for yourself or your family, you can even count on food being given you.

Does this sound utopian, unrealistic? If you were a Native person, it would be your way of life. It is the way of virtually all Native People. In fact, it is the way of all of the Natural Realm. Badger moves into the abandoned den of Woodchuck. Jumping Mouse takes over Robin’s nest. Hungry Fox feasts on the Seal that Polar Bear hunted. It is only we Civilized Humans who subscribe to the concept of private property.

Natives are accustomed to providing for their needs, and no more. There is no demand or incentive for over-production. In fact, the keeping of surplus — if some Native were ever to come up with such a silly notion — would be discourage by his community. In a Native living

situation, surplus gives so little benefit, and adds such a burden in terms of storage and protection needs, that whoever finds himself with a glut, usually gets rid of it in short order. He will share it with others, either informally or through traditional means such as a Giveaway, or he will return it to The Mother.

In this way he gains what is true wealth to a Native — the Respect and esteem of his peers. Now that he is relieved of the burden of false wealth, he again has the time and energy to partake in the genuine richness of Native Lifeway. This richness is qualitative, and it is the basis of personal wealth. These riches — one's level of personal skill and Circle awareness and spiritual attunement — are what nearly all of us are envious of, and what nearly everyone who accumulates private property wishes they had time for.

Gego gegoo gimmodiken can be literally translated as 'Don't steal anything.' This guidance from my Elders is not as simple as it sounds, because the translation does not convey the meaning. As with much of the Native Way, cultural context is everything. When a Native hears *Gego gegoo gimmodiken*, this is what it means to her: "You do not have to steal in order to be a thief. In fact, the source of your possession or how it came to be in your hands, has little to do with whether or not you have stolen. You merely have to claim it as your own, and you have stolen. Property itself is theft."

'Usership' is more accurate than 'ownership' to describe a Native's relationship with material goods. An item, whether it be a tool, a piece of clothing, or even a residence, is a person's to use as long as he or she has a use for it. There is no absentee ownership, there are no landlords. Need rather than possession determines one's right to usership.

In the Circle Way, to hold on to unneeded surplus or items which others could be using, is not only theft, it is suicide. Possessiveness and hoarding may at first seem to favor the individual, but in the Natural Realm, the Circle comes 'round. When someone in your Circle suffers, sooner or later, you suffer.

As with virtually all of the Circle Way, this way of Honoring the greater need is not based on any ideal or philosophy. It is simply what works. A flock of Cedar Waxwings survives Hawk because the Waxwings live together as though they were one. They cooperate in finding food and shelter and warning each other of danger. The flock is strong because it helps each individual to be strong. When each member is strong, they can flee rapidly from Hawk, all in the same instant, which confuses her and allows them to escape.

If certain individuals were to monopolize the food and prime roosting spots, they would grow strong while their flockmates grew weak. Hawk could then shrink the flock by capturing the slower birds. Then the few remaining strong ones would become vulnerable, because there were no longer many eyes to take turns watching for Hawk, and no longer was there a synchronized flock to confuse Hawk. Giving is receiving.

The Aboriginal Play Ethic

Several years ago a Woman-friend asked when I was going to retire. It was one of those rare moments when I was at a loss for words — I simply could not relate to her question. Thankfully, she responded to my blank look by rephrasing her question to "When are you not going to be so busy?" and "Don't you ever take a vacation?" Now that I could respond to!

"Take a vacation from my vacation?" I quipped. "My mother tells me I'm always on vacation; according to her, I haven't yet gotten serious about life! But seriously, I suppose I could take a vacation; it just never occurred to me. I'm already living in Paradise, and I'm already living my passion; I guess I don't have any reason or motivation to go somewhere else to look for that.

“I took a “vacation” 25 years ago, and I never went back. I haven’t held a regular job since; does that mean I’m retired? I’ve been doing what I enjoy, something most People wait for retirement to do; maybe that’s further evidence that I’m retired.

“I’m following my Heartsong, fulfilling my reason for being; why would I choose to slow down? For me it’s not work, I’m at play. I can’t imagine doing anything other than what I enjoy; naturally I would wish to continue in my Bliss until my last breath. To me, retirement would mean Death.

“You could take me to the Bahamas, or Tibet, and I would do the same thing as I am now. I’m already living in the Bahamas; this is Paradise! To me, this is Tibet; there is tremendous spiritual energy here!”

She said nothing, but I read the sadness in her eyes. She would like to have had me accompany her on vacation. She went without me in search of that faraway place where she could play. And as far as I know, she is still working for the faraway day on which she can retire.

Work is an invention of the Civilized mind. Work began with agriculture — no longer could People just gather food. Urbanization further isolated People from the means and ends of their existence — now they had to ‘go to work’. To support the hierarchical structure that ran the urban-agricultural construct, surplus needed to be produced. More work. Lives became disjointed, time became fragmented.

Life was no longer play. Life was work; play became an optional pursuit. Belief systems evolved to instill the work ethic, sanctions evolved to maintain it. Play became the counterpoint of work — a reward for completed work, a vent from the stress of work.

When I craft a bow, it is a fulfilling endeavor: I have a personal reason for doing it, I have specially gathered the materials, and I have a long-term relationship with the bow to look forward to. If I had to make bows all Day, every Day, it would become monotonous and disconnected from my real life — i.e., it would become work. The same is true with helping others, such as when I counsel, teach, or help with healings. Normally these involvements leave me feeling personally fulfilled, but if I had to do them according to schedule, full-time, they would become tedious. Again, work.

A Native person can be brought to understand the concept of work, but she still lacks the motivation to work. She has no need to produce surplus to support the pyra-metro-agri-cult. She has no need to pay for play. She has no need for money to help her bridge the chasm between Hearth and Earth.

I know Native People who are the seventh generation under the yoke of Civilization and still do not grasp the work ethic. They may work until they have enough money for what they want, then quit. To them, work is for reason, and they see no reason to work any longer than to obtain what they went to work for.

The way they approach work still Honors the moment — a cardinal precept of the Old Way. They may arrive at the job site early or late, depending upon how they feel and what is going on in their lives. If Fish are spawning or Wild Rice is ready to harvest, they may not show up at all. Why work to buy Fish and Rice if The Mother just gives them to you? After all, is work not a part of life, rather than life itself?

This disconnecting of the means from the ends of their existence, for no obvious reason, confuses them. And yet, over all the generations since their first exposure to the idea, it still humors them! It reminds them of the humorous childhood stories they heard from the Elders, about foolish animals who go on working and forget why. Natives the World over are (usually unsympathetically) labeled by their Civilized self-appointed overlords as lazy, irresponsible or unmotivated. Because Natives seldom rush to lay down their holistic way of living, exploitative individuals are often quick to label (what they see as) their potential workforce, as stubborn,

belligerent, and even revolutionary. Being subjected to judgment only, is best case scenario; often enough these Natives are also persecuted and enslaved. The justification is typically some variation of 'It's for your own good'. What the Natives hear them saying is "It's for my good."

Where did this 'play ethic' come from, that appears to be so threatening to the work ethic that it cannot be allowed? No matter where an Aboriginal People dwell, whether it be Tundra, Desert, or Tropics, it takes them only about two hours a Day to meet their material needs. Because their needs are gained in ways which are direct, purposeful, and low-tech, they are personally fulfilling and meaningfully connected. With no 'work hangover' to deal with, and with nearly unlimited time for the qualitative aspects of life — adventure, discourse, family, ritual, games — the scenario does not look good for Natives to willingly adopt a work ethic.

This inability to grasp the reason for work is part of why Native People ever dwell in communion with the Circle of Life. And it is why many Natives under the influence of Civilization can for so long resist tarnish.

All this is not to say that Aboriginal People will not put extraordinary effort into something of significance to their lives. On numerous occasions I've witnessed them performing tremendous feats, such as spearing Fish all through a wet snowy Night when it's their only chance to get their year's supply, or going for Days on end without food or sleep to help perform a Healing or Vision-seeking ritual.

Perhaps they have such seemingly superhuman vigor because their low-stress, non-materialistic lifestyle leaves them with copious reserves of energy and spirit to draw upon. They see it is nothing extraordinary; it is just what one does.

The Civilized person works, then engages in cultural pursuits as a form of after-work play. The Native person lives culture; everything he does is a cultural pursuit. Even subsistence activities such as gathering Wood and picking Berries are shared, ritual endeavors filled with meaning and self satisfaction.

And fun! For those who live the Old Way, life is a party. They know intrinsically that they are here to have fun. There is no 'later, after work' or 'next weekend'. Life is now. Virtually everything is done in an enjoyable way. Even ceremony is fun.

Because fun is not an intrinsic part of Civilized life, a Civilized person attempts to create fun as a cultural pursuit. He'll go skiing or out for a walk in the Woods. He calls it recreation, and he couldn't be more right-on — he is attempting to re-create what already exists. Unbeknownst to him, he could be having fun right now, as an intrinsic, spontaneous and continual part of his life. It is his birthright, the way he has evolved to function. If only he knew...

The Native person is continually recreating not only because she lives in the Natural Realm, but because she is the Natural Realm. Snowshoeing, canoeing, gathering herbs, and other such communings with The Mother are not a part of her everyday activities, they are her everyday activities. So 'going out in Nature' to partake in them, as does a Civilized person, wouldn't make sense to her. Nature is all there is, it's all she knows, so there's nothing to go out to or come back from.

Nor would she have the inclination to go snowshoeing or canoeing in the way that most Civilized People do — as ventures detached from the other activities of life. Snowshoeing and canoeing are already an intrinsic part of her life, similar to the way a hoe fits into the life of a farmer. Although a farmer may enjoy tending his plants, in his free time he probably won't call his friends and say, "Let's go out hoeing!"

In like manner, the Civilized Way is to separate art from function, music from work, and religion from life. To a Native, there is no distinction between art and craft. Functional objects

are aesthetically pleasing and expressive because they are artistically rendered. The Native has had no reason to develop the concept of art as a distinct entity, so art for the sake of art is rare. Nor does the Native conceive of religion, or of a time or place to practice religion. Life is her prayer, and she dwells continually in her chapel.

Native People can burst into song at any time of the Day or Night because, like art and religion, song is an integral part of life. Song helps keep labor from being work. It gives rhythm to movement and draws individuals into communion with their comrades. For example, my revered Elder, Keewaydinoquay, gave me this verse that was once chanted by her Ancestors when traveling the Great Lakes:

Zhimaan akagaan akiigo
Zhimaan akagaan anooden

Paddle your canoe close to shore
Paddle your canoe out of the wind

Whew, it takes work to write about play! Writing this book is a good example of what Native People don't do. Besides the work, they have no need for these words, because they are a statement of the obvious. Yet I gladly weave this text, because it is my Bliss. And, more importantly, because it will help you to know it also as a statement of the obvious.

Chapter Seven A Snapshot of the Old Way

Now for some fun — with a serious overtone, of course!

Many of you are no doubt familiar with the book “Seven Habits of Highly Effective People.” The following table plays with this idea, highlighting the (more or less) seven habits of “Highly Indigenous People.” The habits have been simplified for effect. The second table loosely contrasts Native and Civilized Lifeways. It is important to bear in mind that the dichotomous nature of this comparison is a somewhat artificial construct. I do it here in order to amplify certain important features of lifeway. There is an inherent risk in any comparison, because it can be used as a basis for judgment. I respectfully caution you to remember that we are kin with all of Humankind, and that what we consider Civilized is no more than a manifestation of the inherent Human capacity to drift into imbalance

Seven Habits of Highly Indigenous People
(Well, maybe a few more than that...)

- * Addicted to the Outdoors
- * Commonly die off when exposed to Civilization
- * Obsessive homeschoolers
- * Chronic Respect for Elders
- * Incurable non-materialist attitude
- * Underdeveloped PWE (Protestant Work Ethic)
- * Delusion that life is fun
- * Naive tendency toward trust
- * Seldom seen wearing watches
- * Favor birthday suits over business suits
- * Home-based business bias; no commuters of record
- * Shamelessly eat meat
- * Insist they’ve never heard of junk food
- * Allergic to land ownership

Civilization and the Native Way
A Raw Comparison

Civilized

Change the World to suit themselves
changes

Native

Adapt themselves to the World as it

Ever discontent with their present situation
and dedicate their entire lives to changing it

Dwell in the errors of the past and the hope
of the future

Become the center of their Circle

Grovel and beg as they contritely pray
Have psychologists to help them adjust to
their unreasonable lives

Have religion

Talk a lot

Admire each other for what they are

Meet Death lying in bed, expending every
effort to extend life

Ever thankful for the Beauty and Bounty in
which they find themselves

Bask in the fullness of the moment.

Become one with their Circle

Pridefully chant in praise and wonderment
Live in Balance with the Greater Reason

Live spiritually

Listen and learn

Admire each other for who they are

Greet the Passing Over upright, if possible,
with their Song of Passing on their lips