

RESPECT - MNAADENDIWIN

A Sacred Tradition

By Mary Lou Smoke

Greetings to all. It has recently been brought to my attention that there are a lot of people out there that call themselves "Traditional" yet do not behave in the Traditional manner that has been taught to us by our Grandmothers and Grandfathers and all of our relations.

The most important thing that I can remember (and this is going back few decades) is that we are supposed to always show respect for our Elders and our brothers and sisters. This means no matter what. If you don't like the way someone is performing a ceremony, keep an Open mind - after all, they are the one performing it. The way they are doing it is the way they were taught. It doesn't mean that they are wrong because it is different than the way you think that it ought to be!

If you are truly bothered, you should ask to speak privately to the person in question and let them know that you know of a different way. Showing respect is the basic law of life for First Nations people and should be a law for all persons. Each and every person from the youngest and tiniest to the oldest and biggest should be treated with re-

spect at all times.

Special respect and places of honor should be given to persons who have earned the title "Elder" - parents, teachers and seniors should be honored as well as students because we all continue to learn life lessons until the day that we pass on to the Skyworld (and at that time you take your knowledge with you and share it with others who have gone on before you - as they will share their knowledge).

No one "should feel your wrath"! You must remember that we are all very sensitive and if you hurt someone in their heart - that is a mighty blow - you may never be able to repair the damage. For the heart is very delicate.

If you are a woman on her Moon Cycle, you should avoid greeting people With a hug at that time. You are very powerful at that time and if the person that you are hugging is carrying medicine you may cause it to counter-react.

Always ask for permission before you handle someone's sacred objects. Sacred objects are just that - Sacred and should only be used ceremoniously.

When two people are talking, don't walk through them, instead,

walk around. Never intrude when people are talking unless you can interrupt in a respectful way. Always ask for permission to speak (especially if you are in the Sweat Lodge).

Teach your children to ask questions respectfully, not to challenge. There is nothing sadder than seeing a child (doesn't matter what the age is, 5 or 55) disrespecting their mother.

Do not raise your voice. It causes people to back off, makes your throat sore and causes disrespect to the Elders and the other people that you are shouting at.

Never spread gossip, malicious or not. Factual or not. It is my belief that when you act in a negative way, negative behavior will come back to you. For some people, who are conditioned to be negative, there always seems to be negative energies and events occurring around them.

When someone passes on to the Spirit World, lay some tobacco down on Mother Earth in memory and in prayer. Remember only the kind and good deeds that that person has done and do not offer negative, editorialized epitaphs to the family.

*Keep walking in a good way.
Mitake Oyasin*

