

Pamphlet # 2

First Nations Code of Ethics

The following is a *Traditional Code of Ethics* formulated by the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs Youth Secretariat which summarizes the most important values and teachings that are considered universal to all nations.

1. Each morning upon rising, and each evening before sleeping, give thanks for the life within you and for all life, for good things the Creator has given you and others and for the opportunity to grow a little more each day. Consider your thoughts and actions of the past day and seek for the courage to be a better person. Seek for the things that will benefit everyone.
2. Respect means to feel or show honour or esteem for someone or something; consider the well-being of, or treat someone or something with deference or courtesy. Showing respect is the basic law of life.
 - Treat every person, from the tiniest child to the oldest Elder, with respect at all times.
 - Special respect should be given to Elders, parents, teachers and community leaders.
 - No person should be made to feel 'put down' by you -- avoid hurting others' hearts as you would a deadly poison.
 - Touch nothing that belongs to someone else (especially sacred objects) without permission, or with an understanding between you.
3. Respect the wisdom of people in council. Once you give an idea to the council or a meeting, it no longer belongs to you - it belongs to the people. Respect demands that you listen intently to the ideas of others in council and that you should not insist that your ideas prevail. Indeed, you should freely support the ideas of others if they are true and good, even if those ideas are quite different from the ones you contributed. The clash of ideas brings forth the spark of truth.
 - Respect the privacy of every person. Never intrude in a person's quiet moments or personal space.
 - Never walk between or interrupt people who are conversing.
 - Speak in a soft voice, especially when you are in the presence of Elders, strangers or others to whom special respect is due.
 - Do not speak unless invited to do so at gatherings where Elders are present except to ask what is expected of you, should you be in doubt.
 - Never speak about others in a negative way, whether they are present or not.
 - Treat the earth and all her aspects as your mother. Show deep respect to the mineral, plant, and animal worlds. Do nothing to pollute the air or the soil. If others would destroy our mother, rise up with wisdom to defend her.
 - Show deep respect for the beliefs and religions of others.
 - Listen with courtesy to what others say, even if you feel what they are saying is worthless. Listen with your heart.
4. Be truthful at all times and under all conditions.
5. Always treat your guests with honour and consideration. Give your best food, your best blankets, the best part of your house and your best service to your guests.
6. The hurt of one is the hurt of all; the honour of one is the honour of all.
7. Receive strangers and outsiders with a loving heart and as members of the human family.
8. All the races and nations in the world are like the different coloured flowers of one meadow. All are beautiful as children of the Creator and they all must be respected.
9. To serve others, to be of some use to family, community, nation or the world is one of the purposes for which human beings have been created. Do not fill yourself with your own affairs and forget your most important task. True happiness comes only to those who dedicate their lives to the service of others.
10. Observe moderation and balance in all things.
11. Know those things that lead to your well-being and those things that lead to your destruction.
12. Listen to and follow the guidance given to your heart. Expect guidance to come in many forms; in prayer, in dreams, in times of quiet solitude and the words and deeds of wise Elders and friends.

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**Aboriginal Information Series
Office of University Accessibility
August 2006
Number 2**