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Envisioning a Healthy Future: A Re-becoming of Native American Men

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Native American men have historically been important to their communities, each having a specific function in the perpetuation of cultural norms and practices. Oral tradition and communal experiential activity were pathways of maintaining a connection with others and in regenerating culture. In contrast, the modern dominant culture values and emphasizes individuation as an indicator of psychosocial growth. This influence seems to have hindered Indigenous people/men in maintaining a sense of connection with the community. Survival for Indigenous men during the establishment of encroaching nations has often occurred through relinquishment of a part of 'self' psychically. Aboriginal men report experiencing hopelessness living in a self-imposed isolation, without a sense of tradition or direction. Healing may focus on use of normative and narrative efforts that rebuild the 'self' as a part of others and the community, which fosters a sense of interconnectedness. Ceremony is an adjunct to developing linkages between heritage, roles, and a community connection.

It can be said that whatever befalls the least empowered people of a nation, will eventually come to pass for the entire nation. Native American men have historically been stewards of a culture and tradition sustaining a larger community connection (Johnston, 1976; Densmore, 1979; Gill, 1985; Bear Heart & Larkin, 1996). During five centuries of mainstream oppression, the Native male faced disenfranchisement from society, and self; being cut off from the traditional community focus of life. While today's mainstream society enjoys modernity with all of its gadgetry, not all members have been so blessed as to be participants. The pressure imposed by majority institutions on the Native man to individuate has largely resulted in a lonely retreat into depressive hopelessness.

For Native people, this change has been twofold. Primarily, the cost has been unfavorable to the Indigenous psyche, in that being a minority in a larger European-valued population, there is a sense of either being ignored or romanticized. Second, there is a growing feeling of disillusionment with life in modern society; neither being fully allowed to participate in it, nor fully wanting to do so. Many Native men lack a positive self-esteem, which was historically derived from a role abundant with personal life-meaning, and functioning as part of a nurturing community.

Many indigenous people have learned to survive for decades by denying their 'Indian-ness' and even rejecting that part of self in an attempt to gain a limited foothold in the modern world (Moore & Gillette, 1992; Voss, Douville, Little Soldier & Twiss, 1999). This denial of the self greatly diminishes the reward and opportunity once offered to sustain a time-honored way of life and personal meaning-making. Without this rudimentary sense of usefulness and purpose, many Native men have turned to harmful chemical and behavioral addictions of as a means of either escaping hopelessness or maintaining the illusion of control. The progression of an addiction eventually robs the individual of a sense of self, perpetuates psychic despair, and promotes further addictive behavior (Schaler, 2000). As one student stated, "at least [with alcohol] we have something to look forward to in life" (D. L. Johnson, personal communication, August 21, 1999).

Recently, men began to realize they were neglecting the everyday nurturing responsibilities traditionally considered as theirs. For Indigenous men to achieve their own center and balance, it is important that they embrace a healthy respect for the women, children, and elders of their nations (Small, 2001). A respect for the self is grounded in a healthy respect for others, emphasizing the importance of being connected with a community.

It is the goal of this paper to heighten awareness of the diminishing importance of men's contextual role and function in modern Native America, how this has contributed to dysfunctional behaviors and addictions, and how some helpers and organizations are successfully reversing this trend. Discussion will focus on how community-based healing solutions can decrease the feeling of isolation for the individual. These solutions may be as simple as talking, singing, or physical movement. A rekindled

sense of mutual trust, love, and respect can re-connect Native men with their communities developing a renewed sense of purpose (Real, 1996; Cochran & Rabinowitz, 2000). Change is happening through the diverse efforts of community members, educators and mentors. However, for the process to flourish, there is a need to motivate others to help with this type of work.

Traditional Transformation: Role Upheaval

Native Americans make up less than one percent of the total U.S. population but represent half the languages and cultures in the nation. There are hundreds of different bands of Native American people in North America with numerous languages, customs, and beliefs. There are many culturally distinguishing features between different tribes and individuals, degrees of acculturation, and levels of mainstream integration. There are also many striking similarities among the various tribal peoples. It must be noted that both matrilineal, and patriarchal societies existed, and still exist today, within different indigenous bands and tribes. Each of these groups of Native people had different expectations, responsibilities, and gender-based roles according to a traditional way of being. Broad, sweeping statements cannot adequately illustrate the norms, values, and practices of the Indigenous population as a whole (Champagne, 1994). For this reason, the multitude of different tribes in this paper will be referred to utilizing intertribal or pan-Indian terms, for the both the sake of brevity and clarity.

Aboriginal communities have been greatly influenced and transformed by the forces of the modern mainstream of society. The attitudes, values, and social norms of the dominant culture have been integrated into modern Native cultures both on and off reservation. Indigenous city dwellers, by proximity, have been influenced not only by Anglo customs, but by those of the African-American, Latino, and others. It is not uncommon in the Southwest United States to see young Native people thrive on rap, reggae, and hip-hop music. Often, these young people reject their tribal heritage, adopting the trendier dress and the underworld mannerisms of other marginalized urban denizens (Lonewolf, 1996).

During the second half of the twentieth century, American men overall have seen a dramatic change in their sense of importance, worth, and role in the family and the community. Men continued to exert a great deal of influence in these settings. This was due not only to their larger median physical stature, but also to the investment in the value of male dominance, a value still operative today. Over time however, a vast portion of male influence eroded due to numerous forces (Faludi, 1999; Farrell, 1986). Some of these societal values shifted due to a dramatic economic transformation, a change in women's roles in the workplace, and alterations in societal attitudes (Friedan, 2000; Young, 1999).

Within the dominant culture, men's worth tends to be based in terms of individual achievement and accumulation of wealth. This role has remained despite other value shifts. The value of setting one's self apart from the crowd has never sat well in Aboriginal communities, and has often led to a growing alienation from one's people. The foremost of Indigenous values are related to group, family, and community welfare. These are held in esteem far above any self-need or desire (Bearheart & Larkin, 1995; Coyhis, 2001). Today, the Native man who tends to be an achievement-oriented individual, is often identified as the oppressor and suffers rejection by others in the community, his own family, or by both (P. Stewart, personal interview, June 9, 2001).

The Native man has become both the object of prejudice and the one who is prejudiced. Institutional principles of the dominant culture have taught the Aboriginal man to devalue his heritage, language, and traditional roles because they are incompatible with modern life. He has developed a split-self, where he both sees and despises himself, and other Native men, through the eyes of the oppressor (Freire, 1998). This dynamic is one that serves to breed poisonous contempt, shame, anger, self-hatred, and violence. What appears to be a shield of apathy and inertia is really a state of demoralization. The constant drive toward self-sufficiency and separation from community, and each other, has had tragic results. This severance has resulted in despair, hopelessness, and a collective sense of grief and loss; subjects only now being therapeutically broached (Simonelli, 2000). Very recent experiences of ongoing prejudice, maltreatment, trauma, and memories of attempted genocide occurring only a century

ago, remain as open wounds and fodder for resentment in the Native consciousness today (Duran & Duran, 1995).

Loss of Native male identity

In Aboriginal society, men, women, and children maintained balance by a steady cooperation between them in the performance of industrial tasks (Densmore, 1979). In many patriarchal Indigenous societies, it was the male's responsibility to mentor the skills of farming, hunting, fishing, narrative and hands-on education. It was also the elder male's responsibility to train young men to become warriors, or guardians of the people (p. 6). This manner of making role-specific tasks was important for community survival. Although some contemporary Westerners have been known to wax romantic on the ideal of the 'noble red-man', it was indeed a very difficult way of life, involving a constant search for sustenance. While it may seem romantic to daydream of a First Nations' Utopia, the reality of their life is hardly preferential compared to the conveniences of the twenty-first century (Preece, 1999).

Boarding schools

As the American Republic developed, so did many other methods of reforming and modernizing the Aboriginal people. The boarding school experience was purported to have striven to instill teamwork values in an individualist framework from the outset (Szasz, 1999). Boarding schools were largely justified by philanthropic endeavors as measures to protect natives from extinction (Adams, 1995). They were also designed to increase economic well being of both the Indian and the developing America, as well as to aid the Native children in developing skills for survival in the mainstream. Of course, the European ideas about gender roles were reinforced by this experience. The boys were generally trained in farming and industrial arts—the girls were usually trained in domestic skills. Most notable, it was found that education of Native children was seen as necessary for the advancing Republic because it was less expensive than outright extermination (p. 20).

Residual effects of the boarding school movement continue to be felt throughout the native community. Traditional rites

of passage into adolescence and adulthood have been radically transformed or eliminated entirely. During the early days of the boarding schools, many Indigenous children were herded towards these institutions under the threat of harm or death, and in the process had elements of their identities and heritage systematically and permanently stripped away. Having been removed from familiar nurturance and mentoring by the parents, these children eventually matured physically and bore offspring. These new parents had little idea how to 'parent', and as a result, there were poor patterns of bonding between parent, child, and community. The effect of inadequate bonding brought about by this forced exodus from the family manifests itself today in a lack of connection with others, including a lack of connection with the self.

Loss of balance

The value of balance was a priority in earlier Native American societies. Each tribe and band of Aboriginal people had their own ritual and ceremony for maintaining or restoring a natural balance to the people, Earth, sky and plant/animal cycle. Many Native American beliefs also center around the concept of cardinal directions symbolizing the biological, mental, social, and spiritual aspects. Each direction may represent a color, a season, an element of life, a holistic facet, or a blessing. A balancing of these aspects, through deliberate care and activity, indicates homeostasis. When any of these elements are neglected, the other aspects of physical, psychological and relational become out of balance as well (Petty, 1994). Therefore, a primary goal of intervention is helping the individual find a sense of biopsychosocial and spiritual balance, thorough whatever means possible.

A person truly 'becomes' by marking life milestones with certain rites of passage (Kipnis, 1991). In contemporary Indigenous life, initiation ritual and ceremony, once marking important rites of passage, have either been eliminated entirely, or seriously diluted. According to Zoja (2000), modern people often unconsciously substitute drug and alcohol addiction for the initiatory rites passage, as a collective psychological need (p. 33). Unfortunately, there is no longer the opportunity to undergo the important transformation initiation once facilitated, e.g. marking

the "death" of childhood and their subsequent "re-birth" as an adult community member (p. 57). Adaptations of some older rituals continue to exist, but do not carry the same weight as they once did. The need for rites of passage still exists in the Indigenous psyche, but is often substituted for by the effects of chemical intoxication in a form of negative "self-initiation" (p. 59).

A high percentage of Indigenous men and women have turned to body and soul-robbing drugs, alcohol, and violence (Beauvais & LaBoueff, 1985). Alcohol and chemical abuse and dependency may serve to numb the dullness or pain of modern city or reservation life, but it has also become accepted as a cultural norm for many Native people (Williamson, 2000). It is in interviewing many of these men in aboriginal communities that we witness a sense of both fatalism and pessimism. Some men are dissatisfied with life to such a point where there is an overwhelming sense of hopelessness: "... nobody [seems to care] if I drink and sleep in the alley, so why would anyone care if I got sober?" (I. Borrego, personal communication, February 13, 2001).

Ultimately, these problems are not insurmountable nor are Native men merely victims, incapable of improving their lives. It is simple to find fault, identify problems, project blame, and then do nothing. In reality, and with help, thousands of Native men have overcome crippling personal tribulations.

Contemporary Issues and Dynamics

Native American men tend to be portrayed by Hollywood as either wild savages or wise medicine men; rarely as pilots, teachers, social workers, or responsible fathers. Most young children are familiar with stereotypes of the Native American. Many forms of popular media, including children's literature, propagate negative and absurd stereotypes. These media often have, and still do, sustain the idea that Native Americans are a vanished people, uncivilized and nomadic, childishy ignorant, superstitious, or bloodthirsty savages. Conversely, there are romantic myths that cast Native men as spiritually wise icons of shamanism (Kilpatrick, 1999). In this way, it is difficult for younger Native men to develop a healthy sense of self, when healthy role models either do not exist, or are based on inaccurate Hollywood stereotypes.

For positive male role models to become more cogent, a great awakening to reality must first take place. Furthermore, when dealing with wounded Native men, there needs to be a renewal of core values, within the context of healing.

Half as many men as women seek assistance from helping professionals, yet men commit suicide at least three, and up to eight times as often (Cochran & Rabinowitz, 2000). The American Indian man has not only experienced immense change in the sustaining roles once required in his culture; he has also had the European ideals of manhood and gender-roles thrust upon him. Many of these standards are partially or even wholly incompatible with ancient Native wisdom and innate knowledge. Furthermore, these values promote denial of deep feelings, discourage disclosure of personal problems, and persuade the man to bear these agonies in silence. It is this element of silence which sublimates strong emotion, except for intense anger, and allows the soul to wallow in self-pity.

In our rush for gender egalitarianism, we have cross-culturally ignored the wounded male, and become neglectful of male needs as a society. Communities touched by these men have been steeped for many generations in negative emotions such as fear and shame. These negative elements have even become community norms that drive thoughts, feelings, and actions. Many Aboriginal communities have developed detrimental patterns of interpersonal communication and interaction that seem impossible to change. Yet, positive change is happening. This change continues to overcome communities' negative internal barriers and attitudes, subsequently affecting the community positively, and encouraging sustainable healing (Polansky, Ammons, & Gaudin, 1985).

Mentorship: Men Making New Meaning

For millennia, young men have gathered their skill and life knowledge from their male peers and elders. This is generally seen as a major pathway into the development of a sense of 'self' through mentorship (Faludi, 1999, p. 76). This phenomenon continues in the majority of cultures today. There still exists a value to gender-specific work of mentoring skill, and promulgating

esoteric information. Native men today have the opportunity to embrace the best of the ancient wisdom and values, while working in the present. Guidelines for this work are based upon values such as generosity and sharing, respect for elders and women, symbiosis with nature, individual freedom, leadership, and courage (Coyhis, 1995; Sanchez, 1999).

Each of the numerous nations of American Indians had rites, rituals and folkways that were intrinsic to harmony and survival. The mission of survival in Aboriginal communities consisted of many responsibilities, which took a sense of courage and resolve to carry out. It would be easy to postulate that a man was identified by his actions, as many men today tend to identify themselves by their occupation (Farrell, 1986). However, the indigenous man generally anchored a greater portion of his identity in his belonging to a community (Carsten-Wentz & Maldonado, 2000).

In many contemporary efforts, adult men take the lead in working with youth to restructure core beliefs (Williamson, 2000). Historically, men have taught the younger generation skills by way of experiential learning, creating a bond between apprentice and teacher. Cooley (1922) realized the value of the elder mentoring the youth. In terms of role specificity, "emulation" was possibly the greatest role model of all where "the greatest growth of character takes place" (p. 314). Without this apprentice-teacher bond, an important part of life and the learning process has been weakened. For Indigenous men to continue the healing process, the bond between elder and younger male through experiencing cognitive growth, needs to be strengthened. Furthermore, the well being and functioning of Native people by use of community members, publications, and traditional culture, is indispensable (Cooley, Ostendorf and Bickerton, 1979; Polansky, et al. 1985). These elements serve to reduce a sense of isolation and powerlessness.

Prescriptions for Helpers

Most young-adult Native American males come to helping and healing by way of tragedy: Cops, Courts and Corrections. Innumerable Native Americans have experienced devastating events in their lives, and have turned to addictive behavior to

cope with the destructive feelings. However, many of these youth, when given enough opportunity and guidance, have found the way out of the mire of addiction. In the process, recovering individuals can develop a bond or "camaraderie" with their peers. This synergistic sense of inclusion globalizes recovery in the community, greater than if a single person were to make the unaccompanied journey.

Traditional teachings

Embracing traditional ceremony is an adjunct to developing an appreciation of the link between a unique heritage and a place in the contemporary world. Although each tribe has its own esoteric stories, legends, history, songs, and dances, efforts can be aimed at helping those individuals new to recovery develop a personal meaning for each of them. Many contemporary helping professionals observe that a combination of traditional teachings and core values dovetails with the twelve-step philosophy in developing a suggested program of living (Small, 2001). Recovery doesn't solely mean recovery from chemical, behavioral, and emotional stressors, it also means recovery of positive aspects of life that have been lost while practicing addictive behavior (Picucci, 2001). A community needs to be involved as a support-network, a sounding board, and even a normalizing force. There is a range of literature supporting contemporary and long-standing psychotherapies which complement Native American community-based helping; resonating with Native values and beliefs whether solely traditional, or mainstream-integrated (Coyhis, 1995; Gustafson, 1997). There have always been elements of cognitive and behavioral therapies among Indigenous Americans offered by mentoring, although it was never seen as therapy.

Community wellness activities

Although it is the individual who is wounded due to a tragic life history, it is the community that can be an instrument of healing (Small, 2001). Due to the large number of works in tribal communities aimed at attracting people to healing, only a few programs will be discussed here. There have been many successful efforts on the part of Indigenous helping professionals.

At the interface of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries we have witnessed efforts to bring Indigenous communities together in healing. Community efforts such as White Bison's Firestarter Programs and Sacred Hoop walk, G.O.N.A., (Gathering Of Native Americans), U.N.I.T.Y. (United Intertribal Youth), and N.A.N.A.C.O.A. (National Association of Native American Children of Alcoholics) conferences have attracted thousands. These programs offer Native people the venues and opportunities to share thoughts and feelings openly, honestly, and without shame. Health promotion and education programs, such as Women and Men In Wellness conferences, also disseminate valuable materials to Indigenous communities and helpers. Each of these efforts have helped participants to focus on positive happenings, the value of a caring community, and possibilities to begin the healing process themselves. As these efforts proceed, individuals of all ages have the opportunity to be called upon to become mentors. This mentorship serves to boost self-worth of the mentor and models the practice of intergenerational helping in the larger intertribal community.

Drum-singing

Some healing processes begin with an event as simple as a song. There are as many localized practices relating to indigenous music as there are groups of Native people. Nonetheless, it appears that the drum is central to the majority of tribes found in North America (Roberts, 1999). There are literally hundreds of drum-singing groups, or collections of singers that travel from event to event, e.g. the powwow trail, singing for the people. Learning to sing at the drum is a more involved undertaking than it appears to the uninitiated observer. It takes time, a natural musical ability, dedication, and a honest desire to improve ones singing ability, to 'become' a drum-singer.

Singing at the drum has generally been a male endeavor originally of the Plains Indians, although there are a growing number of females sitting and singing with these traveling drums. The drum supports a time-honored way of being an Indigenous man: knowledgeable, respectful, sober, and an entire way of comportment that is becoming of a drum-singer. It may take two to three decades, or longer, to learn, memorize, and 'carry' these songs. It

is a great honor to be named as a 'lead' or 'head' singer, or as a song keeper, in many Indigenous cultures.

There are many drum groups being founded in sobriety, even naming themselves as "sober drums." For many young Native American men, a center is found around the circular drum that provides an anchor in life. Even the act of singing—inhaling and exhaling heartily—is as healing as 'breath-work' being practiced by many New Age or contemporary helping professionals (Weil, 1996). Starting and finishing a song for dancers, who consist of community members and relatives, gives a singer a sense of a completed *Gestalt*, affecting the whole drum-group in a healing and positive way.

A renaissance of celebration

Powwow, Potlatch, and other celebrations are old tribal customs of the United States and Canada. They are gatherings, not necessarily ceremonial, but conducted with certain protocol, where people can form new friendships and renew old ties, sing, dance, give and receive gifts, and generally restore their energy in intangible ways. The dances have enjoyed both a renaissance and transplantation over the previous several decades, with many tribes participating that never had previously. Due to the advent of technology, the automobile, and the ability to transmit or transport elements of these celebrations worldwide, Powwows that are held throughout North America often share a uniformity in their protocol. It is common to see Powwow procedure in Connecticut like that of California—with very similar dances, sets of rules, 'giveaway' ceremonies, and even Powwow Emcees' jokes (Roberts, 1999). Much of this protocol originated in both Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show of the late 1800s, as well as in the modern Rodeo, and has greatly influenced the modern Powwow (Fees, 1989). Many of the well-known Emcees announce for both Powwows and Rodeos throughout Native America. It is also common to see men of tribes in the South and West today dancing a contemporary version of the old Omaha Tribe grass dance. Native men also dance the fancy war dance, Northern and Southern plains traditional dances, and sing with plains-style dance drum groups at different celebratory events. Men represent not only the fierceness of the warrior or the skill of the hunter, but also the grace of a gentleman within these contemporary dances.

Nearly every tribe has some sort of gathering for dancers such as these. It is not unusual to find that many people who participate in these events are themselves in recovery from alcohol or drug dependence, cognizant of these ways having both positive benefits and influences. These public events continue to blend a tradition of sharing and healing with elements that are sacred in subtle ways. These celebrations greatly aid in the healing process by helping the intertribal community come together and rebuild itself, after five hundred years of being driven apart (A. Roberts, personal interview, May 21, 2001).

Storytelling and narrative

While some Indigenous healing ways can generate unity and camaraderie in a public setting, others are appropriate for more private venues. Earliest First Nation life was enriched by stories; marking development, personal growth, and even one's coming into being. Storytelling serves to organize diverse ideas into functional portrayals and narratives, actively restructure the listener's views and provide problem solving methodology. In this context, a successful story contains all of the essential elements of a listener's concerns and then organizes these elements into a viable and replicable process. Storytelling can generate abstract outlines and relational networks for ideas that also serve as guides for action and understanding. This form of narrative may begin a process that leads to a conclusion and growth far beyond the original tale because the storyteller provides a vehicle for the listeners to comprehend in their own way and derive their own solutions (Freire, 1998). According to Jolly (1996) the five components of effective storytelling for growth or leadership are to:

"... (1) identify the discordant, limited, or conflicted elements of the listeners' schema; (2) develop a story in which the conflicted elements are reorganized into one or more workable systems; (3) present the story as a propositional schema; (4) lead the listener in exploring the propositional schema by discussing elements of the story; and (5) through discussion, lead the listener back to her or his issues and guide the transfer of the client's schematic elements into the newly defined functional schema" (p. 10).

Helping solutions may focus on the judicious use of pertinent normative and narrative efforts that aid in rebuilding the 'self'

as a part of others. Oral tradition and experiential activity were and still are touchstones of identity and history, functioning as major pathways in regeneration of cultural mores. Story-telling, talking circle, journaling, and a safe grounding in private and community-based spiritual ceremony are ways this effort has been moving forward. These approaches in the therapeutic context have begun to find inroads into the process of 're-storying' one's life, thereby bringing about a reframed sense of 'self' as a part of the environment.

Integrating the Twelve-Step story

The twelve-step program is a way of storytelling that has roots in a kind of normative-narrative therapy (Davis & Jansen, 1998). While a story is a construct of the individual, it is also told among others with similar problems in a group setting. This way of twelve-step verbal sharing brings people together with similar problems, and shares viable examples of workable solutions. This shared solution-making tends to further foster an ironclad sense of connectedness in struggle. Twelve-step programs in Indian Country are reported to be successfully attracting members of all ages to enter into recovery (Iron Moccasin, 2000). An existing and successful framework for positive change today has its roots in the Oxford Group-based twelve step programs of Alcoholics Anonymous and others (Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, 1976). In the language of twelve step programs, the term "recovery" not only describes teaching based in chemical abstinence, but also describes a positive future outlook for those who "work" the program (p. 58).

This twelve-step approach, especially when integrated with elements of Native spirituality, tends to be a powerful tool for helping to create meaning and in offering the support of others who have successfully navigated a similar journey. Furthermore, twelve-step programs can be modified to fit the language and philosophy of the Indigenous group utilizing the program (Coyhis, 1995).

Talking circle

The healing or 'talking circle' has become a mainstay of urban and reservation professional and lay-based healing work. The

circle is composed of usually a dozen or more individuals and a facilitator. After a period of initial protocol, an eagle's feather, or other meaningful item, is passed around the circle from person to person, and each is invited to speak in turn. Individuals often speak from the heart, sing a song, tell a story, or verbally share whatever they are moved to. This oral tradition gives an individual the chance to be heard in a group context without peer or facilitator interruption. While Johnson and Johnson (1997) stress the importance of feedback in correcting misperceptions and redirection in growth, the talking circle is forgiving and accepting (p. 57). It is this forgiveness and acceptance that Native nations so need to practice and develop to continue this healing journey.

Implications for Helpers and Professionals: Connectedness

While mainstream developmental and rehabilitative psychology is generally aimed at helping the individual, solutions for Native peoples may be more effective if developed in terms of the family, group or community-wide endeavors. Both Krech (1999) and Preece (1999) exhort academics and helpers to respect other cultures and religions, but not to patronize them. This requires an assessment of cultures that sometimes includes their contradictions. Even if there are beliefs within both aboriginal and Western religion and philosophy that urge us to live in harmony with nature and each other, there is a giant gap between teaching respect for ourselves and practicing it. Unlearning internalized negative stereotypes will be a long-term struggle. There is a great deal of personal healing and de-programming that must go on for this to take place. The call for practitioners from diverse nations is ever growing. These helpers can best serve the people by being adequately grounded in a knowledge and practice of cross-cultural competence and historical awareness.

According to Pewewardy (1993), competent helpers can assist their charges by guiding them to examine their qualms, reframing them into ideas that can shape future actions. This being done, one will not always be compelled to try to force negative experiences from the memory, but the utilize this self-knowledge for growth. Respected male elder Iron Moccasin (2001) encourages Native men to "Habillate", or learn to live as was intended by the

Creator (p. 13). This calls for a blend of old and new methods; a combination of processes that have worked in the past connected with those that are working now.

While society continues to depend upon men to sustain life and put bread on the table, society needs to develop ways to help men embrace their need for nurturance. For Indigenous men, fostering connectedness is a template for healing. We need to develop a new way of thinking about men's roles, and engender acceptance for men to experience feelings. For Native American communities, the tie to the mainstream is a symbiotic one. Indigenous attitudes and values have been greatly influenced by European proximity and public policies. Healing strategies that have been most beneficial to Aboriginal people have involved a reintroduction of Native American values, laws, and practices into the lives of the people.

Conclusion

The dominant culture's concept of individualism is still at odds with Indigenous thinking, beliefs, and values, and has indeed been destructive. What is in line with Native values and beliefs is an identity grounded in tribal membership and community. This is an identity and value system in which Native men have thrived and contributed in a meaningful way historically. There are modern ways to establish one's identity in community, such as singing, traditional dancing, storytelling, and participation in twelve-step activities. The common theme among these items is a sharing of oneself for a greater good. Promotion of these events is a pathway to healing for Native men, and thus, for all Native communities.

There is a healing that is awakening in Native American communities today. Native men are lighting the way by connecting with others, after being in the darkness of separation for far too long. Healing involves an acceptance of the true self as a nurturer, desiring connection and intimacy. This is what many have found in the twelve-step groups—mentoring, modeling, sharing, and helping others. When people begin to share thoughts and feelings with specific plans and goals in mind, the end results will bear a sweeter fruit. When a man can see another man risk sharing

from the soul and not be repulsed or afraid of this act, then true healing can begin. When others see the man, once pitiful and ill, now healthy and whole again, it will attract them toward a similar journey of healing and hope. Connectedness teaches all people about what it is to be human—the need to both love and be loved; to share the deepest self with another, and have that sharing returned. This sharing helps us to make a powerful personal meaning of the events of our lives. It is the understanding of an inclusive cultural identity that will foster a sense of reintegration of the self, as our First Nations men move into the new millennium, enjoying growth and survival, and ensuring an enduring progeny.

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