

Elder Teachings – Medicine Wheel Teaching

Speaker: Elder Blu Waters

The Medicine Wheel uses the image of four quadrants to teach us that as human beings there are four aspects to who we are, the spiritual, the emotional, the physical, and the intellectual, and that to live life in a good way, we need to keep these four parts of ourselves in balance. The Medicine Wheel also brings us back to the significance of the circle. Life is not a straight line from birth to death but rather a circle of ongoing learning. Each of the four directions of the Medicine Wheel have teachings to offer and as we live our lives we come around to those teachings as we need them. The east is the place of beginning, every morning as the sun rises. Therefore, we regard the eastern direction as the place of birth, the place of new beginnings. It is the place of emotion as you are introduced to your learning journey. When we go around the circle to the southern direction this is the place of growth as a youth and young adult and is the place of physical activity and physical growth. Everything changes so much physically as you move through puberty and into adulthood in this southern direction. The west is where the intellect sits and is the place of adulthood. It is significant to note that the adult intellect is across from the child emotion as the adult is needed to care for and instruct the child while at the same time parents need the emotion of the child as a form of communication. The northern direction is the place of Elders and of spirituality. We look to the Elders who have much wisdom and spiritual insight from their journey in life. For youth and young adults in the south, sitting across from the Elders, they need their guidance. At the same time, Elders need the energy and active bodies of young people to help support them. In this relationship of mutual need,

altogether as human beings, we live in balance. Also, within ourselves we live in balance if we allow the teachings of the four directions to guide us. This circular journey does not happen just once. We continually move within the four quadrants. There will be times in our life when we need to go back to some learning we might have missed in childhood, while at the same time, there are young ones who display wisdom beyond their years. To live life in a good way is to balance our emotions, our physical self, our intellect, and our spirituality.