

Elder Teachings – Two Spirit Teaching

Speaker: Elder Blu Waters

Two Spirit people have always existed in Indigenous communities. They are people that do not walk within the binary of female and male that we were given through colonization. Two Spirit people are gender diverse and hold special roles and responsibilities in community. Each of us comes with gifts and with Two Spirit people they come with the gift of two perspectives and so can step into many diverse roles. For this reason, before colonization they were considered a valuable part of nations. Being Two Spirit is not something they chose, it is their identity, it is who they are, and who they will always be. Those binaries that were introduced at colonization harmed a lot of Two Spirit people because they were not allowed to be who they were meant to be. For a long time Two Spirit people were unacknowledged in community, but that is changing as those teachings are coming back. Each nation has their own term for a gender diverse person. For myself the word is Aayahkwew and it means neither woman nor man. It means that I am not all of one. Instead, I am a combination of both. With colonization came the negative views about gender diversity and we see how this means Two Spirit people become targets for violence. Two Spirit people cannot change who they are. We cannot ask a flower, not to be a flower. It will always be a flower. Two Spirit people have always walked among us and been part of us. They were not separate, and they are now returning to being among us, and part of us, and taking their rightful space in communities. Our one mind will grow stronger as Two Spirit people are more and more being brought back into the circle.