



The Native Community: A Collective Ethos

- ❖ From the beginning, ***Indigenous People*** have bound themselves together as a ***Community*** primarily for survival.
- ❖ Organizing into ***Families, Clans, Bands, Tribes*** and ***Nations*** to connect themselves to not only the group as a whole but their surroundings as well.
- ❖ In this ***“cultural relativism,”*** the ***Community*** lives up to certain standards that are relevant only to their own group, practicing an innate quality of seeing and ***cultural traits*** understanding all relationships and connections in order to preserve the ***Community*** unit.
- ❖ It is built upon ***Spirituality*** and a sense of ***“communitism,”*** where there is an awareness of ***Community*** tied together by ***familial relations*** and the ***families’*** commitment to it.
- ❖ This relationship is based on the ethical question, ***“What is good for all?”***
- ❖ From birth, there is never a time when the individual Indian, young and old, male or female, is not a part of the cooperative activities of others. One is always part of something bigger than oneself.
- ❖ Children from the youngest age are enculturated to understand this essential truth for their particular group: ***Adults do not represent authority beyond question, one’s actions affect others, all members are equal, and the guidance of the young is the responsibility of all.***
- ❖ A major component of the socialization process is learning to ***Balance*** the needs and desires of the individual to those of the ***larger society.***
- ❖ One may actively strive for individual self-fulfillment but not at the expense of the group. Flexibility and adaptability are important considerations, where one must ***adjust to the contours*** of the ***Community*** as well as the environment, daily life, and circumstances in general.
- ❖ The concepts of ***Harmony and Balance*** apply, where it is the responsibility of the entire group to see that these fundamental tenets are upheld among the various aspects of life.
- ❖ ***Indigenous People*** are motivated to work towards making a contribution back to the society, not to achieve personal gain.
- ❖ Individualistic type of thinking, where there is no loyalty to anyone else other than themselves, is recognized as a dangerous threat to the well-being of all.
- ❖ ***Indigenous People*** base their codes of conduct on the notion that ***Humans*** are social by nature, and they want to remain in the group; ***rewards and punishment*** were put in place to gently nurture adherence to the norm.

- ❖ The message that rings loud and clear is that an ***individual's actions have consequences for self, others, and the world.***
- ❖ ***Oral Tradition*** is considered an essential, intuitive institution that holds the group together by conveying the importance of lessons in ***Human*** behavior, ethical actions, and cultural practices – what was deemed important by the people of the past and what needs to be observed in the present.
- ❖ From such a background, a ***Community Ethos*** was thusly established and literally held the people together by the voices of antiquity.
- ❖ Four “Rs” or ***Core Values of Indigeneity*** as they apply to a group-oriented Community: **Relationships, Responsibility, Reciprocity, and Redistribution.**
- ❖ Ultimately, creating relationships between diverse elements is the goal, not eliminating them.
- ❖ Native Communities are greatly impacted by “outside” influences: *Federal policy* (IRA 1934: IESDA 1978); *economic situations* (recessions); *federal, state and local laws* (*Keystone XL, salmon, fireworks, civil & criminal*), *environmental resources* (timber, water ...) *social issues* (*school shootings ...*) ... many issues that impact non-Indian communities also impact the Native ones.