

## Suggested Readings

The Sioux YMCA volunteer experience will provide you with a realistic view of Reservation life. The Y does not believe in romanticizing or generalizing the community we work with and serve. We ask our volunteers to come into this experience with an open-mind; don't expect this experience or this community to be a certain way. Many volunteers who work with us have preconceived and inaccurate notions of Native Americans and reservations. Usually, these notions and stereotypes stem from the media and false assumptions of authors. Each Indian Nation and peoples has its own history, culture, and present-day issues. The Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Reservation, home to four bands of the Lakota people, is no exception. To truly gain from your experience with the Sioux YMCA, be open to new experiences, participate in discussions and projects, and observe what's going on around you. Most importantly, be patient and don't be afraid to ask questions. That being said, here are some resources to prepare you for this cultural experience. Below are some suggested readings to peruse before arriving in Dupree.

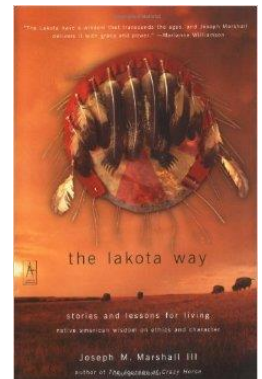
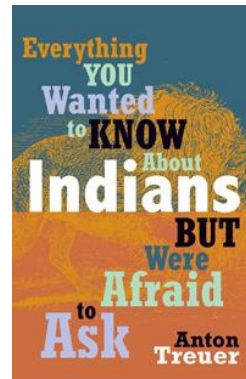
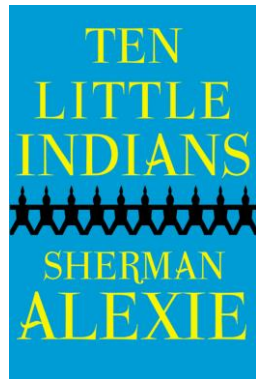
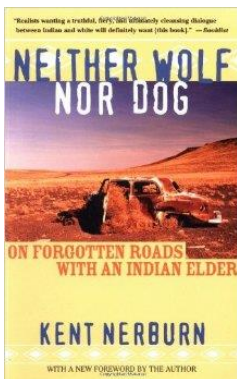
### Books

- Neither Wolf Nor Dog by Kent Nerburn
- Ten Little Indians by Sherman Alexie
- On the Rez by Ian Frazier
- Everything You Wanted to Know About Indians But Were Afraid to Ask by Anton Truer
- The Lakota Way: Stories and Lessons for Living by Joseph M. Marshall III
- Waterlily by Ella Deloria

### Movies

- Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee
- Smoke Signals
- Reel Injun

**Readings:** See attached



# Cowboys and Indians

By Paul O. Sand

On many of those long, hot July days on the plains of west-central Minnesota, there wasn't much for a bunch of six- and seven-year-old boys to do, except to play cowboys and Indians. And there were many days when we'd gather in the woods on the edge of town with our assorted weaponry — Red Ryder BB guns, breech-loading Winchester's, six-shooters, rubber Bowie knives, and even a Daniel Boone flint gun.

Before acting out our imaginative barbarianism, there would be the inevitable argument over who was going to play which role. Of course everyone, including myself, wanted to be on the winning side. That meant no one wanted to be the Indian. Everyone wanted to be either Bronco Ben, or Leggy Joe, or Blacksnake Nick, or Salamander Tom. My favorite was Dandy Dan of Deadwood, whom I played with a cunning intelligence.

The argument would last until someone would threaten to go home. That was the signal for a compromise, and more often than not, I'd end up volunteering to be the Indian. But before I did, I'd make the others promise I'd be given a "fair" chance to win. They'd solemnly agree, swear on a stack of Gideon Bibles, and even cross their hearts. Sometimes, as a token of their appreciation, they'd even let me have the youngest boy to be my comrade-in-arms.

And then — crack! whizz! thud! — the battle for the Red River Valley would begin. Yelling with vengeance, with bullets humming and cracking over my head, I'd chase Salamander Tom — a very slow and awkward lad — through bushes, and over and under fallen cottonwoods. Finally, with my knees bruised and cut, I'd corner this cowardly palatine in some ditch.

It was generally at this point, when I was about to put Salamander Tom out of the business of killing Indians, that the "rules"

would suddenly change. And no matter how many well-placed shots I triggered with my breech-loading Winchester, he'd somehow dodge them all, and then, with a loud whoop, charge hell-bent from the ditch. That whoop always seemed to be the signal that the rules had been changed, and that it was now "open season" on me.

After that, it was only a matter of time before they'd take me into captivity. That meant making me run through a patch of burning weeds with my pants legs rolled up. Or they'd pretend to hang me, burn me at the stake or whip me into unconsciousness. This torturing part of our play symbolized our prevailing belief that savages deserved such cruel and unusual justice.

Back then, most of our racial myths about Indians and our violent make-believe behaviour were influenced, if not conditioned, by the grade-B cowboy movies we saw free of charge on Saturday nights. There was, however, another source that nurtured our racist attitudes.

In our general store there were three old cardboard boxes filled with Buffalo Bill weekly magazines. Some of the Wild West weeklies dated as far back as 1890. Evidently, some farmer had brought the weeklies to the store, perhaps in exchange for a pair of socks or gloves, or food. They were the most popular readings among us boys.

The readings perpetuated the racial myth of the Indian as a savage and a heathen, and played an important role in forming our attitudes toward Indians.

Consider, for example, this excerpt from one of the weeklies: "Even though the government had subdued the Pawnee Indians into something like a peaceful way of living, they would break out on the warpath now and then, and return to their old habits and instincts and seek the white man's scalp." Now, as we well know, the angel of racist

mythology is prejudice. And we also know that childhood prejudices die hard, if ever at all, a fact that was driven home to me just the other day.

Unexpectedly, one of my childhood friends — the one who always insisted on being Salamander Tom — stopped in to visit me. I hadn't seen him for more than 35 years. After getting the pleasantries — how fat and bald we had gotten — out of the way, we began recalling all the fun we had as children growing up in a small town. Then we began exchanging life experiences and telling each other what we were now doing with our lives.

At this point, things got unpleasant. For when I mentioned that I was working on a project in South Dakota, combating racial prejudice and discrimination against Native Americans, he recoiled abruptly. With triumphant ignorance and a tremor from the corner of his left eye, he proceeded to make some of the most intolerant and prejudicial remarks I've heard in a long time.

To him, Indians were naturally lazy, incorrigibly delinquent, habitually dishonest, genetically disease-ridden, and instinctively pagan. His solution to the so-called Indian problem was to abolish all reservations, eliminate all federal handouts, and throw them all into the job market. "Let them sink or swim," he said defiantly. "What they need is a heavy dose of the Protestant work ethic." And then he went on to moralize that the problems confronting Indians were a form of divine punishment for their past and present moral frailties. In short, what was happening to them was divinely deserved.

As I listened to this well-educated 50-year-old business executive, I realized that he had never outgrown the prejudices he had learned as a child. He was still Salamander Tom cowering in a ditch.

I suppose I should've explained to him that when one divides others on the basis of race or ethnic heritage, social justice is impossible. And that his kind of prejudice robs us of the many talents that Indians possess, and that the Horatio Alger myth of rugged individualism often meant getting Indians drunk to exploit them. But, rightly

or wrongly, I concluded that nothing could be done for this first-class bigot of power and status. Not a lecture on the meaning of pluralistic democracy, nor an analysis of relationship between racism and poverty would've changed his mind. Needless to say, we did not part as friends who would see each other again.

After this encounter, I began thinking about my experiences and education, and how I was able to throw off my early racial attitudes toward Indians. To be sure, that attitude was never challenged during my days in grade school, nor in high school, fact, very little was ever mentioned in the classroom about Indian heritage. Minnesota history, which may well consist of 40 per cent Indian history, was taught in the schools I attended, without including the significant role of native peoples.

Nor did we have human-relations classes designed to break down racial stereotypes that Indians were less ambitious than whites; that Indians laughed a lot; that Indians wanted to live off the federal government; and that Indians had looser morals than white people.

Only when I entered college were some of these racist stereotypes and myths challenged. In one history course — How the West Was Physically Won and Morally Lost — I read about how Indians were conquered, dispossessed, exploited, and abandoned by white people. In a sociology class, I came to understand that racism is a dogma that is rigorously cultivated and transmitted and is a major factor in producing poverty.

Through anthropology courses, I learned about the Indians' concept of time as a continuum related to the rising and setting of the sun, about their attitudes toward work about their respect for the elderly, about their need to be free and to live harmoniously with nature, and about their desire for tranquility rather than competition. What was clear about all of this is that giving human respect and dignity to those who are racial and ethnically different does not take place naturally. It must be learned through the sharing of thoughts and feelings.

It seems to me that these were the kind of cultural learning experiences Salamander educators and opinion-makers fail to expose students to ethical values and to challenge the cruel legacy of racism — a legacy that has made the American Indian the most victimized minority in our society.

*Paul O. Sand has been the Executive Director of the National Conference on Christians and Jews, Minnesota-Dakota Region, for seventeen years. He lectures in business ethics at the College of St. Catherine, St. Mary's Campus in Saint Paul.*

*Minnesota, and has been a board director of the Minnesota Civil Liberties Union for ten years. He is the founder of the "Model United Nations" at the Northlands in 1967, and has been widely published in newspapers and journals in Minnesota.*

# Issues to Consider

By Pamela A. Kalir

## Contributions

With faces painted with red or black streaks, saddles hidden under blankets, war bonnets blowing in the wind, stereotypical American Indians blaze across the big and little screens massacring settlers. Their contributions to contemporary society are little known and seldom dramatized.

Many necessities and valuable commodities of modern life are directly tied to Indian culture. Herbs used in the medicines of Indian healers are the sources for more than 200 contemporary medicines. Half of today's agricultural products were domestic crops cultivated by Indians, such as white potatoes, rhubarb, tomatoes and corn. Snow goggles, dogsleds, parkas and snowshoes are Indian inventions. Common words like punk, pee-wee and tuxedo, are derived from native languages. America's highways follow Indian trails, and the asphalt which covers the highway is a substance used by Native nations. High-rise apartment buildings and air-conditioning are designs from the early southwestern nations which have been developed for contemporary use.

Many American rivers, mountains and cities have native names. Twenty-five states' names are derived from Indian names: Alabama, Arkansas, Iowa, Idaho, the Dakotas, and Utah are tribal names.

Thomas Jefferson visited the Iroquois League or League of Five Nations. The governmental structure of this League had such an impact on Jefferson that he incorporated much of what he learned into the Constitution of the United States.

More than stereotypical cancutures and models for dime-store war bonnets and plastic, Hong Kong-produced tom-toms and dolls, the growing living legacy of American Indian peoples is not yet widely recognized.

tribal government under the bureau of Indian Affairs' scrutiny. In recent decades and laws such as the Indian Education and Self-Determination Act have helped to empower Indians and politically strengthen Native national sovereignty.

American Indians were given voting citizenship for the first time in 1924, except in Arizona and New Mexico where it took until 1946. In the 1970s Indian political activism became widespread, leading to demands for change. In recent decades Indians have chosen to fight battles in the courts.

Sovereignty has been under attack for 500 years. Native nations are still fighting to protect their people, land and resources from the encroachment set in motion by Columbus. Genocide, termination, and relocation are some of the weapons that have been used to undermine sovereignty. Contemporary attacks include disputing treaty-granted hunting and fishing rights, and the taxation of government payments for stolen Indian lands. Native lands are being proposed for garbage and nuclear waste dumps while recent legislation, such as the National Indian Gaming Act attempts to pry monies away from Indian nations.

Despite the systematic effort to undermine the sovereignty of modern Indian nations the strength of these unique political entities continues to grow. For a more complete discussion of the complex issue of sovereignty we refer you to *The Nations Within* by Vine Deloria and Clifford Lytle.

## Sovereignty

The legal status of Indian nations is a confused and delicate issue on which volumes have been written. In 19th century treaties while Indian nations were still a very real military threat, the United States Government recognized the sovereignty of Indian nations, yet the United States Supreme Court has referred to these same peoples as "domestic dependent nations" or "wards of the government." The same court gave the United States government title to Indian lands using the Doctrine of Discovery.

The legal status of Indians prior to the 1920s was similar to that of a minor child — their lives were strictly regulated by the government, and they were allowed no input into decisions affecting them. The Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 instituted

along with modern community centers, clinics, businesses, and colleges. Although great strides have been made in recent decades, today you will still find tarpaper shacks, log dwellings and dilapidated, cheaply-built federal housing on many reservations. Running water, electricity, reliable heating sources, and safe drinking water are luxuries in the far reaches of some. It is easy for shallow reporting to deepen misunderstandings about such things.

Media audiences have been fed a diet of negative images for 200 years. The resulting cultural bias leads to unthinking negativism and value judgements which are difficult to distinguish from racism. In addition to the obvious woes like alcoholism, poverty, and health problems, reporters are obligated to cover the success stories. Find out what has been accomplished, what is being done to rectify problems, and who is doing it.

Political rhetoric and posturing have done nothing to improve conditions on the reservation. Endless dignitaries have come to smile and gladhand and get pictures of themselves wearing headaddresses, then leave. Find out where real positive change is occurring, and why. An understanding of American Indian cultural values, of family and tribal relationships, and of the spiritual and practical importance of the land will enhance the quality of media information and positively influence non-Indian people.

## Education

From the late 1800s until the 1960s, church-affiliated boarding schools aided in the government's policy of assimilation. These schools were a nightmare for a half-million Indians. Families were ripped apart, and children were warehoused in cold, barren dormitories. Children were often severely punished for speaking their native languages and observing native customs and ceremonies. Most such church-sponsored schools have been closed.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs also ran a number of boarding schools, and today continues to maintain seven facilities. Today's schools little resemble their predecessors,

## Reservation Life

Through policies and practices such as assimilation, allotment, and termination, the United States government has sought to undo the reservations it created, attempting to separate the tribes from their lands and wash its hands of the "Indian problem." Cultural insensitivity, voracious greed, paternalism, and the bitter fruits of inept law-making have compounded the inequities suffered by Native peoples on and off reservations.

Currently, well tended farms, ranches, and homes can be seen on reservations,

State name	English meaning	Language
Alaska	mainland	Aleut
Arizona	place of the small spring	Papago (Algonquini)
Connecticut	place of the long river	(Algonquini)
Illinois	men	(Algonquini)
Kansas	people of the south wind	Sioux
Kentucky	meadow	Iroquois
Massachusetts	the place of large hills	(Algonquini)
Minnesota	cloudy water	Sioux
Mississippi	big river	(Algonquini)
Missouri	people of the big canoes	(Algonquini)
Nebraska	flat water	Sioux
Ohio	beautiful	Iroquois
Oklahoma	red people	(Muskegee)
Tennessee	the name of a Cherokee village	
Texas	friends	(Caddoan)
Wisconsin	the gathering waters	(Algonquini)
Wyoming	on the great plain	(Algonquini)

Their contributions to our contemporary lifeways and mainstream culture are a rich source of topics for this generation's media professionals.

put generations of Indians still carry the scars of the boarding-school years.

In the 1970s predominantly white schools provided substandard education for Indian children. The drop-out rate for Indian students was twice that of non-Indians. For example, only 35% of those who graduated from high school entered college.

The solution to the education problem is coming from within Indian communities. The nineties have been characterized by a marked increase in the number of Native students graduating from colleges, universities, and technical schools. Contract schools like Little Wounded Knee, on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, and colleges like Sinte Gleska College, on South Dakota's Rosebud Reservation, offer Indian-developed curricula implemented by Indian educators, with emphasis on learning their Native languages.

## Land and Treaty Rights

To aboriginals worldwide, the land is the source of all life, the Mother. It has fed, clothed, housed and nursed them without great effort and prodigious technology. In return they treat the land and its creatures with great respect. The concept of selling the land is completely alien.

Land is the hub around which most Indian issues revolve. It has been the hub since Europeans first came to the Americas. Over the land we see the clash and spark of two conflicting value systems. From the beginning the land that was rich in obvious natural resources was purchased, connived or stolen from Native Americans.

Most reservations are remnants of the land once agreed to in the treaties. The land is often too barren to pursue agriculture or timber harvesting. Fertile farming or grazing land was sold after allotment, or has been leased to relatively well-to-do non-Indian neighbors.

Tribes were relocated to barren reservations thought to be worthless. Beneath some reservations were hidden resources—first precious metals, then coal, then uranium. Each discovery led to a new wave of land grabbing. In the process, treaties nego-

tiated in good faith have been ignored again and again.

In the second half of this century, American Indians have been asking for the return of land—sacred sites, state and federal land, reservation land stolen by guile—assured by the treaties. For the most part, they have been offered money instead, usually much less than the true "value" of the land, but increasingly, they are refusing. The experiences of allotment and termination have reinforced their traditional belief that without the land, their culture would cease to exist. That would be a great loss, indeed, as the folly of exploitation belatedly dawns on the rest of America.

The once sacred places are now littered with gaudy concessions and mine tailings. To Western culture, alienated from the universe, nature is something to be dominated. Home on the range, seldom was heard a discouraging word. But even in the amiable 80s, "greenhouse effect," "water table shrinkage," "ozone depletion," "acid rain," "toxic waste," and "rain forest depletion," were all media buzz words.

Slowly, it is becoming evident that the aboriginal practice of land stewardship is intensely practical and that it embodies ancient traditional wisdom. Not so long ago this view of the world, along with the religious ritual and culture to which it gave birth, was smugly termed "primitive." Indians are the cultural repository of knowledge about traditional conservation in the Americas.

Contrary to popular belief, not all land was taken from American Indians by relentless cavalry charges and innocent immigrants who had suffered at the hands of the savage red menace. Treaties ratified by Congress promised American Indians rights and services in perpetuity in return for the use of tens of millions of acres which were ceded to the U.S. It is astonishing that anyone should expect Indians to willingly relinquish what is left of their once vast homelands, and even more astonishing that few Americans understand why Indians are entitled to exercise treaty rights.

Some states have passed laws that violate the legal terms of treaty rights. Indians

attempting to fish in Washington state have been set upon, beaten and jailed by overzealous law officers. For several years,

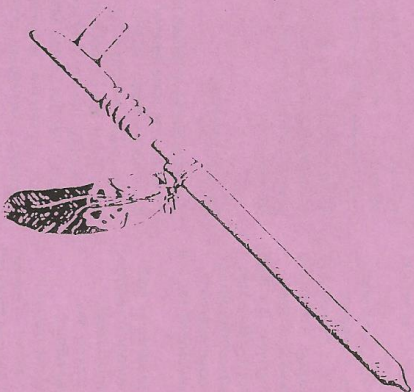
thongs of shouting White sportsmen have threatened Indians exercising spearfishing rights in Wisconsin. Native spearfishing is a reflection of traditional conservation observing self-imposed limits. Indians take only a small percentage of the fish; the great bulk of them are taken by sportsmen. A national overview of contemporary land-related problems as seen by Indian individuals can be found in Vine Deloria's *God is Red* (see bibliography.)

As a result of teachers, textbooks and the media glossing over a shameful history, the

average non-Indian in America knows little or nothing about treaty rights. Treaties are legally recognized agreements which should remain time-honored promises.

For more information, treaties are maintained in the Diplomatic, Legal, and Fiscal Records Division, National Archives and Records Service, 8th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C. 20408. Photocopies are available for a fee upon request.

*Pamela A. Kilar is from the Miami Nation in Indiana. She teaches American Indian literature and composition at Bemidji Community College in Minnesota and is an activist for Indian education.*



## Traditional Indian Values as Opposed to Non-Indian

Indian Culture	Non-Indian Culture
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Time is Unimportant</b></p> <p>Time is a relative thing. Clocks are not watched. One does things as they are needed. The expression "Indian Time" means an activity, program or meeting will begin when everyone gets here.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Time is Important</b></p> <p>Time is of the utmost importance and used to its fullest extent. Everything is scheduled, with a start-time and an end-time. "Rushing" from one activity, meeting or program is incredibly common.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Today</b></p> <p>Traditionally, Native people live each day as it comes. Plans for tomorrow are often left until the future becomes the present.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Tomorrow</b></p> <p>Planning for tomorrow is very important to many non-Indians. Planning such as insurance, savings, or planning for a vacation is usually common.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Patience</b></p> <p>The ability to wait for long periods of time is considered a very good quality.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Action</b></p> <p>Productivity, the ability to accomplish more in less time is admired and encouraged.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Shame/Teasing</b></p> <p>If an individual commits a wrong act, he/she is usually shamed/teased once, or for a finite period of time. When the shaming is over there is no feeling of guilt held by the individual.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Guilt</b></p> <p>After an individual commits a wrong act, he/she feels a tremendous amount of guilt. The guilt is usually carried inside him/her and may make one feel ill physically or emotionally.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Extended Family</b></p> <p>Aunts are often considered to be mothers, uncles are considered to be fathers and cousins are siblings. Extended families often live in the same households and include non-biological family members.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Family</b></p> <p>Biological family is of the utmost importance and there may be significant geographic or emotional distance between extended family such as aunts, uncles and cousins.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Age</b></p> <p>Great respect is held for elders and the experience they bring. Generally, no effort is made to conceal age.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Youth</b></p> <p>Youth and "youthful living" are highly regarded. Individuals may strive to appear and act younger than they really are.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Few Material Things/Giving</b></p> <p>There is little emphasis on collecting or holding onto material possessions. Furthermore giving and sharing money, food and goods is an important aspect of Indian culture. The more you give or share the more respected you are within the community.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Owning Many Material Things/Saving</b></p> <p>Wealth is an important aspect of many non-Indian cultures. Possessions and saving are almost status symbols. Worth and values are placed on everything.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Balance with Nature</b></p> <p>The world should be accepted "as is" and honored for that. The earth is here to enjoy.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Man Controls Nature</b></p> <p>The world needs to be controlled and conquered to be "worth" something or understood.</p>

# Seven Values of Lakota Life

1. Woc'ekiya – Prayer      Finding spirituality by communicating with your higher power. This is communication between you and Tunkasila without going through another person or spirit.
2. Wa o'hola – Respect      Respect for self, higher power, family, community, and all life.
3. Wa on'sila – Compassion      Love, caring and compassion for one another in a good way. Especially for the family, the old ones, the young ones, the orphans, the ones in mourning, the sick ones, and the ones working for the people.
4. Wowijake – Honesty      Sincere honesty with yourself, your higher power, and others.
5. Wawokiya – Generosity      Helping without expecting anything in return, giving from the heart.
6. Wah'wall – Humility      We have a spirit. We are no better nor less than others
7. Woksape – Wisdom      Practice with knowledge, becomes wisdom.

## The Four Directions

When the Lakota people pray or do anything sacred, they see the world as having four directions. From these four directions come the four winds, and each direction has a special meaning and color that belongs to it. The cross symbolizes all of them.

**EAST (Yellow)** — This is the direction from which the Sun comes. Light dawns in the morning and spreads over the whole earth. It is the beginning of the day and the beginning of understanding because light helps us see things the way they really are. Darkness goes away. The deeper meaning is that the East stands for the wisdom that helps people live good lives. This is why traditional people get up in the morning to pray facing the dawn, asking God for wisdom and understanding.

This is the kind of prayer that can be said toward the East:

As I hold the Sacred Pipe in  
prayer for you to see and hear,  
lead us Great Spirit, by the light  
of your wisdom.

Thank you Great Spirit for all the  
ways in which you  
guide us. We are lost without you.



I had a vision. I saw four chariots coming out from between the mountains. One was pulled by red horses, the second by black horses, the third by white horses, and the fourth by dappled horses. I asked: What do these mean?

“These are the four winds, they have just come from the presence of the Lord of all the earth,” said the messenger.

Zechariah 6: 5

**SOUTH (White)** — This direction stands for warmth and growing things, because when the sun is in the south, it is highest in the sky. Its rays are powerful in drawing life from the earth.

That is why it is said the life of things comes from the south. Also warm and pleasant winds blow from this direction. It was said in the old days that when people died, their souls traveled along the path of the Milky Way back to the south from where they came.

This is a prayer that could be said facing the South:

Great Spirit, You give us life when we take our food from the earth, Our Mother. We thank you for your gifts. Keep us from wasting them and help us remember the needs of our fellow man so that everyone will live healthy lives.

**WEST (Black)** — This is the direction in which the sun sets and where the day comes to an end. For this reason, it is the direction that stands for the end of life, as

Black Elk says: "... toward the setting sun of his life." The great Thunderbird lives in the West and it makes thunder and rain come from there. For this reason, the West is the source of water: rain, lakes, streams and rivers. Nothing can live without water, so this direction is very important.

This prayer may be said toward the West:

As the sun sets and darkness covers the earth, we thank you Great Spirit for all your gifts, especially life-giving water which keeps us alive. Cleanse us of all that is evil and renew us once again.

**NORTH (Red)** — This direction brings the cold, harsh winds of the winter season. These winds are cleansing winds that cause the leaves to fall and the earth to rest under the cover of the snow. If someone has the ability to face these winds like the buffalo with its head into the storm, they have learned patience

and endurance. Generally, this direction stands for hardships and discomfort to people. Therefore, it stands for trials the people must endure or a cleansing the must undergo.

This prayer is the kind to say while facing the North:

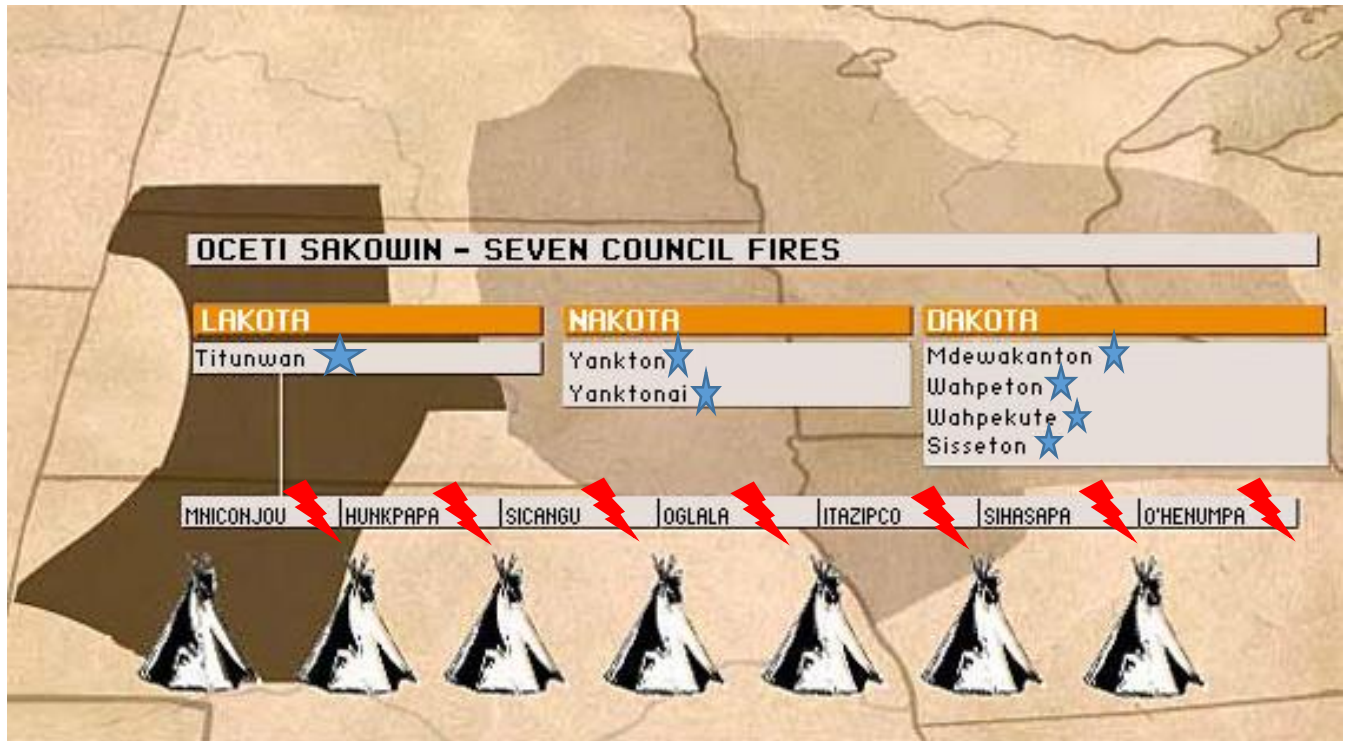
Great Spirit, we need your strength to help keep us strong in bad times as well as good. Help us to be patient and wait for your power to show us the way to go. We rely on you Great Spirit, as we face the harsh and purifying winds of life.

When the Lakota pray with the Sacred Pipe, they add two other "directions" to these four: the Sky and the Earth. The Great Spirit, Wakantanka, dwells high above like the eagle in the sky and the color of this direction is blue. The Earth our Mother and Grandmother from whom we receive our nourishment. The color of this direction is green for a growing things.





## The Seven Council Fires



★ Denotes Council Fire      ⚡ Denotes Lakota band

The proper name for the people commonly known as the Sioux is **Oceti Sakowin**, (Och-et-eeshak-oh-win) meaning Seven Council Fires.

The original Sioux tribe was made up of Seven Council Fires. Each of these Council Fires was made up of individual bands, based on kinship, dialect and geographic proximity.

Sharing a common fire is one thing that has always united the Sioux people. Keeping of the *peta waken* (sacred fire) was an important activity. On marches, coals from the previous council fire were carefully preserved and used to rekindle the council fire at the new campsite.

The Seven Council Fires are:

- **Mdewakanton** - Dwellers by the Sacred Lake
- **Wahpekute** - Shooters Among the Leaves
- **Sisitonwan/Sisseton** - People of the Marsh
- **Wahpetonwan** - Dwellers Among the Leaves
- **Ihanktown/Lower Yanktonai** - People of the End
- **Ihanktowana/Upper Yanktoni** - People of the Little End
- **Tetonwan** - People on the Plains

The seven bands of the **Tetonwan**, or *Teton* group are:

- **Hunkpapa** - Camps at the Horn (Standing Rock & Wood Mountain, Canada)
- **Sicangu/Brule'** - Burnt Thigh (Rosebud & Lower Brule)
- **Itazipo/Sans Arc** - Without Bows (Cheyenne River)
- **Sihasapa** - Blackfeet (Cheyenne River & Standing Rock)
- **Oglala** - Scatters His Own (Pine Ridge)
- **Oohenumpa** - Two Kettles (Cheyenne River)
- **Mniconjou** Planters by the River (Cheyenne River)

<http://aktalakota.stjo.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=8309>

## Compassion Fatigue

Bodily symptoms of empathy Post published by Susanne Babbel Ph.D., M.F.T. on Jul 04, 2012 in Somatic Psychology

Medical professionals such as physicians, nurses, psychotherapists, and emergency workers who help traumatized patients may develop their own Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) symptoms as an indirect response to their patient's suffering. This phenomenon has been referred to as compassion fatigue, vicarious traumatization or secondary traumatic stress.

A survey showed that "86.9% of emergency response personnel reported symptoms after exposure to highly distressing events with traumatized people" . . . [and] . . . "90% of new physicians, between 30 to 39 years old, say that their family life has suffered as a result of their work" (PBS Adult Learning Satellite, 1994). When health care professionals struggle with their responses to the trauma suffered by their patients, their mental health, relationships, effectiveness at work, and their physical health can suffer.

Caregivers who reported experiencing compassion fatigue, expressed such feelings as, "I frequently dissociated and felt that I walked around in an altered state. I didn't realize that I had been in a gray space all year. That had sort of crept in" and "It got to the point where I would feel physically sick before the appointment and feeling nauseous." Others described that they picked up their client's symptoms and explained that they had "tightness in the exact same spot" as their clients and continued to carry the sensation sometimes for days. One psychotherapist expressed, "I am the empathy lady from the old Star Trek episode and get a maybe 45% hit of what my patients might be feeling 100% of."

The helpers' symptoms, frequently unnoticed, may range from psychological issues such as dissociation, anger, anxiety, sleep disturbances, nightmares, to feeling powerless. However, professionals may also experience physical symptoms such as nausea, headaches, general constriction, bodily temperature changes, dizziness, fainting spells, and impaired hearing. All are important warning signals for the caregiver that need to be addressed or otherwise might lead to health issues or burnout.

Researchers and authors such as Babette Rothschild, Charles Figley, Laurie Anne Pearlman and Karen Saakvitne, and B. Hudnall Stamm have recognized that medical personnel and psychologists may experience trauma symptoms similar to those of their clients. They speculate that the emotional impact of hearing traumatic stories could be transmitted through deep psychological processes within empathy. Further, Babette Rothschild hypothesizes that it is the unconscious empathy, the empathy outside awareness and control, that might interfere with the well being of the caregiver.

Hearing and witnessing horrific stories of abuse and other traumas can be very stressful and trauma experts have found that self-care techniques, both psychological and somatic, can reduce susceptibility to the internalization of traumatic stress and compassion fatigue. Bernstein indicates that paying attention to and being aware of physiological signals and somatic counter transference such as "dizziness, emptiness, hunger, fullness, claustrophobia, sleepiness, pain, restlessness, sexual arousal, and so

forth" can be an important method of preventing and managing compassion fatigue. Somatic countertransference entails the psychotherapist's reaction to a client with bodily responses such as sensations, emotions, and images that can only be noticed through body awareness. Since somatic countertransference is often neglected in both the literature and in the caregiver's training, many are not aware of the somatic countertransference elicited in the helper-patient relationship.

Reducing compassion fatigue means not fighting the symptoms but working with feelings which occur during and after the interactions with the traumatized patient. One psychotherapist shared; "If I start to not feel my body, I pause and just take a moment." There is a lot to take in. Giving oneself permission to take a break for a short time and taking care of oneself, may not only help the caregiver but may also provide a role model of self-care for the patient. Taking a break might be just stopping and feeling one's body, asking the patient to slow down, taking a deep breath, or making a small movement, which are forms of regulating the nervous system and decreasing the stress of working with traumatized patients.

Since caregivers commonly dissociate, staying connected or reconnecting to one's identity and physical presence has been rated as very important as well. Some professional helpers use visual or kinesthetic reminders of their lives outside of their work. Visual reminders might be placing pictures of family, certificates, and favorite artwork in the office. Kinesthetic reminders bring awareness back to the body and might be accomplished by feeling one's feet on the floor, intentionally fiddling with a wedding ring or holding the office chair. One caregiver expressed that every time she closes the office door she uses the door as a kinesthetic reminder and says, "This is my life outside and that's where I'm entering."

Studies have also shown that a positive attitude toward life such as a sense of humor, self confidence, being curious, focusing on the positive, and feeling gratitude ranked high in being helpful in treating traumatized people. Additionally, support, supervision, balancing work and private life, relaxation techniques, and vacation time have been useful.

Research indicates that caregivers are not immune to trauma and might experience compassion fatigue. A better understanding and knowledge about this phenomenon as well as self care techniques that include both psychological and somatic tools can help caregivers to more effectively deal with patients' sufferings.

#### Resources:

Burgess, A. W., Figley, C. R., Friedman, M. J., Mitchell, J.T., & Solomon, Z. (1994).

Compassion Fatigue: The Stress of Caring Too Much [DVD]. (Available from Chevron Publishing Corporation, 5018 Dorsey Hall Drive, Suite 104, Ellicott City, MD 21042). Obtained August 11th, 2006 from

<http://www.chevronpublishing.com/product.cfm?dispprodid=458>

## 7 Strategies to Prevent Burnout

Effective burnout prevention strategies from someone who's been there Post published by Paula Davis-Laack J.D., M.A.P.P. on Jun 24, 2013 in Pressure Proof

Exactly four years ago today I stopped practicing law. I burned out during the last year of my law practice, which involved three visits to the ER, consulting numerous doctors, and experiencing near-daily panic attacks. Rebuilding my life has been one of the hardest things I've ever done, but the years since have been some of the most rewarding of my life.

I've recently been interviewed on several radio shows, and regardless of the topic, people remain interested in my story and curious to know what burnout looks like and how it can be prevented. Inspired by your support to talk about my story in more detail, I've created a list of seven action steps that will help you slow or prevent the process of burning out.

**Increase your self-efficacy.** Self-efficacy is having the belief in your own ability to accomplish (and exercise control over) personally meaningful goals and tasks. People who have a stronger level of perceived self-efficacy experience less stress in challenging situations, and situations in turn become less stressful when people believe they can cope (Bandura, 1989). The most direct and effective way to enhance self-efficacy is through performance mastery experiences. When you accomplish a goal, your brain asks, "Hmmm, what else can I do?" Another way to build self-efficacy is to find a self-efficacy "model." Simply observing a friend or work colleague accomplish something meaningful is contagious and increases your ability to meet challenges head on (Bandura, 1997).

**Identify what you need from your work.** Harvard Business Review recently published an article (link is external) identifying the six virtues of a dream company, as compiled from a list of hundreds of executives. The six virtues are as follows:

1. You can be yourself
2. You're told what's really going on
3. Your strengths are magnified
4. The company stands for something meaningful
5. Your daily work is rewarding
6. Stupid rules don't exist

How does your company rate? While few companies meet all of these criteria, use this list as a starting point to create a more rewarding and engaged workplace.

**Have creative outlets.** Burnout interferes with your ability to perform well, increases rigid thinking, and decreases your ability to think accurately, flexibly, and creatively

(Noworol, et al., 1993). Even if you aren't able to flex your creative muscles at work, having some type of creative outlet will keep you engaged and motivated.

**Take care of yourself.** "There's always something to do," I can still hear my dad saying to me as I sat relaxing at the end of my shift at his plastic injection molding company. "Here's a broom." I find it very hard to just sit and relax because it always feels like there is something to do (and there usually is). When I was a lawyer, lunch often involved wolfing down some food-like substance at my desk while I continued to read contracts and catch up on emails. While my work ethic was outwardly admired, I was not working at a sustainable pace. It's seductive to think we must always be present, sitting at our desks, in order for our worlds to run right, but our bodies aren't machines (no matter how much caffeine and sugar you pump in). And really, whatever "it" is (work, chores, homework) will still be there after you take a much-needed break.

**Get support where you can find it.** The number of people who say they have no one with whom they can discuss important matters has nearly tripled in the past two and a half decades (McPherson et al., 2006). The more I burned out, the more I just wanted to hole up in my office and avoid people, and that was exactly the opposite of what I should have been doing. I didn't want to let people know how awful I was really feeling because I thought it meant I was weak. It takes time and effort to maintain social connections, but supportive people are the best inoculation against burnout.

**Get real and go there.** I had to have some tough internal and external conversations when I burned out. I had to figure out why I started getting panic attacks at the age of 14, and why they came back. I had to figure out why I thought it was more impressive to become a lawyer instead of following my heart to become a writer. I had to dig deep to uncover why I was a people pleaser, perfectionist, achieve-aholic. I had to reconnect with my values. Getting real isn't always pretty (which is probably why you're avoiding it), but true happiness and burnout prevention depend on it.

**Increase your diet of positive emotions.** Studies show that increasing your diet of positive emotion builds your resilience, creativity (see #3 above), and ability to be solution-focused, things that are in short supply if you feel like you're burning out. I made it a point to start noticing when people did things well (and told them so), and I tried to stop being so hard on myself. Aim for a ratio of positive emotions to negative emotions of at least 3:1, which is the tipping point to start experiencing increased resilience and happiness (Fredrickson, 2009).

Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes once said, "Too many people die with their music still in them." After finding this quote in another article I wrote, one of my readers asked me, "What if the problem is that people are still alive but their music has died?" And that my friends, is what burnout feels like – being alive but feeling like your music has died. My work involves making sure that never happens to you.

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Paula Davis-Laack, JD, MAPP, is an internationally-published writer and travels the globe as a stress and resilience expert. She has trained over a thousand professionals on how to manage their stress by building a set of specific skills designed to increase personal resilience and prevent burnout. Paula is available for speaking engagements, training workshops, media commentary, and private life coaching – contact her at [paula@pauladavislaack.com](mailto:paula@pauladavislaack.com) (link sends e-mail) or visit her website at [www.pauladavislaack.com](http://www.pauladavislaack.com) (link is external).

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