



10 SECRET STEPS TO THE

NATIVE AMERICAN CONNECTION TO THE NATURAL WORLD

By Native American Author
Dawn Moneyhan, S.C.

Dedication

There are many who played an important role in the writing of this book. I'd like to give special thanks to Rob, John, Kathy, Shannon, Rachel, Neeyati, Jessica, Irena, Cathy, and Marcus. Without your inspiration and guidance this book wouldn't have seen print.

My heart's dedication here is to a promise I made many decades ago to my maternal grandfather, Raymond Frederick Wendorf, and a very special Creative Writing teacher at South Milwaukee High School back in 1987 - both of whom I promised to not waste my writing talent, but to instead do something important with it, make it and everything they taught me, truly mean something.

And while dedications are usually made to people, I can't omit the most important inspiration of all... my beloved and sacred prayer tree, planted in front of my house when it was built, by Harry Nelson and his family.

The forced removal of this tree has lit a fire in me that I never realized existed and can never be extinguished. I couldn't save her but I can and must effect change. My fire is her last great accomplishment before her sad and tragic demise. Rest with peace my beautiful and powerful relative... now your light will never be extinguished.



Photo Credit: Dawn Moneyhan and Anonymous Juneau, WI resident donor

Preface

It's not a secret that Native American people have a different relationship with our planet. It is this very connection that sealed our fate during colonization. Our ability to remain self efficient and self reliant in the face of genocide, and survive - continues to perplex the world. Our steadfast refusal to abandon or sacrifice what is left of our many environmental and spiritually based cultures keeps us a threat and battling the worst of society even today. It also creates a space for those who are curious and feel an unexplained connection to our indigenous cultures and people.

Native American cultures, in their original and traditional forms, pose a threat to capitalism. Our vastly diverse cultures share a few basic structures in common, beginning with a life of planetary stewardship & environmentalism, self sufficiency, and a tribal structure that requires care for one another as a whole people. As our many different Native American tribes begin doing the work of restoring our ancestral cultures, traditions, ceremonies, and belief systems, the threat that we will teach it to others outside of our Native American communities still looms in front of the government, Christian churches, and corporate America.

How do you control a large demographic of people? Make them needy - destroy their most basic means of survival and force them to become reliant upon that which is provided for them. This is how our Native American tribes were conquered and continue to be controlled by the US government and Christian religions.

Basic needs such as food and shelter were the first to be destroyed. The great bison slaughter and creation of the reservation system, forced removal to lands unknown with completely different and foreign environments, were the first major impacts to our Native American tribes. This began the birth of forced capitalism in North America.

Our many tribes across North America, our great Turtle Island, are slowly but steadily reassembling the broken pieces of our ancestral ways and I am here to open the windows to the rest of the world. When enough of us "regular people" begin to put these life skills back into practice, to become more environmentally aware, friendly, and self-sufficient in our own daily lives, the impact to capitalism will be hard felt by those at the top of the economic food chain. True power will once again be returned to the people of this land.

As we begin 2024 the world is beginning to recognize that the secrets to the survival of our planet are buried deep within the shrouds of secrecy of our indigenous cultures. Though still wondering what those secrets are, the public holds back on asking us about them or listening when we attempt to share.

Since the Mayflower found the eastern shores of North America it has been asked how our Native American people can be content, or even happy, with living our cultures when we have the European way of life as an alternative?

Anyone who already knows anything true about our ways of life, already understands. Those who come sincerely and with the intent to learn to do something different, live life in a different way, from a different perspective and approach, tend to adopt our indigenous ways for their own after experiencing them first hand. In turn they find a much more peaceful, healthy (mental and physical health) way of existing. It all begins with our connection to our beautiful planet.

I am here to guide you along this journey of reconnection - first with our Mother Earth, and then with each other - our fellow humans - the Odawa (oh-DOW-ah) way, The KICC way¹.

¹ <https://www.thekicc.org/doctrine>

On this journey we are going to take a stroll together through nature, meet the relatives you may be unaware are relatives. You will learn to listen, which will teach you to see. You will learn to reconnect with your inner spirit, an invisible bond of energy shared with every organic being on our planet, which will teach you to understand and to feel in a new way, using all of your senses.

In opening yourself to reconnecting to our natural world you will learn to channel your energy, use it to battle your weaknesses and celebrate and increase your strengths. If you follow the exercises laid out before you in these pages, in the order given, you will learn to see the world in a new light, through indigenous eyes. You will learn to uplift your own life by creating your own light, during your darkest of hours.

Where there is light, darkness cannot exist. When you possess the ability to generate your own light, darkness can never invade. The brighter your light the further darkness is always kept away. This is very possible. I live it everyday and I am about to teach you the Native American secrets to achieve this new ability, to generate your own light. Nobody needs to be lost in darkness. Nobody needs that kind of suffering when the answers are all right under our own feet and within everyone's reach. Come - let's begin this journey of reconnection.

This isn't just a self help book for you to read and go on about your life. This is a self help manual, with exercises to work through in your real life, not just within the confines of this book. I am leaving plenty of space for your field notes. (If you are reading this book as a library book please commit a notebook to your journey and keep a detailed journal to keep you connected.)

My goal is to help you to create the hands-on experiences I can't bring to you in person, so you can burn them to your brain and muscle memory. This is how we humans learn most effectively. Anyone can read a book but not everyone retains that information long term. When we partake in an experience, especially one that is notable and fun, we remember.

This is the beginning of a new way of life. When you complete this manual you will have traveled many journeys in a short period of time. I encourage you to repeat those journeys and grow them forward as you learn to meet and get to know relatives you didn't know before. Let this become a family reunion as you invite the natural world into your inner circle and explore all our Great Mother Earth has to offer.

To begin you must first clear your mind of the cluttered thoughts from your day. Find a quiet place to sit alone as you read. Take time to ponder the questions asked and to work through each exercise as it is offered.

Cleansing Breaths

Take 7 deep cleansing breaths with a short pause between them. Inhale through your nose to the count of 4, exhale from your mouth to the count of 4. Let go of all you think you know about the world around you. Focus on your breathing, 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 in, 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 out. Hear your heart beating in your ears. Connect your spiritual self to your physical self.

Your body is made up of energy. Each organ functions like a well running machine fueled by this energy. It is both a spiritual energy, one of thought and instinct, and a

physical energy, fueled also by nutrition. As you take in that 8th and final cleansing breath, let the physical and spiritual energy merge, becoming one energy source.

We will come back to this exercise of cleansing breaths often through this book. Practice these as a way to relax and find focus in your daily life.

We all find moments of stress and difficulties in our lives. Often these moments arise when we can't drop what we're doing to seek relaxation and peaceful thoughts. Cleansing breaths are especially helpful during these moments. We can pause anywhere we may be, without the need for extra tools or supplies, close our eyes, and focus for just a minute or two on our breathing.

Stress & tension can cause physical pain, illness, and even memory loss. As we find our focus, our muscles begin to relax, tension melts away, and our physical being improves quickly. When we improve our physical state it is reflected in our basic abilities and our mental & emotional wellbeing. We become more efficient as our bodies devote less focus on healing the physical distress and more on emotional and mental freedom.

The Science

Without the need for an intense chemistry or biology lesson, we will now work from a few basic scientific principles. This knowledge comes from Native American elders long before there were scientific papers to consult.

DNA -

"Definitions from Oxford Languages

DNA / ˌdēˌenˈɑː/ *Noun*: Biochemistry; noun: DNA

- a self-replicating material that **is present in nearly all living organisms** as the main constituent of chromosomes. It **is the carrier of genetic information**.
- the fundamental and distinctive characteristics or qualities of someone or something, especially when regarded as unchangeable."

Matter is any substance that has mass and takes up space. All matter is composed of atoms. All DNA has matter. Humans share our DNA with most things organic. We share 50% of our DNA with trees² and 60% with bananas³. We share 75% of our DNA with fruit flies⁴ and 98% with chimpanzees⁵.

Human fraternal twins share the same 50% of shared DNA⁶ as humans share with trees. Everything organic is connected. When we are connected to our DNA sharing relatives the bond and communication is like that of human fraternal twins. As we strengthen and nurture this bond we learn to share even physical feelings with our relatives around us. If you've ever asked the age-old question if plants or trees can feel pain - get connected. You will learn this for yourself through your bond and relationship with those newfound relatives.

Our Native American peoples have always known this. It is in our origin stories and our legends back to the beginning of time. It is found in our ceremonies and traditions, and even within our languages. If you have ever heard our Native American peoples call others "relatives" or speak of "all my relatives" - this is our awareness and acknowledgement of the genetic connection we share with our organic relatives all over planet Earth. Our many Native American cultures are founded and built on this connection, as we nurture each bond and relationship our connection offers us. Our cultures are those of stewardship. We have a deep and instinctual understanding that

² <https://goodnewsplanet.com/how-much-dna-do-humans-share-with-other-animals-and-plants/>

³ <https://science.howstuffworks.com/life/genetic/people-bananas-share-dna.htm>

⁴ <https://www.cam.ac.uk/research/features/how-close-are-you-to-a-fruit-fly>

⁵ Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History <https://humanorigins.si.edu/evidence/genetics>

⁶ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6875762/>

if we take care of our Mother Earth she provides all we need to live and be happy, so she takes care of us.

Our cultures are often misunderstood or intentionally skewed to meet a personal or political agenda. There is a widespread misbelief that because our Native American peoples have always tried to explain that nobody owns the land, our great mother and provider, that it was free for the taking, as this meant we renounced or ceded ownership of Turtle Island aka North America. This has become American history's first red flag about lack of communication and misunderstanding between cultures and remains as untrue and misunderstood today as it was when the first colonists arrived.

Our planet supports and sustains all things organic, so she is respectfully regarded as our great Mother, or Mother Earth. Her habits in nature are predominantly those of nurturing, respect, love, loyalty, and community. We learn these things from her and all our relatives, who also learn from her. We often refer to these things as wild instincts.

Our connection to Mother Earth and our recognition that we are her, she is us - there is no right to ownership there - gives our Native American peoples a different perspective of why we live, how to live properly and respectfully, and what happens while we are here in this life and world, and if we make poor choices.

For the purpose of this lesson and remainder of this book we are going to focus heavily on our connection to trees and water, 2 things we cannot exist without.

Spirituality

With the world's obsession with all things paranormal, it is well documented in 2024 that "something" exists other than us, in our world. The common and accepted definition of offered "*proof*" is "**energy**". We cannot say what specifically we experience other than the presence of another/outside/unexplained energy source that is measurable with modern technology.

It has also been immensely studied and believed by most that humans possess a soul, and regardless of belief system, religious denomination, or lack thereof, a soul is often referenced as a "spirit". Within our indigenous cultures the presence of spirits, including our own, is part of our daily life. We understand that all things organic and natural possess a spirit.

So whether we believe it to be our own spiritual power or that of the universe around us, we have just identified there is a source of energy that is not defined as "human" in the world around us.

Exercise #1

Make an ice cube. Take 1 ice cube and put it into an empty dry transparent cup/container. Set the cup in a safe place. Document how the ice melts in the cup as it warms to room temperature. Once only water remains, continue to monitor and document until the cup is empty and dry. How long does it take? Where did the water go?

- Water has the ability to transform from solid to liquid, and to gas.
- The adult human body is approximately 60% water.

- Water is matter and matter has energy.
- Water has energy.

According to the Law of Conservation of Energy - "Energy cannot be created or destroyed, but it can be transferred and transformed."

Water is the life's blood of our great Mother Earth as it is the life's blood for all organic life. We are directly connected to our Mother Earth. We already know we share 50% of our DNA with trees, now we know we share 60% of our adult bodies as water⁷. We are it, it is us. We cannot live on this planet without water. Water has matter and energy, thus water has a spirit, as we have a spirit. The energy of the water within our bodies combines with the energy within our spirit to make our bodies function, to make everything we do possible. Without water we can do nothing, we cannot exist. We are connected.

Field Notes:

⁷ <https://www.usgs.gov/special-topics/water-science-school/science/water-you-water-and-human-body>