

## **Seven Grandfather Teachings**

"The Mishomis Book" Benton-Banai (1988)

The creator gave the seven grandfathers the responsibility to watch over the people. Each of these teachings must be used with the rest

### Section 1 NIBWAAKAAWIN (Wisdom) Represented by the Beaver

The mixture of these teachings, combined with the experiences of life, is what we refer to as wisdom. It is given to us by the Creator to be used for good. Wisdom carries other meanings, which also include intelligence or knowledge. When we cherish our knowledge or intelligence, we are also cherishing our wisdom. We must use sound judgment with the ability to separate inner qualities and relationships. We must use a good sense and course of action to form a positive attitude. We must remember to listen and use the wisdom that has been provided by our Elders, Tribal leadership, and Spiritual leaders. We must also always remember that Wisdom comes in all shapes, sizes, forms, and ages.

### Section 2 ZAAGI'DIWIN (Love) Represented by the Eagle

Knowing love is to know peace. Our love must be unconditional. When people are weak, that is when they need love the most. Love is a strong affection for another. This can form between friends and family. Love is an attachment based upon devotion, admiration, tenderness, and kindness for all things around you. For one to love and accept themselves is to live at peace with the Creator and in harmony with all of creation. Love knows no bounds. We must accept it sincerely and give it freely.

### Section 3 MINAADENDAMOWIN (Respect) Represented by the Buffalo

A way to honor creation is by showing respect. There should be no part of creation that should be excluded from the honor that we are to give. We demonstrate respect by realizing the value of all people and things, and by showing courteous consideration and appreciation. We must give respect if we wish to be respected. We honor the traditional roles that we fill and the teaching we have been given. We honor our families and others, as well as ourselves. We are not to bring harm to anyone or anything. Respect is not just an action, but a heart-grown feeling.

#### Section 4 AAKODE'EWIN (Bravery) Represented by the Bear

Facing a problem with integrity is a true demonstration of bravery. We do what is right even when the consequences may be unpleasant. We face life with the courage to use our personal strengths to face difficulties, stand tall through adversity, and make positive choices. We must stand up for our convictions and have courage in our thinking and speaking. All these actions together will lead to ceaseless bravery.

#### Section 5. GWAYAKWAADIZIWIN (Honesty) Represented by the Raven

Facing a situation is to be brave, but having the courage to not only do the right thing but also say it, is honest. We must allow truth to be our guide. We must first be honest with ourselves. This will allow us to be honest with others. We must give full value to both the efforts of our own and others. When we walk through life with integrity, it is then that we know honesty. Be truthful and trustworthy. We must also remember to accept and act on truths through straightforward and appropriate communication.

#### Section 6. DABADENDIZIWIN (Humility) Represented by the Wolf

Humility is to know that we are a part of creation. We must always consider ourselves equal to one another. We should never think of ourselves as being better or worse than anyone else. Humility comes in many forms. This includes compassion, calmness, meekness, gentleness, and patience. We must reflect on how we want to present ourselves to those around us. We must be aware of the balance and equality with all of life, including humans, plants, and animals.

#### **Section 7**. DEBWEWIN (Truth) Represented by the Turtle

Truth is having the knowledge of our cultural teachings. It gives us the ability to act without regret. We must understand, speak, and feel the truth, while also honoring its power. Truth should not lead us to deceptions. We know who we are in our hearts. By knowing that, we also know the truth. Our emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual gifts will guide each one of us in our journey.