

10 Pieces of Native American Wisdom That Will Inspire the Way You Live Your Life

By Matt Valentine [Read the complete article with definitions](#)

1. Enter the Sacred Space

Wakan Tanka, Great Mystery, Teach me how to trust My heart, My mind, My intuition, My inner knowing, The senses of my body, The blessings of my spirit. Teach me to trust these things So that I may enter my Sacred Space And love beyond my fear, And thus Walk in Balance With the passing of each glorious Sun.

- Lakota Prayer

2. Realize “Oneness”

And while I stood there I saw more than I can tell, And I understood more than I saw; For I was seeing in a sacred manner The shapes of things in the spirit, And the shape of all shapes as they must Live together like one being.

- Black Elk, Black Elk Speaks

3. Serve, respect, and live without fear

So live your life that the fear of death can never enter your heart. Trouble no one about their religion; Respect others in their view, and demand that they respect yours. Love your life, perfect your life, beautify all things in your life.

Seek to make your life long and its purpose in the service of your people. Prepare a noble death song for the day when you go over the great divide. Always give a word or a sign of salute when meeting or passing a friend, Even a stranger, when in a lonely place. Show respect to all people and grovel to none.

When you arise in the morning give thanks for the food and for the joy of living. If you see no reason for giving thanks, the fault lies only in yourself.

Abuse no one and no thing, for abuse turns the wise ones to fools And robs the spirit of its vision.

When it comes your time to die, be not like those whose hearts are filled With the fear of death, so that when their time comes they weep And pray for a little more time to live their lives over again in a different way. Sing your death song and die like a hero going home.

- Chief Tecumseh (Crouching Tiger) Shawnee Nation 1768-1813

4. Gross National....Peace?

I do not think the measure of a civilization Is how tall its buildings of concrete are. But rather how well its people have learned to relate To their environment and fellow man.

- Sun Bear of the Chippewa Tribe

5. Touch the Earth

There is a road in the hearts of all of us, hidden and seldom traveled, Which leads to an unknown, secret place. The old people came literally to love the soil, And they sat or reclined on the ground with a feeling of Being close to a mothering power.

Their teepees were built upon the earth And their altars were made of earth. The soul was soothing, strengthening, cleansing and healing.

That is why the old Indian still sits upon the earth instead of Propping himself up and away from its life giving forces. For him, to sit or lie upon the ground is to be able to think more deeply And to feel more keenly. He can see more clearly into the mysteries of Life and come closer in kinship to other lives about him.

- Chief Luther Standing Bear

6. Show kindness to all

Like the grasses showing tender faces to each other, Thus should we do. For this was the wish of the Grandfathers of the World.

- Black Elk

7. Meditate to gain clarity, then act with courage

When you are in doubt, be still, and wait; When doubt no longer exists for you, then go forward with courage. So long as mists envelop you, be still; Be still until the sunlight pours through and dispels the mists, as it surely will. Then act with courage.

- Ponca Chief White Eagle (1800's to 1914)

8. Learn from the Earth

Earth, Teach Me

Earth teach me quiet ~ as the grasses are still with new light. Earth teach me suffering ~ as old stones suffer with memory. Earth teach me humility ~ as blossoms are humble with beginning. Earth teach me caring ~ as mothers nurture their young. Earth teach me courage ~ as the tree that stands alone. Earth teach me limitation ~ as the ant that crawls on the ground. Earth teach me freedom ~ as the eagle that soars in the sky. Earth teach me acceptance ~ as the leaves that die each fall. Earth teach me renewal ~ as the seed that rises in the spring. Earth teach me to forget myself ~ as melted snow forgets its life. Earth teach me to remember kindness ~ as dry fields weep with rain.

- An Ute Prayer

9. What we do to others, we do to ourselves

Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. All things are bound together. All things connect.

- Chief Seattle, 1854

10. Light up your corner of the world (by realizing the first peace)

The first peace, which is the most important, is that which comes within the souls of people. When they realize their relationship, their oneness, with the universe and all its powers,

And when they realize that at the center of the universe dwells Wakan-Taka (the Great Spirit), and that this center is really everywhere, it is within each of us. This is the real peace, and the others are but reflections of this.

The second peace is that which is made between two individuals, and the third is that which is made between two nations. But above all you should understand that there can never be peace between nations until there is known that true peace, which, as I have often said, is within the souls of men.

- Black Elk, Oglala Sioux & Spiritual Leader (1863 - 1950)