

MORAL GUIDES



Although, one of our most fundamental values is freedom, it is a moral that we never discuss. Instead of discussions, arguments or debates, nations, cultures, religions, families, individuals and even the media, turn to stories to pass on moral "guides". We have the "E Pluribus Unum" story, the "rugged individual" story, the "good neighbor" story, the "melting pot" story, and many more.

Our lack of moral courage is affecting us greatly, which I address on another page, so I'm excited to explore morals – an important part of philosophy, both culturally and individually - here in the Fair Shake Free School.

Let's begin our study with those who were here before everyone else: the native peoples. Miigwetch (thank you) for sharing this timeless wisdom!

A GIFT FROM THE ANISHINAABEG

Seven Grandfathers (and Seven Rascals) Principles for Living Well

Many people native to the Great Lakes region understand this teaching as what is needed for a community to survive. According to the authors at the Ojibwe.net website "Each Grandfather Teaching is a gift the Anishinaabeg carry, a potential tool for living a good life. Our understanding is that as we use these gifts our experience of living improves. Using these gifts in our lives is an ongoing challenge for each of us, requiring attention, discipline and perseverance."

The 7 Grandfathers are Wisdom, Love, Respect, Bravery, Truth, Humility, Generosity
The 7 Rascals are Greed, Revenge, Inferiority, Negative Attitude, Fear, Jealousy, Resentment

Nibwaakawin - Wisdom. Sound judgment, ability to teach others what you have learned or experienced. Use good sense and form a good attitude and course of action.

Zaagidiwin - Love. Strong affection for another forming out of kinship or personal ties; attachments based on devotion, admiration, tenderness, unselfish loyalty, concern. Feel and give absolute kindness for all things around you.

Minwaadendamowin - Respect. Showing regards for the value of persons or things through courteous consideration and appreciation, to be upright with a good giving heart. Don't hurt anything or anyone on the outside or the inside.

Aakodewewin - Bravery. The personal inner strength to face difficulties, obstacles and challenges. Have courage and a strong heart to make positive choices.

Debwewin - Truth. Sincerity in action, character, and utterance. Learn truth, honor truth, no truth, see truth.

Dibaadendiziwin - Humility. A measurement or reflection of your own self-worth. To be humble, to be human.

Miigwe'aadiziwin - Generosity. Sharing your ability, time, and extra or non-necessary things. Standing together / Responding to needs

THE STORY OF THE TWO WOLVES

A young girl told her grandmother that she was having a hard time. She said, "I can feel a fight going on inside me, Grandmother. It is a terrible fight and it is between two wolves. One is evil – she is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego."

Her grandmother listened, and nodded gently.

"The other wolf is good", the young girl continued. "She is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith."

Her grandmother looked deeply into her eyes and said, "I know it's hard, granddaughter. The same fight is going on inside me....and in every other person, too."

The young girl reflected on what her grandmother said. Then she looked up and asked, "Grandmother, which wolf will win?"

Her grandmother replied softly, "The one you feed."

Fair Shake is DIY: Build Your Own Operating Principles

Operating principles, which are based on our values, articulate our personal philosophy and help us maintain the clear boundaries necessary to own our life and, hence, own our future. They change over time, developing as we develop. You are under no obligation to accept operating principles 'should-ed' on you by others ("You should try to fit in!", "You should get married.", etc.) . Sue's current Operating Principles are listed below to provide an example. You already have operating principles! To reflect on them, and further develop your list, write down hundreds of ideas, then group similar ideas together. Pare those down to a list that you can remember and commit to.

1. I value living an integrated life. UBUNTU! I am because we are.
2. I strive to develop meaningful relationships.
3. I foster personal growth.
4. I move intentionally and carefully toward my desired outcomes.
5. I listen actively and empathetically when others talk.
6. I own my actions, reactions, responses, decisions, opinions and attitudes.
7. I take a long-term perspective and consider future impact when making decisions.
8. I move away from my comfort zone into growth opportunities. I increase my capacity.
9. I reflect critically and generously; I remember my past as I accept my 'now' and create my future.
10. I do not 'should' on people; I offer options and stay available for questions or support.
11. I respect others' time and opinions.
12. I value honesty. I am courageous and invite others to be courageous, too.
13. I do not avoid confrontation; I say what needs to be said with care and respect.
14. I take care of the body and the mind that take care of me.
15. Words are possibilities, actions are commitments.
16. I strive to be authentic and to support other's authenticity. We all have unique contributions.
17. Learning is available everywhere and all of the time. Wisdom is not found in books; it is built through relationships, conversations, reflections and experiences.
18. Every one and every thing has value, even when I don't understand what it is.
19. Emotional, relational, time and other types of wealth are considered when I determine value.
20. I become stronger from adversity. I utilize my challenges to build inner strength which I can apply to my determination, to humanity, and to the future.

Consider making your Operating Principles a "living document" that grows and changes as you do.