

THE FOUR DIRECTIONS OF THE MEDICINE WHEEL



Understanding Individual Differences and Group Strengths

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What is the Medicine Wheel?

- ★ Many different meanings and interpretations depending on the tribe, we'll be looking at the Lakota Medicine Wheel
- ★ Uses elements of the natural world that must work together to form a cohesive unit
- ★ Helps determine leadership “styles” of how people function and interact with others
- ★ Everyone makes their way around the Medicine Wheel at some point in their life, using all aspects and skills associated with each direction

Direction: North
Season: Winter
Element: Air/Wind
Animal: Bear/Buffalo
Plant: Cedar
Heavenly Bodies: Stars
Life Stages: Death/Elders/Grandparents



Direction: West
Season: Fall
Element: Water
Animal: Wolf/Coyote
Plant: Sweetgrass
Heavenly Bodies: Moon
Life Stages: Adult/Parent

Direction: East
Season: Spring
Element: Fire
Animal: Eagle
Plant: Tobacco
Heavenly Bodies: Sun
Life Stages: Birth/Childhood

Direction: South
Season: Summer
Element: Earth
Animal: Buffalo/Mouse
Plant: Sage
Heavenly Bodies: Earth
Life Stages: Youth/Adolescence

How do I use the medicine wheel in college?

- ★ Understanding that some things are out of my control, but in time I will make it around the circle
- ★ Identifying things I need to work on
- ★ When things go wrong, I have an idea of how to move forward in a situation
- ★ Keeping traditions alive is important to me
- ★ Aspect of my culture I can find comfort in

White: North, Buffalo, Death/Elder/Grandparents

- Warrior
- Independent Risk Taker
- Tenacious
- Hardship, sacrifices
- Courage, take charge attitude
- Task/Action Orientated



Yellow: East, Eagle, Birth/Childhood

- Visionary
- Optimistic
- Creative
- Spontaneous
- Hopeful
- Spiritual
- Change



Red: South, Deer, Youth/Adolescence

- Nurturer / The Friend
- Process orientated
- Collaborative
- Harmony
- Caring relationships
- Yin
- Trusting



Black: West, Bear, Adulthood/Parent

- Critical Thinker / The Judge
- Conservative
- Rational, fact-based
- Methodical
- Consequences
- Contemplative
- Stable



What is your “style”?

- ★ Ponder over the 4 directions on the wheel

- ★ What style best matches you, your personality, and your values?

Share!

Debrief

- ★ Was it hard to choose your style?
- ★ What do you think about your style?
- ★ Did you learn something about yourself?
About others?
- ★ How can this help you work with others within
your community?

All styles are needed, necessary, and are of equal worth

The Buffalo is the Keeper of the Body: Represents the food, shelter, tools, weapons, and directions necessary for survival

The Eagle is the Keeper of the Spirit: the Eagle is closest to the spirit world, afterlife, vision quests, dreams of what could be, and hope

The Deer is the Keeper of the Family: Deer wandered freely among people, represents comfort, gentleness, beauty, warmth, non-intimidating

The Bear is the Keeper of Tradition: Represents culture, a way of life, routine, a return to what's been done, rites of passage for those who are new

What's The Point?

We go through each direction depending on the role we play or stage of life we are in

Goal: to be aware of our own capacities so we can work collaboratively with all styles and people and continue to move forward when setbacks arise