

Center ... learning, SELF
Balance, beauty, harmony
The symbolism may vary from tribe to
tribe.

What to do at the Medicine Wheel

THE MEDICINE WHEEL PROVIDES AN
OPPORTUNITY TO MEDITATE IN A QUIET,
CONTEMPLATIVE ATMOSPHERE.
DURING YOUR TIME AT THE WHEEL, YOU
MAY CONSIDER TO:

BOW TO THE NORTH AND PRAISE GOD. BE
HUMBLED BY THE COLD NORTH WIND
THAT WILL COME SOONER OR LATER TO
DRIVE US TO OUR KNEES. SEEK BALANCE
BETWEEN HARDSHIPS AND BLESSINGS.

BOW TO THE EAST, PRAISE GOD AND
THANK GOD FOR THE WISDOM THAT
COMES EVERY DAY WITH THE RISING
SUN. PRAY THAT THE MORNING STAR
WILL TAKE IGNORANCE FROM YOU.
THANK GOD FOR THE SILENCE. THINK OF
MOTHER TERESA WHO SAID, "PEOPLE OF
PRAYER ARE PEOPLE OF SILENCE."

BOW TO THE SOUTH, PRAISE GOD AND
COMMIT YOURSELF TO BEING GENEROUS
JUST AS THE SOUTH WIND BRINGS
WARMTH TO SOOTHE OUR SOULS FROM
THE COLD NORTH WIND. ALLOW THE
SOUTH TO BRING BALANCE TO YOUR
LIFE.

BOW TO THE WEST, PRAISE GOD AND
HUMBLY ASK THAT WHEN YOU PASS
LIKE THE FADING SUNSET, YOUR
PASSING MAY BE FILLED WITH THE
GRACE AND BEAUTY OF THE SETTING
SUN IN THE DESERT. LIFE WILL END, AND
THE STRENGTH TO DIE WITH DIGNITY
COMES FROM THE WEST.

RAISE YOUR FACE TO THE HEAVENS,
PLACE YOUR TRUST IN GOD AND THANK
GOD FOR ANOTHER DAY TO CONTRIBUTE
TO THE BETTERMENT OF HUMANKIND.
RENEW YOUR COMMITMENT TO MAKE
THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE FOR ALL
CREATION.

FEEL THE EARTH UNDER YOUR FEET,
LOOK DOWN AND PRAISE GOD AND
ACKNOWLEDGE THAT ALL OF CREATION
IS ONE. WE ARE CONNECTED WITH EVERY
STONE. FEEL THE ENERGY THAT COMES
FROM THE EARTH.

CLOSE YOUR EYES AND TURN YOUR MIND
INWARD, FOR THAT IS WHERE GOD TRULY
EXISTS.

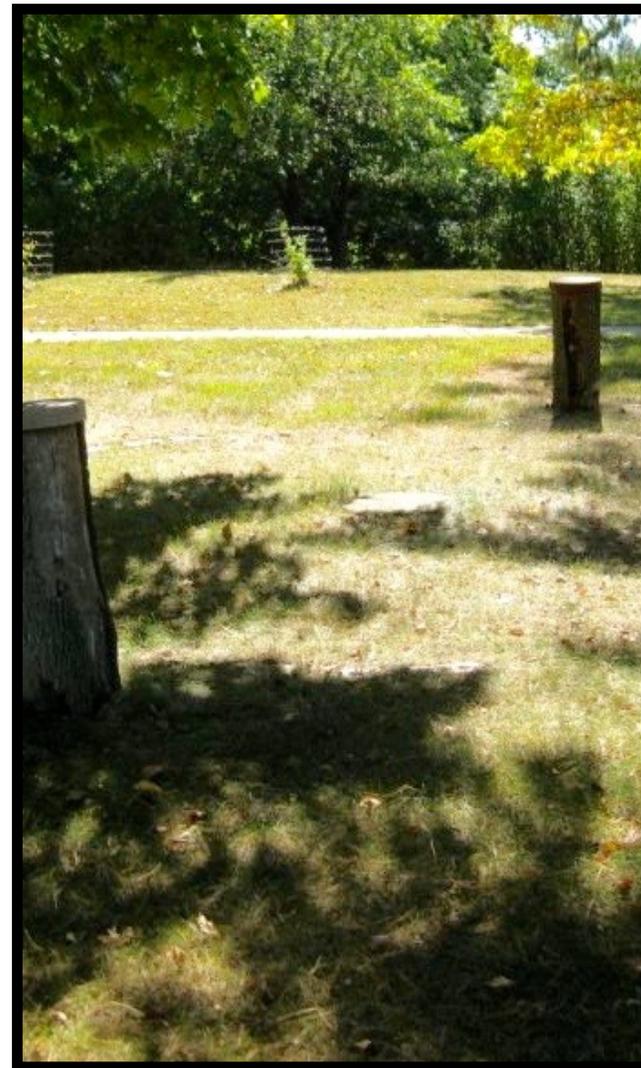
MITAKUYE OYASIN

WE ARE ALL RELATIVES

The Medicine Wheel

Servite Center for Life

1100 Port Arthur Road Ladysmith, WI



History

In some Native American cultures, the **medicine wheel** is a metaphor for a variety of spiritual concepts. A medicine wheel may also be a stone monument that illustrates this metaphor.

Historically, the monuments were constructed by laying stones in a particular pattern on the ground oriented to the four directions. Most medicine wheels follow the basic pattern of having a center of stone, and surrounding that is an outer ring of stones with "spokes" (lines of rocks) radiating from the center to the cardinal directions (East, South, West and North). These stone structures may or may not be called "medicine wheels" by the people whose ancestors built them, but may be called by more specific terms in that nation's language. Physical medicine wheels made of stone have been constructed by several different indigenous peoples in North America, especially those of the Plain nations.

They are associated with religious ceremonies. As a metaphor, they may be used in healing work or to illustrate other cultural concepts.

Uses

The Native American Medicine Wheel was used for various spiritual and ritual purposes, especially for healing almost any illness. Since it was believed that illness sprang from spiritual imbalance, the focus of the healing was on treating the source of the problem, not the symptoms. As the medicine wheel focuses on balance of all things, it was thought this balance would help the spiritual imbalance in the person who was sick.

Basic Pattern

Most medicine wheels have a basic pattern - a center of stone (cairn) then having an outer ring of stone with "spokes" of stone radiating out from the center. Being a wheel, it is round depicting the circle of life, the shape of the sun and the moon, etc.

The medicine wheel consists of the four cardinal directions and four sacred colors representing certain properties:

blue (north)



defeat;trouble ... winter - a season for survival and waiting Wisdom, intellect, the adult self, MIND
Element = Wind/Breath

yellow (east)



Success; triumph ... spring - a re-awakening, the power of new life Illumination, creation, the wonder child self, SPIRIT
Element = Fire/Life Source

black (west)

death ... autumn - the final harvest, the end of life's cycle Introspection and intuition, the physical body, MANIFESTATION
Element = Earth



white (south)

peace; happiness ... summer - a time of plenty Trust and Innocence, EMOTIONS
Element = Water

