

SISTERHOOD

Cedar Woman

As Native people, one of the gifts we were given was kindness. As Native people, we were taught not to judge others, we were taught to welcome one another in a good way. As Native people, we are taught to forgive ourselves and then we can forgive others. The Creator bestowed upon we Native people many gifts which however, many of us have never understood.

Many of us have lived through abuse, whether physical, mental or emotional. As children we were never exposed to our traditional and spiritual ways. Many of us tried to deny our Native heritage. Our beliefs of nature were translated by many others as "pagan". We linked this negative reaction to others we constantly received. We were often called, "dirty alcoholics" and told we "would never amount to anything". Our spirits were destroyed which led to our conflicts with the law and our imprisonment. We lacked our own traditional ways of coping and became caught up in a world that was never ours.

We've let other people control our emotions, feelings and thoughts. We do things that we wouldn't dream of doing or saying - all to be accepted. In time we become what we see around us. We become hateful, revengeful, selfish, greedy, judgemental, spiteful, uncaring and unfeeling. It is only through our Elders, our sweat lodge, our ceremonies, the pipe and The Creator that we begin to understand what a proud heritage we have.

We begin to look at "Ourselves", the pain we have caused our friends and families and all those that have passed through our lives. It is then that the healing begins "within ourselves". The road is long and hard. We struggle within ourselves on a daily basis, not wanting to let go of certain things for fear of rejection and ridicule. But, in spite of the hardships we endure, we are never alone.

Look to The Creator for guidance and strength, The Creator is always there. Once we begin to follow and understand this road, it gets easier and we begin to love ourselves, take care of our spirits, our minds and our bodies. We can see through the eyes of The Creator, the beauty that surrounds us. You will feel that inner peace as you come into yourself. For the first time in your life, you will feel good about "You", and others.

We have denied our identity for far too long. We lost who we were. Don't be afraid to take that first step. What you will find eventually is that you understand that under all of the garbage and masks we've worn, lies a beautiful, warm caring person who has a lot to offer others. You will feel re-born when you finally let your true self surface. We are the caretakers of our spirits. Don't deny your inner beauty and your gifts for the sake of others.

Let only good spirits live in You.