

## Native Spirituality & Money

Within the cultural paradigm of which I come, that of the indigenous North Americans, the thought of 'paying' for a Ceremonial never comes up because the thought of NOT paying is never considered, so there is never the need to put a 'price tag' on anything of a spiritual nature. We Spirit People who provide a spiritual service, at home in a tribal culture, may wake up to find a sack of corn, a haunch of venison, an envelope of cash or some other valuable gift upon our doorstep. A person who receives help from us Spirit Peoples will continue to provide gifts for years to come.

This expression of appreciation is not a feature of American culture. In a consumer based society everything has an expected fee. You pay the price or go without. If there is no price established, there is an assumption of fine-print-trickery or worthlessness. This aspect of American society deprives the individual of responsibility and freedom in relationship to establishing the inherent value of a product or service to the individual. If, on the other hand, there is the appellation of 'donation' or 'contribution' associated with the item or experience, there is an observed tendency of even the most spiritually inclined person to consider that no payment or a minimal pittance is somehow acceptable, rather than to own personal responsibility for determining the value, for one's self, of that which has been offered. This 'get-something-for-nothing' attitude is both reprehensible and dishonoring.

"How much is this Ceremony?" I have been asked. I might respond by asking how many dollars is an experience of the ineffable and infinite worth? A teaching, which may transform one's world view? The opportunity for a healing that enables a person to live, let alone to live with grace and ease? The very concept is rather absurd. There is no way to place a dollar value on these things.

What is affordable to one is an extravagance beyond measure for another, and for someone else the same amount is mere pocket change. What is affordable for you? Determine this, then offer more than what is

affordable, for it is in that realm between what is affordable and comfortable, and the extension of one's offering beyond that limit, which creates the space where true healing and appreciation reside. I will often present a guide for payment in an evening's Ceremony: How much would you spend on a fine evening's entertainment? A movie and dinner? A night out partying at a club? Going to a theatrical stage production? Determine this first. Now, if what you have received in this Ceremony is purely entertainment, place an equivalent amount in the basket. If you have received something more than entertainment, something which is enlightening and world changing, place an amount in the basket in accordance of value of that which you have received. If you feel 'less than' from your experience, take something out of the basket and place it in your pocket! Never should a person feel lessened by their experience in a sacred event.

I have found that, even after offering insight on how 'payment' is handled, that some will then look at me and ask "So, what is the fee for this Ceremony?" Well, I have been sent forth, by my Grampa and by Eagle Brother, into the American world to bring 'the Ways' into accessibility for all. I have had to learn to speak the language, socially and economically. So, when you see that there is a fee placed upon a ceremony, it is because, for the most part, Americans do not have the culturally designed knowledge of how to appropriately recompense a valuable service.

There are times when a person says to me that they really would like to attend a Ceremony or receive a Doctoring (Shamanic Healing Ceremony), but they cannot afford it. I will never turn away a person who sincerely needs help just because they don't have cash in their pocket. If a person sincerely needs help, help I will offer to the best of my ability. The need for assistance arises from within the Soul, not the bank account. Such a person of indigent means may be asked to perform a service in exchange, and not always a service for me, but often a community service. It is the act of giving beyond one's means which creates the space for healing. This is, in addition to the many ways possible, one expression of my give-away back into the Community.

There are some who have a belief that any kind of monetary exchange for a spiritual service is somehow unethical. I am curious when presented with this particular world view. I ask of the person what they themselves do to earn an income. And, if this occupation of theirs is not the expression of their spiritual service in the world, then why are they wasting their time doing something, merely for money, which is NOT their Spirit's Calling? Personally, I cannot conceive of spending a significant portion of my waking life in the pursuit of money, let alone doing something which has no relevance to the purpose of my Being!

My Grampa Pena was insistent that payment be made for all Shamanic services. He would say that if a person did not suffer (by 'suffer' he meant to go beyond one's comfort zone, physically, mentally, emotionally), they would not appreciate nor receive anything of value. Grampa told of how, in a Vision Quest, the young Indian men go up on the mountain with no food nor water for three, maybe four days. He spoke of how, because in those days the People were always hungry, that to go without food might mean death. And sometimes these young men would, in fact, die up on the mountain. He then mentioned American people who go up on the mountain, they don't eat for a few days, they come down from the mountain and have a big turkey dinner....it means nothing to them to not eat, there is no real challenge. "Grandson," he told me "you gotta make the people suffer so they can get something good. Those American people, they hurt in their wallet!" Think about it. He was right, you know.

My Spirit's Calling IS my Life. As such, the expression of that Calling is, and must be, the means of supporting my worldly existence so that I can continue to bring my Spirit's Calling forth. So, when you see a 'fee' associated with a Ceremony, that monetary exchange is not a payment for a Ceremony. It is a contribution to, and support of, the continuance of my life and worldly responsibilities (rent, food, transportation to your community, my kids' shoes and bicycles, an occasional movie...you know, the stuff of

life in the world) so that I am able to continue to present 'the Ways' to you, and to others down the road.

Power, the Soul, and Money

"If you charge too much for your work, you will get sick. If you do not receive enough for your work, you will become sick."

~A statement of direction given by the Ancestral Spirits of my lineage.

Life, in this incarnation, is finite. We have only a limited amount of time upon this planet, this lifetime. Every moment is an expenditure of a very precious resource...our time.

Life Force (Shamanically referred to as Power) is generated with each breath, spent with each action. Every endeavor, deed and minute of our life has an inherent investment of Power within it. The spiritual economy of Power underlies our interactions, relationships and the way in which we spend that most precious resource of time. When an individual goes to work they are expending a quantum of Power, quantified as time on the job and the investment of previous time spent in developing that particular skill (training, work experience, etc). For this the worker is compensated with money. That money represents, symbolizes, the investment of Life Force given on behalf of the employer. As the symbol is the thing itself, money equates with Life Force. The person who has been compensated then spends the cash, transferring that portion of his/her Life Force to another who is providing the product or service that is being purchased. This product or service also has an investment of Power within it, as the provider has spent time, i.e. Life Force, in the creation of the offering.

Our spiritual balance requires the maintenance of an equilibrium of Power within our Soul. When we start from the assumed place of inner balance and then extend a charge of Power to another, be it a lover, a friend, in a business transaction or to one who

provides a service, there is the a prior agreement that there is to be a fair exchange, an equal return of Life Force in some other accepted form. In that moment we enter into, willingly, a state of negative equilibrium. When the exchange is fulfilled by the partner in the agreement returning an equal dynamic to us, we reenter a state of neutral equilibrium. When the partner receives our willingly given charge of Power, in whatever form it may be, a teaching, a product, a payment, etc, that partner is in a state of positive equilibrium. Only when the partner returns an equal quantum of Life Force does the partner reenter a state of neutral equilibrium.

If, when we have come from a fair assessment of trust, given a charge of Power to another and the partner does not return a significant charge, or even anything, in exchange, we, the giving party, enter into a state of negative disequilibrium...we feel 'burned', robbed. The partner who has snubbed or deceived us is now in a state of positive disequilibrium, which creates a spiritually toxic state. Imagine that you have just expressed your heartfelt care for your mate/child/friend and that person turns and ignores you. That feeling is what I am speaking of. And the partner who has just taken your offering and kept it is, in actuality, perpetrating an act of theft upon you. This type of behavior, unfortunately so prevalent in today's societies, disempowers, literally, the giver and causes separation, illness and discord in the life of the taker.

When we give and receive in fair exchange, all parties experience a communion with humanity, a trust validated, an encouragement to risk. A thing of beauty ensues. Let us be in awareness of the rightness and goodness in the sharing of our Life Force with each other, be it with a kind word of appreciation, the willing balancing of our karmic accounts or the honor of payment for spiritual services rendered.

I hope with these words and investigations to bring clarity to a question, which arises in the arena of spiritual teachings and money. Please give them consideration. If you find value herein, yes, you have my permission to send this on to those you feel would

equally find benefit in the views expressed, as long as this is sent in it's entirety, unedited, nothing added, and full credit is given to myself, Jade Wah'oo Grigori as the author, including my website.

Blessings~

Jade Wah'oo Grigori

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