

**“The first purpose of the circle was to help the people,  
and the first purpose of the people was to help the circle.”**

**Manitonquat**

s156-168

### **North – Direction of Body**

The first part to consider is the physical aspect. This would include our providing a safe and healthy environment for ourselves and our loved ones, and we would understand that to expand outward to include a safe and healthy neighborhood, community, nation and planet. We would want only the healthiest food, clean and pure water and air, sufficient exercise and play, rest and sleep, to keep our families fit, and available medical care as might be required.

### **East – Direction of Mind**

The second direction concerns the mind, the mental aspect. The primary instruction in children, built in to every developing cell, is to grow and to learn. Everything for them is about learning, their play, their fun, their explorations, their observations, their expressions.

### **Storytelling**

Children love stories. We all love stories. They are the way human beings have passed knowledge and understanding from generation to generation from the earliest times. Children resist teaching and preaching – we all do – but they delight in stories and reach into their hearts for meaning, absorbed by the desire to explore and learn, and the needs for justice and the balancing of disharmonized forces.

### **South – Direction of Heart**

The third direction is that of the heart. One of my favorite stories from my grandfather is that of First Man, who, when he asked his grandmother how to know what to do, was told “Follow your heart”.

### **West – Direction of Spirit**

The last direction in the wheel of the complete person is what some people call spirit or soul. By that I don't mean anything to do with religion, with theology or a creed.

s.169 **The Circle Way - The Joy of Caring for Children in The Circle Way**

### **The Great Separation**

The Circle Way recognizes that humanity is suffering today from disconnection, a Great Separation from basic needs and values of humanity, suffering from the isolation patterns of our societies. There are three major separations affecting us all. We are suffering from our separation from Mother Nature, from the Earth and all other life, both plant and animal. Secondly, we are all suffering from our isolation and separation from each other. We have lost our tribes, our communities, even the closeness of our families. And finally we are separated from our very selves. We do not know who or what we are, our real nature, our spirits, our very souls are hidden in the identifications we are given and taught by our societies -

### **When I begin to assert to people**

the truth of their goodness and innocence, of their lovability and their compassion, of their caring and helpfulness, of their playfulness and creativity, of their longing for and deserving of any kindness, appreciation and understanding, they usually laugh or weep to hear this great and immensely vital truth.

As human beings we have a number of needs, not only for food and exercise and rest and meaningful occupation. **We all need to be heard.** And beyond that we also need to be understood. And beyond that we need to **be accepted by others.** And beyond that we need to be **appreciated,** to feel valued by our fellow human beings. And we need the security and warmth of knowing we belong. Belong to the Earth and perhaps some particular part of it, belong to the community, the clan and family where we live, and that every part of ourselves is accepted and valued by our selves.

## 170 } **Reconnecting**

There is **no one right way.** We do not seek perfection. But we are continually striving to discover what is better. We are all different, but we have many common needs, and we have the ability to learn and work together for ways that work better for all.

The Circle Way is concerned with connection, and it is concerned with learning the art of listening as part of the art of loving. One of the principle reasons that people feel powerless and frustrated is that they are not heard. We need to make our decisions together, from groups small enough that each voice is attended to.

### **TOGETHER THERE IS NOTHING WE CANNOT DO**

#### Chapter Eleven - **Parents Liberation**

***“The power of the world works in circles”***

*–Black Elk*

Parents perform the most important of all work in this world, demanding exhausting, full-time work. And for that they receive almost no support, honor, praise or encouragement and no pay. Little credit do they get for their children’s achievements but all the blame for their transgressions. Parents know this but feel hopeless to change society’s attitude.

Parents! It’s our turn! We are overdue. Be silent no more. Speak up!  
Gather together! Listen to each other. Begin making circles of parents.  
Call out for allies and build a worldwide movement!

**“The Circle Way”, “Play Days”, “Special Time”, and the tool I call “Supportive Listening”, or co-counseling** as it is known to the Re-evaluation Counseling community that developed it. Because that method allows the greatest expression of your feelings and the resultant clearest appraisal and use of your creative thinking. **“None of us is as smart as all of us.”**

*Parents Liberation { 175*

Once you have a **circle of parents** that meet regularly you can brainstorm on ways to use it to support each other in parenting. One thing I would strongly recommend is that you all come together for a **“play day.”** Play days are fun for all and bring us closer to each other and the children. See if you can manage it at least **once a month** to start. → Chapter 5

One thing which many parents have done is to join with other parents to create a school. s176 It was a **‘free school’**, inspired by A. S. Neill’s Summerhill, and charging no tuition. People freely donated whatever they could afford, to pay the rent and take care of expenses, and donated books and materials. Many of the people involved were living communally in various houses and the whole school felt like a community – the **embryo of the village - The Palo Alto School** s.179 Everyone offered their skills in crafts or knowledge of interesting subjects. A few parents had no time to give, but were able to give money instead.

We need the children to center our lives on what is important to us, s.188  
Children know and remind us that life can be fun, that work can be play.  
So, playfully but seriously – it takes a child to raise a village.

### **All is Relationship**

My elders taught that relationship is everything. Everything is related to everything in Creation, and all relationships are sacred. s.190

They are even more dependent on love than we, with less defenses, more open to joy and laughter and closeness. We can help direct our evolution towards greater health, beauty, love, and joy for our descendants. - so create a new environment now. A village where we increase our closeness, our joy and love, our creativity and fun, and change each other – with the help of our children as our guides.

Since the way *Emmy (Ellika)* and I wanted to treat our children with complete respect ran counter to what we saw in the world around us, including in many consciously created communities and spiritual communities we had visited, and that there was only one other person in my own nation who was ready to try and create and live in a traditional native village circle, we decided to build our own community. We decided to try and find others who would be willing to be completely respectful of the young people and to guide them by connection rather than coercion.

In spite of the fact that none of us had grown up in such an atmosphere we managed to achieve that most important aim, by agreeing **to listen to the children and to each other.** *The Village { s195*

“We have as many teachers as there are people – everyone is potentially a teacher. Of course we don’t all do it in the school, but many of us do put in a few hours now and then to show the children a skill, tell stories, talk about life, take a group on a trip somewhere, organize a group project, or just play with them. And most of the young people are self-starters. They are very resourceful and they set themselves their own projects, maybe get others to join a group project of their own. If there’s a teacher available and interested, great, but if not they will figure it out on their own – maybe check in with an adult advisor now and then.

*“You understand that most of what **society calls school is only warehousing,** keeping young people off the streets while people go to work. s198*

I truly believe that the best option we the people have is just to walk away from the system entirely. We need to blow up our TVs and make our own entertainment, tell our own stories, make our own music and plays, art and literature, a complete culture of who we are, what we do and seek, our deepest dreams, deepest yearnings of our hearts, our humor and fun and playfulness with each other, to honor and be enriched by our elders and have fun and play with our children, and give them the experience that the joys of life are not about competition or winning or ownership or material stuff, gadgets, fashion, or wealth, but are found in our love, our connection and closeness to nature and other people and creatures. *The Village { 201 - www.circleway.org.*

### **The Economic Issue**

If you worry about the economics of it, let me just say that a group of people who pool their energy and resources can live on far less per person than each person living by themselves or in separate families can. Our community, all poor unpropertied folks, paid off a mortgage plus \$50,000 in debts in 10 years. Such is the experience of every single consciously created community that exists today. And the difference between them and the ones that did not continue has only to do with the level of commitment. **When people want to do a thing they find a way.** The hardest part, in my experience, is in **learning to get along, to listen, to support and appreciate and celebrate each other.**

Do you want to know what it takes to create and build a new community?

I think, from what I've seen, **all it takes is one person**, one person totally committed, one person who is so dedicated that he or she will never give up. If he never gives up, that kind of dreamer attracts others, and because none of us is as smart as all of us, eventually, together they will find the way, will remove all the barriers and do it. *s203*

And once you have your circle, what it takes to keep it together is  
**everyone's love and trust in each other and in the circle.**

### **What do we need to make it fun?**

What will people need in your circle? Caring for each other we need to know. We need to learn how to ask "How can I help you make your life more wonderful?" And we all need to learn how to ask for help when we need it and not pretend we don't need it. We need each other – let's just agree to that. Let's remember that to agree to accept help is a great gift to the helper. We all need to be helpful.

People pretend they don't need anyone, but they are crying inside. When a baby cries we pick him up and hold him. We listen and try to understand. We have to go after those who run away – they are hurt and need to be held and listened to and understood, appreciated and accepted. *S204*

You want a village, a more human culture for you and your children?

**What do we need?** People. Resources (money). Land. Land large enough to invite people to gather and listen to each other, to learn how to do and teach supportive listening and spread the Circle Way. Enough land to feed us, for us to play and work together, enough for us to live as our ancestors lived, taking care of each other, of our children, of the plant and animal life, of our Mother the Earth. *206 } The Joy of Caring for Children in The Circle Way*

The communities I know that are sharing the work and resources and the care of the children are also living closer to the Earth, to the rhythms of nature and its lovely harmonies and beauty. They seek a natural healthy relation to their food through Permaculture and organic agriculture. What I am offering in the Circle Way is a **Permaculture of the Heart** – a process of regaining the natural flow of our love and compassion, of our closeness, playfulness and creativity together.

### Epilogue - **The Story of Muckachuck** – s208ff

#### **The Circle Way Basics**

The first instruction is respect.

The second instruction is the circle.

The third instruction is celebration.

*The Circle Way Basics { 221*

Also basic to our closeness is our understanding of our nature:  
how good, how compassionate and kind we all are naturally, how we  
like to have fun and enjoy each other, when we are not confused by  
old Appendix:

hurtful patterns getting in our way. How we all want to be helpful,  
and how the best help we can give others is to listen to them, be a mirror  
to their true selves and an ally in seeing and discharging negative patterns.

I am not recommending a return to any of the older traditions,  
only that we learn from them what was best for human life and  
see how we may adapt those principles to the world of today.

**But what of conflicts?** Whenever people live together, as in a family, conflicts arise from time to time. Does the traditional native parent just let the child have her own way all the time, even at the expense of the rest of the family? Here again the guides are respect and trust.

The person in the parenting or teaching role allows the child full independence and autonomy. The child will be allowed to find her own way and make her own mistakes. The child will always know, however, that some responsible adult is available for advice and assistance whenever the child may seek it. Help is neither offered nor withheld, but it is always available.

*Appendix: Joyous Childraising { 239*

The young people of today are also an oppressed group. The oppression is enforced in families and schools by denial of any respectful attention, invalidation of their thinking and feelings, misinformation, physical abuse, negative attitudes and low expectations, and economic dependency.

240 } The Joy of Caring for Children in The Circle Way

This oppression of young people keeps all of society from the advantages of youthful clear thinking and high hopes for the world. **Young people are naturally loving, intelligent, creative and full of fun when they are free of the dismal conditioning of society's institutions.**

Children come into the world joyously, expecting it to be fun, expecting us to be fun, and to play with them. But we have grown old and serious. Children can teach us to be joyous again. Children are excited to be alive, and they need to see people who are as excited about their being alive as they are.

**Manitonquat** (Medicine Story): [www.circleway.org](http://www.circleway.org)

Re-Evaluation Counseling: [www.rc.org](http://www.rc.org)

EU-Resource: [www.connected-childhood.de](http://www.connected-childhood.de)

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Shimananda [www.seitai.de/ipep](http://www.seitai.de/ipep)

**int.peace education project**

Ammersee/Bavaria/Munich

[www.lovebirth.de/ipep](http://www.lovebirth.de/ipep)

