

# HEAL THYSELF, HEAL THE EARTH

Ancient Wisdom for the Modern World

MaryRose Lessoway

*All things share the same breath - the beast, the tree, the man, the air shares its spirit with all the life it supports. (Chief Seattle)*



*The Medicine Wheel tells us how to flow to the natural and cosmological energies. It gives its own small prophecies and visions, so to speak. The Wheel was meant to help people stay focused, disciplined and alert to daily living. (Lisa Foss Tardiff)*

*Our Aboriginal Ancestors say that the Medicine Wheel comes from the Earth herself and is a gift from the Star People. The above quote explains the basic philosophy of the Wheel. It shows us that natural and cosmological forces or laws are different from human laws. It is a tool that we can use to survive in today's troubling times. It is adaptable to any time period and is meant to be shared with all races or cultures. These teachings were given to all First Nations peoples, as we can see in the circle at Stonehenge, the pyramids of Egypt or the Mayan temples of South America.*

*When I began my path as Keeper of the Wheel, I had no idea where it was heading. I stumbled onto it in 1991 when I found myself at a Peace Elders Gathering on the Seneca Reserve, New York State, with Grandmother Twylah Nitsch. I had just completed my Fine Arts degree at Concordia University in Montreal, Quebec. The last project I did in Fine Arts was a multi-media performance where I made a sacred circle with candles and chanted affirmations.*

*The ritual was empowering and life-affirming. I was unaware at the time that it was my first Medicine Wheel. Something in me awakened that day because of that ritual. The experience was so powerful that people talked about it for days. It also changed the direction of my life. After that I made a sacred pilgrimage to the Ocean, and then attended the Peace Elders Gathering. I met many Elders, Shamans and Medicine People, had visions and learned about the sacredness inherent in my Aboriginal Heritage. I had found what I had been looking for my entire life. I was home!*

*The Medicine people were humble and real. They faced many hardships, but remained completely in service to Mother Earth. Over time, after attending sweatlodges and sundances and studying with Grandmother Twylah, I realized that what had been missing in my life was that connection with Nature, that deep sense of sacredness and respect for our Earth Mother.*

*It was my destiny to learn and teach the Medicine Wheel. I led circles, gave lectures and workshops. The people who came, like me, they were searching for something different. At that time I only had knowledge of the Four Directions on the Wheel. It wasn't until Lisa Tardiff became my Teacher that I learned that there was so much more to the Wheel wisdom. There are many forms to a Medicine Wheel or Sacred Circle, as it was originally called. The colors of the Directions or the Totems of each Direction vary with topography and the times.*

*The Wheel can have anywhere from four to over two hundred stones on it. The one I work with has thirty-six stones. They carry an electro-magnetic force when placed in a certain configuration. This then magnifies the energies of the surrounding environment, showing us what is present, what needs to be healed and giving us messages from Nature and Spirit. The Wheel can be used to heal ourselves, the land or make crops grow and so much more. The possibilities are infinite. It is useful for conflict resolution, community building, raising children, manifesting, and healing and learning about our inner and outer realities.*

*The wisdom of the First Nations peoples is being revived. There is much that we can learn from the ancient teachings about inter-connectedness, being balanced and functional and whole human beings, which in turn makes us better equipped to handle the issues of today's world.*

*Perhaps the most important lesson of the Wheel is about our inter-connectedness. This knowledge helps us to accept and respect all our relations, which includes the trees, animals, the wind, the rain, rivers, stones and every living thing. It is such a simple premise that seems to have been lost somewhere along the way. It is the human ego that thinks we are above Nature, animals, trees, or even the stones we walk upon.*

*There are thirteen `Moons` on the Wheel. These refer to the thirteen months if*

*you follow the natural lunar cycles. These Moons also represent the first thirteen years of life, when the child is developing their emotional body or ego, as we call it. If any of the Moons are `broken` through neglect or trauma, we become imbalanced and dysfunctional adults. We remain egocentric and emotionally reactive. It is a dangerous thing to have adults who are emotionally immature, with their fingers on the trigger of a gun or the button of a bomb.*

*We have a lot of power, but are lacking in the wisdom that we need to see beyond our immediate needs. The truth is that we are all imbalanced today, because we were not brought up with our basic needs met in those first thirteen years.*

*Children need to be egocentric until the age of inter-relations at age seven. They need to discover themselves before they can even consider others. They are irrational and emotional until they reach the Moon of Reasoning at age ten. They also need discipline or containment so they can learn how to manage their emotions.*

*As adults, we need to be responsible caretakers of the Earth. We need to look beyond our personal needs and include the whole picture, not just other humans, but all life. I believe that all our problems began when humanity tried to conquer Nature rather than work with her. We let it go too far and now Mother needs to shake off the excess toxins in her body and renew herself. That is the way of Nature.*

*Earth changes are not a new thing. We all have heard about the dinosaurs that died in the middle of a meal because they froze suddenly. According to Aboriginal legends, the Earth is much older than we think. Grandmother Twylah said that this is the Age of Unity, that we have been living in the Age of Separation for a very long time. John Major Jenkins says in his book, *Mayan Mysteries: Galactic Alignments in Ancient Traditions & the Future of Humanity*,*

*The Maya chose 2012 to end their calendar cycle because in the years around AD 2012 the solstice Sun will be aligning with the Milky Way (the white band of stars that can be observed arching overhead in late summer). This alignment is not something that happens in every era, for the precession of the equinoxes slowly shifts the position of the solstice Sun in relation to the "background" position of the Milky Way. The processional phenomenon that is responsible for bringing the solstice Sun into alignment with the Milky Way is caused by the slow wobbling of the Earth on its axis. One complete wobble takes approximately 26,000 years. That is one big wobble!*

*The Medicine Wheel teachings are still alive on all continents and have what we need in order to survive and thrive in today's world. We need to return to circular thinking and community oriented living to restore the natural order of things. Native tribes would split if they got over 250 people, because they knew*

*they could not care for everyone if they got too big. We lose the connection with others when the numbers are too large. How can any government know the needs of millions of people? It is arrogance to want to govern huge masses.*

*If we work on our personal (Moons) in order to become functional adults, we can become whole within and can be in service to others. Our personal wheels emanate out to the collective and the cosmic and back again. We are all part of the bigger picture; we are not separate from the Earth, the Sun, Moon or Stars. We can learn how to heal on all levels: physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual. These are what we call the Loops of Consciousness. If we put Creator at the center of the Wheel, instead of ourselves, we will be able to find our place in the grand design. It takes humility to know that we are both human and divine. It takes conscious awareness and patience to listen to the messages and guidance that the natural world has to offer. It takes trust to know that we are all loved and cared for by something smarter and bigger than us. All life is a great gift to be cherished, not to be taken for granted, misused and abused. I have found from personal experience, that when I connect to Mother Earth, I feel a profound sense of fullness and wholeness. I feel loved, nourished and supported. I also feel her pain, her shifts, her sadness and sorrow. Circular thinking taught me to finish wheels so Mother doesn't have to take my unresolved into her body. Carrying around resentment, anger, unforgiveness, fear or pain, is the equivalent of dumping our garbage into the ocean or landfills.*

*Mother Earth is talking loudly, but who is listening? We can use the ancient wisdom of our Ancestors to heal the body of our Mother. Each one of us that adopts an attitude of gratitude, beauty and abundance, learning and healing... is making a difference. If we realize that we are all molecules on the same body and that our thoughts, words and actions on a daily basis can affect the world around us, we can make conscious choices to be happy, healthy and whole.*

*We can make a difference.*

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- *Don't own Mother Earth, but live in peace with her. Appreciate what she gives and make sure you give back in return. I see many of our (Medicine Wheel) teachings as an exchange towards what Mother Earth gives to us. (Lisa F. Tardiff)*

- *Only when the last tree has died and the last river has been poisoned and the last fish been caught will we realize we cannot eat money. (Cree Proverb)*
- *The ultimate test of man's conscience may be his willingness to sacrifice something today for future generations whose words of thanks will not be heard. (Gaylord Nelson, former governor of Wisconsin, co-founder of Earth Day)*
- *Take only memories. Leave nothing but footprints. (Chief Seattle)*