



## **Finding your way**

Article written in 1998 by Lee Mason

I was taught my earliest lessons by an Algonquin medicine guide and a Thompson pipe carrier and spiritual leader, I have also been blessed with the teachings of many other Spiritual guides from the Cree, Beaver, Blackfoot, Lakota, Nuu-chah-nulth, Gitksan, Haida, Nisga'a, Nlaka'pamux, Shoshone, Tsimshian, Shuswap, Carrier, Chipewyan Prairie, Blood, Dene', Dakota, Sioux, and other tribes. I have been on my journey for a number of years now and am of course still but a child in this journey, but I will share with you what little I do know and what I have been able to research through conventional sources as well.

There is much controversy among some medicine people about who has the right to carry medicines. I always go back to the teachings of Fools Crow whenever I hear of such controversy. Fools Crow stated many years ago "those who speak the most about who has the right to carry medicines are always those that know the least about it." You may run into controversy yourself; whenever one tries to bring something good to the people there are always others that want to block the good work you do. It is important

to remain strong and to walk in balance, it is also important to ask the Creator for guidance so that we may carry on with our journey in the face of such controversy being directed toward us. I have been called a heathen, a pagan, a devil worshipper, simply because I follow the old ways. I have been verbally attacked by so called good Christians and men of the cloth, there have been times when I have felt like an outcast, and there have been other times when priests have asked to come and learn in the circle about the Sacred ways of old.

I would like to stress a point that was reinforced many times during the earlier stages of my medicine journey; there is no right way or wrong way, there is only the way of the heart. Many tribes have lost all but a fragment of their culture; some have actually lost it all. I heard recently about the Seminole Indians in the Florida region and I found this very interesting. During the days of black slavery in the United States there were some blacks that escaped their masters and were taken in by the Seminoles, they were adopted by the tribe and married into the tribe as well. Today the Seminoles are very dark skinned and have the same tightly curled hair as the Blacks. The sad part is their people and their remaining culture was almost entirely wiped out by years of violence and disease at the hands of European society. The Seminoles now bring many different teachers into their society to share their culture with them. The Seminoles are now adopting what they feel most comfortable with from each of the tribes. I believe, and it is not a view that is liked by some people, that we must look at what is in the best interests of the people and perhaps forego whether it was your way or not, we must consider what will serve the best interests of the people, what will give them a solid Spiritual foundation, especially our youth. It is said that youth between the ages of 11 and 15 are wide open to and searching for Spirituality. I believe that if we help them develop a solid Spiritual foundation especially during these early teenage years they will then have the tenets of that foundation to call upon when they are struggling with the difficult choices life will present them with. This being said, I commend all of you that are making the effort to teach your young people about spirituality, culture and medicines, and I will do all that I can to assist you in this very important work you are doing. I am but one teacher you will encounter on your journey and I can only share with you what I have learned. Adopt whatever feels comfortable for you, and leave the rest.

***All my Relations***