

“A Return to the Earth” Webinar Series

MODULE ONE: CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

Module One defines culture and expands and elaborates upon cultural perceptions as they relate to our personal lives and the lives of our ancestors and how that affects us today.

We will probe deeply into common and personal landscapes of culture and what this means as we move toward being decolonized people. As human beings we mirror each other and long to connect, to interact, to create relationship with, to live with a sense of belonging and a sense of shared “commons,” a place where we fully realize that “other” is essential for self-fulfillment as a human being. We need each other.

As we move into relationships, we come to understand the cultural lens through which we see the world. How a person sees the world is how a person acts toward the world.

MODULE TWO: SEEING WITH A NATIVE EYE

Module Two elaborates on the worldview and ceremonial practices of the Indigenous cultures in North America.

For the Native People, the world was seen as being in constant motion and flux. Everything was animated and imbued with spirit, consisting of energy waves, and a myriad of interrelationships.

Philosophically, they would be in total agreement with the quantum world and would have no problem with the biocentric view of the world, meaning that their participative role in shaping the cosmos was innate to their sense of self. They saw creation as a continuous process and saw themselves as participant-observers. Different words were used to describe this universal energy shared by everyone/everything. For this reason, an individual sense of self was not distinct from the animate universe but, rather, each person was integral to all human experience. (*See The Sixth Grandfather: Black Elk's Teachings Given to John G. Neihardt, edited by Raymond J. DeMallie, 1984, University of Nebraska Press, p. 81.*)

MODULE THREE: COLONIZATION

Module three focuses on colonization as cultural hegemony. This cultural dominance leads to “power over” other cultures and manifests as collective trauma shared by all of humanity today.

We will discuss how colonization was not a one-time event that happened to Indigenous People only, but it was a gradual process of shifting perspectives that emerged into a cultural worldview of hierarchical privilege where some human beings were dominant over other human beings and other life forms. Colonization and fascism share foundational similarities rooted in systems of hierarchy, exploitation, and violence, particularly concerning the concepts of race, territory, and authoritarian control.

We will also discuss how this colonial culture has led to a profound loss of a sense of place, loss of a sense of community, and loss of self-identity and purpose. These are all earmarks of collective trauma. These scars appear as fractures in the social fabric of society itself. The hallmarks of collective trauma are evident in our healthcare systems, governments, and other cultural, civil, and social bodies.

MODULE FOUR: DECOLONIZATION

Module four addresses DECOLONIZATION as a transformation back to a deep and profound sense of connection to all aspects of the natural world. It requires a shift in consciousness.

As Einstein famously said, “A problem cannot be solved from the consciousness that created it.” Such a worldview shift transforms underlying beliefs and informs values we live and lead by. This sense of interconnectedness is not alien to us, it feels like a homecoming. We have felt moments of this connectedness in our lives when we feel love and aliveness – a heart-felt sense of being aligned, present and true in the moment. If we consider the last 300,000 years, it is astonishing to learn that 94% of the time *human beings viewed all of nature as sacred and interconnected*. They were immersed in the understanding that nothing is separate, that when *we harm one aspect of the world out there, it affects all of us. We ask, is it time to return to our original “story?”*