



On Tribal Consciousness

THE TREES THAT HOLD HANDS

Murdena Marshall, MEd

Elder, Spiritual Leader

Associate Professor of Mi'kmaq Studies (retired, Cape Breton University)

Eskasoni First Nation, Mi'kmaq Nation, Canada

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Bringing Together
Western and Aboriginal
Science Knowledges



Unama'ki

Unama'ki – Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, Canada

Knowledge has spirit

lives in specific places

- stories
- oral traditions
- prayers
- daily dialogue

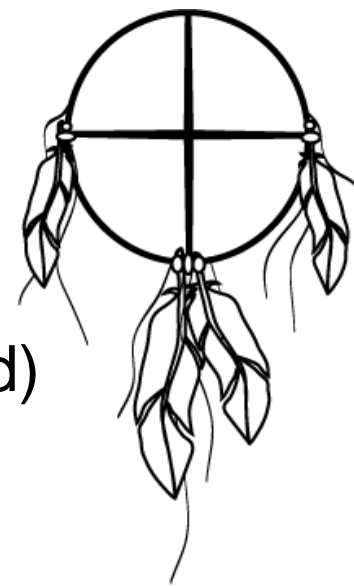


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Traditional Knowledge

- known through watching and listening
- dynamic (i.e. not static as many schools demand)
- experienced through song, ceremony, hunting, fishing, gathering medicines
- interacts with daily life
- present in dreams, visions, ceremonies



Traditional Knowledge



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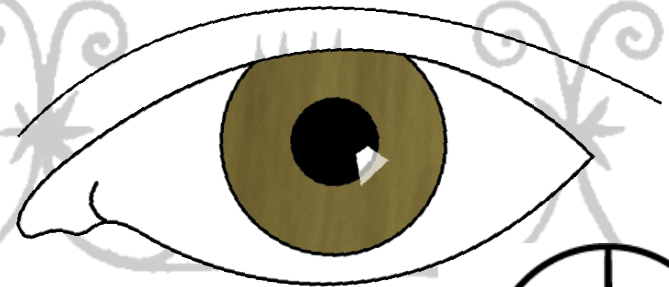
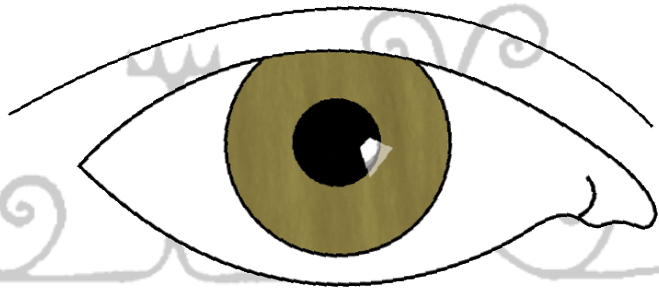
lots of interest in this concept from outside traditional culture

What is TK?



Elders from several communities provided understandings towards the concept of Traditional Knowledge





Two-Eyed Seeing



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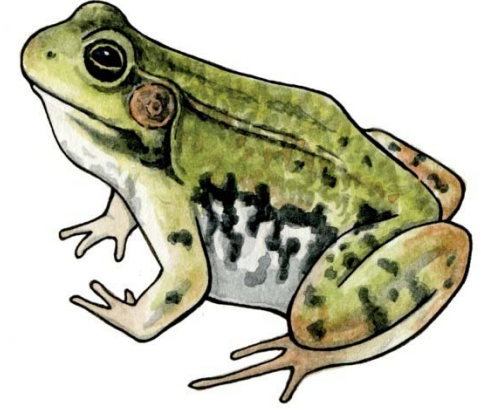
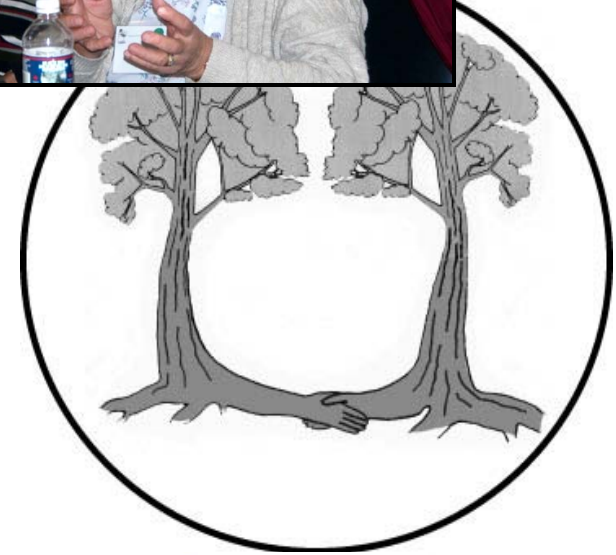
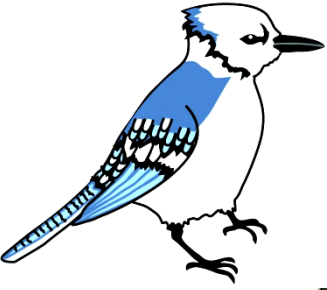


Cheryl Bartlett
Professor of Biology



SCIENCE + TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

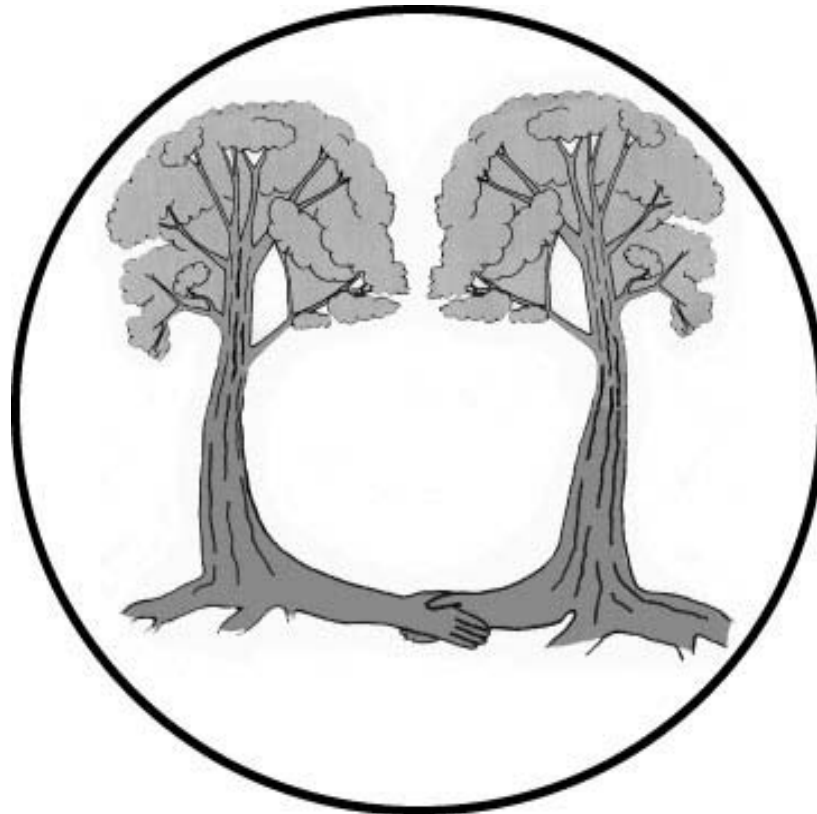
What is TK?



*image by: Rod Restoule
from: Into the Daylight;
C. Morrissette, 1998*

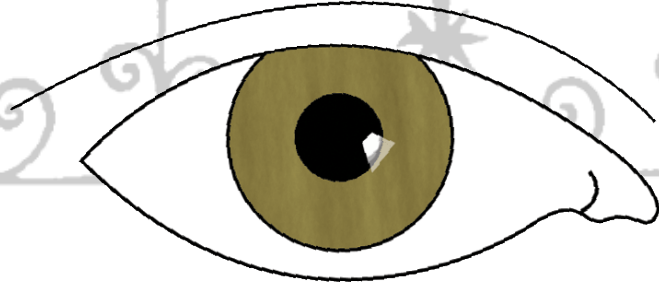


If you look beneath the forest floor you will see that the trees of different species are all holding hands. Charlie Labrador, Elder

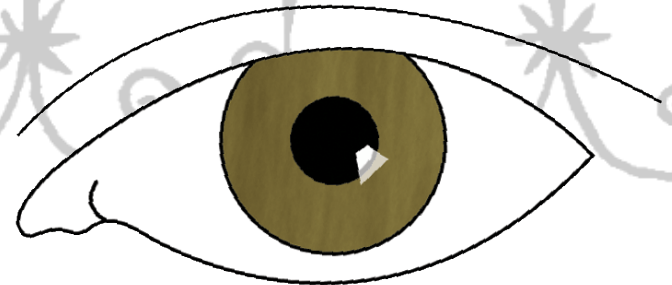


Why can't we humans do the same?

Western Science



Traditional Knowledge



physical
characteristics



physical
characteristics

+

cultural
significance

For example, long ago moss could be used to keep infants dry and comfortable (as a diaper).

This is part of **tribal consciousness** and also reflects scientific understanding.

Elders try to pass on tribal consciousness to ensure the living preservation of our world view.

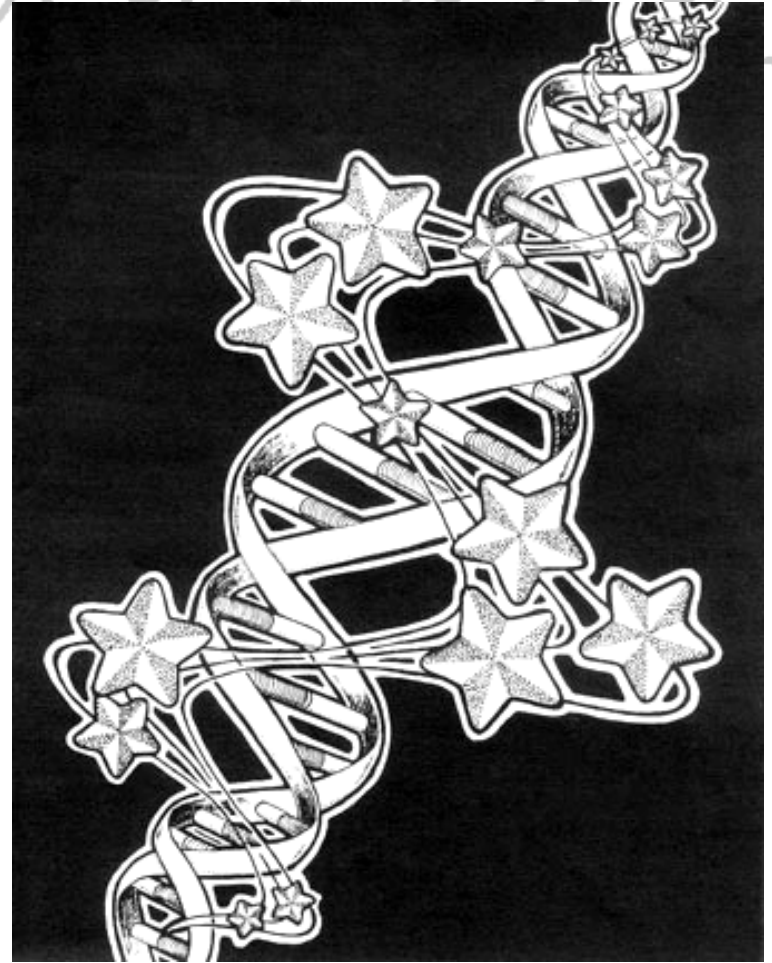


Loss of language among the young makes it difficult “to live” the knowledge because the understandings are embedded in the language.

What is Traditional Knowledge?

The words of our Elders have always reinforced our belief that at one time all creation was one.

All living things have DNA.



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TK is a reflection of your own tribal consciousness.



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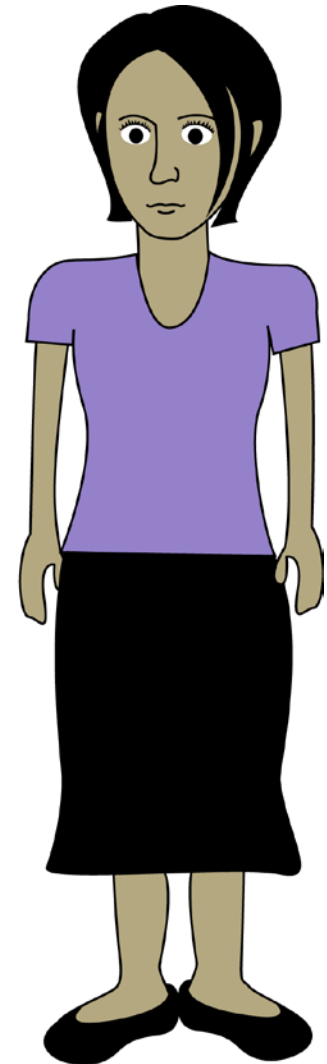
One's possession of traditional or tribal knowledge becomes a mirror image of our spirituality.



Merging spiritual guidance with knowledge: parenting



Parenting is considered
preparation of character

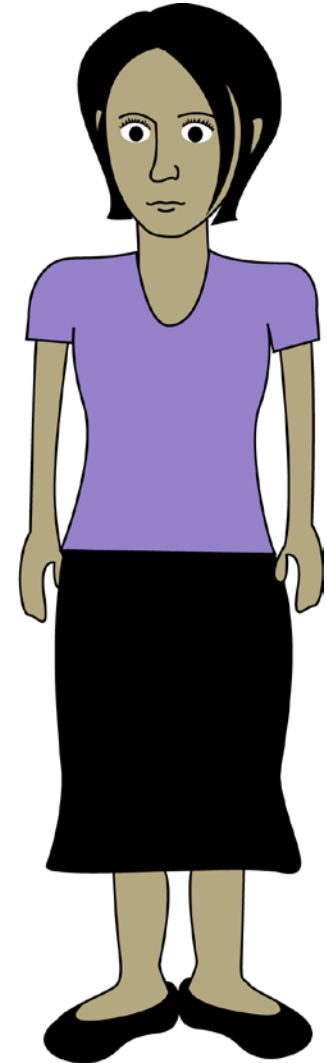


Spiritual Guidance and Knowledge

Elders from the community monitor behaviour of a pregnant mother.

Mother must make sure baby's spirit is safe, thus she must not exhibit bad habits or lack of control.

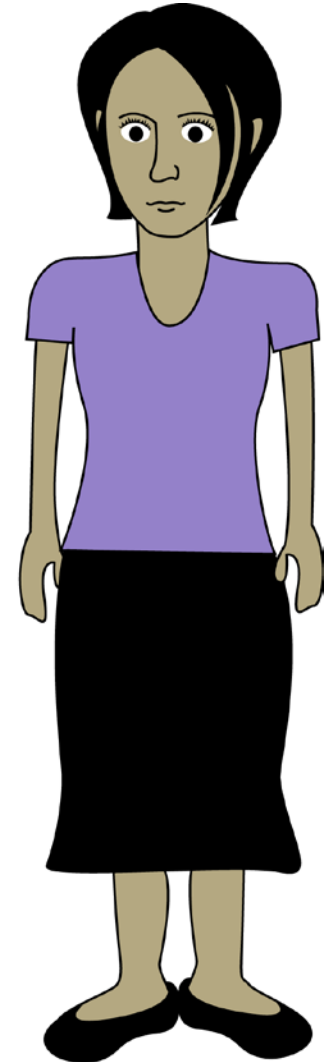
Our responsibilities to each other, i.e. our interconnectiveness, is thereby reinforced as a new being prepares to come into the community.



Spiritual Guidance and Knowledge

There are many beliefs which are enacted during pregnancy that serve to remind us of our spiritual ties to one another.

When the baby is born, these beliefs continue to remind us of the fact and mystery of interconnectiveness.



Language Has Spirit



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Language allows us to teach respect.

Wounding of Our Interconnectiveness

Government Agencies said:

- 1) children should only be raised by the parents, and
- 2) the community was not to interfere.

This distorted the rights and responsibilities of parenting and caused cultural disarray.



Healing Our Interconnectiveness

We need to recover from cultural starvation ... i.e. relearn and use our Mi'kmaw language and spirituality.

We need to recapture our stolen spirits, broken methods, and beaten down skills ... all towards our collective journey of recreating healthy communities.



Traditional Knowledge

Consciousness of Knowing

our interdependence on each other and on Mother Earth

All people must learn

“two-eyed seeing”

so that knowledge of the physical is not separated from wisdom of the spiritual.

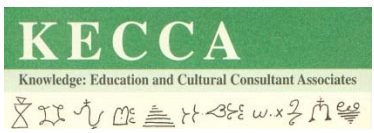


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Wela'liog
Thank You

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Bringing Together
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with acknowledgement of several funding agencies