

We have had numerous requests at UTFAV for information about a Traditional pamphlet series and how it can help survivors of Domestic Violence. Please see this as a starting place on your road for healing and recovery ~ The UTFAV Team

Sacred Items and Bundles

When we carry sacred items, we carry them with the recognition that everything in creation has a spirit; this includes the plants, the animals, the waters, the rocks, the stars. Even a single eagle feather has a spirit. When we use an eagle feather in ceremony, we are calling upon the spirit of that bird for help and guidance. A person in crisis from a domestic violence situation may wish to know about how these items are used to promote healing from the trauma they have experienced.

A sacred item can be considered many things. It can be an eagle feather, a Bible, a necklace, a stone, a shell, a candle, a fur pelt, a container of tobacco, sage, sweet grass or sage. It can be a drum, drum stick or rattle.

Personal Bundles vary from person to person and contain the items that you personally care for and that help you in your personal development. These items and teachings have been given to you by an elder or family member. The contents of the bundle relate to you personally and for your use. A personal bundle may contain your personal medicines, your drum and drum stick, a bowl, a special stone, a shaker/rattle, your personal pipe, a feather or shell. You may also have an article that has something to do with your clan, such

as a bear claw, or a turtle shell. Tobacco is often kept with your bundle. These sacred items remind you of the beauty of the Creator.

Sacred Bundles are carried by many traditional people. It can simply be a tobacco pouch and the four sacred medicines of tobacco, sage, sweetgrass and cedar. It may also contain sacred stones, feathers, shakers or a sacred pipe. It is well cared for and kept in a sacred place where no one else touches the items.

Bundles for the People are used for healing and ceremonies. It is said to contain all the things a nation needs to survive. The healers who carry the bundle do not own the bundle but carry them for the people. Carrying the bundle is a responsibility that healers have as they are chosen by the spirits, to carry on the teachings. Work and responsibility come with these bundles. Tobacco is always offered for help and healing from our Traditional Bundle keepers.

Pipe or also called Apwaagan and is sometimes called a Grandmother pipe or a Grandfather Pipe as it can be male or female. The bowl of the pipe, usually made of pipestone is female and represents the woman. The stem of the pipe is male and represents the man. The pipe was given to Native people as a way of communicating with the Creator. The story of how the pipe was given is often shared at tobacco ceremonies. Tobacco or Asemaa is smoked in the pipe. When a person offers tobacco to a pipe carrier, their thoughts and prayers are

offered into the pipe when it is smoked. There are pipes that are ceremonial and shared with the people. Some pipes are personal pipes and only smoked by that person. Pipestone is mined in quarries such as those located in Pipestone, Minnesota. It is a great responsibility to carry a pipe. It can be kept on a table, or altar. Sometimes it is stored in a pipe bag until used. The pipe bundle is usually feasted in the spring and in the fall.

Drum or Dewe'igan is often called the heartbeat of our people; it is the heartbeat of life. We live the first nine months of our lives within our mothers and we listen to the heartbeat; it sets the pattern of existence. There are many kinds of drums and many different teachings associated with the drum and drum use. One sided hand drums are often called teaching drums or personal drums. Women often use the one sided drum. The two sided drum is often called a warrior drums and in some places is only used by the men. There is a larger drum that is used at pow wows for social events. There are also sacred drums known as "the Big Drum," and also the sacred drum used in Midewewin ceremonies known as the Little Boy Water Drum or the Grandfather Drum. Each tribe has its own traditional protocols for use of the drum. The main rule is that you are respectful and not use the drum or be close to it when you have been using alcohol or drugs or if you are on your menstrual cycle. A drum feast is often held in the spring and fall to honor the drums that will be used during

the year. Drums are often kept in a cloth container in a sacred place.

Drumstick or Dewe'iganaatig is the instrument that brings sound to the drum. There are many types of drum sticks and traditions that go along with it that vary from tribe to tribe. Some people refer the drumstick as being part of the Thunderbirds. Others say it is the arm of the Creator. This article must be shown respect when it is carried. It can be placed with the hand drum or in a bag made for this purpose.

Rattle, Shaker or Zhiishiigwan is the instrument that brings a soft and pleasing sound. Sometimes it is made of a hollowed-out gourd with small stones or it can be made of rawhide that is sewn and shaped to a circle size and filled with stones. Teachings vary with the Zhiishiigwan. Some teachings talk about the sound of the shaker being like the first sound that was ever heard...a soft sound of the Creator calling his thought back from the nothingness...soft sounds like the seeds in a gourd. A shaker may be used in a sweat lodge. It is said the spirits are called with the sounding of the shaker and singing of a song. This sound is very healing.

Eagle Feather or Migizi Miigwan is a very sacred item. It is said that even the mother eagle will recognize the feather of her children. It is sacred because the eagle or Migizi is the bird that flies closest to the Creator. In the old traditional ways, you had to earn the right to own an eagle feather and it was a great honor to receive one.

Usually an eagle feather is kept in a cedar box or a special container that keeps it safe from the elements. It is often wrapped in red cloth and white cedar is placed with it. Like all things that are sacred, it is not to be used or approached while under the influence of alcohol or drugs or on your Moontime menstrual cycle. Eagle clan people often have eagle clan feasts, where the eagle feathers are cleaned and given cedar oil to preserve and protect the feather.

Respecting and Honoring Sacred Items and Bundles

Some people display their sacred items in a special room or on something called an altar, which can be a table or shelf used only for that purpose. Others keep them in a bundle until they are ready to be used in a ceremony. Some people leave their feathers out as a way to create calmness in their homes.

People feast their bundles of sacred items four times a year with each season or twice a year in the spring and in the fall. Some people feast them every time they do a ceremony.

All effort was made to keep these teaching pure and simple. For more information or to ask questions about these Sacred items or Bundles, offer tobacco to your tribal elder or spiritual leader. Megwetch. Thank you.

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Helping and Healing from all Directions



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