

# Nicole Bell's construction of the Anishinaabe Medicine Wheel teachings for Indigenous education

*By Nicole Bell*



*Medicine Wheel by Nicole Bell*

Medicine Wheel teachings provide insight into Indigenous knowledge and worldview. The Medicine Wheel diagram reviews the gifts of each of the directions as informed by Cree Elder Michael Thrasher.

In the east, the gift of vision is found, where one is able to see. In the south, one spends time in which to relate to the vision. In the west, one uses the gift of reason to figure it out. In the north, one uses the gift of movement to do or actualize the vision. In-depth searching for knowledge is what leads to wisdom.

Wisdom is achieved by first becoming aware of the learning through all the senses, requiring the learning to be introduced to the students in multiple modalities. Understanding is achieved by providing students with enough time to solidify the learning so that they are able to replicate the learning. A deeper understanding is achieved by students relating to the learning at a deeper level to become knowledgeable to the point that they are able to apply the learning in any situation. To say that the students have achieved wisdom requires that they are able to create some action with the learning and teach it to others.

Building from these understandings, Indigenous knowledge embraced by Medicine Wheels can be defined as wholeness, interrelationships, interconnections, and balance/respect. Wholeness requires that we look in entirety; that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, yet the parts cannot be fully seen until the shape of the whole can be seen. Interrelationship requires that we establish a personal relationship with the "whole" – with all that surrounds us. In addition, we must establish a relationship with our whole being; this includes our spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional aspects. Interconnections create an environment which is mutually sustaining; where there is a transcending of logic and linear thought to reveal synthesis and dynamic interdependence. Balance and respect provide an order and structure to the whole and all its relationships and interconnections, while providing an appreciation for the "awe" of it all.

While Indigenous worldview articulates that Indigenous people need to develop themselves, including their children, in a holistic way that addresses their spiritual, physical, emotional, and mental capacities, they need to address how to transmit learning through all of those personal aspects. The spiritual can be touched through ceremony, teachings, and stories. The physical can be transmitted through the land, while the emotional aspect can be developed through a balanced connection between the heart and the head. Mental capacities can be developed through ancestral languages and integrative learning.

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For more information on **Medicine Wheel**, please visit [www.cea-ace.ca](http://www.cea-ace.ca)