



These “basic laws of life” are benchmarks for westerners who wish to learn indigenous protocol as a westerner. A few of the laws are presented by Wil Numkena (*The Sacred Tree*, Four Worlds Dev. Press):

- Treat every person, from the tiniest child to the oldest elder, with respect at all times.
- Special respect should be given to elders, parents, teachers, and community leaders.
- Touch nothing that belongs to someone else (especially sacred objects) without permission or an understanding between you.
- Respect the privacy of every person. Never intrude on a person’s quiet moments or personal space.
- Never walk between people who are conversing.
- Never interrupt people who are conversing.
- Speak in a soft voice, especially when you are in the presence of elders, strangers, or others to whom special respect is due.
- Do not speak unless invited to do so at gatherings where elders are present (except to ask what is expected of you, should you be in doubt).

- Treat the Earth and all of her aspects as your mother. Show deep respect for the mineral world, the plant world, and the animal world. Do nothing to pollute the air or soil. If others would destroy our Mother, rise up with wisdom to defend her.
- Show deep respect for the beliefs and religions of others.
- Listen with courtesy to what others say, even if you feel that what they are saying is worthless. Listen with your heart.
- Listen to the elders, for their words are the wisdom of experience, truth, honesty and foresight.
- Be truthful at all times, and under all conditions.
- Always treat your guests with honor and consideration. Give of your best food, your best blankets, the best part of your house, and your best service to your guests.
- To serve others, to be of some use to family, community, nation or the world is one of the main purposes for which human beings have been created.
- Observe moderation and balance in all things.
- Know those things that lead to your well being, and those things that lead to your destruction.

- Listen to and follow the guidance given to your heart. Expect guidance to come in many forms – in prayer, in dreams, in times of quiet solitude and in the words and deeds of wise elders and friends.