



**SIXTEEN GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR BUILDING A
SUSTAINABLE, HARMONIOUS, AND PROSPEROUS
WORLD**

Starting from within, working in a circle, in a sacred manner, we heal ourselves, our relationships, and our world.

STARTING FROM WITHIN

Human Beings Can Transform Their World

The web of our relationships with others and the natural world, which has given rise to the problems we face as a human family, can be changed.

Development Comes From Within

The process of human and community development unfolds from within each person, relationship, family organization, community, or nation.

No Vision, No Development

A vision of who we can become and what a sustainable world would be like, works as a powerful magnet, drawing us to our potential.

Healing Is A Necessary Part Of Development

Healing the past, closing up old, and learning healthy habits of thought and action to replace dysfunctional

thinking and disruptive patterns of human relations is a necessary part of the process of sustainable development.

WORKING IN A CIRCLE

Interconnectedness

All is related to everything else: therefore, any aspect of our healing and development is connected to all the others (personal, social, cultural, political, economic, etc.). When we work on any one part, the whole circle is affected.

No Unity, No Development

Unity means oneness. Without unity, the universal oneness that makes (seemingly) separate human beings into 'community' is impossible. Disunity is the primary disease of community.

No Participation, No Development

Participation is the active engagement of the minds, hearts, and energy of the people in the process of their healing and development.

Justice

Every person (regardless of gender, race, age, culture, religion, sexual orientation) has the right and is accorded equal opportunity to participate in the process of healing and development and to receive a fair share of the benefits.

IN A SACRED MANNER

Spirit

Human beings are both material and spiritual, in nature. It is therefore inconceivable that the human community could become whole and sustainable without bringing our lives into balance with the requirements of our spiritual nature.

Morals and Ethics

Sustainable human and community development requires a moral foundation centered in the wisdom of the heart. When this foundation is lost, morals and ethical principles, and development stop.

The Hurt of One Is the Hurt of All: The Honor of One Is the Honor Of All

The basic fact of our oneness as a human family means that development for some at the expense of well being for others is not acceptable or sustainable.

Authentic Development Is Culturally Based

Healing and development must be rooted in the wisdom, and living processes of the cultures of the people.

WE HEAL AND DEVELOP OURSELVES, OUR RELATIONSHIPS AND OUR WORLD

Learning

Human beings are learning beings. We begin learning while we are still in our mother's wombs, and unless something happens to close off our minds and paralyze our capacities, we keep learning throughout our entire lives. Learning is at the core of healing and development.

Sustainability

To sustain something means to enable it to continue for a long time. Authentic development does not use up or undermine what it needs to keep ongoing.

Move to the Positive

Solving the critical problems in our lives and communities is best approached by visualizing and moving into the positive alternative that we wish to create, and by building on the strengths, we already have, rather than on giving away our energy fighting the negative.

Be the Change You Want To See

The most powerful strategies for change always involve positive role modeling and the creation of living examples of the solutions we are proposing. By walking the path, we make the way visible.

What's a Guiding Principle?

A guiding principle, as we are using the term is a statement of a basic truth about some aspect of the process of human and community transformation. It articulates what works or what doesn't, what is needed, what must be avoided, how the process must proceed, and what it must include if the outcome is to be authentic human well-being and prosperity, and not some counterfeit. And there are many counterfeits. Much is said and done in the name of "health progress", "development", "improvement" and "prosperity" that either end up benefiting a few at the expense of many others,

benefitting no one, or else bringing real harm to people or to the earth.

A More In-Depth Presentation of the Sixteen Principles.

The following is a more in-depth presentation of the Four Worlds Guiding Principles for Building a Sustainable and Harmonious World. These Guiding Principles are the outcome of consultations and experiences with Indigenous Elders, Spiritual Leaders, and communities from across the Americas and around the world, as well as a systematic reflection and distillation of the best thinking of development practitioners globally, for more than 53 years. There are many ways that these Guiding Principles can be expressed, and so these are offered as a work in progress, which needs to be adapted by each community for their own particular needs and ways of expressing themselves.

1.Human Beings Can Transform Their World-The web of our relationships with others and the natural world, which has given rise to the problems we face as a human family, can be changed.

The conditions of our lives are not unchangeable givens. We are not trapped in the world as we know and experience it. How things are now is not how they always were or how they will always be in the future. Indeed, change is the most fundamental characteristic of our

universe. Although many of us live within the illusion of permanence, the reality is that our lives and the world around us are in a constant state of change.

Many challenges and difficulties we face as human beings everywhere on Mother Earth are either the result of our own actions or those of other members of the Human Family. To a considerable extent, people make the human experience what it is. Because we don't understand the natural laws that govern the physical and spiritual worlds we live in, we violate each other and the natural world upon which all life on Mother Earth depends. As a Human Family, we dwell within the web of relationships we have made with other peoples, nations, nature, and the spiritual world. The hurt of one is the hurt of all and the honor of all is the honor of all.

The totality of the impact that the web of all these relationships has on our lives, on our future generations and on our Mother Earth itself is what can be referred to as humanity's challenges. Prosperity and poverty, sickness and wellness, justice and oppression, war and peace -- all of these are products of the impact of these fundamental human relationships.

It is of the utmost value to know that these relationships can be changed. It may be very challenging and arduous, it may take great vision, sacrifice, and effort, and it may require time and patience to unfold, but everyone needs

to know that healing and development are not only possible but inevitable!

In practice, the application of this principle implies making a shift from being a passive recipient, or victim of the realities and conditions within which we find ourselves living; in other words, "stepping into history" (Freire, 1970). Moving from the passive to the active state begins in consciousness. It begins from within. It begins in how we see ourselves within the process of life as it unfolds.

This active approach of entering into a creative relationship with life, and of consciously making choices that will lead to the making of a better world is the choice of "stepping into history." Gandhi and his followers did it in India. Millions did it in the former Soviet Union. Nelson Mandela and the ANC did it in South Africa. Occupy Wall Street, that morphed into Idle No More, Mni Wiconi, Ending the Tar Sands related pipelines, and the Twelve Step Movements and others are part of this on-going change, as well. In 2020 we are stepping into forging history of the beginning of world peace by 2030.

Development Comes from Within

2. The process of human and community development unfolds from within each person, relationship, family organization, community, or nation.

The process of human and community development unfolds from within each person, relationship, family, organization, community, or nation. Outsiders can often provide catalytic support in the form of inspiration, technical backstopping, training or simple love and caring. But because the essence of what development is entails learning and the transformation of consciousness, there is no way to escape the need for an inner-directed flow of energy.

For example, a child learning to ride a bicycle may need a certain amount of encouragement, and may even require a bigger person running alongside her to support the bike while she learns how to balance. Still, there is no getting around the need for the child herself to get up on the bike and to try to ride it. No amount of explaining, or riding the bike back and forth in front of the child to demonstrate how to ride, will replace doing it. As well, sooner or later, the person guiding the learning has to let go of the bike and let the rider move forward into full control of their destiny.

In a similar way, people who are struggling to learn new patterns of life and to transform their world need to create and guide change processes themselves, if those processes are to be effective and sustainable. Our individual and collective Development comes from within.

3. Healing is a Necessary Part of Development

Healing the past, closing up old wounds, and learning healthy habits of thought and action to replace dysfunctional thinking and disruptive patterns of human relations is a necessary part of the process of sustainable and harmonious development.

Many wonderful projects and programs have been destroyed because the people involved in them were unable to trust each other, to work together, to communicate without alienating one another, or to refrain from undermining each other, tearing each other down and attacking each other. No matter how great the idea or vision the inability to trust and heal ultimately destroys the very best of our efforts to serve the greatest good for the People!

In some communities, alcohol and drugs and other addictive behaviors destroy human potential and cause people to retreat within themselves to deal with problems that can only be addressed in cooperation with others. In other communities, generations of in-fighting and mutual hostility across family, cultural, clans, religious or political lines block any chances of unified action. In still other organizations and communities, certain personalities or groups hold the reins of power, and thereby control the conversation of the community

to such an extent that other people simply fall silent and retreat in frustration.

Many of us, because of our family backgrounds and personal histories, carry a great deal of resentment, fear, anger, intergenerational trauma, or numbness that serves to paralyze us in terms of building effective relationships with other people. We must always remember that these old unresolved hurts, intergenerational traumas, and the resulting habitual responses to hurt others before they can hurt us, maybe there for a good reason.

Some people (and sometimes whole populations) have experienced horrendous suffering, and are carrying the burden of unresolved grief, pain, trauma, and conflict within them. It is therefore critical for all human beings to learn that these learned habits of the heart, mind, and body from unresolved pain and suffering and the dysfunctional behaviors that go with them can be overcome and left behind. The holistic processes for doing just that are what we mean when we say "healing and recovery". As long as these dysfunctional habits and behaviors remain in place, people will be handicapped, paralyzed, and blocked from fully participating in personal and community development processes.

4. No Vision, No Development

A vision of whom we can become and what a sustainable and harmonious world would be like works as a powerful magnet, drawing us, individually and collectively, to our full potential. Where there is no vision, there is no development.

If people cannot imagine a condition other than the one they live within now, then they are trapped. It is only when we are able to see ourselves in terms of our potential and within healthier and more sustainable conditions that we can begin to move towards creating those conditions within ourselves and in our relationships with the world around us.

Helping people to develop a vision of a healthier, more sustainable and harmonious future that they can believe in and identify with is, therefore, one of the primary building blocks of success in the work of healing and development.

5. Healing and Development Processes Need to be Rooted in the Culture of the People

Healing and development must be rooted in the wisdom, knowledge, and living processes of the culture of the people. Culture may be described as the software of the mind. It shapes how people think, learn, and solve problems, what they value and respect, what attracts and

delights them, what offends them, and their sense of what is appropriate.

More deeply, culture is the soil in which the tree of identity has its roots. People's sense of who they are, and of their self-efficacy is bound up in their (often unconscious) connections to their cultures. To disconnect or alienate people from their cultural foundations is like plucking a plant from the soil in which it is rooted.

The renowned futurist, Willis Harman, had this to say about culture:

"Whole societies can perceive things that observers from other cultures do not, so we have to be cautious about claiming that some class of experience is universal."

This implies that whole cultural communities may actually experience phenomena such as alcohol and drug abuse, success and failure, love and hate, and other experiences differently than another.

Not only do distinct cultures have unique perceptions not experienced by other cultures, but they also have unique gifts and abilities. They can know things, see things, experience things, and do things that people from other cultures cannot. This is a very important understanding. It means that each distinct cultural group has community members with unique strengths and capacities upon

which healing and development can be based. You cannot build on what is wrong or missing. You have to build on who people actually are and what they have. It also means that the effective approaches for solving actual social and economic problems may look very different in different cultural communities.

Following is a list of some key areas related to healing and development that need to be guided from within the culture of the people. We spell out those points in some detail in order to stress that almost all cultures have ways of doing all of these things. It is very important to help people to discover their own ways of addressing each of these areas.

a. The process used for consultation, for decision making, and for reaching consensus.

b. The analysis of current realities, conditions, and needs.

c. The interpretation of how the past has shaped the present and how outside influences have affected everyday life.

d. A description of a sustainable future that is desirable and possible (i.e. a vision).

e. An articulation of the values and principles that will guide development action.

f. The selection and priority setting of the goals of development.

g. The selection of healing and program strategies.

h. The making of the plans.

i. How the health development promoting organization is structured and how the program functions, who controls it, how it runs on a day-to-day basis, who is selected to work in it (and how this selection is made), how the organization fosters the participation of the people it serves, how conflicts are dealt with, how accountability is handled, and how money is managed.

j. The indicators of success that are chosen.

k. Evaluation of the process and the outcomes.

l. How healing and development experiences are interpreted and plowed back into new analysis and new efforts.

6. Interconnectedness: The Holistic Approach

Everything is connected to everything else. Therefore, every aspect of our healing and development is related to all the others (personal, social, cultural, political,

economic, etc.). When we work on any one part, the whole circle is affected.

The primary implication of the Guiding Principle of Interconnectedness for development practice is the requirement of taking a whole systems approach. This means that we can only really understand a particular development challenge in terms of the relationships between that issue and the rest of the life-world in which that issue is rooted.

For example, in many Indigenous communities, alcohol and drug abuse cannot be understood by focusing on the medical fact of chemical dependency. It is only when we consider the historical and cultural context in which the abuse is taking place that it becomes clear how substance abuse (in those communities) is a social phenomenon with profound spiritual roots. Once this was recognized, many North American Indigenous communities began to address the issue of alcoholism and drug abuse by combining personal healing, counseling, economic development, cultural and spiritual revitalization. All of these dimensions needed to be addressed on a community-wide basis before individuals in significant numbers began to leave alcohol and other drugs behind. Many communities that have taken this holistic approach have gone far toward eliminating

alcoholism and drug abuse from their community systems.

The Guiding Principle of Interconnectedness provides critical guidelines for community work. Personal growth and healing, the strengthening of families and community development must all go hand-in-hand. Working at any one of these levels without attending to the others is not enough. Personal and social development, as well as top-down and bottom-up approaches must be balanced. This is the true meaning of a holistic approach to community development.

7. The Hurt of One is the Hurt of All and the Honour of One is the Honour of All.

Since everything in our world is connected to everything else, how much more must we as human beings be connected to each other? The basic fact of our prior unity and oneness as a Human Family has always been known and understood by the wise, and often lost sight of and even opposed by the frightened and the foolish. Nevertheless, the reality is that what happens to some of us really does happen to all of us. This principle has profound implications for human and community development.

The point is this: we all live in a shared social environment. We have recently begun to learn that if we

poison the air we breathe and the water we drink (i.e. the environmental commons), we are poisoning ourselves. Similarly, if we poison our relationships with other people who live in the same social world as we do (the social commons), then we and our children will sooner or later discover that we have poisoned our own lives.

The primary implications for community healing and development of the principle, "The hurt of one is the hurt of all and the honor of one is the honor of all," are fairly straightforward:

- a. Development for some at the expense of well-being for others is not sustainable (and will cause long-term harm to the community).*
- b. It is vital to foster a spirit of mutual respect and cooperation, such that improvements and accomplishments in the lives of some people are seen to be an achievement for the whole community.*
- c. Similarly, it is essential that the community believes (and acts upon the belief) that the misfortune of anyone is the concern of everyone.*

This principle directly challenges the popular dominant cultural doctrine that every individual is responsible only for him or herself, that the community bears no responsibility for the well-being of its members, and that individual prosperity is born of individual effort and merit

alone. We now know that the doctrines of individualism and materialism are dangerously blind to the consequences of ignoring our fundamental interconnectedness as human beings. In the process of creating a sustainable human community, these doctrines (along with all types of racism and religious intolerance) are a virulent ideological contagion. They are death to sustainable human well-being and prosperity.

What we think about expands in our lives. If we espouse separateness, we create it. For this reason, increasing the community's capacity to see itself as inter-connected -- as one -- is a very powerful strategy for generating sustained cooperative action. Because we live in a world of competing dreams and ideologies, it is vital to nurture and deepen the community's ability to be animated by the vision of our common oneness and our mutual responsibility to serve and protect one another.

8. No Unity, No Development-Unity means oneness. Without unity the common oneness that makes (seemingly) separate human beings into a community is impossible. Disunity is the primary disease of community.

Science tells us that the physical universe is made up of trillions upon trillions of tiny particles called atoms, bound together in fields of energy. These energy fields take many different shapes and patterns: stars and

planets, trees and rocks, fish and fowl, and human beings. Clearly, there is some cohesive force that holds the particles together in the forms that we see in our world.

Imagine what would happen if the cohesive force that holds all of the particles together that make up the Rocky Mountains were to disappear. The mountains would simply crumble into dust.

In the human world, the cohesive force that binds us all together is love. While most spiritual traditions on Mother Earth have been trying to tell us this since the beginning of recorded history, science is now beginning to come to grips with it. We have now learned, for example, that people who feel the love, and caring of family, friends, and community have stronger immune systems, and are therefore more resistant to disease than people who feel isolated, and cut off. From another perspective, the gravity that holds together our physical world could be called, "Metaphysical Love."

Human beings are connected to each other in a complex web of relationships for mutual support and cooperation, it doesn't matter what area of life these links focus on (governance, economics, recreation, the arts, etc.).

If the feelings between the people are right, then the enterprise will probably flourish. Conversely, if the

feelings go bad, the operation will probably fall apart, no matter how bright the plans and strategies of the group may be.

What is critical to realize is that building, and monitoring collective oneness (i.e. community) requires the involvement of the human heart and spirit, as well as our minds (thinking) and our physical energies (i.e. time and work).

Unity is the term we use for the cohesive force that holds communities of people together. It is a fact of our nature as human beings that we need the love, support, caring and respect for others in our struggle to heal ourselves and develop our communities. Unity is the starting place for development, and as development unfolds, unity deepens. The strategic implications of this vital principle for community healing and development are that restoring and maintaining unity must be seen as a prerequisite at the foundation of the community healing process.

9. No Participation, No Development

Participation is the active engagement of the minds, hearts, and energy of people in the process of their own healing and development. Because of the nature of what development really is, unless there is meaningful and effective participation, there is no development.

On the personal level, we use the term volition (the exercise of human will) to refer to the capacity to focus, to choose, to adopt goals, to persevere and to complete what we set out to do. We refer to this capability as willpower. Nothing can be achieved in our life (and all of our hidden potentials will remain dormant) unless and until we engage our own volition. As human beings, we must direct our energies toward a goal in order to achieve it.

This is also true of communities, and the collective will of the community is engaged in the process of participation. Since authentic development is driven from within, through learning (i.e. acquiring capacity) for personal and social transformation, there is no escaping the necessity of involving the people whose development is being promoted in every aspect of the process.

Participation is to development as movement is to dance or the making of sound is to music. If you take away sound, you have no music. If you take away participation, you have no development.

10. No Justice, No Development

The principle of justice in development implies that every person must be treated with respect as a human being, regardless of gender, race, age, culture, sexual orientation, religion, or personal beliefs. This means that

every person must be accorded equal opportunity to participate in the processes of healing and development and to receive a fair share of the benefits. Unless development is driven and guided by the quest for social and economic justice, some people will always benefit at the expense of others. And when some people become enriched through a process which at the same time impoverishes others, sustainable community (common oneness) is impossible. The circle has been broken.

This type of "development" is one of the primary causes for the alienation of hundreds of millions of youth around the world from their communities and cultures. It is often the principal cause of the breakdown of law and order and the real source of many ethnic conflicts, some of them prolonged and deadly.

Unless justice animates all that we do in human and community work, what we are doing is not development.

11. Spirit

Spirituality is at the center of authentic healing and development. The vast majority of people on earth understand that, as human beings, we are both material and spiritual in nature. It is therefore inconceivable that human communities could become whole and sustainable without bringing our lives into balance with the requirements of our spiritual life.

In down-to-earth terms, this understanding implies the following:

- a. Putting the love of the Creator (the Unknowable Essence, God the Life-giver) in the center of every relationship, every meeting, and every activity.*
- b. Drawing on the wisdom, teachings, principles, laws, and guidance that come from the rich spiritual traditions of the people to inform our understanding of the goals, purposes, and methods of development.*
- c. Practicing life-preserving, life-enhancing values, , and ethics (such as honesty, kindness, and forgiveness).*
- d. Strengthening our spiritually based development capacities, which include:*
 - i. the ability to have a vision, dream or a goal that describes our potential (i.e. what we could become);*
 - ii. the capacity to believe in that vision, dream or goal to such an extent that one is able to align one's heart and mind to its achievement;*
 - iii. The capacity to express that vision, dream or goal through language, mathematics or the arts;*
 - iv. the capacity to actualize that vision, or goal through the exercise of our volition (i.e. our will) to choose, plan,*

initiate, persevere through, and complete processes of growth and development.

How spirituality is expressed depends entirely on the culture and religious perspectives of the people. There is no right way or wrong way. Or, as one elder Metis woman in a northern Saskatchewan community put it, "The Creator is not in competition with Himself." It is certainly true that people fight over religion, and that it can be made a source of contention, prejudice, and disunity. The problem in these cases is not spirituality, but the lack of it. Spirituality is not a religion nor is it tied to any particular set of beliefs. When viewed in a spiritual light, all people are the children of the same Creator. The differences between us are insignificant. Our reality is oneness. From that place, the most powerful force in development is love. It is the cohesive force of love that makes a community, and life itself, possible. Without love between the hearts of the people, healing and development are not possible. And when love is present, solutions can usually be found for even the most difficult of problems.

12. Ethics and Morals

Sustainable human and community development requires an ethical foundation. When morals decline and basic ethical principles are violated, development stops. Essentially, moral and ethical standards describe how

human beings must think and act toward themselves, the Creator, each other, and our beloved Mother Earth. There has never been a successful society in human history that did not have moral standards, laws, and protocols that people were required to follow.

Moral and ethical standards are not mere limitations imposed on our freedom by the conservative or the prudish. On the contrary, these rules describe where the boundaries of well-being may be found. They are like highway signs that tell us to slow down on this corner, to be careful on that hill, or to drive with caution when the road is slippery. We can choose to ignore them, but we do so at our own peril.

In healing and development work, the violation of moral and ethical standards can destroy months and even years of good work. Like a young plant just breaking ground and experiencing the heat of the sun and the strength of the wind and weather for the first time, developing people are often very vulnerable. It doesn't take much to destroy their faith and confidence in themselves, or in the processes of growth. In those early stages, people often look to their facilitative leaders and professional helpers to be role models for wellness. In a sense, these facilitators are living proof that the process is real, and that the dreams people have dared to believe in can come true. Later, when they become stronger and more self-reliant, they will learn to see the strength they

are looking for within themselves. But even then, the violation of ethical and moral standards can seriously undermine personal growth, healing, and community development processes. The most common violations that cause trouble all over the world are the following:

a. Dishonesty - lies told to the people, covering mistakes; stealing money; hiding self-serving agendas and purposes.

b. Sexual Misconduct - sexual relations between professionals and clients, or trainers and community learners or sexual abuse of children or the weak and vulnerable (ranging from seduction to rape, but always containing the element of the more powerful taking advantage of the weak and vulnerable).

c. Alcohol and Drug Abuse - ranging from closet addictions to open drunkenness. This problem usually causes many others, such as accidents, a breakdown of morality, and a general collapse of discipline, responsibility, and the quality of work.

d. Backbiting, Slander, and Gossip - speaking negatively about others, or spreading "information" calculated to undermine the reputation and the public trust and confidence of others is one of the most destructive behaviors impacting the heart and soul of community wellness. This is because such behavior destroys unity. It

sets up barriers between the hearts and minds of people. It corrodes trust and rots away common oneness. Nothing dampens the enthusiasm of the people for participation in community healing development activities more effectively than poisonous talk. Usually, at the root of such talk may be found hurt, jealousy, or competition for power, influence, or money

13. Learning

Human beings are learning beings. We begin learning while we are still in our mother's wombs, and unless something happens to close off our minds and paralyze our capacities, we keep on learning throughout our entire lives.

Learning is the process of acquiring new information, knowledge, wisdom, , or capabilities that enable us to meet new challenges and to further develop our potential. Learning leads to relatively enduring changes in behavior. Individuals, families, organizations, communities, and even whole nations of people need to learn.

Because learning is the key dynamic at the heart of human development (in one sense, since we can say that human development is a process of learning), there is no way of separating learning from the process of community development either. Unless people are

learning, community development is not happening. This principle tells us that the promotion of various kinds of learning is an important part of what individuals and agencies that are facilitating community healing and development initiatives must be done.

For purposes of devising learning strategies in healing and development work, we have found that distinguishing the following categories (or types) of learning has been helpful.

a. Critical Learning - enabling people to learn to analyze their own situations and behaviors, as well as the social, economic, political and cultural forces that influence their lives, and to uncover the root cause of situations that require change. Critical learning is directly related to transformation. It is learning to see and to articulate the obstacles and barriers to development that exist both within us and around us.

b. Transformational Learning - enabling people to see possibilities and potentials within themselves, and to envision a sustainable, and attainable future. Transformational learning is also learning to generate and sustain the processes of healing and development that constitute the journey to a sustainable life.

c. Relational Learning - refers to learning for inter-personal well-being. Relational learning involves the

acquisition of virtues and the practice of values that promote good human relations. It also involves learning the skills and positive interaction patterns that lead to healthy human relations. Relational learning requires learning together with other people because much of what needs to be learned is connected to the habits of thinking and acting that only arise when people are together.

d. Operational Learning - refers to everything we need to learn in order to accomplish what we need to do in the process of healing and development. Operational learning includes acquiring:

i. information,

ii. in-depth knowledge and wisdom,

iii. new skills,

iv. new behaviors and habits, and

v. new values and attitudes.

14. Sustainability

To sustain something means to enable it to continue for a long time. In community healing and development, we can think of sustainability in a number of ways.

a. Program or prosperity sustainability - refers to the life and vitality of the community's own process of learning and growth. Funders often ask how communities will sustain the process after the money has run out. A process that can only go as far as the money goes is not sustainable. Usually, process sustainability is linked to community ownership and to the level of freedom from dependency thinking. Communities that depend on government or other outside funds and on professionals to initiate, , and sustain their community healing and development activities cannot be said to be engaged in sustainable processes.

b. Environmental (or bio-system) sustainability - refers to the well-being of the natural systems upon which all life on earth depends. The quality of air, water and soils, the preservation of fish and wildlife habitat, and of forests, inland waterways, reefs and oceans, biodiversity and the integrity of the gene pools at the base of life are all issues related to the sustainability of the natural environment. The global environmental crisis is the result of many people in many places taking actions that may have brought wealth to some groups but has also caused serious damage to the natural environment upon which other people and future generations depend for their survival and well-being.

c. Social and cultural sustainability - refers to how development action impacts the social world of the

people. There are many kinds of development that bring one kind of improvement along with another kind of harm to communities. Community health, cohesiveness, , and culture are a few of the dimensions of life that can be affected. For example, along with the Alaska pipeline and North Slope development came an increase in alcohol and drug abuse and family violence and a disconnection from the land and their own culture for many Alaskan Native people. All over the world, dominant culture schooling educates the children of minority cultures into devaluing their own identity and mistrusting their own cultural resources. Very often when money comes into a community for a development project, people are pitted against each other for control of the process and for a share of the benefits. In each of these examples, one kind of benefit brought another kind of deficit.

d. *Economic sustainability* - refers to the continuous production of wealth and prosperity. If a community depends on fishing and has no other means of earning a livelihood, the ability of that community to sustain itself over the long run is utterly dependent on the continued abundance of fish stock, as well as on market conditions for the sale of fish. Clearly, economic sustainability (like biological sustainability) is enhanced by a diversity of strategies. Economic sustainability refers not only to producing wealth but also to the equitable distribution of

that wealth so that all members of the community can meet their basic needs.

e. Political sustainability - refers to the processes through which decisions are made and power is arranged and distributed. A community development process is not sustainable if the political forces against it are stronger than the political forces within it. For this reason, it is very important to win over the support of political leaders and organizations that control the political and economic environment in which community development is occurring.

There are many kinds of sustainability, as this brief discussion illustrates. The challenge to developing communities is to harmonize environmental, social, economic, and cultural needs, and not to promote one kind of development at the expense of another.

15. Move to the Positive

Solving the critical problems in our lives and communities is best approached by visualizing and moving into the positive alternative that we wish to create, and by building on the strengths we already have, rather than on giving away our energy fighting the negative. Whatever we think about expands. Try not thinking about Miss Piggy, or not thinking about anything. The only way you can do it is to think about something

else. If we think about how sick or weak or incapable we are, we give strength and endurance to the very weakness we wish to escape. If we always think about all the things we don't like about another person, those are the very things we see and reinforce (whether negatively or positively) in our interactions with them.

Likewise, in community health development work, it is much more fruitful to focus energy on building the alternative than it is to try to oppose and undermine what we do not like. This in no way implies that we should allow injustice or unhealthy conditions to continue. The principle of moving to the action suggests that we should clearly visualize what it is we wish to achieve in terms of positive conditions (health, prosperity, social justice, racial unity) and begin building that. Instead, many people focus their program energies on trying to eliminate the perceived obstacles to the things they wish to achieve.

Consider the example of disunity in a community. One approach to solving this problem might be to identify the people we believe are the source of the problem and to attempt to convince them to change. Unfortunately, when confronted with a challenge to one's character or personal behavior, many people become defensive. A usual response includes one or all of the following: a) deny that there is a problem, b) discredit the person who challenges you, c) blame someone else for the problem,

or d) justify the behavior for which one is being criticized and increase it.

Another approach to disunity would be to gather together those people who want unity and to begin to behave toward each other in a unified way. The result of this strategy is that you have created unity. Other people can join this new pattern, but if they wish to partake of its benefits, they will need to behave according to the principles and rules that produce unity.

While this may be a somewhat simplified example, it is, in fact, a very powerful community healing and development strategy. Many North American Indigenous communities have already created sobriety movements that will eventually end the terrible burden of community alcoholism using this approach. Recovering alcoholics and non-drinkers formed core groups and worked on their own healing as well as the creation of healthy human relations between them. Gradually these islands of health attracted others, and the core groups grew in strength and influence until a critical mass was reached and whole communities were transformed.

16. Be the Change You Want to See

"Be the change you want to see." These words came from Gandhi, the great transformational leader of India who led a peaceful revolution that succeeded in freeing

his country from British colonial rule. Essentially what he meant was that trying to convince other people to change doesn't work. If people wanted liberation from British rule and a return to the positive cultural values of all of India, then they would need to begin to act as if that transformation had already occurred. By becoming the alternative (i.e. be the change you want to see), you have in fact created that alternative. This "Walk your Talk" perspective, is at the heart of Indigenous wisdom everywhere!

This guiding principle also applies to development-promoting organizations. A sick organization cannot promote health. A team crippled with in-fighting and disunity cannot build "community" in the world. Unless our institutions reflect the principles and values we espouse in our work with the people, why should anyone take us seriously? By walking the path, we make the path visible.

The most powerful strategies for change always involve positive role modeling and the creation of living examples of the solutions we are proposing. That is why, as development practitioners, we must strive to be living examples of the changes we wish to see in the world.

Brief History of the Four Worlds Guiding Principles for Building a Sustainable, Harmonious and Prosperous World



The Four World's Sixteen Indigenous Principles for Building a Harmonious and Sustainable World emerged from an extensive process of consultation with Indigenous spiritual, cultural, and community leaders, spanning more than two decades.

This consultation process began with a Historic Gathering that took place, December 27-30, 1982, on the high plains of Southern Alberta. This gathering of forty Indigenous Elders, Spiritual Leaders, and Community Leaders came together to find a solution to the terrible darkness of substance abuse, poverty, suffering, and death, that seemed to have engulfed nearly every Indigenous community in Canada and the United States, and to share Indigenous Visions and Prophecies of the future.

Four core principles emerged from this Traditional Council that became the foundation and guiding framework for extensive development, learning, and action in hundreds of communities around the world. These four core principles are as follows:

1. Development From Within

Healing and growth must come from within the communities of people who desire change and must be directed by those people.

2. No Vision; No Development

If people have no vision of human possibility other than the one in which they find themselves, they cannot heal themselves; they cannot develop and, ultimately, they cannot survive. Culture is the mother of vision. Developing people need to rediscover the life-preserving, life-enhancing , and insights of their own traditional experience.

3. Individual and Community Development are connected.

The development of individuals and the development of their families and communities go hand-in-hand. Personal and social developments are interdependent.

4. A great Learning enterprise is required.

Learning drives the process of development. People have to learn how to live in the world as individuals, families, and communities in new ways that are life-preserving and life-enhancing. Learning is a fundamental dynamic of human development.

Four years after the initial gathering (in February 1987) another Elders' Conference was called to review the work underway, and the original four principles were expanded to seven, adding (at the direction of elders and spiritual leaders attending the second visioning conference) such concepts as "the spiritual and moral dimensions of development are inescapable"; "development must be shaped and guided from within the culture of the people", and the importance of integrating the "top-down and bottom-up approaches", because both grassroots participation and strong leadership, as well as effective institutions, are needed.

In July 1991, the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) and the Four Worlds International Institute (FWII), sponsored a gathering of Indigenous Elders and Spiritual Leaders of Turtle Island, in Loveland, Colorado, to further discuss the Guiding Principles and Indigenous visions and

prophesies of the future. This gathering resulted in the formation of the AISES Council of Elders.

Finally, for seven days, in the summers of 1993 and 1994, Summer Institutes were held at the University of Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada, attended by some five hundred Indigenous peoples each year, for reflection and dialogue on their experiences in healing and developing their communities. Based on this in-depth reflection and consultation process, Sixteen Guiding Principles emerged from this participatory development process. These Guiding Principles reflect what works, and is needed, in the process of community transformation toward sustainable well-being, harmony, and prosperity.

It is important to note that these Sixteen Guiding Principles have been tested and reviewed by many Indigenous (and other) communities, and have been found to be a practical guide for positive transformational processes. A principle is not a recipe, however; it is a statement of fundamental truth. It describes the nature of things as they are, what is primary or essential, what works and what doesn't, what to include, and what cannot be left out.

These Sixteen Indigenous Guiding Principles reflect the experiences and distilled wisdom of hundreds of communities and Indigenous First Nations as they struggle to heal themselves and develop a sustainable, harmonious, pattern of life. Others may express these

Guiding Principles differently, with the same spiritual meaning.

Finally, it is important to stress that these Sixteen Guiding Principles, as with all life, are in the draft. They are not the last word. We have certainly not learned all that we have to learn. New guiding principles will emerge, and new insights about the meaning of the guiding principles we already know will come to light. Consider this an invitation to dialogue.

These Sixteen Principles were presented at the United Nations Headquarters in New York in March 1995

Presented to United Nations Secretary-General,

**Javier Pérez de Cuellar and the World Commission
on Culture and Development**

United Nations, New York City, New York, March 1995

Very Respected Friends and Relatives,

As always, it is my hope and prayer that you and the many loved ones who surround you are in the very best of health and happiness.

With the spiritual understanding that each one of us are representatives of all those beloved relatives, who walked the Red Road before us, I have complete faith

that, together, we will be able to build a just, new global civilization. Drawing on the collective consciousness of countless previous generations, we have the divine capacity to resolve and heal all past grief, fear, and broken trusts, while building a just, sustainable and harmonious world that will fully realize the unlimited potential of our Human Family, both individually and collectively.

We are living in the days of the fulfillment of sacred prophecies. An Elder once told me, "Grandson, the longest road you will ever have to walk in your life is the sacred journey from your head to your heart." Another wise Elder said, "We will never solve the many critical and life-threatening issues before us solely through the intellect, for every problem the intellect solves, it creates ten more." The intellect is a sacred gift of the Creator, but without an open, and creative heart, there is no wisdom. Both our heart and mind are gifts from our Creator and inseparably connected.

Countless centuries before the birth of our generations, the Ancient Ones gave us prophecies that foretold these very days that we are living. This new Divine Springtime is unfolding with ever-increasing clarity, as promised.

It is toward actualizing this long-held vision of the emergence of a new world civilization, founded in

spiritual principles and values, that I wish to share with you, from the innermost feelings and thoughts of my heart and mind.

In December 1982, on the high plains of Alberta, forty wise, respected, dedicated elders, spiritual, and community members from different Indigenous Communities across North America came together for four days and nights of in-depth purposeful consultation. Our common purpose was to develop a holistic model of human and community development, inspired and guided by organizing principles, values, strategies and processes of sustainable change, healing and growth rooted deep in the Natural Laws that are at the inmost heart and core of Indigenous cultures throughout Mother Earth.

Through this prayerful, elder-guided, consultation process emerged the spiritual guidance, understanding, wisdom, strength, vision, and faith that the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas, committed and dedicated to doing so, had the potential to develop sustainable, healthy, creative and spiritually balanced communities free of alcoholism and drug abuse.

This humble beginning, perfectly synchronized with a rare, full eclipse of the moon, was empowered, guided and sustained, by an ever-deepening understanding of

the natural laws, prophecies, spiritual values, and wisdom shared with us, over the years, by Elders, Spiritual Leaders, Visionaries, and our Indigenous Communities. With this patient, faithful and prayerful support, we have steadfastly continued our healing journey into our long-awaited future.

With the unfailing guidance and assistance from those beloved elders that are walking the path before us, it has become evident that the long spiritual wintertime of our Indigenous peoples is over and the long-awaited springtime is unfolding, slowly, but steadily, with ever-increasing beauty and healing in every direction. It is, also, apparent that as we heal ourselves and our communities that Indigenous peoples everywhere will have a higher and more significant role to play in the final unfolding of this dynamic change throughout Mother Earth.

Before outlining the fundamental guiding principles that have emerged from the ongoing consultative process of the past twelve years, it is crucial that we reflect briefly on the challenges before us. These are the critical and pressing challenges to be addressed, if we are to prosper as noble, just, compassionate, truthful, and forgiving human beings and societies.

(1) Environmental destruction is increasing throughout our Mother Earth. Along with this increasing

destruction, Indigenous peoples and their way of life are rapidly disappearing. Unless there is a dramatic change in our actions towards our sacred Mother Earth, humanity's ultimate survival is more than doubtful.

During the early years of North American's "new" ecological consciousness, my grandfather had a conversation with an old friend, while visiting the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in South Dakota. He asked my grandfather to explain to him what ecology was all about.

"Well," my grandfather said, "you know, Tahansi, Cousin, we have these educational places where you can go study books, talk and learn about life. Some people attend these learning places, for many, many years. After people have read enough books, written about what they , and talked about what they wrote about, they become what they call "Doctors of Life."

These Doctors then get jobs where they earn a lot of money, so they can read, talk and study more. They have machines that look at things that are very small and make them look big, other mechanisms that look at things far away and make them look close. They even put different materials in containers and pour

them back and forth so they can find out more about Mother Earth.

They have spent vast amounts of money and studied Mother Earth for many, many years, and they have recently made a discovery. They found out that everything is interrelated. They found out that when you pollute the air that all living things breathe and poison the water which all living things depend on, you pollute all living things. What do you think about that?"

The old man smiled knowingly and shook his head. "I was wondering when they would get around to that! Just look at what we do to our Mother Earth. We cut her hair where it should not be cut up and rip up her skin where it should not be ripped up, then we drill holes inside her and suck all of her blood out and put things inside of her and blow her bones up." He then looked deeply into the eyes of my grandfather, shook his finger and said, "And what would happen if you did that to your mother? She would die! We will all prematurely die, as well, if we do not learn to respect and understand the spirit and teachings of our Mother."

(2) Along with the dramatic increase in environmental destruction, natural disasters are synergistically and simultaneously increasing everywhere on Mother Earth. These natural disasters include; earthquakes, droughts, fires, hurricanes, weather changes, incurable

diseases, air, soil and water pollution, floods, tornadoes, insect infestations, and the destruction of the ozone layer and polar ice caps.

The Western medical complex is just beginning to realize that their worldwide war on “ending disease” is failing on many fronts. Super drugs have created “superbugs” that are breaking through every line of defense that has been created by Western Science, with little hope that more expensive and powerful drugs will prevent these super diseases from having a rapid, deadly, widespread global impact.

It is important to note, in desperation to find new “cures”; the Western Medical Complex is currently spending \$ Millions to research plants and herbs that were developed and utilized for countless centuries by Indigenous Science Systems, to find alternative ways to deal with these new, deadly, human-created diseases.

(3) The world’s population is increasing by more than 92,000,000 human beings every year, adding to a current world population of more than 5 billion. In fact, if every human being who now lives on Mother Earth were able to experience the average economic status found in middle-income homes in Canada and the US, we would need two more entire planets.

Until we thoroughly understand the true meaning of respect for all life, the sacred relationship between women and men, and the spiritual purpose of our physical existence, we will continue to move towards worldwide disaster. This change will not happen by force but through spiritual understanding.

(4) Global economic competition is increasing. The current world financial system is spinning out of control despite the best efforts of our nation-states to stabilize a system that no longer serves the needs of our human family. Instead of sovereignty, in its purest meaning, financial institutions of this world are attempting to manipulate and control our economic and social destiny for selfish purposes. For instance, global financial markets are increasingly being de-stabilized by financial speculators whose primary motive appears to be the unquenchable thirst for material riches, at whatever the cost to future generations. More economic theories and external controls will not solve this deepening crisis.

Only when our hearts experience the Divine Reality that there is just One Race, the Human Race and that all Mother Earth is the common spiritual heritage of all beings, and that the Hurt of One is the Hurt of All and the Honor of One, is the Honor of All, will we be able to develop economic systems that are life-preserving and life-sustaining. As a wise Elder once told me, whenever

we make a financial gain on the weakness of others or unfairly exploit others for our selfish purposes, we will pay a very high price. In essence, again, the hurt of one is the hurt of all, and the honor of one is the honor of all.

(5) The social and cultural disintegration of human beings and their communities is increasing with every passing day. Divorce, child sexual abuse, teenage pregnancy, substance abuse, family violence, abuse of women, violent crimes, , and other distinctive signs of our increasing spiritual sickness are as bright as the midday sun. Only when we can understand and embrace one another as members of the same Human Family will we have an everlasting foundation for rebuilding our communities and the world. As one of my grandfathers said to me, "You know, my grandson, the Great Spirit, Wakan Tanka, has given all people wisdom. To every living thing, he has given something special.

Some people receive their knowledge and understanding through books. In your life grandson, you too must read and study books, but remember to take with you on your journey only those things that bring more unity within yourself and others, that bring goodness and understanding and help us to serve one another in better ways.

Wakan Tanka also gave our Indigenous peoples, and all other human beings who live close to Mother Earth, knowledge and wisdom through dreams, visions, fasting, prayer, and the ability to see the lessons the Creator has put in every part of creation."

He said, "Look at those trees standing over there. The alder does not tell the pine tree to move over; the pine does not speak to the fir tree to get out of the way. Each tree stands there in unity, with their mouth pressed toward the same Mother Earth, refreshed and warmed by the same breeze and sun, with their arms raised in prayer and thanksgiving, protecting one another. If we are to have peace in the world, we too must learn to live like those trees.

Look, grandson, at the beautiful teachings the Creator has put in the little stream. Feel that water and see how gently and lovingly it touches your hands. It travels through deserts and mountains and many places, but it never turns its back on anyone or anything. Even though water gives life to all living things, it is very humble, and always seeks the very lowest spot. But water, also, has great faith, power, and patience for even if a mountain stands in its path, it keeps moving and moving until finally that mountain is washed into the sea and is no more. These are spiritual gifts and capacities that the Creator has given each one of us. If we are to be happy with ourselves and with one

another, we must always do the best we can to develop these sacred gifts and capacities.”

(6) As the old, outworn, global order becomes increasingly more unstable, governments will try and stop the social and political disintegration process by increasingly violating human rights. As these abuses increase, an even higher number of people will react to them with greater and greater resistance, including violence; resistance not only against governments but, also, the growing conflict between ethnic, faith, and racial groups as well.

The spiritual reality is that the old, global order, based on materialism, , and prejudice, is no longer able to meet the needs and the growing consciousness of our Human Family. Only by providing positive alternatives to our destructive and inharmonious patterns of living will we be able to rebuild our families and communities. Without love and forgiveness for ourselves and others, we will be unable to heal the age-old fear, mistrust, greed, selfishness, and hatred that is destroying the innermost heart of our Human Family.

External control and repression of the human spirit will not end the devastation of our global social order. Only self-discipline and penetrating vision in the service of the Creator, , and ourselves will enable us to be

victorious over all the abuse of the human spirit that surrounds every human being and every human community.

7) As governments become more rigid, abusive and uncompromising in a last-ditch effort to save the disintegrating institutions of the old world order, terrorism and random acts of violence will increase dramatically. This movement of disintegration will continue until the ancient teachings found at the heart of all living cultures and spiritual traditions that teach us how to live in harmony and balance with all life are once again alive. We have a critical decision before us. Will we continue to walk the path of hatred, and pain or will we choose to walk the path of healing? Each has clear consequences. As the spiritual greatness of our Indigenous peoples returns with greater and greater strength, it is clear to see that we are choosing the sacred path of healing, the way foretold in our ancient prophecies.

Not only is each one of these seven global challenges monumental in themselves, but it is obvious to see that we are approaching a global catastrophe, as the crossroads at which they all meet is coming rapidly into view. It will take bold, courageous, unified and selfless action to avert such destruction; the choice to

do so is ours, and that decision is ultimately a spiritual one.

These Sixteen Principles for Building a Sustainable and Harmonious World emerged from a twelve-year process of reflection, consultation, action within a wide variety of Indigenous communities across Turtle Island. They are rooted in the concerns of hundreds of Indigenous elders and leaders, as well as in the best thinking of many non-aboriginal scholars, researchers, and human and community development practitioners. These principles describe the way we must work together, and what we must protect and cherish. We offer them as a gift to all those who seek to build a sustainable world, and as a foundation for a worldwide consultation process for actualizing a new world civilization based on justice!