



THE GIVEAWAY CEREMONY: SACRED GIVING, SACRED RECEIVING

IN THE NATIVE AMERICAN TRADITIONS: One of the very common practices of virtually every American Indian Nation is some form of “A Giveaway Ceremony.”

Giving, in a sacred way, has always been a central component of the Ceremony. It may have been a means of giving thanks, of bringing the people together, of gaining honor or distributing material goods so that all might survive, or a means of teaching. It was thought to maintain the balance that was needed to hold a nation together and to keep an individual in the right relationship with him or herself and with the community – a community that was not just composed of humans, but also of animals, plants, even the stones – for all things were thought to be alive.

IN THE GRANDMOTHER GATHERING TRADITION: We begin by placing the various gifts that have been brought for the Ceremony on the altar in our small circle. Everyone will ultimately be invited to come and take one gift. You are encouraged to choose the gift you accept by allowing the Spirit to guide you, focusing on the gesture of giving and receiving.

It is also said that we should think of the gifts we receive as having come from Spirit. Thus, it is to Spirit, the Great Mystery, that thanks should be given for the gift. We say “Please” to each other and “Thank You” to Spirit. This helps to ensure that those who give do so with humility, with an awareness of the sacred nature of all gifts.

The giver is not calling attention to herself, but to the spiritual power behind the giving and receiving. Thus both remain sacred.

IN OUR TRADITION WE PROCEED BY:

Placing the gifts on the altar in our small circle.

The eldest Grandmother present selects the first gift.

She then states why she was drawn to that gift.

The giver explains her reason for selecting this particular gift and then selects a gift for herself.

The giver then continues the process.

In the event the giver or receiver has already participated, the next eldest Grandmother will proceed with the process until all gifts have been received.