

Niitsítapi Values 'The Real People'

"A 'real person' Niitá'pitapi is one who is self-disciplined, responsible, honest, appreciative, wise, and compassionate." The Blackfoot people believe that understanding and integrating Niitsitapi values and teaching will be reflected in peoples conduct and will be observed in everyday lives (Crop Eared Wolf, 2006).

Blackfoot elders describe Niitsitapi values as those that make for a good life and an orderly life. Values include spirituality, compassion, respect, generosity, courage, achievement, balance and harmony, community, thankfulness, and wisdom. All have been eloquently described in Anabel Crop Eared Wolf's graduate Thesis as follows.

Atsimmi'takssini

Prayer, Spirituality

A daily ritual performed to ask guidance from the Creator

Atsimmi'takssini is having a sense of wonder with respect to the beauty and the intelligence of creation. Once a person comes into sacredness, they realize the purpose of their being and gain perspectives about their lives; relationships, traditions, ceremonies and stories.

A person with compassion is willing to help others as they would their own children. Compassion and kindness are practiced for all of life. Compassion is central to all relationships.

Kimmapiiyipitssini

Compassion, Caring,
Concern, Love, Kindness,
Empathy

Encourage a compassionate
lifestyle

Innákootsiyssini

Respect

Respect with the land, all of
Creation, the Spirit World, the
Source of Life

Respect includes avoidance of certain kinds of speech as well as avoidance of physical presence to another(s). There is a general respect for all, especially the elderly and the young.

Generosity extends from having a sense of compassion with a commitment to a family and clan. It also enhances and maintains the standards and reputation for tribes' accomplishments and generosity. Gift giving is an important expression of generosity.

Ááhapssini

Generosity

Show generosity to family, clan,
tribal members, and visitors
from other tribes

Makámoo 'tsitapiyssini

Truthfulness

Tell things as they happened or as they were told

There is great disdain for those who embellish, exaggerate, or lie. Being straight forward is a desirable characteristic if used meaningfully.

A courageous person has the ability to withstand and successfully deal with life's challenges, whether they are emotional, spiritual, physical, or lived in combination.

likítápiiyssini

Courage

Have courage to deal with life's challenges

Sao'ohkóómaimmohsini

Achievement

There is great pride in one's hard work, independence, and personal appearance

Achievement includes values of being a hard-working person, excelling, being outgoing and resourceful and not satisfied with doing nothing. There is also pride in attaining deep knowledge and becoming a good person.

Harmony has the existence of an orderly and peaceful situation. Relationships, customs and practices for the enhancement and maintenance of healthy relationships.

Sapáátsima'pii

Harmony

Keep relationships harmonious and maintain positive relationships

Ááhkowaitapiiyssini

Collectivity

All actions, decisions, and events have an impact on our people

We must realize that everything we do and say can have an impact on our collectivity as a people and as a whole. Our way of life and that with the land. Our people are interdependent with each other.

Express thankfulness in your daily prayers and in their daily routine with outward expression of the abundance of nature and those they share the world with. Gratitude is also expressed with the elders who help to guide our lives.

Ksimmatsiiyssini

Thankfulness

Thankfulness is a dimension of humility and respect arising from a sense of the sacred

Mokákssini

Wisdom

Understand experiences of your life to share with others

Wisdom comes from gaining a deep understanding about your past experiences with your environment. All of the social, physical, emotional, and spiritual experiences need to continue through the generations.

“Compassion, wisdom and spirituality are all inter-related; spirituality is born of compassion and wisdom arises from both.” A fine person will live Niitsitapi Valued every day. One should be honest, selfless, and generous to help others, and provide guidance to set others into their course of life.

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References

Crop Eared Wolf, A. (2006). Matsiyipaitapiiyssini: Kainai Peacekeeping and Peacemaking. Thesis Dissertation M.A. Department of Native American Studies. University of Lethbridge, Lethbridge, Alberta Canada.

