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Based on a Presentation to the Board of Directors of The Institute of Noetic Sciences

First I want to explain to you the base from which I'm speaking. My grandfather's grandmother was Oneida. She became respoYnsible for an ancient tradition and for passing it along. She did this because she was both a Healer and a Spirit Healer. During what was, in effect, her internship, she was assigned a man who was slowly dying. That man, as it turned out, was dying of grief. She learned this very quickly.

This was a test for her, by the equivalent of the Community Medical Board, to determine what kind of healer she was, and what she would do.

She pinpointed the cause of his grief: He was the Keeper of the Old Things. He had not been able to find, during his very long life, anyone at all who would take the time to sit with him and learn all of these ancient treasures. This was because of the oncoming tide of the Pale Ones.

Therefore as part of this man's therapy, my grandfather's grandmother began to learn these things from him. And

immediately his condition improved. He got better and better.

Now her purpose in life had always been to be a Healer. So during this therapy she thought she would find somebody else to learn all these things from him and pass on the responsibility. But she was never able, in three decades of trying, to find anyone at all who could learn this from him or from her. So she finally accepted maintaining this tradition as a family responsibility. The idea was to perpetuate this ancient wisdom as far into the future as necessary, until Earth's children grew Listening Ears.

Black Elk, whom some of you will know, said that it was the fifth generation that would grow Listening Ears. In this specific tradition, I am the fifth generation. In my own lifetime I have discovered that people have indeed grown Listening Ears.

Now -- my father's idea was that I should wait until I developed some grandmother wisdom before writing this down. In other words, I needed to live through the life cycle before trying to commit to paper all of these ancient understandings. My grandfather had given up a career in medicine to spend his time learning all this from his grandmother. He then passed it on to my father after a great deal of testing.

I don't want to give you the impression that this transmittal is based on automatic lineal descent. It's not. In this tradition a man learns these things from a woman, if possible, and a woman learns them from a man. That way you keep things in balance. It gives you an understanding of the other half of life and prevents some of the competition that can often come in when you learn from someone who is also male, also female.

My father's responsibility was to find someone who would have the natural proclivity, the motivation, and the latent skills to learn all this. I went through extended periods of testing with my father,

not pass/fail tests, but evaluations. There's a lot of evaluative testing that goes on in this tradition. (See accompanying box.)

As a result of 15 years of careful exploration of ways to share these things, the first book to be published out of the three Basic Learning Stories has received three national awards, one of them being recognition by the US Department of Education as part of an Exemplary Educational Program. The three Learning Stories represent Body, Mind, and Spirit. We hope to publish them together soon.

The Consensual Oral History, under the title The Walking People, has also been written down. It is about 700 pages long. It goes back to before what logically must be the crossing of the Bering Strait, which was called at that time Walk by Waters. There is a great deal that precedes that event, so it is indeed an ancient history, which has been maintained down all these generations.

Now -- one of the difficulties of my path through life has been to find ways to express these ancient ways of knowing. I knew from the time I was a child that I would need to take the step in my generation of stating these things in English. I wrote a thought piece a while ago which refers to the problem of"catching a concept in a net of sound patterns called English". Sometimes you can do that and sometimes you can't. I want to speak to that briefly.

Years ago I took a class in parapsychological research. The idea was to get an updating on all of the latest in Western scientific studies. I had a terrible time. I wanted to get up and run screaming from the room. Often! And I thought, what's going on? What is my problem?

Then I realized that the problem was language. The language was driving me crazy. In my tradition, for instance, the process of going somewhere when your body stays here is called Spirit

Walking -- because that's what happens. The Spirit Walks. It feels like moving forward, like walking. In English it's called Out-of-Body Experience. Well, in my tradition, that's considered dangerous. You don't want your whole Spirit out of your body because you may not find your way back. You handle it in a different way and you speak in terms of Spirit, rather than Body. So, all of these body-related terms bothered me.

Finally I went to the teacher and told her my problem. She asked me to make a presentation to the whole class explaining this. The whole class spent some time making up new terms in English. Over the years I have found ways to deal with this, which do not include leaving the room. And this has worked reasonably well.

When you talk to Native American people you need to understand that most Indian languages are much more verbal -- that is, verb-oriented -- than English. English has worlds of nouns. The Iroquoian languages -- which is my tradition -- have nouns also, but not so many. The Hopi, I understand, have no nouns at all. Everything is described in verbal terms.

You would not for example call Paul Temple over there the Chair as much as you would call him Man who sits at head of table. This tells you something. You go through the thought process of placing him at the head of the table (in the North) and thinking about his behavior, rather than just announcing who Paul is, what his title is. It becomes extremely difficult, painful, agonizing sometimes, to try to say things in English, because you're forever jamming things into categories that don't work and making yourself think in ways that aren't natural to you.

Now -- the tradition that I come out of says: If you want to be truly understood, you need to say everything three times, in three different ways. Once for each ear...and once for the heart. The right ear represents the ability to apprehend the nature of the Whole, the

wholeness of the circumstance, the forest. The left ear represents the ability to select a sequential path. And the heart represents a balance between the two.

How do you choose a Path if you haven't looked at the Forest?

If you've only admired the Forest, where are you going in Life?

The distinction that I want to make between Western science and the approach to science which my tradition, and perhaps other Native traditions, have found useful...is that first you look at the Forest...and then you look at the Path. We had a speaker earlier, Michael Murphy, who described a process of acquiring sensory data and then testing it. This is the reverse of my tradition, which is that you first acquire an intuitive, whole understanding, and then you focus on a Specificity and examine it, and then you always put it back into the Whole.

Now -- when you examine anything, you examine it first with your mind. When I was a child, if I were trying to understand the process of a leaf growing, for example, the idea was to sit and think, allow my thoughts to flow into the leaf. Only after I was completely satisfied with my explanation would I ask the plant's permission and hold it in my hand. So you go through sort of a mirror image, a reversed image of the process of Western science.

We were talking earlier about the difference between the Western way of understanding, the Eastern way, and the Indigenous way -- the Native American perspectives and approaches. It strikes me that the Western tradition represents body because it's always looking at things out here at arm's length. It's using microscopes, it's using all kinds of tools to look at things, to take them apart. That's changing, but this has been the understanding. The Eastern approach uses Spirit -- you meditate, you breathe, you apprehend the nature of the Universe through your Spirit. I think the Native

American tradition, at least the one that I understand and grew up in, represents Mind. Because, as I say, you let your thoughts precede you. You let your thoughts flow into that circumstance to understand it.

Specificity and Wholeness

Now -- there are general similarities in Native American approaches to life. But they are similar the same way European circumstances are similar as you go from Ireland to Turkey. There are enormous variations. But to a certain extent it's the same dance, from one end of Europe to the other. The similarities I see in many Native American cultures include such things as an absolute sense of the Wholeness of Things. One of the problems that Indian children often have in this educational system is that in school people are always talking about specific and separate things, but the Indian children may understand that it's really one interrelated whole. And this passion for separation just sounds crazy. You try to translate it from English into an Indian language and it literally sounds crazy.

So it's very hard for them to take this seriously. Very difficult. This was hard for me, when I began school, but my father kept saying, learn the system, learn the system. How can you learn to say what we understand in an intelligible way if you don't learn the system? So the idea is, learn the system and contribute in that way. And it is a very viable way of understanding life. What becomes dangerous is when any one way of understanding life is considered to be the only way, or the Right Way.

The idea of relatedness runs throughout all Native American thinking. Everything is related to everything else, everything is attached to everything else. So everything affects everything else. This gets into the causality issue that you've been examining here at the Institute. The idea that this-causes-that is simply impossible

in Indian understanding, because everything is attached; everything has its own gravitational attraction. So you can say what I say comes out of my tradition, but what Michael said this morning has already affected what I say and the presence of the people on each side of me also affects what I say in an ongoing way, and that's the way the world works.

The way that this is stated in mythic terms is that Spider Woman created the world, and she did it in this way: In the beginning all that existed was Thought Woman. She was the totality of all that existed until Spider Woman came and took from that Whole Thought the specificities that were implicit in it and from these she spun the world in which we live.

You see how it is? Every place where a thread crosses a thread, that is an Individuation. And the continuing thread connects every Individuation to every other.

The idea of how Universe functions that comes out of my tradition, and I hear echoes of it in other Indian traditions, is that Universe is Space which contains Energy. Energy of its nature moves. As it moves it produces Change.

In the Western world we call that Change "time" -- past, present, and future. But the idea is that it isn't time at all.It is Change -- it was, it is, it will be.

Part of the process I'm describing is what I hear discussed in scientific terms at the present time as the distinction between wave and particle -- is it wave or is it particle? And the answer is: yes!

In the shamanic tradition you understand the distinction and the interrelationship of Specificity and Wholeness. Particle is Specificity. Wave is Wholeness, the direction that the energy takes. And you spend a great deal of time looking at each. I can't speak

for all shamanic traditions. I suspect there may be something similar. But in the shamanic tradition that I'm familiar with you understand the world as binary. Now that's not good/evil, any more than light is right and dark is wrong. Dark is not wrong in relation to light. Light is not wrong in relation to dark. In fact, we need both. We need both.

So the binary nature of life gives us a multiplicity of yes/no choices from which we choose our path, constantly branching in the direction of our yes decisions. Each minute yes/no decision is a binary decision. Understanding this helps you understand another binary, coequal aspect of Life. When you want to enter a different aspect of Life, you wait for the point at which Particle becomes Wave. And just at that split second before the Particle is gone and the Wave takes over, you enter between, and you become Energy. At the point where the wave becomes Particle again, you enter between, and you re-become who you were or you make a different choice. Which is also possible. I think it is that space in which healing occurs.

The critical thing is to understand that Particle and Wave co-exist.

In one of your papers on Perennial Wisdom it says that the Native tradition is nature-focused. I would like to modify that a little. I would like to say that Indian traditions are nature-inclusive. You do not see man and nature as separate from each other, but you see yourself in the context of an interrelated whole instead.

The Rule of Six

One of the attitudes taught in my tradition is the Rule of Six. The Rule of Six says that for each apparent phenomenon, devise at least six plausible explanations, every one of which can indeed explain the phenomenon. There are probably sixty, but if you devise six, this will sensitize you to how many there may yet be and prevent

you from locking in on the first thing that sounds right as The Truth.

But your task isn't over yet. Because you can't just float on a multiple option basis. Now your task is to apply your life experience, which is unique to yourself, and use it as a base to evaluate each of those options. Now you assign a probability factor. That probability factor can never be 100%...and absolutely never zero.

You keep a floating attitude toward life, but you constantly know where you are in that context.

When I was very young my father would stand me on my left foot and say, "Answer this question in the manner of the people." Wholeness. And then he would stand me on my right foot and say, "Explain this in a way that your mother would understand." Sequence.

Then he would stand me on both feet and ask, "What do you see now?" Because it isn't enough to do only one, only the other. The critical thing is to strike a balance between the two.

In my tradition you get mind puzzles a lot. One of the questions that my dad gave me as a mind puzzle was, "What is the sound of one hand clapping?" When I discovered that that is also a Zen question, I was delighted. I'm reasonably confident that they come from the same source. I spent months trying to come up with an answer, and I came up with all kinds of different things. My father would say, "No, that's not really the sound of one hand clapping, that's..." Then, "No, that's not really the sound either." And finally he suggested to me the kind of clue that you get under this pedagogic structure -- "Maybe Eagle has the answer." And I knew immediately he was right, because of course Eagle would understand the sound of one hand clapping.

As with all of his suggestions, I taught myself. This process is called go-and-be-Eagle. You become Eagle in your mind and heart, and look at the world from Eagle's perspective. As a result of that, you may come up with an entirely different concept of what the answer might be, which limited to this body you could not have come up with, because this body doesn't work that way.

In this pedagogic tradition, nobody tells you what to think or how to process information. Instead, you discover it for yourself, you keep discovering it for yourself. And only at the other end of this long process of self-discovery would my father say, "That's another generation that's reached that conclusion." In this case, however, he said that my answer was a whole new answer, that he knew of eight others, but that was a whole new answer to the question. He didn't tell me what the other eight were at the time, and I won't tell you what mine is now, because if I did, that would prevent you from ever discovering it for yourself.

The basis of the learning, the basis of the pedagogy, is to cease preventing people from learning things for themselves. This way of thinking, what goes on in here, can really be taught only from the inside out. When it's taught from the outside in, someone else comes between you and yourself, and that's not considered a wise idea. That's the tradition.

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