



INTRODUCTION TO THE POWER OF MEDICINE  
WHEEL IMAGERY  
By Judith Fraser, MFT

The Medicine Wheel is reputed to be 10,000 years old. It is one of the earliest psychological tools used to gain new insight into personal as well as community issues. When done in a respectful manner, it encourages participants to create a sacred space within themselves.

*For every up there is a down.  
For every knowing there is uncertainty.  
For every action there is stillness.  
For every masculine there is a feminine.  
For every negative there is a positive.*

Everything in life has its opposite. For every up, there is a down. For every knowing there is uncertainty. For every action there is stillness. For every masculine there is a feminine. For every negative there is a positive. Using the Medicine Wheel as a psychological tool encourages us to “let go” of what we think are the answers to our difficulties and to call on the wisdom of the unknown. The wisdom of the unknown can be referred to as the “Source,” the “Great Spirit,” or even “God.”

#### SETTING UP THE WHEEL

If done in the outdoors, stones are set up to represent different directions. If practiced indoors, a drawing of stones on a large piece of paper may suffice. The stones are placed as follows: One in the center of the wheel, one in the direction of the east, one in the direction of the south, one in the direction of the west, and one in the direction of the north.

The center of the wheel is used as a focus to let go of what is known about a problem, or situation. Sage or cedar is used as cleansing agents. When one circles them around themselves they clear the air. A gift of tobacco, (or other symbol of nature) is traditionally placed at the center along with a request to receive inspiration and knowledge. The sky above is used as a focus to call on spiritual guidance. It is generally referred to as “Grandfather Sky.” The earth below is used as a focus to call on one’s connection to everything animate or inanimate. It is generally called “Grandmother

earth." The four directions on the wheel — north, south, east, west — are used to focus on different perspectives of a problem, emotion or feeling.

There are many ways to use the Medicine Wheel. In my own practice I have used it for many years as follows:

#### ENTERING THE WHEEL

Enter the wheel from the east and proceed to the center. Ask for support in your quest for knowledge. You can use my words or choose your own.

"Great Spirit I call on you to be with me now as I begin my work with the Sacred Medicine Wheel. I leave this gift of (tobacco, sage, seeds, etc.) and humbly ask for new knowledge and inspiration in my life."

Look up, raise your arms. "Grandfather Sky, help me to know my connection with the Universe beyond myself."

Look down, lower your arms. "Grandmother Earth, help me to know my connection to all things, large and small, animate and inanimate, two or four legged." Silently state your desire to learn something new about your problem. Ask for guidance. "How can I overcome this constant irritation I have in traffic? What do I need to know about the jealousy I feel when \_\_\_\_\_. What is stopping me from feeling peaceful about my new job?"

#### THE EAGLE - RISING ABOVE A PROBLEM

Slowly make your way to the east. Reverently ask for help and support. "Spirit of the East, Golden Eagle of the East. Let me ride with you. Lend me your eyes that I might find a new perspective for my issue.

Help me to create a loving distance between myself and my problem.

Help me to see that I am not my thought or my habit. It is only a part of me."

Take time to rise above your problem. Move it out and away from you so you can look down on it from a different perspective.

#### THE RED COYOTE OF THE SOUTH - QUESTIONING

Slowly make your way to the south and ask again for help and support. "Spirit of the South, Red Coyote of the South, let me walk with you. Lend me your cunning ways that I might face reversal of my view, that I might let go of holding onto the known and reach for the unknown. Open my heart to receive, to be renewed.

Help me to know that things are not what they seem.

Help me to understand that I am not alone.

Help me to see the humor hidden in the darkness."

Take time to imagine what would happen if you finished that job, or you were smart enough, or you did reach out for help. Change your problem. See it from an opposite stance. Nothing is black or white.

### THE BLACK BEAR , GATEKEEPER OF THE WEST - NURTURING

Slowly make your way to the west and ask for help and support. "Spirit of the West, Great Black Bear of the West, let me hibernate with you. Share your power of silence, your courage to go within, your strength, your trust and self responsibility.

Help me to make amends to myself.

Help me to make amends to others where necessary.

Help me to live a more balanced life."

Let the information you have now about your problem move into your body. Hold the feelings inside of you with compassion. Is there a shift of awareness? What action, physical or mental, might you take to release the problem?

### THE WHITE BUFFALO OF THE NORTH - WISDOM

Slowly make your way to the north and ask for help and support. "Spirit of the North, wise White Buffalo of the North, let me stand beside you in harmony.

Let me feel the feelings.

Let me accept the insights.

Let me talk the talk and walk the walk of this new inner awareness.

Be with me now as I project this new way of being into my past, absorb it into the present, and carry it into the future of my life."

White Buffalo is part of a large herd. She knows that she is not alone. Take time to be grateful for the information you have received. If need be, repeat the process.

### RETURN TO THE CENTER

Slowly come back to the center of the wheel. It is time to acknowledge the four directions.

"Great Spirit, thank you for being with me.

Grandfather Sky, I am grateful for your protection and your guidance into the unknown.

Grandmother Earth, I am grateful for your beauty and your nurturing.

All my Relations. I am grateful to be a part of all that is. I acknowledge my mind, my body, my connection to the Source of Life.

### IN CONCLUSION

All the answers to problems reside within the body/mind. It is this listening within that connects us to personal information that is life enhancing.

When appropriate you may want to use additional creative processes following the Medicine Wheel as: drawing or even writing a story about your chosen animal or animals.

The Medicine Wheel is similar to another process that I do called "The Inner Journey" or "Focusing". For further information read: *American Indian Ceremonies* by Medicine Hawk & Grey Cat. Their Medicine Wheel is different than mine and is only one part of many ceremonies.

Mitakuye Oyasin (Lakota)

We are all related