

## MI'KMAW SEVEN SACRED GIFTS OF LIFE – Teachings of Elder Murdena Marshall



One of the Teachings of Mi'kmaq Elder Murdena Marshall of Eskasoni First Nation is that of the Seven Sacred Gifts of Life, as understood by the Mi'kmaq people. Elder Murdena, in conjunction with Tom Johnson (Eskasoni Fish and Wildlife) as a graphic designer, developed the visual on the next page which Murdena uses frequently in the numerous presentations for exceedingly diverse audiences that she gives on Mi'kmaq culture, including language and spirituality.

### MI'KMAW LANGUAGE

Our language is the key to how our actions will unfold. Each word is much deeper than only taking care of an object. Animacy brings personal connection ... such that actions fit actions (everything is in the picture) and we are always mindful of the First Sacred Gift of Life: **LOVE**

#### EXAMPLES

- 1) pekajo'tmnej = consider all aspects  
... *action is harmonious*
- 2) wulo'tmnej = love some one  
... *action is care*
- 3) sespite'tmnej = worry about what you do  
... *action is guided*



# MI'KMAQ SACRED TEACHINGS

## 7 Stages of Life with the 7 Gifts

Love of the Creator – Spiritual  
 Love of a Mother – Physical  
 Both are Unconditional

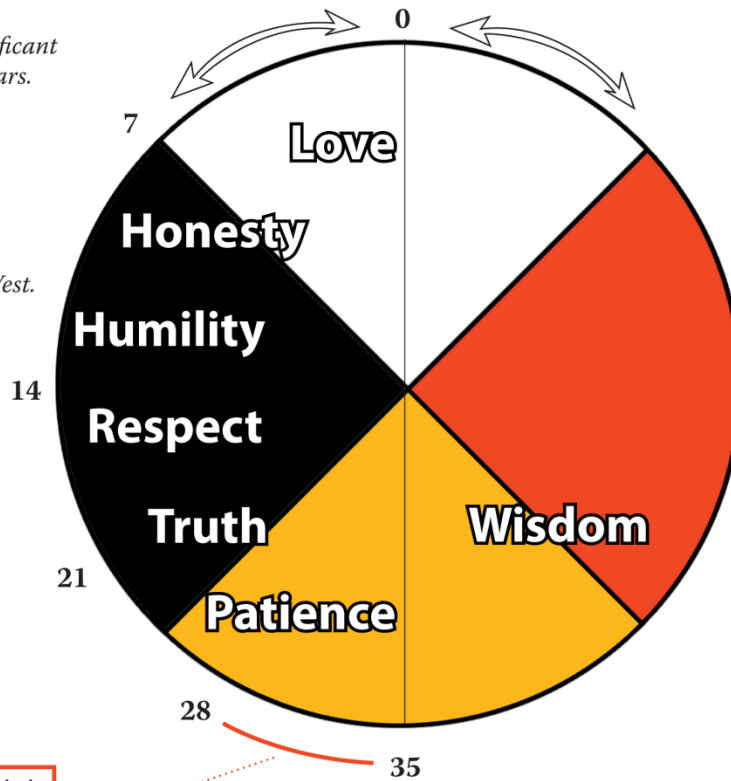
*White is the colour reserved for Elders but they share it with children under the age of 7. It is also the colour for the North.*

If all of the Gifts are visible in a person, that person is an Elder.

*Life makes a significant change every 7 years.*

*Black is for the West. It represents our spiritual world.*

*Red is for the colour of the rising sun, and the newness of each day. It is the colour of the East.*



Elders say that this is when your spiritual awareness is realized.

*Yellow is for the South, where warm breezes come from. It renews life through the cycles.*

\*The Gifts run in chronological order.

Elders believe that we can go back to age 7. This is the only time that the circle reverses in life. *Apaji-mijua'ji'juen.*

*Apaji (preverb) – repeat, go back, again. Mijua'ji'j (root word) – child under 7. uen (inflection) – in the process of, to be, state of being.*