

All My Relations

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A profound part of the work that I do as a therapist is based upon the work of Dr. Bert Hellinger in Systemic and Family Constellations. This is a most unique kind of practice that uses the energy of the “field” to identify and resolve issues that may repeat from generation to generation. This is not so much a therapy as a philosophy that has the freeing of love and the movements of the soul at its foundation. Some of the core beliefs of this work are as follows:

- Everybody has equal right to belong to the system;
- All those who came first deserve honor and gratitude;
- In each system and relationship, there must be a balance between giving and taking;
- Those who gained advantage at another’s expense and those who suffered in this exchange are mutually entangled in one another’s fates and systems.

From October 6- October 10, 2005, I attended the First U.S. Conference on Systemic Constellations, held in Portland, Oregon. The theme of this conference was “Unity and Diversity” and for me, there was a great synchronicity that the conference was held in the days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, the time for deep reflection and atonement for us of the Jewish faith. Throughout this conference, I was made aware (sometimes most uncomfortably so) of the many ways in which we knowingly and unwittingly commit sins against one another. Each day of the conference began with a blessing and prayer from Rob McAfee, a Native American (Pima) elder. In his talk and in his songs we were repeatedly reminded of our relationships and responsibilities to one another. We were reminded of the blessing bestowed upon us in the mere fact of our existence. We

were made aware of the natural elements with which we interact and with which we share our mother Earth. Rob's love and respect for all was evident in every word he spoke and each note of every song he sang.

Rob's connection to Great Spirit was made even more poignant upon reflection of the talk of another Native American, Lee Brown, Ph.D. Dr. Brown is a member of the Cherokee Nation and shared with us some of the history we were not taught in our schools. He spoke of the abuse of the bodies, families and culture that Native Americans suffered through our domination, from our earliest settlers until the present time. The information presented was most painful to hear. And yet, we heard no anger from Rob and Lee, both of whom are actively involved in healing their people and communities. Instead, we were presented with loving models of honesty, respect and dignity. Truly, they embodied a greater model of inclusiveness, "always in-addition-to, never instead-of". In fact, each communication is ended with the phrase, "All my relations" as a demonstration of our unity. This salutation honors all peoples, all living beings, all of nature, everything that is. And so, what I was left with is to remember that the word "atonement" also means "at-one-ment". This theme, as you can imagine, was reflected throughout this wonderful conference.