

If all these great stories were told, great stories will come!
Heart and Head Ways of Knowing

Rodney Frey, with Tom Yellowtail and Cliff SiJohn

20 August 2008

Modified from an essay published in *Religion and Healing in Native America*, edited by Suzanne Crawford, Praeger Press, 2008, and a presentation given at the *Annual Indigenous Ways of Knowing Conference*, Lewis and Clark College, Portland, Oregon, 1 November 2007.

There are many who are responsible for this little talk. Let me acknowledge, with sincere gratitude, among the many, Rob and Rose Moran (Turtle Mountain Chippewa/Warm Springs), Josiah and D’Lisa Pinkham (Nez Perce), Leroy Seth (Nez Perce), Valerie Jackson (Crow), Rayburn and Janet Beck (Shoshone), my wife, Kris, and son, Matt, and, as if standing beside me, Cliff and Lori SiJohn (Coeur d’Alene/Cayuse) and Tom and Susie Yellowtail (Crow).

Qe’ci’yéw’yew, limlemtsh, ahókaash.

Over the last three decades my role has been primarily one of facilitating for others the re-telling of their stories and the sharing of their cultural landscapes. These have been landscapes rich with oral traditions, with names, with ways of knowing, often in conflict, sometimes in confluence with altogether different ways of knowing. All these re-tellings were done as part of collaborative tribal projects, projects deemed relevant by those I’ve worked with, and reviewed by them for appropriateness and authenticity. Prominent among the stories of others I have facilitated have been those of Tom Yellowtail and Cliff SiJohn. See bibliography.

I come to you in all humility, as I now turn to a landscape more immediate, my own. Telling my own story is certainly a new role for me, entered into with some degree of reluctance. Should I re-tell my own story? Is it appropriate? Could it be of any value to others? In re-listening to my elders, the answers were provided. It is a re-telling, in fact, only made possible by the story “gifts” Tom, Cliff and others have so generously facilitated for me. And embedded in my story is, indeed, a confluence with what may seem incompatible, of two mutually exclusive ways of knowing, rendered complementary.

A short time after being diagnosed with cancer in December of 2005 I was having lunch with Cliff SiJohn, sharing the situation with him. His words helped initiate the critical path in my journey over my landscape. Cliff emphasized the importance of appreciating the distinct,

though interrelated, processes of both the “exterior healing” and the “inner healing.” “Listen with your heart,” he said. While putting my full faith in my oncologist, my surgeon, my family physician, my nurses – the external healing and head knowledge, I would need to attend to my inner healing and heart knowledge, as well. But in what ways? Where, within, should I look?

Not too long before being diagnosed, Valerie Jackson, a granddaughter of Tom Yellowtail, had contacted me, asking to “hear my grandpa’s voice again” as he told his favorite story. Tom had passed on “to the other side camp” in November of 1993. But Tom’s Burnt Face story would again be “re-told.” I had made an audio recording of Tom telling the story of Burnt Face during the summer before his passing. Valerie felt this particular healing story would be of immense help for her own son who was in a treatment program for his methamphetamine addiction. I made a compact disk copy of Tom’s entire telling of the Burnt Face story, lasting over forty minutes, and sent it to her.



Tom Yellowtail, at the Sundance, 1974

As I re-visited and listened carefully to a story I first heard over thirty years ago, Burnt Face revealed itself in ways seemingly all together new, fresh and poignant, and in ways that spoke directly to something I was about to begin. And I remembered sitting with Tom in 1993 as he completed his telling of Burnt Face. He turned to me and said, “If all these great stories were told, great stories will come.” Those powerful words have resonated with me ever sense. With Burnt Face, I would attempt not only to make sense of my situation, but make my own story, actively engage and plot its unfolding along Cliff’s internal path of healing.

Retold here will thus be Tom’s Burnt Face, along with other great stories, as I have lived them through my own healing journey. Joining our stories will be those of Cliff. And let us see what great stories may come.

As with so many elders, in the storytelling of Tom and Cliff, lessons are to be discovered by the listener, with effort, embedded within the story. They are seldom made explicit by the teller. The lessons gained may, in fact, differ from listener to listener. In accord with a storytelling session, this talk will unfold as story, the voices of three tellers interwoven within its distinct pedagogy.

As we considered the best way to convey the meaning within our voices, both Tom and Cliff elected to format their segments reflective of the oral nuance of their telling. To reflect a sense of the dynamic rhythm in their words, we have italicized voiced inflections and stresses, and added a series of dot ellipses to approximate the duration of pauses, from brief (two dot) to longer (three dot and four dot). Paragraph demarcations reflect the critical segments selected for this presentation. My text formatting lacks these oral nuance considerations. The edited segments of Tom's *Burnt Face* are based upon a 1993 audio recorded transcription and a conversation we had at that time on the use of the oral nuance format. See Frey 1995:108-122 for another transcription of his story. Tom's words appear in **Arial Bold font** and immediately follow the subheadings of our unfolding story. Cliff's words are presented in Arial Narrow font, transcribed from two short segments of an interview we did together in 1997 and from a 2006 recorded conversation I had with Cliff specifically intended for this essay. To begin to appreciate and access something of the power of storytelling, the reader is encouraged to become a listener. Have someone else read aloud to you the words to come. A great story is to be experienced as it is told. We begin with Tom Yellowtail.

Into the Fire

In the *days* when they *still* . . . move about the country . . . the *territory* where the Crow Indians . . . roam . . . about . . . moving from one place to another . . . is this area . . . comprising . . . the rivers . . . the Little Bighorn . . . the Bighorn . . . the Yellowstone River . . . and the Missouri River . . . and the Indians . . . would follow some of these rivers . . . move about every few days, *from way down there* next to the North Dakota border line . . . on up this way toward these Bighorn Mountains

In the evening . . . in the camp . . . the children . . . would play . . . build a bonfire or something like that . . . and play . . . and this one night they *did* build a bonfire . . . and they were chasing each other around playing games and a young lad of about the age of this boy here now . . . I'd say the lad was probably . . . was probably about ten years old they were all playing around this bonfire . . . chasing each other . . . and while they were playing like that . . . chasing each other . . . some were standing back and others would be chasing around each other . . . and *somebody* gave a push to this one boy as he was going . . . the fire over here . . . and when he got pushed he *fell into* that . . . into that bonfire

which burned him pretty bad . . . before they rescued him . . . pulled him out . . . but he was burned already . . . pretty bad . . . into the bonfire . . . the *big fire* he fell into

And . . . that accident happened so the . . . the other children all quit playing . . . for one of them got hurt . . . and . . . the child was taken to his . . . camp . . . his parent's camp . . . and they took care of him . . .

And the next few days . . . the sores started from that *burn* . . . on his *face* and he was *burned* so . . . so much that . . . his face had to . . . sores were on and finally come to . . . to *heal as scabs* and . . . he would still try to play with his other friends . . . yet . . . but his face was *disfigured then* after these . . . sores had healed . . . and tightened up and his face was . . . *disfigured* . . .

We never know when we might get pushed into a bonfire. In December of 2005, I was diagnosed with third-stage Hodgkin Lymphoma. I was a fit 55, or so I thought, happily married with a wonderful family, professionally successful, and about to begin a most unanticipated journey that threatened it all. I blamed no one. In fact, felt no anger. But it could not be ignored. The cancer had to be acknowledged, and dealt with. Based upon my particular staging, a protocol of six cycles of 12 chemotherapy treatments, lasting some six months and involving a “recipe” of ABVD drugs, was prescribed. I put my faith in my doctors, with the “chemo” and all the biomedical treatments they offered. In turn, I looked after my body as best I could, trying to eat well and continue my morning runs, until I couldn't, then “power walks” through the nearby arboretum. When I could, I fly-fished the local reservoirs and rivers, “for therapy,” I told my wife. But the question lurked – is there something else I should do?

Solitary Journey

And the other kids would make fun of him . . . “*ahh . . . look at him . . . look at his funny . . . ugly face!*” and all that and that made the boy *ashamed* . . . he felt ashamed the way the other kids would make fun of him an ugly face

So . . . he didn't like that and he wanted to leave camp . . . be away from . . . staying in camp . . . so . . . he . . . he got bedding and . . . and things to stay away from the camp *when the camp move about* . . . he'd travel along the side of them . . . I'd say probably a half a mile away from them or so . . . and he doesn't come into camp for he is *ashamed* . . . of what the other kids would make fun of him . . . when they look at him and . . . so he

stayed that way . . . his parents would try to bring him back and he won't do it he has his bedding . . he stays there and they bring food for him . . . and he's sad and he doesn't come back into the camp . . to play with the other . . his friends . . other children

Whether by choice or being somehow marked by the big "C," I certainly felt out of the norm, differentiated from my students, colleagues and family, as my hair thinned and fatigue overcame me. On campus I was greeted by concern, by those willing to engage me, or by silence, by those, perhaps, not sure how to engage. As my once thick eyebrows vanished, so too it seemed did my recognition, traveling incognito! Though I cut back on many of my faculty responsibilities, I deliberately chose not to "stay away from camp," continuing my full teaching load and work with my graduate students. Nevertheless, in so many ways, it is indeed a solitary journey.

Taking to the Mountains

And . . as the camp move about . . . moving about . . toward the Bighorn Mountains and he . . he had in mind . . . as they were approaching the Bighorn Mountains . . he thought to himself . . . "now when we get to this Bighorn Mountains . . I'll . . I'll quit staying alone . . with my people . . my parents . . my parents are among the group in that camp I'll leave them when we get to these mountains . . and take the mountains . . and go up somewhere and fast"

And what would be my "taking to the mountains"? It was 1974. I had just completed my masters degree in anthropology, and was offered an opportunity to conduct my first ethnographic research, sponsored by the Crow Tribe of Montana. I was to assemble an introductory paper that presented "traditional" Crow perspectives on the causes and treatments of illness. It would be used to help Indian Health Service physicians better communicate with and deliver health care to their Crow patients. Among the elders, it was suggested I interview Tom Yellowtail.

I remember our first meeting. The sun was gazing down into the Lodge, and Tom Yellowtail was dressed in his Sundance regalia, offering prayers with the hundred or so other Sundancers. He was the "medicine man running the Dance." I was absolutely unfamiliar with the form of intense prayer I was now observing. Held during the height of the summer, Sundancers give of themselves for the welfare of family members, dancing and fasting from

food and water for the three and sometimes four days of the Dance. And, on occasion, a dancer might “take a hard fall,” as he or she received a vision and “medicine.” See Frey 1987. After the Dance, Tom invited me to his home for a visit and to learn more about his Sundance ways, a learning that would continue for years to come.

The next summer I was again at the Yellowtail Sundance, along with my wife and six-month old son, Matt. We came early so I could assist the dancers with the hard work of setting up the Sundance Lodge – of going to the mountains and bringing back the twelve, lodgepole-pine “poles,” used as the “overhead rafters,” of cutting and bringing back the cottonwood “Center Tree,” and of constructing the lodge itself. My wife and I didn’t see much of our son that first afternoon, as Matt was placed in a beautifully-beaded cradle board and carried around to the various tipi and wall-tent camps, by his many new, adoring “grandmothers.” I also remember standing at the Lodge door as the dancers, with their Eagle-bone whistles blowing to the beat of the drum, charged the Center Tree and danced back from it. And for some of these dancers I was beginning to appreciate their personal stories and sacrifices. Just then, tears filled my eyes, my knees buckled, as I sat down, crying uncontrollably.

During the winter of 1976, Matt suddenly became very ill. I was a desperate parent, reaching out to the only way that seemed to offer any hope for my ailing son. As we drove to the hospital, I pledged to give of myself in prayer, going without food and water, for a three day “fast” for my son’s recovery. At his welcoming and under his guidance, Tom Yellowtail helped me with that fast, and much more. Over the next months and years I would receive a number of very special ‘gifts,’ including the health of my son, as well as an introduction to Tom’s favorite story – Burnt Face, along with an appreciation of something all together unexpected that happens in the act of telling the stories. As Cliff SiJohn explains:



Cliff SiJohn, 2002

When you *tell* a story . . it goes *far beyond* being a . . myth or a . . entertainment . . . it has to do with how you walk *this life* the Creator has given you . . and *that life* is pointed in a certain way because of the First People *who come alive* in the story . . and who can *swirl around you* . . as the Turtle is saying his thing or as the Chipmunk is saying something . . . they swirl around you and you feel that Indian medicine

so strong . . because there is a *significant feeling* about being so close to the Animal People . . *they are the ones who taught us to live* this is Chipmunk talking to you . . this Coyote talking to you. . . . this is the Elk talking to you . . and the Deer and the Eagle . . and this is the *Hawk* what he said . . of how to live our lives so . . when we're telling the stories . . when it comes through *the heart* and out of the mouth . . the heart then cleanses it to make it *pure* . . that *the power* of the Animal People . . is still here *all these things* . . suddenly come *alive* . . and they're just as *alive* as they were a thousand years ago that these were the First People . . they were the ones who *led us* to the lives we have right now

As I give voice to Burnt Face, with my heart and through my actions, Burnt Face comes alive and swirls around me. And together we take to the mountains. As I had done for my son some thirty years ago, I'd now do for myself.

Preparing for the Journey

So . . he told his parents . . to make him several pairs of moccasins . . and to prepare when the men go *hunting* and making jerky . . . to save up . . plenty of jerky . . to take with him when he leaves . . when they get to the mountains . . . and quite a few extra pairs of moccasins . . and enough . . enough clothing to . . to leave the camp . . the camp could go on and he'd take to the mountains . . and fast somewhere "I'll go do that . . if I return . . if I'm lucky to do my fasting . . and I may return to my people if not . . if something happens to me . . why that . . that'll be it . . that'll be alright" he *knew* those conditions . . . but he decided he's going to *leave* the camp . . they can go on . . and he would . . he would *leave* the camp and take to the mountains and fast somewhere

So . . the parents prepared all those extra pairs of moccasins for him . . . *things he would need* for him to get along with . . . and the jerky . . for the food . . so he could spend quite a few days . . quite awhile . . before he . . would return to his people he wanted to do that fasting *so . . alright* . . . he was determined to do that fasting

So . . they got to the mountains . . and he bid his folks goodbye for awhile . . other friends . . . "now you folks go on and I'll . . I'll take these mountains and I'll find a place where I'll fast . . for quite awhile" so he left the camp and he took to the mountains and went south . . . along the mountain range . . . kept on . . traveling . . into Wyoming . . . kept traveling south and finally he come to a place . . "*I believe this is a good place*" . .

where the present Medicine Wheel is now he come to that place . . look things over the country . . “right here is where I will . . fast!”

Soon family and friends were making jerky and extra moccasins. When Rob Moran, my “elder bro,” a Turtle Mountain Chippewa, first heard the news, he immediately drove over, some 350 miles from his Warm Springs, Oregon home, to offer prayers, salmon from the Deschutes River, and much needed laughter. In my backyard, the Sweat rocks were heated and we entered the Little Lodge. Rob tied strips of Blue and White cloth to the overhead saplings supporting the Lodge’s coverings, renewing its connection with the Sundance Lodge and to the two Flags of the Center Tree. With his medicine things laid out before us and the burning of cedar, Rob asked the Creator to watch over his “younger bro,” and all those in need of help. Each week there after, Rob called and sent e-mails, offering a joke or a story, an update on the family, and his concerns.

A short time later Josiah Pinkham, a close Nez Perce friend, had me down to his home, just south of Lapwai, for a “Healing Sweat” and meal of traditional foods. Joined by two elders and his brother, it was a powerful Sweat of prayers, sharing, and heart talk. As Josiah said, “we wanted you to know that we would be there with you for your entire journey.” One of the elders, Leroy Seth, in fact, shared even more, “a little bonus,” he said with a smile. As he sat next to me in the darkened Lodge, the steam thick in the air, Leroy began to swoon and became listless. Once outside and clear-headed, he told us that while in the Lodge he “heard a song, coming from near the fire pit, sung by the Little People or, maybe, Children!” He went on to relate how he had felt and shouldered some of my challenges, a “gift to you.” After the meal, Josiah presented me with a beautiful Pendleton blanket, while his wife, D’Lisa, gave me a candle in a dragonfly holder and a supply of *qhasqhs*, a medicine root used in the Sweat Lodge. I had brought with me my Buffalo Skull, wrapped in a black blanket, a blanket Leroy had given me a couple of years prior as part of his give away. I presented it to Josiah. In the days leading up to the Sweat, it had come to me that the Skull should now belong to Josiah. I had received it many years before from Joseph Epes Brown (a student of the Lakota elder, Black Elk, and author of *The Sacred Pipe* 1953), when I taught his courses for him during a sabbatical leave. With the Sweat being so critical in the preparation for any journey, Cliff offers the following thoughts on its significance and use, and of the potential of being “reborn.”

We have the Sweat House . . . the Sweat Lodge . . . was *given* to us by the Creator the way I was taught . . . and practice is that the Sweat Lodge is the *womb* . . . of the Mother . . . Earth . . . and when we go in . . . we go in . . . *naked* . . . we go into that . . . *dome* that is made up of . . . *cedar sticks* . . . we go into that . . . *womb* that is dressed on the floor . . . with cedar boughs and up into the bow . . . is stuck different medicine things . . . tied a little something . . . sister's hair . . . mother's hair . . . father's . . . something *significant* to you . . .

You go in there to *pray* to the Creator . . . for . . . many different things . . . but never *specifically* about . . . "oh . . . I want this . . . oh . . . I want that . . . bring this to me . . . bring me money . . . bring me women" . . . that's not the purpose . . . you go in there pray for *good things* to happen to your people . . . for the old people . . . for their pain to *go away* . . . so they have an easy time this winter . . . you go in there to pray *to take* the borrowed things that we now have and *learned* from a different society . . . jealousy and greed . . . hatred . . . for each other . . . we pray to the *Amotqn* . . . to the Creator . . . in this womb . . . of Mother Earth . . .

And the things that are inside of you come out . . . in the form of *sweat* . . . comes onto your body . . . and the hotter you have those rocks . . . the rocks come *alive* . . . and the more water you put on them . . . make heat and you *suffer* . . . suffer for your people . . . suffer for your *mother* . . . suffer for your father . . . suffer for your *grandma* . . . who had no doctor when she had children . . . *suffer* for that umbilical cord that connects us . . . *all the way* . . . generation to generation to generation to generation . . . suffer . . . for the people

It is to help you . . . open up . . . your spirit . . . so it can gain the power . . . of the Animal world . . . and you can *rejuvenate* yourself . . . *re* . . . *charge* yourself . . . to *heal yourself* from the inside . . . just like you crawl inside the womb . . . of the Mother Earth . . . you also crawl inside yourself . . . and *all of those things* that have been . . . keeping you *out of balance* . . . will come out in the form of *sweat* . . . and when you crawl out . . . you are weak . . . you go and take cold water . . . throw it on yourself . . . *hard* . . . from the top of your head clear down . . . you *rub* yourself . . . rub that sweat so it goes into the water . . . onto the ground . . . and *all* those things in your heart that have been hurting . . . all those poisons in your body that come out . . . that water will take that *away* into the ground . . . into the creeks . . . into the rivers . . . take it away from you . . .

That's . . . the *power* . . . of the Animal world . . . *the power* of the Jump Dance is in everyone of those Sweat Lodges . . . the Sweat Lodge was given to us by the Creator to help us find the way to heal ourselves . . . *find* our way to clear our minds . . . in a clean pure way . . . to separate ourselves *from the sweat* that keeps us out of balance . . . so that whatever was troubling us is gone this is what that *womb*

will do . . . when you come out you are reborn again . . . clean like a baby . . . and we have to do that many times . . . because of the *pitifulness* of our lives . . .

On campus, two friends and colleagues, one Yaqui and “adopted” Shoshone-Bannock, and the other Nez Perce, brought gifts. Ed Galindo smudged my office and me with cedar and prayer, leaving me with a supply of cedar and advice – eat lots of meat and drink four liters of water daily. I left him with a small Eagle feather I had been gifted many years ago. Sarah Penney, along with her dad and some of the Native students, gave me a basket of “healing,” including “traditional gifts” – a fishing hook and sweetgrass, and mountain tea and cous root her family had collected. As Cliff explains, such things, like cedar, are gifts to the people, given a long time ago.

Cedar . . . came to our people . . . in a *dream* to some medicine people . . . the people were sick and they *couldn't do* anything for them . . . and so during this one *particular night* . . . these Animal People . . . First People came to them . . . and there was *Blue Jay* . . . and there was *Hawk* . . . and there was *Badger* . . . and they came to the people and said “we want *to show* you something” . . . so they took these people out of this tipi where they were all sick and took them to this tree . . . they prayed around this Tree . . . the First People . . . “this Tree is going to help you . . . *the whole Tree* . . . *the roots* . . . *the bark* . . . *the leaves*” . . . so that's when we began using the cedar . . . because it was given to them . . . by the . . . First People . . .

So . . . we use the cedar for purification as well as medicine . . . and mixing it with other things . . . for *salve* . . . and then to *tie* things on . . . for *traveling* . . . cedar *strips* are so strong . . . they made *baskets* . . . the cedar weavings from this bark the cedar . . . the tips of the leaves . . . lay them out . . . strip them *off* . . . dry them . . . pound them . . . and put them in a bag . . . or cut the boughs . . . put them in our house . . . put them in . . . where *prayers* are offered . . . put them inside of the Sweat House . . . so when you come out . . . the cedar's on your *head* . . . to protect your *head* . . . to clean your *brain* and your head . . . your eyes . . . your throat then there's the *root* to make a *tea* . . . you smash it up and then it is mixed to make a *blood cleansing* thing these are the things *I still* use at home . . . me and my kids when we go out and collect them . . . and when we go collecting we take the little guys and we talk to them about it . . . the importance of *not destroying* the Tree . . .

Oh how we want to act always according to our desired outcomes. But we are reminded that we may “return to our people, but if not, if something happens, . . .” It is indeed a journey, a journey of steps – many mine, those of others as well – the destination of which far from

certain. While I didn't want to lose sight of my dream of what could be, I also felt I needed to attend to, with my best effort each day, my part of the journey. I trusted my oncologist to do her part. With proper treatment, I was told the prognosis for Hodgkins can be good. Sitting under an IV drip for three hours, receiving a recipe of chemo drugs and knowing of their varied side effects, can be a very trusting experience. Family and friends had generously done their parts. And their prayers continued. But for my part of the journey, would each step be my best?

Rocks of the Medicine Wheel

So he did . . . he started fasting there . . . right where the Medicine . . . Wheel is now . . . he fasted there and *during the day* . . . where he fasted . . . a lot of the place is just rocky . . . formations of rocks . . . all around him *so during the day* . . . he would gather . . . the rocks . . . and he started forming . . . a circle . . . representing the Lodge . . . the Lodge you seen nowadays that comprise . . . the Sundance Lodge . . . *he built* . . . that large circle . . . everyday he'd pile up rocks on top of . . . to form a circle . . . and at the doorway toward the rising Sun to the east *he made it big* . . . and everyday he works . . . and the *spokes* that lead to the *center* . . . he piles up rocks leading to the center what you see now on a . . . Sundance Lodge . . . it is round . . . with a doorway leading towards the Sun . . . to the east where the Sun rises *and he built* that according to the . . . to the form of a Sundance Lodge . . . built it according to the Sundance Lodge

And . . . no telling how many . . . he must of stayed there a month or so and he fasted . . . fasted there . . . every day says his prayers . . . he has tobacco . . . with him . . . and a good supply of tobacco . . . and he'd fill up his pipe and offer smokes . . . to the Great Spirit . . . and he went that way on all these days of fasting . . .



Crow Sundance Lodge following the dance. Co-sponsored by Alvin Howe and Rob Moran, 1993, Wolf Mountains

Every day I say my prayers. Each evening before going to bed, I would sing the Song of the Tree, the fourth song sung each morning during the sunrise ceremony of the Sundance, the song also sung in preparation of the Center Tree of the Sundance Lodge. And with that song,

prayers would go out to those in my family and to others, all those in need, asking help and giving thanks. In my backyard, the Sweat rocks would be periodically heated, cedar and water placed upon them and prayers spoken in the Little Lodge, the Younger Brother of the Big Lodge, the Sundance Lodge. Each full moon my medicine bundle would be opened, its contents renewed, and prayers offered.

It was a journey of quite awhile, and all my patience and perseverance would be needed. During that fast in 1976 for my son's health, not only had I an opportunity to fulfill a vow and help my son, but an important lesson, a berry gift, was also received and now remembered. I had been offering my prayers with tobacco, using the Eagle-feather fan, going without food and water, as Tom Yellowtail had instructed. It happened during the evening of the third night, before I was to come down off the hill the next day. A tremendous uneasiness, verging on panic, overcame me. I lit a cigarette, held it out toward the east, and prayed. As the smoke ascended so, too, would my prayer. Another cigarette and then a third were lit from the fire of the previous. I prayed hard, still so unsettled. Then he appeared. Just to the south, not more than a few feet away, one of the Little People stood silent, watching. And with his appearance, a calm came over me and I felt protected. And I realized the cause of my anxiety. That evening I had acted in anticipation of desired results, confident that I alone had achieved something of importance. But, in fact, I had achieved nothing by myself, on a journey not yet completed. As in all our journeys, others do their parts. Tom had been saying his prayers, and his "Medicine Fathers," "Spirit Helpers," were watching over and making all this possible. Ultimately, it is not a solitary journey. After I came down from my fast, Tom and I sweated, giving prayers of thanks. And Tom asked if I would like to continue my prayers for my son, joining him later that summer in the Sundance.

Along with the days of fatigue and nights of sleepless worry, there were also days of feeling "so normal." It was as if the weeks of chemo and their side effects were a distant memory. Especially on such occasions, I didn't want to slip into thinking *I* had made it, becoming *self* confident. In those moments of worry or of conceit, it was the presence and watching over by so many that helped provide the patience and perseverance I would need for the long haul.

I, too, attended to a Medicine Wheel. The Crow word for sincerity is often rendered, *diakaashe*, meaning to do something with determination, with effort, literally, “he/she really did it.” Sincerity was the most important gift that could be given by someone in return for the health of another or, as with Burnt Face, the ultimate gift given if the Little People or other Spirit Helpers were to “adopt” you. One’s sincerity, found along that path of one’s inner journey, necessitates a listening with all your heart, of getting in touch with what is most essential. It’s a listening to the qualities others have identified within you, or, perhaps, have charged you with becoming. Through his offering of a rock Medicine Wheel, Burnt Face sought to identify and give his best effort, his *diakaashe*, and so, too, would I.



Rocks of the Bighorn Medicine Wheel, 1994

Of particular urgency was how I would understand my cancer, laying a foundation for my Medicine Wheel. So many spoke of it as an “enemy” to be confronted and defeated, a “battle” to be won. But for me this conceptualization just didn’t feel right. To do so, at some core level, it felt as if I would be rendered akin to that which I confronted and adrift from what I cherished most. I would become, “enemy.” And, after all, Burnt Face battled no great adversary. I certainly understood my cancer as an enormous, potentially deadly obstacle. But it was to be approached as something to be jumped over, around, and through, something to be left behind. I would seek to fill my healing path with the gifts of huckleberries that have come to embody much of what is most essential to who I am. Two of these gifts came during my early Sundancing years, and became pivotal rocks in my Medicine Wheel.

In 1977, Susie Yellowtail, Tom’s wife, said that if I were to continue to “go in and use the whistle,” to Sundance, I would need an “Indian name.” During a medicine bundle opening, held in their home, Grandpa Tom and Grandma Susie bestowed an Indian name on their newly adopted grandson, *Maakuuxshiichilish* – “Seeking To Help Others.” A tremendous honor, and a huge responsibility, was conferred. It is a name I would strive to bring forth in all that I do. While shouldering an enormous challenge and withdrawing from some of my faculty duties, I did not now want to compromise such a defining part of myself. So I continued with my full teaching load and work with my graduate students on their thesis research and end-of-semester

defenses. I was up-front about my situation, periodically updating my students on my journey, though not wanting to engender on their parts any sort of sympathy. If my journey could be used by any of my students as an example of how a person can navigate a serious illness or any dire situation, then others would be helped. Reiterating the words Cliff had shared with them the previous fall semester, I told the students that each of them must work hard as they go to the mountains with their cedar baskets to gather with care the huckleberries, those special “gifts” received from a mentor, a friend, a grandparent, a teacher while in college. Identify and cherish each of those “berries,” as they will be relied upon as unexpected challenges are encountered along their own journeys. “It may be next year or thirty years from now that you may need to call upon your gifts, your cherished huckleberries, to get you through a tough time.”

In 1978, I had received a second defining gift during my fourth Sundance, completing the cycle I had pledged for the health of my son, Matt. As I charged the Center Tree and danced back, Eagle-plumes in hand and blowing my Eagle-bone whistle in cadence to the beat of the drum, I kept my gaze on the mounted Buffalo Head, hung from the Tree, facing me. Many of the over one hundred men and women dancers were also up and dancing. Looking in from the Lodge’s door stood family and friends offering their encouragement. I wore with pride the beautiful belt Lucy Real Bird had beaded for me. As I danced I remember being overwhelmed by a feeling of comfort, I felt safe, and let go, danced all the harder. After some time and recognizing what was happening, the other dancers sat down and the singers beat with increased intensity. Every charge took more of my rapidly diminishing strength.

I am not sure how much time had passed, but I do remember seeing the Dance continue without me, as my body lay there on the ground. And then I was in a deep, dark canyon, with sharp rock ridges on each side, looking up into the sky. Then in a thick pine forest, still searching up into the sky, with the jagged tree line on each side of me. Now I was in an open cottonwood grove, looking up, with a more subtle, flowing tree line. Then I was no longer looking up, but was up, in the clouds, rounded and white, but still striving to see something. And then I realized I would not see anything out there. I was looking through the eyes of *Bishée*, with his horns on either side of my head, viewing the clouds all around me. I was Buffalo. Then I was back again in the Lodge.

Following the Sundance, Grandpa Tom and John Trehero, a Fort Washakie Shoshone medicine man, over a hundred years of age, wanted to hear my story. It was from John that Grandpa had received his medicines. At his direction, John insisted that I never consume the meat of the buffalo, of my Medicine Father. He also had me give a “give away” for the sponsor of the Dance, Johnny Boy Cummins, to acknowledge and thank him for helping make my gift possible. I presented the sponsor with four things of value I had with me, including the pipe I had recently made with its carved Catlenite stone bowl.

The gift of *Bishée* was something I had not been seeking; this is not supposed to happen to white guys. I would have been honored simply to have been able to give of myself in the three days of fasting and prayer for my son. But I was humbled to receive such a special gift, and knew of the great responsibility with which I had been entrusted. Grandpa instructed me in how to assemble and care for my medicine bundle. On the full moon, I should renew it with the burning of sweet grass or cedar, and offer prayers for those in need. Over the next years, at those times of indecision or challenge, I would always turn to it and seek its counsel. *Bishée* would help guide and give me strength. It was *Bishée*, along with *Akbaatatdía*, “the One Who Has Made Everything,” the Creator, that I addressed in my evening prayers. It is *Bishée* and *Maakuuxshiichilish* that are essential to who I am, rocks of my Medicine Wheel offering.

They Come Out

**And right by are the cliffs . . . caves . . . where . . . you hear about the Little People . . .
. they are there . . . and they’re there yet today finally . . . the Little People come out . . .
they’d been watching him . . . they come out . . . and they . . . they said “Young man . . . you
have been here for awhile . . . we’ve been watching you . . . you’re fasting . . . you’ve said
your prayers . . . and you’ve spent enough time here . . . and you’ve built this . . .
representing a Sundance Lodge . . . it is good . . . now we want to adopt you . . . we want to
give you medicine . . . we want you to quit your fasting and you go back to your people . .
. . . your people are at that place . . . your parents and the rest of them you get back . .
back to your people . . . don’t stay away from them**

**We’ll take those scars away from you so you’ll look . . . look decent . . . so you won’t
be ashamed to get back into your people and . . . the *medicine things* we will give you
. . . you will have them . . . and . . . you pray for people . . . doctor people . . . when you are**

back home you'll have the power we are giving you . . all these powers so . . you exercise . . using your medicines when you get back to your people and you will be a medicine man among your people and eventually become a *chief* . . of your tribe" "So . . alright . . I will leave . . . I'll go back"

Cliff asked if I would join him in his family's Jump Dance. His family welcomed all in the community, setting an early March date for the Dance. The Jump Dance is the Coeur d'Alene's most important annual ceremony, held over two nights, from dusk to dawn, during the height of the winter. See Frey 2001/2005. Kris, my wife, and Jennifer Gatzke, one of my graduate students, also accompanied me, having done so in the past. We planned to attend only the first night.

Kris and I greeted Cliff and his wife Lori that evening with three small gifts – a Pendleton blanket in the style I had used while Sundancing, a smaller blanket for Lori's new grandchild, and a porcupine quilled medicine wheel medallion with an Eagle Plume attached, that had been given to me many years ago by a Lakota artist. Soon the air was filled with "heart talk" and *suumesh* song. Someone would make their way onto the floor, offer "heart talk" of their family's joys and challenges, and then sing his *suumesh*, medicine song, as others would then join in, "jumping," dancing with him in support of his family's needs and hopes.

Well into the evening Lori had me join Cliff on the dance floor, as the two of us then walked counter-clockwise before the other participants, over one hundred men, women and children. Knowing Cliff's eye-sight was very poor, especially under the dimmed light, was I to have the honor of helping guide Cliff around the dance floor as he sang his *suumesh* songs? And then we stopped and Cliff spoke. Instead of his family, Cliff talked to everyone about me, my relationship with the Crow and the Sundance, what I have meant to him and the Coeur d'Alenes, and asked all to pray for my health. Then he had me give my own "heart talk." Alone, I circled the floor and spoke. I don't remember much of what I said, much too nervous I guess.

When I completed my circle, standing again beside Cliff, he announced and bestowed an Indian name on me, *Kw'lkwi'l Sqqi*, meaning "Little Red Hawk." The name is in reference to the Red-tail Hawk, as Cliff said, "a patient and observant bird," who then "acts quickly and deliberately." And he spoke of me as a "patient observer" who then "acts deliberately," as he "thinks and writes about," and "helps our people." As we returned to our seats, Cliff took off his

red bandana from around his neck and had me place it around mine, and called me, “brother.” On such prayerful occasions the red bandana is worn with pride by all the members of the SiJohn family. With the gift of *Kw'lkwi'l Sqqi*, I would have the opportunity to place another rock in my Medicine Wheel.

Having received this special name, I felt I needed to attend the second night and have my give away. But as we were going to our car after the Dance, Cliff and Lori approached and insisted that I spend the next evening at home, resting, and said that they had already taken care of the give away for me. When we spoke next, Cliff said the give away had gone well, and the Sundance blanket had been given to a young Coeur d'Alene girl, now also blessed. In considering the importance of an Indian name and of the rebirth that can come from receiving such a name, Cliff says:

I never received . . . a name . . . for a very long time . . . and . . . I went to . . . Vietnam and when I came back . . . and . . . was in the Sweat House with my *father* . . . and telling him things . . . about what I had done . . . and I told him about that incident . . . during my tour of duty . . . where we were surrounded by the enemy . . . I sang a song that *he had* taught me . . . along time ago . . . when I was a young boy . . . I took the *power* of my *father* and my *T'upyes* (the grandmothers) and I placed it in front of me . . . against that enemy . . . *the enemy didn't take* me that day . . . and he gave me the name *Circling Song* . . . we were . . . completely surrounded and . . . the song . . . *whirled* around me and the others that were there that we *survived* . . .

So my *children* . . . and *every one* of my grandchildren . . . down the line . . . they all have been named . . . they all carry their names . . . so to . . . place a significance on the names is one of the most important things . . . that us as Indian people carry . . . and we're known by that name . . . and it *also* says that when you get and cross the river . . . cross the creek to the other side . . . to the other big camps . . . to those who have died and gone on ahead of you to set up their camps . . . when they see *you* they will *recognize* you and they will call you by your name . . .

Well the question probably comes to some . . . “*well* . . . I don't *have* an Indian name” . . . maybe there's a reason for that . . . maybe when you cross over . . . someone will greet you . . . and things will work out in the next world . . .

I've always said we were *crippled* and *wounded* . . . by the coming of the fur trader . . . then the missionary . . . then the soldiers . . . then the immigrants . . . our lives were never the same . . . *but* when that missionary came . . . he *immediately* began to take our names away . . . and he would replace them with

names *he* would decide you would carry . . . “from now on instead of your name being Eagle Head you’re going to be called Michael . . . Gabriel . . . Mary” . . . and he took all those names and just threw them down . . . “you’ll no longer carry the names of *animals* . . . that’s *devil’s stuff* . . . that’s *evil*” . . . and they were ashamed . . . some of them . . . and they . . . wanting to be *good* . . . *Indians* . . . walked away and took that name . . . and we still carry that wound with us . . . it’s *prevalent* . . . it’s *everyday*

I’ve *always* . . . told my family that we’ll *never* do that . . . we’ll always . . . keep our *names* . . . call each other *that* during certain ceremonies . . . and *never ever* give up . . . never be wounded we’ll always *carry* our *two* ways to the heaven trails . . . *one* is our ancient *beliefs* . . . customs . . . traditions . . . and the other way . . . is a *Christian way* . . . and *neither* is more powerful than the other . . . just both headed the same way . . . *and that’s* what the Jesuit . . . couldn’t understand or accept . . . that our *names* were as *important* and as *strong* as *King George names* . . . or as strong as . . . the *La France names* . . . that our names were . . . *messengers* . . . the messengers of the *Amotqn* . . . the Creator . . . his messengers were the *Animals* . . . his messengers were the *First People* . . . and hence we would honor those *First People* that the Creator placed here and carry their names . . . Buffalo Head . . . Eagle Head . . . Little Hawk . . . Poor Wolf . . . it’s as close of a name to the Creator . . . as anything else

So . . . we may know somebody for a long time . . . and that person . . . when they *walk* . . . they remind you of something . . . when they *talk* . . . when they *do* something . . . suddenly as if the *sky* were to open . . . and a *beam* . . . of . . . *sunlight* come down . . . shine on that person . . . and then they would *call it* . . . *get it* . . . *grab it* . . . go like this with their finger (reaching out and pulling in with his index finger) . . . *name it* . . . and that’s how that person got his name . . . sometimes in *Dreams* . . . sometimes in *Sweat House* . . . sometimes seeing something . . . go to *Sweat House* . . . think about somebody . . . praying . . . “*how* can I see this person . . . *what do they do* that . . . they could warrant . . . such a powerful thing as one of the *First People’s names?*”

You have two names . . . very powerful . . . with the people that gave them to you . . . gave them in sincerity . . . in deep sacrament I am *sure* that . . . *Tom Yellowtail* thought a long time . . . about . . . the trail you walked and what you would be known in the *next* big camp by the people . . . as well as the people today . . . in the world you live . . . as the name he gave you and *he’ll* be *waiting for you* . . . and when he sees you . . . he’ll raise his *hand* and he’ll *holler* your name . . . you can holler back . . . “I am here” . . . and he’ll say . . . “come this way . . . I have a lodge for you . . . all set up for you right here my son . . . you sit here and tell me stories about . . . what you’ve been doing”

So you have your name . . . that will echo in the mountains . . . for a long time . . . Little Red Hawk
when we thought of your name . . . it came from our *spirit* . . . who spoke to our hearts . . . to say *this is what*
we will call this man . . . *this is what his name* will be . . . this is what it will be when . . . *I call him* when I see
him on the other side . . . this is what you will be *known as* . . . we'll holler your name . . . we'll have a *big* . .
feast . . . when we both get on the other side . . . and we'll sit down with *all our people* . . . and we'll tell stories
. . . .

The power of the Creator . . . the First People . . . the Animal world . . . that spirit *jumped* onto our spirit
. . . into your spirit . . . into your heart the power of the Creator will come through to you through that
Animal spirit . . . the *power* to heal yourself . . . the power to be like the Deer who . . . maybe gets wounded and
turns around and *licks* his wound . . . and take the power of *his* . . . *juices* . . . his internal *liquid* . . . to *close* that
wound . . . *healing* himself from inside that *aura* of that name surrounds you . . . you are reborn . . . again
. . . you reborn with this touch of the power of the Creator . . . with this name . . . and that *aura* that *surrounds*
you . . . and you can *use* that . . . to take it *internally* to heal yourself the Creator gives you . . . the strength
from inside . . . to *heal yourself* . . . if you *believe* . . . if you put your . . . *trust* in the Creator's power that he has
given *everyone one of us* . . . if you open up . . . your heart to that spirit *you can lay on a hillside* and
you can listen to the Wind and the power of the Wind going through the *Trees* and the *Trees* will *sing* to you
. . . you'll hear the Bird . . . *flying* . . . *hollering* . . . making his little noise . . . and you can say . . . "that is the power
. . . that is inside of me . . . because of the names that were given to me . . . by the people who understood the
power of that name"

On the Monday following the Jump Dance, we had another look into the physical territory of my illness. I had taken a base-line Pet/CT scan in December. Because of some intense night sweats and hot flashes I was having, the oncologist wanted this early scan to make sure the chemo recipe was not missing some of the cancer. On Wednesday, my doctor shared the results with Kris and me. There was no indication of any abnormality. A little over two months into the six months of treatment, and there was no sign of my third-stage Hodgkins, from my left-side abdomen up through my chest and into my neck. Incredible news. I am still amazed! I immediately called and shared the news with my Mom, son, sister, and uncle, then "bros," Cliff and Rob, then Josiah and Leroy.

This by no means suggested that the journey was over. The oncologist was very pleased to be sure, but the cancer, I was told, could still exist at a "microscopic level," not detectable by

the scan. So the chemo continued into June, completing the 12 treatments. And with the chemo new challenges arose.

Knowing you have cancer can certainly be challenge enough, but many of the side effects of the chemotherapy, especially as they continued to manifest themselves along the way, added to the challenge. After each treatment, my white blood count was lowered, increasing my susceptibility to infections; there were days of fatigue and high blood pressure with accompanying edginess, disassociation and sleepless nights; my testosterone levels were lowered, the cause of those intense night sweats and hot flashes; a blood clot developed in my jugular vein that would remain for months to come; my fingers and thumbs became hyper-sensitive to the touch, while my toes grew numb; and there was the hair loss and weight gain. In the larger scheme of things, the side effects were nothing too overwhelming. Fatigue was the biggest issue, a constant reminder to pace myself. It was a healing journey, full of all sorts of obstacles and nuisances, that needed to be left behind. While my doctors addressed the more serious side effects, I kept saying my prayers and laying out the rocks of my Medicine Wheel. A third Pet/CT scan was taken on July 3, 2006, a month after my last chemo. The results re-stated those of March – no abnormality. I was watched over and they came out, those scars taken away.

Hearing the Crackling of Fire and Re-telling One's Own

So he started back the way he came . . and went to the place where the Little People had told him where he will find . . your people . . probably several days to travel . . he's a foot . . . so one day . . here he come into camp . . . he asked for the chief's camp . . and they told him . . "there's the chief's camp" . . .

The chief looked at him . . he's grown up already he was a young lad when he left them . . he's a young man now and he *didn't* recognize him . . . so . . the young man explained to the chief . . "I am the boy that got my face burned . . and I stayed away from the camp . . . and I'm . . I'm the boy . . I've grown up now . . . I've fasted . . like I wanted to . . . I received my medicine . . . and *here* . . I was asked to return to my people and here I am . . . I've come back . . my parents are here somewhere" . . .

So the chief said . . "*okay . . alright . . come on in*" . . and he call his announcer . . a herald we call them . . the man who goes around camp making announcements . . . the

chief called the herald . . to come and told him the story . . . “go around camp and tell the different chiefs to come to together and come to my camp . . and we’ll have a smoke . . we have this young man who has returned to us . . . we will hear his story . . . we will ask him to tell his story to us” . . . so the herald went around camp . . .

And there it’s a big tipi and there they come in . . . the chief sits here and they have the boy there they come and take their places . . . *and* they . . they have a ceremony . . they . . they filled up their pipes and smoke . . make incense . . prayers . . . and after doing that they say . . “*alright . . young man . . we are now ready to hear your story . . tell us*” . .

So the young man . . says “I am the boy . . that when . . quite awhile back . . when we were . . moving up . . from *way down there* . . way down the Missouri headed this way up the Bighorn . . River . . . when we got to the mountain . . where I left . . you people . . and I . . I went to the mountains . . and I went on south from there . . quite aways down and come to a place where I fasted and stayed in one place I spent all my time there . . . and finally the *Little People* there around close by . . come to me . . and visit with me and talk with me . . . and they advise me to leave that place and come back to . . back to my parents and all of you . . and I’m a member of your group and according to what I received they call me Burnt Face . . and I was disfigured but those Little People took those . . . took those . . disfigurations off my face and make me look different . . . so *here I am* . . . I’m the boy who left your camp” . . .

“*Ahhh . . ahhh . . ahh . . hay! . . that’s great*” . . the chief said . . . “*alright . . we will . . welcome you back to our camp you will be with us now . . . stay with us . . . we’ll travel on*” . . . so . . they accepted him back . . . they announce . . throughout the camp . . “the *young man* is back with us . . he is back to his parents . . . he is with us now from now on . . . we will depend on him . . when some of you get sick . . call on him . . . he’s been given the power to work and doctor you and make you get well he’ll be the man we’ll call on . . as our doctor . . among this group” . .

So . . *sure enough* . . camp went on . . people respect him . . . anyone that get sick they would call on him . . and he’d . . pray for them . . doctor them and they get well . . . *and they respect him* . . “*oh . . this man had the power . . . we must respect him . . . we can’t make fun of him no more . . no way . . anymore*” . . . so as time went on he finally become a chief . . and a great chief from that time on . . . and his name was . . Burnt Face . . .

When you have traveled a life-altering journey, how essential it is to be able to re-tell one's own, *baaéechichiwaau*. The Crow refer to the act of storytelling with the expression, *baaéechichiwaau*, literally meaning, "re-telling one's own." As with many tribes and as asked of Burnt Face, the Crow adhere to the importance of re-telling, to one's elders, family and friends, those experiences that have been personally transformative and life-changing.

1. In re-telling your story, as Burnt Face has done for me, may others be helped, inspired in some way to better face their own challenges, and, if wounded, to begin the healing.

2. In re-telling one's own, you renew your kinship with family and friends, with adopted "bros" and Medicine Fathers, and come to discover the expanded horizons of that kinship.

3. Having laid them out as rocks of your Medicine Wheel, in this act of re-telling your story, you discover a little more of what is most essential within, what is most cherished, that of your heart, and can bring it out in all that you do. Who you are.



Rodney Frey, at the Sundance, late 1970s

4. In re-telling my story, may we consider traveling the many differing paths that can reach the same destination, both the external path of head knowledge, as well as internal path of heart knowledge. While some might consider them mutually exclusive, is the path of chemotherapy and an Indian Name, indeed, irreconcilable? Let us consider these divergent paths.

“Head knowledge” is the world of analysis, of social scientists, of natural scientists, of rationalism and empiricism, of positivism, of the scientific method. What are some of its premises?

Duality: This is the world of objectivity, an objectified world, as if we are standing behind a great glass pane, autonomous, independent and distinct from that which we observe on the other side, which is just as autonomous and distinct, operating by its own laws, laws those following in the footsteps of Isaac Newton seek to know. This is the world of Rene Descartes, of the “I” – thought and the “it” – material distinction, of “mind” and “matter,” neither reducible to the other, of Cartesian Dualism.

Reductionism: What is most real and true are the “objects” on the other side of the glass pane, the discrete phenomena, accessible through the five senses, the world of material objects, all of which are reducing to discrete, quantifiable, statistical units of measurement. As Galileo first stated, “The language of nature is mathematics”

Head knowledge has facilitated the powerful ability to manipulate the physical world, of creating technologies and the techniques of surgery, of creating chemicals and chemotherapies, of the healing of the external path.

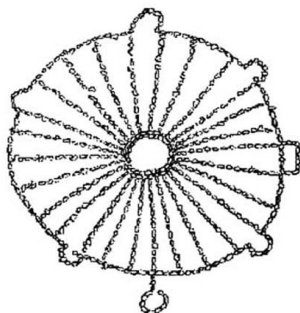
“Heart knowledge” is the world of the Little People and Burnt Face, and of the Creator and the elders. What are some of its premises?

Ashammaléaxia: This Crow term for “clan” literally translates, “as driftwood lodges,” and refers to the strength that comes from the interdependency with one’s kinsmen. As a single piece of driftwood does not easily survive the powerful currents, eddies and boulders of a fast moving river, it finds strength and survives by lodging with many others along the shore of the same river. This metaphoric understanding is shared widely by other indigenous peoples, expressive of a world view within which each person is ultimately in kinship with a vast host of others, a spatial and temporal “family” certainly made up of other humans, but also of Ancestral Peoples, Animal Peoples, and Spirit Peoples. You are fundamentally a participant, existing as a part of the world, and not an observer, existing apart from the world. There is no dualism found here.

Baaxpée: This Crow term is often translated as meaning “spiritual power.” But its subtleties have far reaching implications. Understood among other indigenous peoples as well, *baaxpée* holds that what is most real is the spiritual transcendent. It is the spiritual that emanates through and from all things, be it a person, an animal, a plant, even a rock. And it is from this realm that the perennial significances and great archetypal meanings of the world, as well as the transformative force that bestows life onto that world, are all precipitated. There is certainly no quantitative, materialistic reductionism found here.

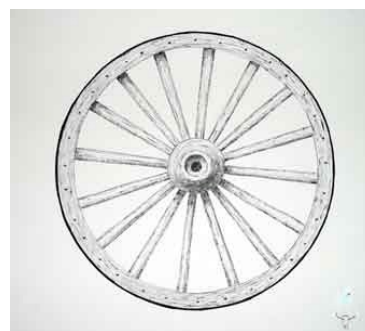
Heart knowledge is the internal path that can just as effectively facilitate a healing.

So we are faced with head knowledge and heart knowledge, . . . the assumptions of each representing seemingly two mutually exclusive ways of knowing, and, one might argue, they are much too divergent to attempt to reconcile?



Certainly Cliff and Tom didn't think so. I am reminded of a little story Tom shared with me so many years ago. He envisioned the world as a "Great Wagon Wheel" – like the structure of the Sundance Lodge, the pattern of its dancers, and the Medicine Wheel itself, he would point out. The spokes represent the separate paths to the center, the distinct religions and peoples of the world, each with their own ways, languages and traditions.

Bighorn Medicine Wheel Nevertheless each spoke is of equal importance. The wheel would fail to turn if some spokes were longer than the others, or eliminated all together; all are needed if the wheel is to turn. Yet all the spokes are linked to the same hub, the same source, the Creator, though each spoke might conceive of it and address it distinctly. During their lives, Tom was both the Sundance Chief for his people, as well as a devout Baptist, while Susie danced alongside her husband and practiced biomedicine as a registered nurse.



Head and heart ways of knowing, the external and internal paths of healing, chemotherapy and an Indian Name, all are complementary with one another. Perhaps Tom is offering us all a little lesson, as we attempt to reconcile the seemingly incompatible, the mutually exclusive, the irreconcilable, as we engage our communities, our families, our lives with so many others, . . . indeed, as we reconcile our healing paths.

5. In the very act of re-telling, Burnt Face is lifted off the pages of this book, no longer story, but immediate and vital, continuing to doctor the people. That which is spoken aloud, from the heart and in accord with the ancestors, be it a story or a name, is rekindled and brought forth, and swirls around you.

And having opened up your heart, in your re-telling, may you "experience the healing" that comes from the inner journey, that indivisible convergence of the spirit descending upon you – "those scars taken away," and the spirit coming through you – "reborn." For indeed, the spirit of the Creator, the Little People, the Buffalo, the Bird that is *above* is the spirit that resides *within*.

So what's in a name spoken, a story told, a prayer recited? What's this spirit descending upon you and spirit coming through you, this experience the healing?

I had laid out the rocks of my Medicine Wheel, of *Maakuuxshiichillish*, of *Bishée*, of *Kw'IKwi'l Sqqi*, my sincerity, my *diakaashe*, the greatest gifts I could give from my heart. I am now re-telling my story, *baaéechichiwaau*. And in doing so, in the act of placing the rocks, of speaking the names, of the re-telling the stories, you are in kinship with the source, with the Creator, with *baaxpée*, that spirit within, that spirit throughout, that precipitates, brings forth the world. It is from here that one expresses heart-felt words of sincerity, and it is from here that the world is created, renewed, and perpetuated.

I am reminded of this understanding in the Crow words, *diiawákaawik* and *dasshússuua*. One does not say good bye, but instead, *diiawákaawik*, "I'll see you later." To say "good bye" is too final, and may bring it about, *dasshússuua*. That which is spoken aloud has the power to affect the world, *dasshússuua*, literally meaning, "breaking with the mouth." Hence the expression, "stories make the world." As Cliff relates, in the act of telling the stories, "[it is] the First People *who come alive* in the story . . . and who can *swirl* around you . . . as the Turtle is saying his thing or as the Chipmunk is saying something when it comes through *the heart* and out the mouth . . . *the power* of the Animal People . . . is still here *all these things* suddenly come *alive* . . ."

In the act of giving voice to and replicating Coyote's story of the world, or of Burnt Face's story, or of an Indian name, a family's song, a prayer, and of doing so from the heart, from one's *diakaashe*, from the very core of your being, the door is opened and you dwell in the perennial landscape, connected to and participating with Burnt Face, the Animal Peoples, the Creator (*ashammaléaxia*), connected to and participating with the spiritually transformative power (*baaxpée*), as it flows out from the world and our selves, as well as onto the world and our lives.

6. In re-telling one's own, what gifts may await? Ultimately, it is up to each person to cherish the particular special gifts bestowed upon him or her, and then apply them, as rocks of his or her Medicine Wheel, to the challenges encountered, choosing the course of his or her journey that comes from the heart. If Burnt Face speaks to you, cherish this gift as yours. Surely great stories will come!

And Cliff concludes:

Sometimes I can *sit* . . . and . . . hear the crackling of fire . . . I can hear the humming of the old people . . . our beds were *all the way* around the room . . . and the fire and the stove . . . and somebody over here tells stories . . . somebody over here . . . old people . . . I can remember the *smell* of buckskin . . . of my grandma sitting there . . . working on *beadwork* . . . sometimes *cornhusk bags* . . . sometimes . . . combing her hair . . . she had *long* hair . . . and just the things that are comforting and warm to a little boy . . . maybe a hand on my shoulder or let me lay my head on her *lap* . . . but that crackling of fire . . . *every time I hear that* . . . I think of them . . . *I think* of that room and I'm *quickly* drawn to that room . . . *quickly* drawn to the things I heard in that room . . . the stories before *white people* came . . . what it was like when they were little children . . .

My brother [Jim] and I lived with my *grandma* for awhile . . . my dad made us *live with* her . . . and his reasoning behind it was that it was part of our *education* and then he picked up where they left off . . .

My dad talked about the mountains . . . about when they would ride *their horses* . . . they had no transportation there was *no roads* . . . they rode horseback . . . *four days on horseback* from here up into the huckleberry mountains and the Clark Fork and the Pend Oreille Country . . . and he would talk about *how many people* would be going up into the mountains and of the trail . . . *the trails* would turn to *powder* there was *so many horses* and people going up into the mountains . . . and I would ask him . . . "you mean ten fifteen twenty horses?" . . . and he says . . . "*hundreds!*" . . . *people* all *moving* to go up to it . . . he got to see it . . . he got to be a part of it . . . he got to ride on the horses and see the *old people* and their horses with their picking baskets as they *all moved* into the mountains . . . that *crackling* of that fire *immediately* gives me visual pictures in my mind as he described them . . . of what it was like . . .

So that crackling of that fire . . . *I believe* . . . every person . . . *I believe* . . . has a crackling fire . . . if they can *just* light it . . . and if they *can't* . . . if they are so *wounded* . . . that the Jesuit took all of that away and their grandmothers gave it up and their grandfathers . . . their mothers and fathers ashamed of being what they were . . . and now those children are running around here *lost* . . . you see *it everyday* . . . see it everyday in *jails* . . . see it everyday in *drugs* . . . *alcohol* . . . and so . . . I think that . . . so many people have a crackling fire . . . but they *can't light it* . . . they haven't got the tools to light it . . .

And *that's where* . . . I believe . . . our *Indian names* . . . our . . . continuous *oral history* . . . the handing down of the *significance* of our *beliefs* . . . the significance of our *prayers* . . . what ceremonies we *do* . . . how we *believe so strong* in them . . . it's *there* . . . it's in the mountains . . . it's in the water . . . it's in the Sweat House . . . it's in the *songs* of our people . . . find it . . . listen to it . . . that suddenly will become a tool . . . to

create . . . *enough energy to light a fire* and that *aura* that *surrounds* you . . . will suddenly become visible . . . and you'll feel it touch it . . . taste it . . . and then you can experience the healing of your *spirit* and your *heart* . . . that crackling . . . that fire . . . that fire that puts you at ease . . . that fire that *heals you* . . . that fire warms your *spirit* your *heart* . . . that crackling of *family* . . . that cracking and popping of *old people* without that fire we'll be extinguished . . . forever . . . and we'll only become a memory . . . in the pages of somebody's writing

You are my friend . . . you are my brother . . . and the words that we *share* . . . we understand . . . and someday . . . we will sit in each other's *lodge* and Circling Song . . . will embrace your *hands* . . . my brother . . . Little Red Hawk . . . to again . . . share stories . . . and to *share our fires* and to listen to the *crackling* of each other's fires . . . because the cracking goes on and on and on and on and on . . . and it holds us together as a people . . . as *brothers* . . . as a Tribe . . . as a Nation . . . that crackling sound . . . of the true spirit . . . of our hearts . . . you and me as Indian people I still my voice on this and hope someday . . . someone who *reads* this . . . can light their fire . . . and hear the crackling . . . of you and I's fire . . . I still my voice on these matters today

Thank You

A sincere *ahókaash* (Crow), *limlemtsh* (Coeur d'Alene), *qe'ci'yéw'yew* (Nez Perce), thank you, to all in the Indian community who have so generously facilitated for me my “re-telling one's own” – Tom and Susie Yellowtail, and John Trehero, in memory, and Cliff and Lori SiJohn, Rob and Rose Moran, Josiah Blackeagle Pinkham and D'Lisa Penney Pinkham, Phillip Barnaby, Leroy Seth, Silas Whitman, Phillip Cash-Cash, Ed Galindo, Janet and Rayburn Beck, Valerie Jackson, Diane Reynolds, Mike Penney, Sarah Penney, the Native students at the university, and so many others. My heart-felt acknowledgment and thanks to all my immediate family, friends, colleagues, and students in the non-Indian community, and especially for their tireless support and prayers – my wife, Mother, sister, uncle, and son, who was given the Indian name, *Awakúikiiaateesh*, “Little Dwarf,” by Grandpa Tom, that the Little People always be a part of him. And particular thanks goes to Suzanne Crawford, the “chief of this camp,” for allowing me to re-tell my story for you.

During the second night of Cliff and Lori SiJohn's January 2007 Jump Dance, I had my “give away.” With Cliff guiding my way, I spoke to the over hundred other participants of how

wonderful it is now to be able to sing and dance with them, of my healing journey, and of my tremendous gratitude to them for all their prayers. The blankets and other gifts were then distributed.

Bibliography

- Brown, Joseph Epes. 1953. *The Sacred Pipe: Black Elk's Account of the Seven Rites of the Oglala Sioux*. Norman: University of Oklahoma.
- Frey, Rodney. 1987. *The World of the Crow Indians: As Driftwood Lodges*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- 1994. *Eye Juggling: Seeing the World Through a Looking Glass and a Glass Pane*. New York: University Press of America.
- 1995. *Stories That Make the World: Oral Literature of the Indian Peoples of the Inland Northwest As Told by Lawrence Aripa, Tom Yellowtail and Other Elders*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- 1998, with Dell Hymes. "Mythology," in *Handbook of North American Indians, Plateau*. Vol. 12. Editor, Deward Walker. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- 2001/2005, in collaboration with the Schitsu'umsh. *Landscape Traveled by Coyote and Crane: The World of the Schitsu'umsh (Coeur d'Alene) Indians*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- 2002. *Nimíipuu (Nez Perce) - Lifelong Learning Online*, in collaboration with the Nimíipuu. Nez Perce Tribe, University of Idaho, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. <http://L3.ed.uidaho.edu/>
- 2002a. *Schitsu'umsh (Coeur d'Alene) - Lifelong Learning Online*, in collaboration with the Schitsu'umsh. Coeur d'Alene Tribe, University of Idaho, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. <http://L3.ed.uidaho.edu/>
- 2003. *Warm Springs, Wasco, and Northern Paiute - Lifelong Learning Online*, in collaboration with the Warm Springs, Wasco and Northern Paiute. Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, University of Idaho, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. <http://L3.ed.uidaho.edu/>

- 2004. "Oral Traditions," in *Companion Guide to the Anthropology of American Indians*,
Editor, Thomas Biolsi. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.