

Voices of Love and Truth:

Teachings from the AETS Elders Gathering

Introduction



In March of 2025, a circle of wisdom was formed in Thunder Bay, where Elders from AETS's nine First Nation communities gathered in the spirit of unity, healing, and vision. This gathering was not merely an event—it was a remembering, a reclaiming, and a rekindling of our ways of being. With hearts open and voices strong, our Elders came together to share stories, teachings, and truths rooted in generations of lived experience.

Guided by the Seven Sacred Teachings—Love, Respect, Courage, Honesty, Wisdom, Humility, and Truth—this gathering was held to honour the journey of aging and to uplifting of Aging Well at Home. Home, not just as a place, but as a feeling, a memory, and a sacred connection to land, language, and spirit.

This book holds their voices. It is a collection of quotes, insights, and reflections offered during those days together—words that hold power, compassion, and direction for all of us. In their words, you will hear the strength of the past and the hope for the future. You will find teachings wrapped in laughter, in silence, in ceremony, and in truth.

May these words carry you forward. May they help us all remember who we are, where we come from, and what it truly means to care for one another as we grow older—at home, in community, and in spirit.



“Miigwech comes from the word miigwe!
When we offer tobacco, we are showing
respect to the Creator, our Mother Earth,
and all our relations for what we are
given.” – Beatrice Twance-Hynes

“Watch a child and learn from them. They
are so innocent, loving and caring.”

“Live by the 7 Grandfather Teachings.”

“Be a mentor to the future generation.”



Sharon Desmoulin

Stay Grounded plant your feet on Mother Earth, breathe in, Breathe out
Calm, peaceful.

Hug a tree, our Ancestors so near, ask for help.

Release - Dance of Anger, music, stomp your feet.

“An Elder’s story is usually a life experience. Listen and learn, it could help you in your life.”

“Each day is a blessing. Live life to the fullest each day.”

“Always show love and respect to everyone. Help your Elders in and out of the home.”
–Raven Morningstar

“Remember that LIFE is a journey not a destination. Embrace Life.” –Jeff Gagnon

“Open windows for sun/trees to give help to who needs it.”

“Take care of your teeth. The Creator gave them to last your whole lifetime.” –
Clarence B

“Remember words are very powerful! They can make people happy but also can hurt, and if you hurt someone, it’s something you can’t change. Always watch what you say.”





“Empathy is a beautiful gift to express love. Treat those in ways you would want to be treated.” –Angela D

“Do not play in the mud puddles. Your shoes will get dirty.”

“Always respect your Elders. Children learn from Elders.” –Carolyn S

“We are both spiritual and physical. We need to feed our spirits too like we feed the Ancestors. So we make a spirit dish for our spirits too!”



"Howl at the moon. Grandmother moon hears all."

"Always speak even if your voice shakes. Don't be afraid."

"Laughter is a key to happiness. Smile." -Lyla

"Help your Elders always. Don't walk away if you see them fall."

"Sharing is Caring."

"Think Positive."



The courage it takes to leave behind what's not for
you anymore is the same courage that will help you
find your way to what is.

Angela Samuelsen

“Be positive and have empathy for others.”

“Always have something nice to say to someone.”

“Get the children more involved in what Elders and cultural organizers do. Have them in all Traditions.”

“Be kind to one another.” – Jeffrey

“Take time to walk out in the bush and listen to Nature (Beautiful).”

“Keep going with yourself! Be strong. Be kind!”

“We are medicine.” – Joceline

“Stay healthy, eat, move your body.”

“You are who your ancestors sang about in their ceremonies. You are their revolutionary prayer. You are their sacred gift to the world.”





“Seek wisdom in all you do in life and share your love for others and trust in God. Always.”

“Mino yaa pii q'daa n'doo moot saak qichi yaa amaa en deh waat.”

“Have an attitude of gratitude!”

“Share your stories of what was passed down to you, keep it alive.”



“Take time to care.”

“Treat all with respect the way you like to be treated.”

“Practice our teachings in all aspects of our lives.” -D Michon

“Encourage the children to learn the language, keep it alive.”

“Think with your heart.”

“Put all trust in God. He would do everything for you.” -Molly

“If you’re a diabetic make sure to carry candy.”

“Live, Love, Laugh.”



Take time to visit with an elder;
even for a short half an hour. It feels
so good to have someone stop by and say
hello and acknowledge that you matter.

“Teaching Language. Today Anishinaabe language gets mixed up like at University combined Ojibway/Cree and youth get confused. Need Elders to bring language together.”

“Each day is a blessing, live each day as if it were your last.” –Lorina

“A hug a day helps your whole day.”

“Moon Water – If you have faith in the healing powers, you’ll be good.”

“Share Elder knowledge/stories and experiences to pass onto future youth.”

“You got this! Keep on moving. One step by one step. One day at a time. Our weakness is our strength. Treat others with respect. Wisdom.” –Sharon Desmoulin

“People who think the elderly can’t do certain things are correct, but they got to remember to not always tell them that but to help them do these things.”





“Love one another. Love gathering with people. Enjoy one another.”

“Keep learning, keep sharing knowledge.”

“Do you want to be right or happy?”

“Always remember to pass your smile to everyone you meet.”



“Have someone to have daily check-ins with yourself. Phone-Message- In Person.”

“Pass on the knowledge. Don’t let it die.”

“We need to have more kindness and respect as this is how I would like to be treated. I was taught how to respect all, no matter what age.” -Raven Morningstar

“Accept each other as they are or we are.”

“I come to listen to the magic in our language.”

“Love thy neighbor, as Creator loves you.” -Angela D

“Treat people like you want to be treated. (Respect).“



Just Smile and Wave

*Before going to sleep at night,
think about what you are grateful
for about your day + say "Miigwech"
to our Creator!"*

Beatrice Twance Hynes

“One thing we need to inform our youth to keep them reminded to try to keep their Anishinabwemomin (dialects) of various tribal speaking dialects, and identify as Indigenous person. Meegwetch.

“Get rid of the past hurts, and abuse. Carry on full force.” – Pao Fry

“Respect each others beliefs.”

“Live life to the fullest each and every day. It is a beautiful life.”

“Respect: Treat others the way you want to be treated. Love one another.”

“Happiness depends upon ourselves. Keep your face always towards the sunshine and shadows will fall behind you.” –Carolyn Sobey

“Do not disrespect an elder, older than yourself, because you will never know what they are caring and, the spirit they are feeling.”





“Listen / ask Questions” – Debbie Michon

“Gegoo nooch dinaa wiiyaa – don’t talk bad about anyone.”

“Offer Asemaa in the morning to give thanks to our Creator for opportunities of each new day and for our family and our life.” –Beatrice Twance-Hynes



“Stay active.”

“Be grateful for all you have.”

“Accept what is. Let go of what was. Have faith in what will be.” -Angela Desmoulin

“All the problems that you experience in this life are designed to set you free.” -JD

“Acknowledge everyone and everything each day (creation) with gratitude. Meegwetch.”

“Daily Affirmations, “I love myself”. Keep going. You’re simply the best.”

“Exercise “more communication”.”



music to good medicine! It really makes you
feel good ♡

Always respect your Elders
Children learn from Elders

Carolyn S.

"Music is good medicine! It really makes you feel good."

"Treat others the way you would like to be treated."

"Education is empowerment." -Myran Poile

"Keep on Keeping on" - Debbie Michon

"Remember you are a teacher. Think about what you want to teach others."

"Make yourself number one (1). Love yourself."

"Forgive & Forget & Be Kind <3" - Gloria Deans

"Learning is healing."





“Respecting elders, no arguing -and not use fire water in 7 teachings
(no drugs or alcohol).”

“Give you big hugs. Stay positive.”

“Don’t be afraid to ask for HELP. (P.s It’s not shameful.)”

“Always say miigwech and offer asemaa to Gakina danawe-makingag for without
them we would be pitiful!” -Beatrice Twance-Hynes



“Be compassionate.”

“Make each day count.” –Myrna Poile

“Always be thankful to the Creator.”

“Be positive in life: Look for the silver lining in all the chaos. Even when you have experienced tragedy. At some point, the light will shine through. Believe in yourself. It’s too bad it takes a lifetime to come to this point. Love Yourself.”

“Healing, Spiritual, Soul, Forgiveness.”

“Use Prayer for guidance.” –K Hardy

“Sing songs I know.”

“Share your story.”



A HUG A DAY helps your whole day

REMEMBER, you are a teacher.

THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU WANT TO TEACH OTHERS.

“Grateful. Feeling Bless.”

“Knowledge is power.”

“Keep smiling. Be happy.”

“Laugh.”

“Share Jokes.”

“Love yourself.” -K Hardy


“Remember... Life is not always fair.”

“Listen!!”





your past is a good learning
experience to know how to go journeyes
in the future if you study it LB



- Laughter is a key to happiness
- Smile

Lulu.

Love your children every day,
myrna Poile







Miigwech

As we close this circle of wisdom, our hearts overflow with gratitude for the Elders who have generously shared their stories, teachings, and truths. Your voices have illuminated paths of understanding, compassion, and strength, guiding us towards a future rooted deeply in respect, love, and harmony.

To each Elder who gathered in Thunder Bay and to all who supported this meaningful journey, we extend our heartfelt thanks. May your words continue to nurture unity, inspire healing, and ignite the flame of remembrance in generations yet to come.

With open hearts and gentle spirits, let us carry these teachings forward—honouring them in our homes, within our communities, and in every step we take upon this sacred land.

Miigwech, thank you, for sharing your wisdom and lighting the way.

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Carry these words with you, and invite others to
share their own wisdom alongside yours.
Together, we weave a legacy of teachings for
generations yet to come.



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