

# TRUSTING THE CULTURE IN OUR FOOD

Overcoming Barriers for Sustainable Indigenous Foodways

By

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# Trusting the Culture in Our Food

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## Abstract

In this thesis I delve into the world of traditional, Indigenous agricultural practices. My goal is to examine how these traditional practices of small community-style gardens can help various populations of modern Indigenous people become self-sufficient in today's struggling economy, while at the same time showing how this sustainable food system contributes to the betterment of Mother Earth. Furthermore, this thesis will show the connection these foodways have to the cultural and linguistic practices of Indigenous Peoples and how they can be used to assist preservation of these practices. As a living example, this thesis will explain how the influence of reclamation of their indigenous foods has helped my own tribe, the Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin, revitalize their culture. Finally, I will explore the psychology behind why we are hesitant to change and demonstrate how these traditional practices can create a model for Indigenous populations to overcome these psychological barriers, while fitting contemporary societal settings.

## Acknowledgements

I have to first acknowledge my family, who have taught me about life and the importance of my beliefs. Also, the members of my committee for offering inspiration and assistance in expanding my capacity for knowledge. A special thank you to Raymond Pierotti and Cynthia Annette for their constant support and encouragement throughout my time at the University of Kansas. Lastly, I have to thank my daughter, Marley Rose. Without her I may have never realized the importance of working for a better tomorrow.

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# Chapter 1: Introduction to My Story

## PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

The art of storytelling is not lost, I have learned this art form growing up on the Oneida reservation in Wisconsin. Many storytellers have come before me and have taught me that I cannot make any claims without first telling my own story and letting the audience know who I am. It is important for me to remember this custom even when writing in academia. Therefore, I will open my thesis with a brief description of the background concerning why I chose to write about the importance of food, culture and community.

As an Indigenous woman living away from her ceremonial home, separated from my language, culture, and original People while I attend school, I sometimes find myself lost in this big world away from my people and land. After I finished my undergraduate career, I began to realize that I was forgetting who I was and my proper place on earth. Being away from the things that have defined me since youth, it became easy to forget what I stood for. When this happens people sometimes turn to their language, ceremonial/social songs, or to the stories of their People in order to reconnect them to their culture. While these are all important elements to me, I

find that turning to traditional foods and how to incorporate them in my current life can be even more effective in reconnecting me with who I am.

When I feel like I am losing myself, as a Hotinoshonni (People of the Longhouse) woman I turn to a basic human craving, sustenance. I grew up with white corn and wild berries as staples in my diet; these were served at every ceremony and social gathering. Therefore, this is where I find solace. When I eat these and other foods I have grown up with, I am returned to those moments in the Longhouse; hearing the songs, the feeling of the floorboards jumping beneath my feet from the passionate dancing, the laughter of my elders as they tell jokes in the language too fast for the children to understand, the smell of wood burning under the huge pot of corn soup, watching my chiefs and faithkeepers close their eyes and retell the stories of our people and thank the Creator for all that we have. Those are the moments I miss, those pure moments of place, family, and community that instilled in me the values and beliefs of the Hotinoshonni. So, when I am far from home and need to be reminded of these values I can cook corn mush or corn soup from corn grown on my reservation. The smells and tastes transport me back to those moments from my childhood.

I remember when my mother, who was working on revitalizing her traditional self, made her first pot of corn soup for one of our ceremonies. The entire Longhouse community was going to have this soup, and she became so nervous that she unfortunately overcooked the corn to the point where the kernels popped. Devastated by her attempt, she was embarrassed to bring it to the Longhouse; however, she held her head high and brought it in even though she felt she would be



teased. Most of her peers, as well as myself, ended up loving the soup and although she did get teased, it was all in good faith. My mother was trying to reaffirm her place in the traditional community and was embarrassed by her attempt, which she felt was unsuccessful, yet the community leaders reminded her that it is not about how good she made the food, but about the feeling she put into it.



*Figure 1: My Mother, Cheryl Stevens, outside our Longhouse*

It is stories like this and many others that remind me of the powerful connection between community, culture, and food. I am reminded that no matter how far you have been displaced from your traditions and culture, simple acts like

the story above can reinstate those value systems as long as we acknowledge those powerful connections.

*\*Portions of this introduction originally published in Ethnobiology Letters.*

Stevens, L .and R. Pierotti. 2014. Eating The Landscape: American Indian Stories of Food, Identity, and Resilience. *Ethnobiology Letters* 5.

## INTRODUCTION TO THESIS

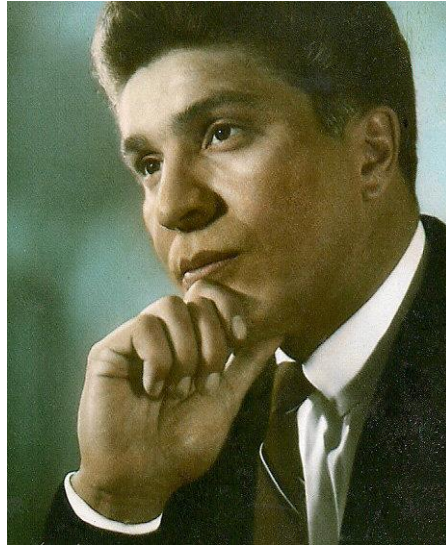
*"...Others have taken the challenging path of believing that we can respect the values of our ancestors while being good American citizens, in a thoughtful, determined, proactive way. That is both our responsibility and our children's, and to achieve it we rely on the Indian commitment to family and community. This commitment has never been lost; nor is it dependent on the outside for its vitality. It is the ultimate link we have to our ancestors."*

*- Ernest Stevens Sr. (McLester, 2010: 251)*

In the past, Indigenous peoples used communal farming practices that required every member of the community to participate in the food system. Everyone had a job or a role, everyone ate, and nothing was wasted. Changes in our contemporary food systems have caused the people to lose appreciation for their food. The current food system, from production to consumption, produces over three billion tons of carbon each year; which contributes 19-29% of the total greenhouse gas emissions (Vermeulen, 2012: 195). With the population expected to grow to eight billion from its current six billion by 2025, there is a lot of stress put on the food industry to ensure there is enough food for everyone (Blowers, 2013: 1). Indeed this is a terrifying thought, however, when you think of the approximate one-third of food produced already being wasted each year it makes you wonder how effective the adoption of industrial agriculture really is (Nellemann, 2009: 32). Furthermore, the idea behind industrial technology is to make production faster, simpler, and more efficient; however, the act of growing food is a long, complex, and intimate process. Putting the two together does not make sense.

But where do we go from here? The quote above, which is from my grandfather, talks of the ultimate link to our ancestors being the commitment to

community; this link is vital in taking us in the right direction to a sustainable food system for Indigenous communities.



*Figure 2: My grandfather, Ernest Stevens Sr.*

Influence from western ideologies has led to the abandonment of many traditional foodways and the communal practices that have long kept cultures and people alive. This thesis makes an effort to demonstrate a path for revitalization of a sustainable food system by using Indigenous ideologies to highlight the powerful connection between food, culture, and community, while at the same time showing how the commitment to community assists in cultural and linguistic preservation. Furthermore, I explain the psychological barriers that prevent us from readily changing our unsustainable life habits, and present a contemporary model used to overcome such barriers by taking traditional Indigenous ideologies and applying them to the modern setting and individual.

The first section of this thesis explores Indigenous foodways and gives examples of cultural connection to and importance of food for Indigenous Peoples. From creation stories to present-day programs, food continues to be a staple for Indigenous ways of life across the globe (Salmon 2012; Stevens and Pierotti 2014). I also review works already available that address this topic, as well as discussing some scholars currently working in this field to show that this is not a new or fading idea. The purpose of this section is to show that this thesis is not proposing a new idea, rather it is taking a very old knowledge system and presenting it to an audience that is constantly changing with its environment.

Taking a page from my own upbringing for the next section, I present a living example of how this cultural connection and commitment to community has helped a displaced tribe revitalize their traditional selves. The Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin are originally from the area now known as New York, where they were one of six nations of Hotinoshonni, or more familiarly known as the Iroquois Confederacy. This section provides more detail of how the Oneida relocated to Menominee territory which is in present-day Wisconsin, where they initially severed essentially all ties to their traditional Hotinoshonni lifestyles. Furthermore, I will explain the astounding efforts made in reclaiming their traditional foodways, first by a small group, and then to a constantly expanding tribal enterprise. This section will include firsthand knowledge from my own childhood.

The section following presents ideas on what has led us down this road of unsustainable action by exploring the psychological barriers that prevent most

humans, from readily changing our harmful behaviors. I focus on three main areas, social, behavioral, and cognitive. Therefore, this thesis provides examples of the barriers we encounter and the irrational responses most people show to them. Figuring out how to overcome these psychological barriers is important in understanding in order to provide an effective model for change.

The last section introduces a relatively recent approach from the social sciences, called Community-Based Social Marketing (henceforth CBSM) which has been proposed as a base model for promoting behavioral change for sustainable development. Expanding on CBSM, this last section will use the model to incorporate Indigenous ideologies, culturally appropriate principles, and beneficial use of Indigenous languages in order to foster a more sustainable food system for Indigenous communities. At the same time I will explore how traditional Indigenous practices designed to allow tribes to survive in an unpredictable world and cope with changing environmental conditions are similar to the approach described in CBSM (see also Pierotti 2011).

# Chapter 2: Value of Food and Cultural Connections

*“...food value in Indigenous, heritage foods is far greater than the food value in commercial food. The food value in commercial food is weighed in dollars, and the food value in heritage foods is weighed in something we might call life force. Somehow it was built around life.”*

- John Mohawk (Nelson, 2008: 175)

Food is life, I believe this is the message the late John Mohawk was trying to convey in the quote above. There is a special connection between peoples and their food that seems to have disappeared in many cultures across the world, being replaced by the fast food lifestyle. This is an unfortunate pattern when you consider the effort by our ancestors to develop this connection and provide us with the lives we are living now, and the survival skills we used to get here. The generations before us lived a life that would ensure we had a future to call our own, it is now the responsibility of this generation to ensure the next seven generations “may enjoy the same things that you are now enjoying” (Lyons, 1999). If food is life, we must stop trading it for a cheeseburger.

Melissa K. Nelson echoes this notion by referring to eating as an “intimate act” because “native food traditions honor the sanctity of food as the Creator made them and as our ancestors nurtured them” (Nelson, 2008: 181). We are not only eating the foods provided to us, but we honor them with ceremony, songs, and dances. Indigenous foodways refers to a group’s diet, traditions, and other culture associations surrounding food (Ackerman-Leist, 2013: 145). There are ceremonies that go along with the growing and harvest season, there are also foods that must be consumed for certain ceremonies

and dances to be properly conducted; you cannot have one without the other. There is more than simply honor involved, it is a reciprocal relationship.

This section explores the important connection between food and various Indigenous cultures, which has been with us since creation, and functions to persuade the current generation to follow or revert back to their traditional teachings of growing and cooking their own foods. This connection has allowed many Indigenous communities to have already revitalized traditional food practices (Salmon 2012). Therefore, after providing a few examples of how food is incorporated into in the creation stories of Indigenous peoples, I will discuss efforts already being made. As well as, some vital publications and studies I have come across that contribute to the purpose of this thesis.

## CREATION STORIES

### Hotinoshonni Culture:

This is the origin story of my people and, although there are many different versions of this story depending on whom you talk to, each version has only slight differences. Whatever version is read or heard, it is apparent that the basic important elements, lessons and purpose of the narratives are the very similar. I favor the version that was told to me by my great-grandmother when I was a child; however, I will retell a rather condensed version as the narrative is lengthy.

She told of a pregnant woman that fell from the Sky World and onto a turtle's back in a world of water. All this woman had was the roots of a great tree from her land clutched in her hand. With those roots and mud brought to her by a muskrat from the



bottom of the great sea, she rubbed the mud into the turtle's back and walked in a counter-clockwise circle, which caused the earth to grow from beneath her feet. We refer to this woman as Sky Woman, who subsequently gave birth to a baby girl, who would eventually grow to a woman and become pregnant with twins by the spirit of the West Wind.



*Figure 3: Sky Woman image by Ernest Smith. January 1936, 40.5 hrs. RMSC Collections.*

When the daughter was to give birth, the right-handed twin came out the natural way; however, the left-handed twin pushed his way out of the mother's side in an attempt to be the first born. The action by the left-handed twin caused his mother's death in the process. The right-handed twin buried his mother and from her body would grow tobacco and the Three Sisters, corn, beans, and squash. Although she sacrificed her life, the gifts of sustenance and medicine were given in return. This story reveals why many Indigenous cultures regard the Earth as being female and as the female creative force that gives rise to all forms of life (Pierotti 2011, Chapter 5). This symbolism may contribute to why we are a matriarchal society.

#### Hawaiian Culture:

According to the origin stories of Hawaiian Native peoples, they view a very important plant as their ancestor and not as just another crop. Taro, or Kalo in Hawaiian, is a very important root crop that is used to make many Hawaiian and Polynesian foods such as poi, deep-fried chips, breads, pancakes and kulolo, which is a fudge-like candy (Nip, 1980). Thus, this food is a staple of the diet, but also a very important element within the culture.

The Hawaiian creation story states that there was a Sky Father, Wakea and a Earth Mother, Papa, who gave birth to a girl, Ho'ohokukalani, who grew to be the most beautiful woman. She would give birth to a stillborn baby boy, Haloa-naka, who would have to be buried in the Earth. From his burial place grew the plant with a long stem and leaf that quivered in the wind, which was the origin of Kalo. Ho'ohokukalani would later

give birth to a healthy second son, also named Haloa, who would be fed by the Kalo and to whom the Hawaiian culture trace their lineage. (Jacobs, 2011).



*Figure 4: Hawaiian Image of Kalo plant by Anthony Kalaemaka Kekono Jr.*

#### Mayan Culture:

The Popol Vuh, or “book of the community,” tells the story of Mayan creation where humans are actually created from their most precious crop, maize, which is logical from an ecological perspective, as animals are made from the plants upon which they feed. According to the book, Mayan culture began with a world of nothing but water, which is similar to the Hotinoshonni story. There were six deities who helped create the earth, plants, animals, and then wished to create a human that could properly worship them. They first created humans out of mud, but without souls they could not be good

“keepers of the days.” After they were destroyed by a great flood, the gods tried again, this time creating humans from wood. This attempt failed as well, when the deities realized that the men of wood could not worship either. (Tedlock, 1985)

At this time there was still no sun or moon, until the Hero Twins were conceived. After their father was killed by the Lords of the Underworld, the twins challenged those Lords to a ball game to bring their father back. The Twins won the game and their father was brought back as the Maize God. When they returned back to Earth, they become the sun and the moon, illuminating the Earth, at this time the deities were able to create the final form of human out of white and yellow corn. While in the previous stories a precious plant emerged from a buried body, the Mayan story illustrates humans created directly from their precious plant (Tedlock, 1985), which is what might be expected with an important foodstuff that defines a culture.



*Figure 5: Raúl Anguiano, The Creation of Mankind in the Maya World, 1964*

All of these stories reveal a similar pattern among Indigenous cultures, in which crucial food species are considered to be major elements of creation, without which humans could not exist, or ever have existed. Similar, uncountable stories can be found from other cultures around the planet, all of which demonstrate the importance of food as an element within creation stories. It is useful to consider these creation stories as we consider contemporary efforts to re-establish links to threatened cultural traditions by re-establishing important relationships with traditional foods that were important in the original establishment of these cultural traditions.

## CURRENT EFFORTS

Many Indigenous communities have realized the importance of affirming food sovereignty for their people in order to reconnect them to cultural traditions. Food sovereignty refers to the right of people to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems...” (Ackerman-Leist, 2013: 142). Significant efforts are being made across the nation that are working to ensure our traditional foodways are not forgotten. This can be seen in examples as disparate as the return of First Salmon ceremonies to tribes in the Pacific Northwest, the establishment of tribal bison herds on the Great Plains, and the efforts to revive the Three Sisters style of food production among the Hotinoshonni. Protection of our traditional foods is an important fight in which we must all be engaged if we want to ensure a healthy future for the next generation while reestablishing cultural lifeways.

One non-profit organization that has been helping Indigenous communities engage in this fight is the First Nations Development Institute, whose mission is to strengthen Native American communities and economies. This institute has a program dedicated directly to helping Indigenous communities increase access to healthy foods by providing financial support, technical support and training (*Native American Foods & Health, 2014*). This institute has been instrumental in my own community by assisting programs with grants, such as the W.K. Kellogg Foundation (see next section). I had an opportunity to participate in one of Institute's recent venues located on my reservation, the Food Sovereignty Summit brought together Indigenous communities from all over the Americas to collaborate on shared ideologies and ideas. Meeting so many new people, getting to sit in one sessions about new projects taking off on various reservations, and hearing new ideas really showed what can be done when you believe in the connection between food, culture, and community.

Tohono O'odham Community Action (TOCA) is a community-based nonprofit based out of Arizona that is dedicated to the pursuit of a sustainable community with four goals in mind: 1) Wisdom from our past creating solutions for our future, 2) Community Assets: see our resources, not just our needs, 3) Context is crucial: strengthening the material roots of O'odham culture, and 4) Encouraging community self-sufficiency (Lopez 2002, 5). TOCA has been extremely successful in engaging their community in programs that highlight their traditional foodways, from farming, school gardening, youth internships and projects, locally driven café, and have even began publishing their own magazine, *Native Foodways: celebrating food, culture, and community*. TOCA is working hard at doing something right and recovering traditional ideas and values.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Another useful tool in understanding the link between food and culture is knowing what other people are saying. For this subsection I begin a book handed to me during my second semester of graduate school: *Eating the Landscape: American Indian Stories of Food, Identity, and Resilience* by Raramuri Ethnobiologist Enrique Salmon. Salmon is one of only a few academically trained scholars who retain close ties to his tribal community and culture. At the very start of the book, Salmon talks about the Raramuri culture that surrounded his grandmother's kitchen, and tells stories of family gatherings and his "richest memories" associated with plants and food (Salmon, 2012: 3). He describes eating as a "cultural act that reaffirms one's identity and worldview," a process that happens every day (Salmon: 9). *Eating the Landscape* is a prime example of the strong connection Indigenous people have food by providing examples of Indigenous foodways throughout southwestern U.S. and northern Mexico; such as the Raramuri, Puebloan, Hopi, Yaqui, and Seri cultures (see Stevens and Pierotti 2014).

While Salmon focuses primarily on the cultural connection to the landscape, he also shows how all elements of a food system involve connection to culture and the land or the sea. He provides a personal account about Indigenous communities and how they have exhibited a deeper connection to their food systems, at one point stating that Native farmers do not base reasoning on agro-scientific evidence, but on "a responsibility to culture, clan, family, and land" (Salmon 2012: 55). He also points out that Indigenous agriculture involves much more than plowing, irrigation, and sowing; growing food for one's community is a responsibility connected to one's identity (Salmon 2012: 32).

Reading his book and being able to feel the joy through his words not only brought back

memories of my own, but it also placed them in a context that helped me to appreciate them so much more.

Another important publication comes from the Bioneers Community Network, which gathered ideas of 31 indigenous scholars, Enrique Salmon, Winona LaDuke, John Mohawk, and Oren Lyons in a book titled *Original Instructions*, edited by Melissa Nelson. This volume tackles a wide array of issues concerning Indigenous peoples, such as decolonization, kinship, democracies, feminine power, and traditional agriculture. Interestingly enough, while food is given its own section with six contributing articles, intriguing dialogue about native food or agricultural practices is referred to many times throughout the book. As one example, Priscilla Settee acknowledges this pattern by saying “ I have noticed a commonality that exists among Indigenous People with reference to plants, food production, and relationship to natural surroundings” (Nelson, 2008: 44).

The most recent book I have come across shows strong connection between plants and an Indigenous culture, in this case that of the Dakota. *Watoto Unyutapi* consists of a list and pictures of plants important to the Dakota people, not only providing their common and scientific names but their traditional Dakota names as well. While the book does not involve farming or gardening practices, what it does highlight how Dakotas identify, harvest, prepare, eat and preserve plants important to their culture (Bishop, 2013: 2). This volume is an important example of how linguistic and cultural practices can be effectively tied to our food and portrayed to a very broad audience.



There are numerous publications and organization that are working on developing sustainable foodways using the knowledge base derived from their cultural connection to their food. It may not be appropriate, however, to assume that Indigenous groups have achieved success in the past in their agricultural practices simply because of their spirituality and connections with the land. It is easy to romanticize Indigenous Peoples because their deep connection to their culture and the way they have developed spiritual and philosophical traditions to deal with changing environment (Pierotti 2011, Chapter 2). Simply because they have this shared connection does not mean, however, that we can chalk it up to primitive notions of being one with nature. Such shallow stereotypes can lead to audiences overlooking the hard won empirical knowledge of the lives of plants that was a major component of the daily lives of Native peoples (Pierotti and Wildcat 1997: 96). Indigenous cultures have been instrumental in revitalizing foodways, and Indigenous people have long practiced a complex agricultural system that included potatoes, corn, beans, squash peanuts, tomatoes, walnuts, pecans, and various types of berries, among other plant foods.

The evolution of corn is a prime example of this. From a wild grass with tiny kernels known as teosinte, Indigenous peoples domesticated a plant that would grow in to one of the most important crops to modern agriculture. Ancient farmers in what is now Mexico took the first steps in domesticating maize when they simply chose which kernels (seeds) to plant. These farmers noticed that not all plants were the same. This involved a long term system of picking out the seeds of the most desired plant to be harvested for the next growing season (The Evolution of Corn, 2014). This practice is still utilized today to maintain crop diversity. Raymond Pierotti and Dan Wildcat retell a story, originally told

by Gary Nabhan, of a woman selecting seeds from a various varieties of ears, big, little, and colored. By doing this the woman was preserving the genetic diversity of the crop, meaning that no matter what weather conditions occur, some of her corn will still likely survive (Pierotti and Wildcat 1997: 71). Current industrial style food systems seed employ practices that actually result in the loss of genetic diversity, so if they are all the same genetic make-up, they will not be able to respond effectively to changing environments, including new pests or climate change (Pierotti and Wildcat 1997: 71).

Furthermore, the cultural importance of an agricultural system known as the Three Sisters to the Hotinoshonni people, which involves planting corn, beans and squash together in a polyculture is yet another example a complex and effective agricultural system developed by an Indigenous people. The Three Sisters were the most important food source to the people, many stories were told about them in my upbringing, as already stated, the sisters grew from the body of the twin's mother in our creation story. The word used to describe the sisters was translated to "our sustainers," which signified their vital role in the lives of Hotinoshonni people.

The sisters were not simply a story, however, the complex system did a number of things that contributes to successful and sustainable outcomes, such as, enhancing the soil physical and biochemical environment, minimizes soil erosion, improves soil tilth, manages plant population and spacing, provides nutrients in appropriate quantities, and at the time needed, and controls weeds, (Mt. Pleasant, 2006). The stories talk about the importance of how the Three Sisters worked together to provide sustenance for the people, because beans are a legume that fix Nitrogen in the soil, corn uses the Nitrogen to grow a tall stalk that provides support for the growing beans, and squash provide ground

cover and repel many herbivores. This means that the process was multifaceted in how it contributed to the people and local ecosystem function (Mother Earth) without the need for fertilizers or pesticides.

It is important that Indigenous ideologies are taken seriously while at the same time appreciating and committing to our cultures in order to revitalize our traditional foodways. In the next section I describe an example of how my own tribal community has revitalized their traditional food system by clinging to previously lost traditions, while at the same time being taken seriously as an agricultural enterprise.

## Chapter 3: A Living Example

*Kalihwí·yo – The use of good words about our Nation, our future and ourselves.*

### THE ONEIDA TRIBE OF INDIANS OF WISCONSIN

Far removed from their homelands, far from their brothers, and disconnected from their origins, the Wisconsin Oneida felt the need for cultural revival. This section will tell the story of the Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin, who despite the unfortunate events that led to their cultural loss, were still able to revive their traditional ways through the influence of their Indigenous foodways. Today, the Oneida community in Wisconsin is thriving on multiple levels, including economically, politically, and agriculturally. The most important factor contributing to the survival of the Oneida people in Wisconsin, however, is the return to their traditional values and belief systems of their Hotinoshonni (People of the Longhouse) culture.

During a period from 1822 well into the early 1830s the Oneida people were removed from their homelands in upstate New York, and relocated to land near what is now Green Bay, WI (Hauptman, 2002: 6). As a result of the heavy influence of Christian missionaries, such as Reverend Samuel Kirkland and Eleazer Williams, the Oneida people became convinced that a new land would benefit them, and were thus the only one of the Six Nations to leave New York (Hauptman 6). While the missionaries are usually credited with causing the removal, Oneida leader Daniel Bread was instrumental in keeping the people together and well on the journey and, most importantly, rebuilding the nation once they settled in Wisconsin. Although he was criticized for his support of

acculturation and missionary schools, without his influence, the Oneidas in Wisconsin may not been able to successfully transition to life in their new home (Hauptman 12).

Although the influence of Christianity was a major factor in the loss of cultural identity among the Oneida people, the impact was not made fully apparent until after removal took place. Many Oneida had already adopted another lifestyle when living in New York, but they were still surrounded by those Oneidas who had chosen not to convert, as well as members of the other Hotinoshonni nations who maintained their traditions. Once this group was removed to Wisconsin, however, they were in a land that was alien to them, surrounded by people who were also alien. In this time the traditional culture of the people declined drastically (Hauptman, 1999). Almost all traditional ceremonies were abandoned; and only a few minor practices would remain (Lewis, 2005: 5). This was the beginning of an Oneida lifestyle set apart from their original ways of living, where the most successful groups were those who essentially chose to assimilate, clearing land and becoming good farmers (Lewis 2005: 6).

It is important to recognize the strong relationship Hotinoshonni people have with their culture, which is so strong that many scholars have written about it (Elm, 2000: 10). When writing about any Indigenous groups it is unwise to leave out information about their culture, as cultural narratives, and especially the origin story, are vitally important to recognizing who the people consider themselves to be. To the Hotinoshonni, these stories are not simply metaphorical representations of what is right and wrong, the stories are what make them *uwkehu*, or real/true people. Without these stories they are just like everyone else; the stories are what set them apart and make them a People.

The Oneida people lived with cultural loss until 1991 when the reopening of a food cannery assisted in a cultural resuscitation movement. The cannery was first opened on the reservation in 1979 by Carol Smith and Ruby White in order to allow residents to preserve the products of their personal gardens. After ten years of operation, however, it was closed because of budget cuts (Cornelius, 2012). The cannery reopened in 1991 with a new Food Specialist, Vickie Cornelius, and new Supervisor, Art Skenandore, who put together a grant from the Kellogg Foundation in order to return to their homelands and retrieve indigenous seeds to be planted in Wisconsin (Cornelius). After this trip, the project made noteworthy developments that would further cultural progression, such as the creation of a retail and agricultural division, known as *Tsyunhehkw^* (it provides life), that sells herbs, medicines, and other natural products at a store on the reservation, as well as in the tribal gas stations. This was also the time when the development of a small vegetable garden took place, which would eventually become the first completely organic community farm located on the reservation (OICFS, 2012).



Figure 6: *Tsyunhehkw^* planting season

Several members of the community had previously traveled back to the homelands to learn the language or culture; however, it wasn't until a group, including Vicki Cornelius, went to attend the Midwinter Ceremony held by the Canadian Oneida First Nation in Thames, Ontario that the revitalization efforts began to show significant results. This new and profound interest on the part of the Wisconsin Oneidas encouraged a fluent speaker of Oneida, who was raised in the Longhouse ways, to move to Wisconsin. This individual, Robert Brown, known to everyone as Bob, remains on the reservation as a leader, teacher, and friend to the people (Cornelius, 2012).

Vicki and Art Skenandore were among the many who met with Bob to learn the ceremonies as well as the language and songs that accompanied those ceremonies. Participants in the community would meet at each other's homes, mainly at the homes of Vicki and Art. The group's fundraising efforts led to the construction of the first Longhouse on the Wisconsin territory. For the first time since the removal of Oneida in 1822, the people again felt that they were Hotinoshonni. The first group interested in this cultural awakening was small; however, the size of the original Longhouse would prove insufficient once this cultural awakening spread to the community. A larger Longhouse had to be built to accommodate the growing interest, with the previous one converted into a community cookhouse (Cornelius, 2012). The cultural ripple effect did not end there, however, it led to many more developments around the reservation.

These developments included changes in education. The Oneida reservation is home to two main schools, as well as a Head Start and a day care center. Prominent is the Oneida Nation Elementary School, better known as the Turtle School, because it is

actually shaped like a turtle (see Figure 7). This is intended to honor Mother Earth as she was created by Sky Woman on the back of a turtle in our creation story. Upon entering, the design of the school is a large circle signifying the belief of a never-ending cycle of life, with branches of classroom areas in the legs and tail. All along the hallway walls of the circle, tiles tell the creation story, with pictures depicting the events that took place. At the very center of the turtle is a large skylight that connects the lower world to Sky World, from where Sky Woman fell, as well as the home of the spiritual beings from which we came. Thus, the brightest spot in the whole building is its center. The classrooms that surround this central area are where language and culture lessons are taught so that the people remember that their culture is the center of the Hotinoshonni way of life.



*Figure 7: Helicopter view of Turtle School, Dennis King, 2009*

As students, we had to learn the same basic things that children in public schools had to learn, however, we had the advantage of getting lessons on something greater than ourselves. We were taught culture. The school was built with a traditional purpose in mind, so to remind us of our cultural roots, where we came from, and what is held most



important. My favorite time of the day was going to language and culture lessons; I knew that I was learning something very important and different than any other class. As an extra bonus, my great-grandmother was one of the teachers who read us our origin stories (Figure 8). The teachers always taught by using hands-on experiences instead of notes, quizzes, and other formal methods. Their teaching methods introduced traditional agricultural practices to me as a child. As early as kindergarten we were taught the importance of the seasonal cycle of the moons and how they decide when we carry out certain harvesting practices and perform correlating ceremonies.



*Figure 8: Grandma Maria w/ group of Turtle School students*

A large part of this was accomplished by developing a garden on school grounds that was taken care of by the students and teachers. We were not only taught how to plant the seeds and care for them, we were also encouraged to talk with them because they were not just plants; they were spirits and relatives. As we progressed to higher grade levels we were taught how to compost using trash collected in our school cafeteria and housed our own worm farm. We incorporated fish around the seeds to nourish the soil; a

practice that is illustrated in a painting of the three sisters by Ernest Smith with the skeleton of fish at the feet of the corn spirit (Cornelius, 1999: 147). We also learned how to tap maple trees to gather sap, as well as the boiling process that would eventually turn the sap into syrup, which was done in a large pot in the woods behind the school, in what we called the sugar shack.

Tribal departments have developed books that support cultural and linguistic revival, which are incorporated into the curriculum of younger grades. One was created by the Oneida Community Integrated Farm Systems (OCIFS), called a Cultural Activity Book, has crosswords, word searches, coloring pages, and other types of puzzles that illustrates the different aspects of the OCIFS (VerVoort, 2008). It also gives descriptions of the ceremonies conducted by the Oneida people depending on the seasons,. Another example comes from a book created by the Oneida Nation Language Revitalization Program, which provides a condensed version of our *Tekanehelatuksla*, Thanksgiving Address. It provides a list of each element we give thanks to with illustrations that show the children what is important to us (*Tekanehelatuksla*, 2004). These and similar books are on my daughter's bookshelf. Although we are far from home, thanks to these books she still has the opportunity to learn the same things children her age are learning on the reservation.

The incorporation of culture into the Oneida schools systems is vitally important because children are the future. They are the start of a new generation, a new way of living. They will lead our people in the next battle they face, whatever it may be, but they will only be able to do so if they have their cultural values to guide them. The world will continue to change as it has since the time of creation; whether changes are

environmental or social, the world is constantly changing. However, while the world may change, the way that we view the world should not change. Their commitment to their values and beliefs are what make Hotinoshonni a People. Most important, the children should not forget who they are; *ukewhu*, real/true people.

The people involved in the success of the culture-based agricultural project have information on what it takes to build a strong system using cultural tools, but how can this help the people from this community. This is where the concepts of “reporting back” come from (Smith, 2007: 15). Since we have this information it is time that we bring it back to the people so that they fully understand what is possible when they embrace their culture. While there are many community members actively involved in supporting all of the efforts towards further cultural progression, total community involvement should be the goal.

Along with “reporting back” comes “sharing knowledge” (Smith, 15). The Oneida people have been given a second chance, the traditional practices were almost completely lost, yet we were able to retrieve them from tribal members who stayed in our original lands. Now that we have been successful, it is our duty to share the knowledge of how this was done to other Indigenous nations that haven’t been as fortunate. The Oneida people have already begun this trend by holding the annual Food Sovereignty Summit, with the goal of collaborating for sustainability to provide a future for the People. People from across the U.S. and from other countries have attended.

While I agree with revitalization of ancestral ways, I disagree with the notion of “decolonizing” the people. This term is used by Indigenous nations and Indigenous

militants across the world, however, it is my belief that fully decolonizing a People is not possible. Once a loss of traditional ways occurs and new practices are learned from outside nations, we cannot entirely return to those traditional ways because we will always have those outside ideologies influencing our minds. It is my belief that combining the two can be beneficial to the people. In support I use the quote, “No one is entirely traditional, and no one’s life is entirely modern” (Finger, 2004). While we can revitalize lost ways we will always be people of a modern world, but this does not mean we have fail as a culture.

*In Peace, Power and Righteousness: an Indigenous Manifesto*, Mohawk scholar Taiaiake Alfred says, in “Rotinohshonni tradition, the natural order accepts and celebrates the coexistence of opposites” (Alfred, 2009: xiv). Alfred also discourages the notion of decolonization and rather promotes indigenization. The Oneida people have been able to establish a system in which they honor their traditional ways, yet they coexist with the communities surrounding the reservation. As my grandfather said in the quote I used in my introduction, “...we can respect the values of our ancestors while being good American citizens.” The Oneida tribe have found how to deal with this coexistence. There is no use fighting what we cannot change; we can, however, indigenize modern ideologies to better fit ours for a brighter future.

As an Oneida woman, however, I shy away from both decolonization and indigenization terms. I prefer to use concepts in my own language that I feel better conveys my emotional commitment to our issues. *Yukwatsistay*<sup>^</sup>, meaning “our fire, our spirit within each one of us,” refers to what drives us as individuals and connects us as a people. *Ka?nikuhli-yo*, meaning “the openness of the good spirit and mind,” tells me to

embrace all things with good thoughts. And *Ka?tshatst<sup>^</sup>sla*, meaning “the strength of belief and vision as a people,” really highlights the importance of community be linking their beliefs. These are core values of my people and are the things I chose to live by, rather than decolonization or indigenization.

For Hotinoshonni people, a commitment to values and beliefs of a community is their culture. In the case of the Oneida in Wisconsin, their commitment to their traditional foodways was instrumental in the cultural revitalization of the people. Hotinoshonni culture was the driving force behind a simple cannery project on the Wisconsin reservation, and this project served as a vessel for cultural growth throughout the community.

Before I end this section I feel it is important to acknowledge that the Oneida tribe in Wisconsin has had a lot of success in the gaming industry that has led to many improvements on the reservation. While these funds generated by these casinos have been helpful, no matter how vast, money alone will not bring a culture back. Indigenous cultures were not built on monetary value, but on the values held by the people within their cultures and ecosystems (Pierotti 2011). Because of this, I have purposely chosen not to link traditional revitalization to the success of casinos. Yes, funds from gaming have allowed many Indigenous communities to create beneficial community programs, land reclamation efforts, and business ventures, among other things. And yes, gaming has also allowed tribes to achieve greater self-sufficiency, which is essential for self-determination. Although I support gaming efforts to further sustain our people, without the commitment to their community, without a value system, or a language to link them there is no culture to revitalize; regardless of how much money you have.

This ideology of community is echoed by my father, Ernest Stevens Jr. the chairman of the National Indian Gaming Association (NIGA). Since he was elected when I was 12-years-old, my life has been surrounded by the gaming industry and I realize its importance and positive impact on many Indigenous communities. I support my father in all that he has done for Indigenous Peoples and he will be the first to say that it is the concept of commitment that drives what he does as chairman of NIGA. When talking of NIGA's role he says, "It's all about community, it's all about people helping people and none of that is restrictive to gender or to the color of our skin. We're all in the together. This is what I try to teach the people I impact." He continues by saying, "the bottom line for me is that we secure opportunities for our future, so we can leave a better world for our children (Ascione, 2013)." Therefore, although gaming is very much a monetary industry, the driving force behind it is still echoes those commitments to our ancestors and the seven generations philosophy.

Furthermore, you cannot buy moments like the one shown in Figure 9. My daughter, 3 years old at the time, fell asleep barefoot and covered in dirt after a long day of participating in cultural activities, which included dancing, singing, eating, and celebrating our community overall.



*Figure 9: Marley Rose Atkinson, 2012*

# Chapter 4: Psychological Barriers of Our Environment:

## WHY CHANGE IS SO HARD

Although we have already discussed the connection between food and culture and examined its importance to Indigenous Peoples, a problem remains in that our environments, environmental and social, have continued to change in ways we have not previously experienced. Modern society has paved the way for a new generation of thinking and reacting and, as individuals, we are resistant to change because we are already set in these altered ways, which causes us to make excuses for why we choose not to act. This creates a problem for the environment, if we resist changes in our behavior how can we make necessary actions to preserve the planet?

Thus, before we can provide an effective model for action, we must first understand the barriers our younger generations face. I explore the underlying psychology of environmental action through discussion of the social, behavioral, and cognitive areas of psychology, which lets me examine the irrational behavior of human beings as individuals, and may explain why we act the way we do when it concerns environmental sustainability.

The challenge with changing entrenched behaviors is that we all like to think that we are rational beings. We like to think that we make our everyday decisions based on our own reasoning and logic. We call this decision-making process free will because we believe we are making our own decisions without influence from the outside world. In



actuality, we are bound by preconceived notions of the norm (Winter and Koger 2004:155). One problem is that there is too much information out there for us to respond rationally, therefore we rely on our personal vision and pre-existing biases to make decisions that are really conditioned responses (Winter and Koger 2004: 155). To better understand how we can change harmful behaviors, I examine social, behavioral, and cognitive psychology to identify our societal barriers.

## SOCIAL BARRIERS

We may believe we operate on logic, yet our friends, and even societal norms, have much more influence than we are likely to accept. Social psychology shows us how social situations influence attitudes towards the environment (Winter and Koger 2004:56). Decisions are motivated by the group, not the individual. Each of us has our own social reference group, a group of friends, family members, even neighbors who pressure us to conform to their attitudes and beliefs in an effort to maintain the balance of the group (Winter and Koger 2004: 69). In these groups, members have a role to play in order to fit the norm; for example, from my own experiences of trying to fit the came when I was a freshman in college. My friends and teammates started to tease me about my food choices and called me things like “hippie” and “granola.” While I knew they were jokes, I began to eat unhealthy fast food and junk to fit in with them. In this particular case, groupthink undermined my individual beliefs and attitudes about the environment.

Making decisions that harm the planet happen not only in the presence of other people, but also when we are alone and while serving our own ego. Cognitive dissonance creates the unsettling feeling that the world does not fit because we are trying to reconcile

two or more contradictory beliefs or values in mind and this may result in us painting a prettier picture of ourselves than is warranted by our actions (Lappe, 2011: 17). We may accuse a person of not supporting local markets because they go through the Dunkin' Donuts drive-thru, which implies that they are the ones that are hurting the environment. However, perhaps we use the same drive-thru a day later, justifying this because we are running late or our coffee maker broke, and thus we aren't a bad person. We might already have a tendency to judge others while letting ourselves off the hook, and when we make a decision all these conflicting emotions merge in order to justify this one action. In an effort to reduce one of these contradictory beliefs we opt for a self-serving bias to hold ourselves in higher esteem than others. As a result, we put ourselves on a metaphorical pedestal where we do all we can for the environment, when in reality we are no better in our actions than the ones we judge. (Winter and Koger 2004: 66, 84)

## BEHAVIORAL BARRIERS

In behavioral psychology, behavior is controlled by our physical, social, economic, and political environments (Winter and Koger 2004:88), which suggests that we exercise mental processes motivated by outside entities. Throughout the day we are conditioned to feel certain emotions in reaction to what we see, as explained by classic conditioning theory (Winter and Koger 2004:89). Unconditioned and conditioned stimuli combine to give us a conditioned response in regard to certain emotions (Winter and Koger 2004: 89). For example, global warming is the unconditioned stimulus, images of the changing environment, melting ice caps, or rising temperatures are the conditioned stimuli and in most cases the response is fear or anxiety. All the images are there, we know the changes are taking place, however, these classically conditioned responses like

fear and anxiety are not enough to foster change. We are being controlled because regardless of the information we possess, information alone does not change our behavior in ways we know to be rational. Operant conditioning is different, it states that a favorable consequence from a past act imprints itself in our minds, while a punishment associated with that action stamps it out of our minds (Winter and Koger 2004:90). Thus, we will repeat unfavorable actions until they are accompanied by a punishment to stamp it out.

This leads to the question, does short term satisfaction outweigh positive long-term effects when choosing whether or not to act in an environmentally-friendly manner? No immediate punishment results from littering, failure to recycling, or driving down the block instead of walking. Although potential fines exist for littering, but it is unusual for litterers to be caught, so it continues to be a problem. Some incentives for recycling are in place, such as getting money for recycled cans, but the rewards are not high enough to motivate a material-driven society. As for driving, rising gas prices seem to be the only motivation to reduce our automobile use. Therefore, current incentives and desire for short term benefits far outweigh our motivation to act sustainably.

Behavioral psychology has also taught us that sustainable behavior cannot be reinforced if it is rarely if ever practiced. Classical conditions do not favor sustainability because the consequences do not scare us enough to encourage change, while operant conditions are also not sufficient because they do not offer us a substantial reward. If we want environmentally appropriate behavior, we must first design an environment that promotes such behavior. Behavioral psychologists rely on the idea that we can modify our behaviors; if we change the stimuli. We can do this by manipulating our stimuli with

prompts, information and modeling (Winter and Koger 2004:97). This idea will be expanded upon further in the next section on Community-Based Social Marketing.

## COGNITIVE BARRIERS

We rely on what our mind is telling us is right and wrong, and believe we can trust our minds when in actuality our minds tend to lean towards what is more attractive. Cognitive psychology deals with how people see the world and how they process the information given to them on a daily basis. Under social psychology we discussed how we use bias to make our decisions because of the vast amounts of information we are given to process; however, cognitive approaches rely upon the visual aspect of establishing how we decide to behave in certain situations. A person's visual concepts will affect what type of restaurant they decide to eat at (Winter and Koger 2004:159), i.e. would you rather go to the local food restaurant that uses sustainable practices but is located in an older building with faded signs and monotone coloring or the franchised restaurant in a brand new building with sparkling windows, shiny signs, and bright colors that scream "look at me?" Chances are most people would go for the newer place because it feels more exiting. As I argued previously, we would like to think we are rational people, but in this case visual stimulation takes charge and overrides the desire to support local food options.

Not only do we rely on our visual biases to determine decisions, we also opt for what provides immediate gratification rather than lasting benefits. Proximal cognition is a cognitive issue because it contributes to our sensory adaptation and responses (Winter and Koger 2004:162). We choose the short-term benefits instead of what is best for our long-term interests; this has existed throughout our evolution (Winter and Koger

2004:163), although as I point out in the next chapter Indigenous cultural traditions found ways to counteract this tendency.

Dr. Dan Ariely, professor of Psychology and Behavioral Economics at Duke University, provided a general example during his keynote speech at UNC's 2013 Doctoral Hooding Ceremony (Ariely 2013; Figure 10). He asks the arena a question, "What would you rather have, a half of box of chocolate right now or a full box of chocolate in a week?" If the chocolate is in front of you; you can see it and smell it. Our minds are going to tell us that we don't need the full box in a week, i.e. delay instant gratification for a greater, albeit delayed, reward, we want the feeling that the half box will give us right now.



*Figure 10: Dr. Ariely dressed as a Jedi at UNC*

Short term goals provide immediate if smaller rewards, thus preventing us from processing more information than we care to take in, this is why we create mental maps of our surroundings. For example, Lawrence can be mapped out by employing its popular

food locations as landmarks. When we give directions to someone who is unfamiliar with the area directions to a particular store we will not say, “It is across from La Prima Tazza,” which is a locally-owned café. Instead we would more likely opt for a generally recognizable location, e.g., “It is two stores down from Starbucks.” We create mental maps every day in order to process a collection of places all at one time (Winter and Koger 2004: 155). These maps create inaccurate perceptions of how the actual local environment is constructed, contributing to our lack of knowledge and action. Thus, our visual bias leads us to believe our environments are beyond saving, we tell ourselves that we are surrounded by chain restaurants and no one else is working for change, therefore, why should I?

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This leaves us at a crossroads, where we have to decide the kind of person we want to be to actually live according to our purported values. Dr. Ariely commented on this theme ironically in his speech, “In the future we are wonderful people!” implying that we tell ourselves that in the future we are going to make the proper changes, we will eat better, we will exercise more and drive less, we will reduce our water use, we will recycle.. Ariely describes a familiar phenomenon, where at night we set our alarms for 6AM telling ourselves that we are going to get up and go for a run. However, when the alarm goes off in the morning we are not the same dedicated person. Instead, we react as if we were sleep deprived, caffeine-craving zombies. It is easy to say we are going to act differently tomorrow, when in reality we have no idea who we are going to be tomorrow and we are probably deluding ourselves with regard to motivation. Are we going to be the same person we thought we might be yesterday, the person that wants to make a

difference or are we really only the person that takes the easy route and chooses immediate satisfaction? This is our dilemma and it takes will power to break free and change our ways.

This idea of change is not easily accepted, no matter how much information we possess. To put this idea into perspective, consider two possible, alternate pathways: Path 1 is to follow the irrational, but often convenient, responses of the three areas discussed; 1) is attractive, 2) there are no immediate negative consequences, and 3) all your friends have already started down the path. Path 2 is overgrown, covered in things that may hurt, or at least inconvenience, you temporarily, you can get dirty, and there aren't many footsteps that precede you. The end of path 1 is crowded, hot and destructive to the environment, however, whereas the end of Path 2 is green, clean and preserved, but it is not going to be easy to get there.

We have continued to struggle with self-control and cooperation since the very beginning of human kind. The commercial world around us constantly tempting us to follow the trends and our minds are willing us to do so. We are so resistant to change that in order to create an environment that promotes sustainability, we must trick our minds into thinking it is the norm, which is essentially what Indigenous elders did when they established sustainable cultural traditions (Pierotti 2011). Acknowledging the mental limitations discussed in this chapter, we have to also acknowledge the mental limitations specific to contemporary Indigenous populations; that may contribute to why some may still be resistant to change back to ways that required more individual and communal effort, but were much more likely to yield a sustainable way of life (Pierotti 2011).

## THE IMPACT OF HISTORICAL TRAUMA

In this modern era, younger generations of Indigenous people are suffering from the same psychological barriers that I described in the previous section; however, this population is also susceptible to other psychological barriers that are specific to the past history of their peoples and families. Carol Anne Heart Looking Horse interprets the term “historical trauma” as “the historical grief we bear [as a people] and its relation to not only the attempted eradication of our cultures, but also the trauma our parents experienced...” (cited in Morrison, 1997:65). As I indicated in the introduction, Indigenous populations have had their fair share of battles in the past and along with this this past comes “psychological baggage being passed from parents to children” (Wesley-Esquimaux, 2004: 3). This baggage may still be contributing to why Indigenous people today are hesitant to revert back to traditional ways of life, including growing their own foods.

Traditional food systems were not voluntarily abandoned by Indigenous people, because there were major efforts made by outside agencies that led to a forced transition to a different food system. Impacts of colonization and displacement, genocidal warfare, the Dawes Act, and the Termination Policy all contributed to the problem because it took the majority of tribes away from their homelands, which also disconnected many from their traditional foods. While some tribes, such as the Hotinishonni, were agricultural or agrarian societies, many tribes that employed hunting and gathering techniques were also forced to adopt a much different lifestyle by be pushed towards farming, which some tribes rejected. Moreover, tribes were often forced on lands with poor quality soils, making adaptation to an agricultural lifestyle that much more difficult. In order to survive



many Indigenous groups had to adopt a new food system, which led to a dependence on government-assisted food programs.

In our current era many tribes have worked towards economic self-sufficiency and self-determination through efforts such as gaming; however, the dependence on government-assisted food is still apparent to the degree that it has become a cliché. The government provided flour, lard, salt pork, coffee, sugar, among other things that were not originally consumed by Indigenous peoples (Christopher, 2005: 413). Frybread, made of flour and baking soda fried in lard, became a staple food now sold at every powwow across the nation, is one of the examples cited every time the topic of Native American foods arises. I've witnessed an example of these types of foods directly effecting my family; I remember my great-grandmother ordering salt pork bacon every Saturday morning at breakfast, even though she knew it is basically salty pig fat because it was all she had growing up. The food had become a part of her lifestyle, no matter how unhealthy it was. Foods like fry bread and salt pork have dug their way into the lives of Indigenous peoples and show no signs of leaving.



*Figure 11: Frybread (R) and Salt Pork (L)*

Historical trauma surfaced in the context of education as well, adding to issues deriving from Indigenous peoples having no control over their food system. When

Indigenous children were taken from their homes and forced into boarding schools their language was not the only thing taken from them; their traditional foods were traded out for a daily diet consisting of poor quality European style food. A trip to Haskell Indian Nations University's Cultural Center and Museum (which was first opened to "train" Indigenous peoples in "trades" such as cooking, sewing, masonry smithing and farming) shows pictures of the original institution (Milk, 2007:15). In one display is a copy of the weekly menu plan, showing that gravy being served with every meal. This pattern was also apparent at the Pawnee Boarding School which had been given the nickname of "Gravy U" (Kresge, 2009).

Since the arrival of new societies to the Americas, Indigenous populations have been targeted for removal, assimilation, and termination. However, thanks to efforts by many Indigenous scholars and activists, the population has arisen from an unfortunate past and become active members of modern society with many distinct cultures. Many have chosen to leave home for college in order to get good paying jobs, however, in the process they are leaving behind teachings vital in keeping cultures alive and in the ability to regularly experience ceremonies and be immersed in what remains of their cultural traditions. After many have fought to be accepted and many more have suffered in the process, asking the current generation to return to the lifestyle of growing and cooking their own food may seem like regression. Reaffirming ancestral values of traditional food systems is vital in overcoming the historical trauma for all Indigenous people. I argue that this can be achieved with the help of community-based social marketing, which can be viewed as basically a modern updating of traditional practices as I discuss in; the next section.

# CHAPTER 5: Community-Based Social Marketing for the Indigenous Community

*“Make your decisions on behalf of the seventh generation to come. Those faces looking up from the earth... Layer upon layer waiting their time... Defend them, protect them, they’re helpless, they’re in your hands. That’s your duty, your responsibility. You do that, you yourself will have peace.”*

- Oren Lyons (Lyons, 2008).

One thing that is important is that we figure out how to reclaim and maintain the Indigenous ideologies of community. As one possible method, in this section I introduce an emerging field known as Community-Based Social Marketing (CBSM), which is a 5-step system that utilizes a “pragmatic” approach to bolster effectiveness in changing environmental behaviors (McKenzie-Mohr, 2010), and shares several thematic elements with indigenous traditions as discussed in Pierotti (2011). This 5 step CBSM system consists of: 1) carefully selecting the behavior to be promoted; 2) identifying the barriers and benefits associated with the selected behavior; 3) designing a strategy that utilizes behavior-change tools to address these barriers and benefits; 4) piloting the strategy with a small segment of a community; and finally; 5) evaluating the impact of the program once it has been implemented broadly.

The purpose of this section is to show how this modern model of fostering sustainable behavior, developed by environmental psychologist Doug McKenzie-Mohr, can be utilized by Indigenous communities. It can be effectively employed by Indigenous

populations because it provides these unique and diverse populations barriers and examples to which they can relate because these ideas converge on their traditions. While most, if not all, Indigenous cultures display a deep connection and respect for the environment, they are not exempt from the societal influences that contribute to the harm of the planet's ecosystems (Pierotti 2011). This model can be employed to help overcome the societal and psychological barriers already imposed upon them through colonialism, as well as to bypass barriers specific to their history by incorporating Indigenous ideologies of community and culture. The goal is to promote Indigenous individuals to choose to grow and eat locally within their communities by readopting the ancestral concepts of food, culture and community.

#### FOSTERING SUSTAINABLE BEHAVIOR

An unfortunate truth about sustainable behavior is that there are multiple barriers to overcome before changing even one action. McKenzie-Mohr uses the example of riding your bike instead of driving a car, with the various barriers being weather, safety, and time allowance. In the case of growing your own food items, it isn't simply installing a garden in your backyard. The barriers include, but are not limited to, the initial cost of preparing your lot, more physical exertion, what if you don't have room?, would you have to invest in a community plot?, does this mean more commitment?, the foods you want won't be readily available at all times, will the weather cooperate?, and besides, driving to the store is so much easier. While lack of knowledge contributes to some of these barriers, it does not influence them all, so it is not feasible for a program to rely solely upon information.

The path taken by many initiatives involves information-intensive approaches that may show the audience the damage being done to the planet, what people are doing to contribute to that damage, and what they can do to help reverse it. The problem with these approaches is that just because the audience possesses all the information they need does not mean they will act sustainably. Furthermore, even when they acknowledge there is a problem and verbally commit to making a change, little commitment is seen. I include examples given to us by McKenzie-Mohr, the first shows how information can be presented yet did not lead to change, while the other shows how people will acknowledge a problem but not act to address it.

Example 1: Scott Geller and his colleagues studied the impact that intensive workshops have upon residential energy conservation. In these workshops, participants were exposed to three hours of educational material in a variety of formats (slide shows, lectures, etc.). All of the material had been designed to impress upon participants that it was possible to reduce home energy use significantly. Geller measured the impact of the workshops by testing participants' attitudes and beliefs prior to, and following, the workshops. Upon completing the workshop, attendees indicated greater awareness of energy issues, more appreciation for what could be done in their homes to reduce energy use, and a willingness to implement the changes that were advocated in the workshop. Despite these changes in awareness and attitudes, behavior did not change. In follow-up visits to the homes of the 40 workshop participants, only one had followed through on the recommendation to lower

the hot water thermostat. Two participants had put insulating blankets around their hot water heaters, but they had done so prior to attending the workshop.

Example 2: When some 500 people were interviewed and asked about personal responsibility for picking up litter, 94% acknowledged that individuals bore a responsibility to pick up litter. However, when leaving the interview, only 2% picked up litter that had been planted by the researcher.

In both instances, even after the audiences were aware of the problems and took personal responsibility, their actions did not inspire change. This suggests that simply because information is available, this is not enough to overcome those multiple barriers and change our behavior, we must employ other approaches. I will also discuss Indigenous traditions and how these might have been employed to address similar issues, however, in this case we are talking more about survival than about sustainability, although when it comes down to actual human behavior these may amount to essentially the same thing.

For example, Indigenous cultures had to figure out how to coexist with other species that they depended upon for survival, of which species such as salmon, deer, bison, caribou, and a whole host of plant species, both domestic and wild (Pierotti 2011). To maximize chances of survival they need to restrain members of their people from overexploiting such crucial resources, even though at times it must have seemed easier to simply take all the prey you could, even if some were wasted.

## COMMUNITY-BASED SOCIAL MARKETING: A 5 STEP PROGRAM

Table 1 shows the steps involved in CBSM and key processes involved in each step, this section will build on this table.

Table 1: CBSM Process

| STEP   | PROCESS   |
|--|---|
| 1) Selecting Behavior                        | Target Sectors<br>End-State Behaviors<br>Impact, Probability, Penetration                               |
| 2) Identifying Barriers and Benefits         | Literature Review<br>Observation<br>Focus Group<br>Survey   |
| 3) Developing Strategies                     | Commitment<br>Social Norms<br>Social Diffusion<br>Prompts<br>Communication<br>Incentives<br>Convenience |
| 4) Piloting                                  | Small-Scale Implementation  |
| 5) Broad-Scale Implementation and Evaluation | Evaluation<br>Publication   |

### STEP 1: Selecting Behavior

No matter what your goal is, selecting the right behaviors to achieve that goal are important. There are multiple behaviors that contribute to any issue, therefore it is important to target behavioral changes that are realistically attainable yet effective. For example, if the program's goal is increased energy efficiency the targeted behaviors could be getting homeowners to install additional insulation or wash their clothes in cold

water; or on a broader scale the program could encourage businesses to turn off computers when not being used, or even help farmers sell produce locally (McKenzie-Mohr, 2010). However, before any behaviors can be targeted, a sector must be chosen and targeted. A sector refers to an area or group where your issue is prevalent and where a significant change could have the greatest impact on your cause.

Sectors to Begin with:

- A. Adults – Many programs have targeted the youth sector, perhaps with the seven generations philosophy in mind, referring to living responsibly so that you leave a world for the seven generations to come. While youth are our future, many programs experience failure because when the youth return home they are no longer in an environment that fosters change. Youth are vital targeted audiences in order to promote change for any effort, however, if they are not surrounded by heads of households that share their ideologies, they are likely to revert back to environmentally harmful behaviors.
- B. Tribal departments – An effective way to reach the adult sector in Indigenous communities is to target their tribal departments, in particular their tribal council members. A community elects certain officials to represent their tribe at a national level, and this decides how they want their tribe to be represented. These officials must be considered leaders among their communities, so their lifestyles are under constant observation. If the community sees their elected leaders engaging in a healthier eating lifestyle, it is more likely to encourage change in their own



lifestyles. . Alternatively elders may still retain traditions that helped the people how to survive in previous times and these can be recovered. Such individuals probably do not need to be converted in their lifeways; however, they do need to be empowered.

C. Community Groups –Because commitment to community was a value virtually all Indigenous peoples shared in the past and one goal is to return to that ideology, targeting community groups that are already in place would make a transition smoother than it would to make a brand new group. These groups or communities could come from a wide array of examples, as every tribe has different programs: Single moms or moms receiving assistance, basketball moms (similar to the soccer mom concept), fitness or wellness groups, elder assistant programs, or language groups. This sector could be an important target because these particular groups or programs would consist of members of the community that have different lifestyles, food choices, beliefs, and even upbringings, however they are already bonded by a commonality.

From there, the next step would be to create a list of end-state behaviors, which refer to behavior that produces the desired environmental outcome, meaning there is not another action that needs to be taken in order for an impact to be made (McKenzie-Mohr, 2010). For example, the goal should not be to simply have the target audience purchase seeds, because the action makes no impact until seeds are actually planted. Moreover, encouraging the audience to buy organic ingredients makes no impact if they let them go

to waste. Therefore, your list must be made up of behaviors that directly impact your desired outcome while they are motivated to participate.

When you have a list of potential behaviors to be targeted, the next step is to take a more concentrated look at them by asking three questions that can help determine the effectiveness, before you commit to anything: 1. How impactful is the behavior? 2. How probable is it that my target audience will engage in the behavior? And 3. What level of penetration has the behavior already obtained with my target audience? (McKenzie-Mohr, 2010). Laying out a table that uses a number system to evaluate these questions can help you narrow down your targeted behaviors.

See *Table 2: Determining Effectiveness* for an example of how this can be carried out using a 1-4 number system.

*Table 2: Determining Effectiveness*

| <b>Behavior</b>                            | <b>Impact</b> | <b>Probability</b> | <b>Penetration</b> | <b>Average</b> |
|--|---------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Refraining from eating at fast food chains | <b>3</b>      | <b>1</b>           | <b>1</b>           | <b>1.67</b>    |
| Readying a garden plot                     | <b>2</b>      | <b>2</b>           | <b>2</b>           | <b>2</b>       |
| Cooking with locally grown goods           | <b>2</b>      | <b>3</b>           | <b>3</b>           | <b>2.67</b>    |

## STEP 2: Identifying Barriers and Benefits

Having selected your targeted sector and behaviors, CBSM next provides a four step approach to identify the barriers and benefits involved with engaging people in your chosen sustainable behaviors.

## 1 - Literature Review

Evaluation of publications and reports that are relevant to the issue is important in order to get a better understanding of where gaps still remain. Fortunately for my perspective, there are a lot of resources out there about Indigenous foodways, traditional practices, Indigenous health disparities related to modern food systems. Unfortunately, as mentioned before, because Indigenous groups are so varied and widespread it is unlikely that we can find a program that will work for all. Conducting a literature review that is specific to your tribe, geographical area, and ancestral origin stories will help better identify what may be blocking change and where change will benefit most.

Below is a list of potential list that may be beneficial to begin with, most taken from reference used in previous sections of this paper:

### Books

- Eating the Landscape: American Indian Stories of Food, Identity, and Resilience, by Enrique Salmon
- Iroquois Corn in a Culture-Based Curriculum: a Framework for Respectfully Teaching about Cultures, by Carol Cornelius
- Original Instructions: Indigenous Teachings for a Sustainable Future, edited by Melissa K. Nelson

- A People's Ecology: Explorations in Sustainable Living, edited by Gregory Cajete

#### Journals

- American Indian Quarterly
- American Indian Culture and Research Journal
- Cultural Survival Quarterly

#### Societies and Online Databases

- Society of Ethnobiology
- Fostering Sustainable Behavior – CBSM.com
- First Nations Development Institute

## 2 – Observations

Observation is key in identifying barriers because you are gaining first hand imagery concerning your audience and issue. Observing how people behave and the choices they make gives you an unbiased look at what may be preventing people from engaging in sustainable behavior. For example, observation can be done at a community's farmer's market through paying attention to what stands people are most attracted to, what they buy, whether it is products or produce, how engaged they are in the community or if they avoid communication, and whether they go alone or bring family with.

Observers can be sent out around the whole community to see how many homes have their own gardens, whether there are community gardens, and who is

working these gardens. This step is particularly important in order to assist the next steps in identifying barriers and benefits.

### 3 – Focus Groups

After gathering sufficient information to pinpoint the major issue that would prevent your project from succeeding, the next step is to conduct focus groups that make people active participants in the conversations by discussing their thoughts, as opposed to being lectured and possibly overloaded with information. An important factor in this step is having the right people involved, when a focus group is volunteer-based it is more likely that they are already interested or engaged in the topic. While it is a positive to gain interest, for focus groups you want to choose people randomly, perhaps from a tribal directory or attendees of General Tribal Council meetings, so that you have a good mixture of people to engage in a comprehensive discussion.

Simply choosing participants at random does not guarantee they will actually participate, however, certain incentives can be provided in order to ensure a good turnout. This can be anything from cash, gift cards, or match play coupons, which are popular casino incentives that give you an extra \$10 when you play \$10. In traditional cultures incentive was provided through status gained by helping and cooperating, but in the contemporary world it is important to provide monetary compensation, which has become the equivalent of status in many people's minds. It is also important to make participating convenient. Being a mother in an Indigenous community myself, I am always complaining about venues not providing activities for children so the parents have a chance to

engage in whatever is being promoted. Knowing there is something there for your child to do, makes the idea of participating more comforting.

Once you have your focus group in place, there must be someone to facilitate conversation to ensure that discussion does not become stagnant or the more assertive talkers do not outweigh the passive participants. Be sure to have preliminary questions ready in order to get the discussion started, these questions would be developed from your literature review and the observations made during previous steps. There should also be someone taking notes, who can play close attention to statements that were made multiple times; this is a vital stage where you find your barriers and benefits.

Examples of statements that present barriers:

“I would make my own garden, but I don’t know how.”

“I would cook more often, but I don’t have time.”

“I want to start a garden, but I don’t have the space.”

“Healthy food is expensive.”

#### 4 – Survey

CBSM acknowledges that focus groups are an “essential step in enhancing your understanding of how community residents view the behavior you wish to promote,” however, relying on the words of a small handful of people can be damaging to your program’s effectiveness (Step 2). Conducting surveys is a great tool in reaching a larger amount of community members. Using the repeated statements, such as the ones above, you can further develop your

questions to get the responses that best help you advance your cause. While McKenzie-Mohr speaks directly about conducting mailed and phone surveys, online surveys have become much more popular. This method can be very effective in Indigenous communities, most of which have a directory of every tribal employees and a survey can be sent out to everyone quickly and all at once.

Another effective method for surveys is conducting them during community gatherings. Indigenous communities tend to gather often at various events including but not limited to sports, cultural/ceremonial, celebration, pot locks, and powwows. Conducting surveys at such events allows participants to fill out the survey more efficiently because surveyors would be onsite to handout the surveys and assist with any questions the recipients might have. They would also be able to gather surveys once done, boosting effectiveness by making sure surveys are actually turned in.

### STEP 3: Developing Strategies

Once steps 1 and 2 have been completed, strategies can start to be put in place that directly target the type of barrier your focus groups and surveys have helped you identify. This is done by utilizing a number of tools, which will be outlined and then interpreted for the use of Indigenous communities to effectively promote behavior change among food choice and garden practices. This is the step where use of language and cultural values can be beneficial in order to enhance behavioral change. Examples of this will be given for each tool listed.

Commitment:

While getting someone's verbal or written commitment may seem too simple or easy a task to actually effect change, McKenzie-Mohr provides numerous examples of how such actions served as indicators of significant change in behavior. For example, in one study residents of a college community were asked to sign promise cards saying they would use crosswalks and yield to pedestrians in crosswalks when driving. Cross walk usage increased by 10% and yielding to pedestrians increased by 21% (McKenzie-Mohr, 2010, Commitment). In a similar instance, individuals who were asked to wear a pin publicizing the Canadian Cancer Society were nearly twice as likely to subsequently donate than those who were not asked to wear a pin (Commitment). Once commitment was established, individuals felt more empowered to take a stance, no matter how small.

This type of behavioral change has been attributed to self-perception theory, which refers to the idea that attitudes can be shaped by engaging in a particular behavior (Bem, 1972). The idea is that if the individual makes a commitment to buying local, cooking at home, or starting a garden they will start to see themselves as environmentally concerned people who believe these actions are important. For example, getting commitment from a community member to not eat fast food may inspire that individual to view themselves as the person that doesn't support food chains. Early cultural traditions were established using similar techniques, by having people who agreed to cooperate or share gained status and access to important ceremonies.

Another way to increase the likelihood of behavioral change is to make their commitment public, this can be done by getting signed letters from community members and publishing it on tribal media outlets; such as newspapers, websites, Facebook, or Twitter. Indigenous communities are relatively small and close-knit, where everyone



knows everyone, which is why this tactic is equivalent to traditional ways in which people who shared and cooperated were honored and those who failed to do so were shamed or even exiled if they continued to be recalcitrant. A contemporary example is that if the whole community sees an update on Facebook saying “Commitment Notice! Lois Stevens commits to a better food system by choosing to buy local foods,” that person is more likely to stick to her word in an effort to remain consistent and save face.

Indigenous ideologies have already shown that they are environmentally concerned, even though many communities have adopted other lifestyles from European and EuroAmerican traditions, the value system of the people is still in place through culture and language. Therefore, using them to enhance your approach will aid in behavioral change. For example, using the “Commitment Notice!” described above, this type of campaign can be given a name that connects the people to a traditional value. To take an example for my culture we have a set of core values we live by, e.g. being *Kaʔtshatstʰsla*, which means the strength of belief and vision as a people. Giving the campaign a name they are familiar with and identify with, represents something more than themselves reassure the people they are not alone in this endeavor.

#### Social Norms:

I briefly touched on social norms in the previous section when using the example of a following along with the actions of your friends in order to fit the norm. Although that example highlighted possible negative effects of norms, this section will show how they can be used to your advantage. Social norms refer to standard of behavior based on widely shared beliefs of how individual members ought to behave in a given situation (Fehr, 2004: 185). This means that people are more likely to engage in an action if the

people around them already are doing it, which is how most tribal communities functioned prior to European contact.

It is important to remember when trying to establish social norms that you want to encourage people to engage in the positive behaviors rather than discouraging the negative behaviors. This means one does not want to highlight the harmful actions that you are attempting to change. By highlighting the harmful action, you are showing the targeted audience that this can be considered as the norm, rather than the positive behavior. For example, instead of greeting costumers at the grocery store with a big sign that says “1/3 of food produced is wasted each year,” greet them with a sign that provides a statistic on the increase of sales of local produce, which does not go bad as quickly.

For Indigenous communities, providing information on efforts already being made on the reservation or territory encourages other members to engage. There are many communities, however, who are still struggling with revitalizing their foodways so it is harder to establish norms and in such cases, information on other Indigenous communities that are having success in the area will demonstrate the possibility of establishing an environmentally concerned norm.

#### Social Diffusion:

As with social norms, social diffusion refers to how an individual’s actions influenced by the people around them. Social diffusion, however, operates at a more personal level. When a sustainable action is made public by someone whom an individual trusts or perceives as similar to themselves, they are more likely to influence behavior (McKenzie-Mohr, 2010, Social Diffusion). This tool can be very beneficial to Indigenous communities who tend to be closer to their neighbors and are even related in many

instances. This is especially true when individuals want to emulate or consider themselves to be ‘high status’ or ‘honorable’ in their communities and they see others they regard as their peers acting in a particular fashion.

Prompts:

As humans we are far from perfect, because even environmentally conscious people can fall victim to the basic human error of forgetfulness or laziness. When simple things like turning off the lights when you leave a room can be easily overlooked, imagine how easy it can be to forget to check how far your food had to travel to get to you. Or how easily it would be to forget to water your garden. A prompt is a visual or auditory aid that reminds you to carry out an activity we may tend to forget (McKenzie-Mohr, 2010, Prompts).

One example that I experience every time I go to the Community Mercantile in Lawrence, KS. Up and down every aisle you will see small but visible stickers below certain items, these stickers tell you where that food came from and how many miles it had to travel to be in front of you at that very moment. This is a simple yet effective prompt that gets the buyers attention and reminds them that there food choices have a footprint too. IF it is well known that the food was produced by your community, i.e. through food sharing from gardens this is even easier to respond.

Building prompts into your program is an effective and interesting way to get people to change behavior because it can be done in so many different ways. From anything like stickers to radio commercials, prompts can get the word out there about your program while reminding people of the actions you wish to promote. For example, making stickers that say “What’s for Dinner?” with your programs logo is a simple way

to remind people to think carefully of what they eat, this will get them wondering whether they should rethink that trip to the drive-thru. “Got Garden?” key chains, or calendars with dates and locations of farmer’s markets. Creating a slogan for your program and circulating it around the community could be a prompt that builds on social norm. Creativity in this area can provide so numerous possibilities.

Prompts can be a fun way to combine language and behavior change. Your program can partner with your language department to get prompts translated to your Indigenous language to encourage learning your language while prompting specific actions. An effective way to do this is create labels to be hung around community member’s homes, so that you are reaching a wide range of linguistic areas and not just one or two phrases on a flyer, such as providing labels for the plants in their gardens, notepads with a grocery list of essential items already provided, and cooking labels and recipes to encourage cooking in home. This is also a fun way to get the family involved as well, especially children.

#### Communication:

This tool refers to how information can be effectively portrayed to your targeted audience. Using captivating information specifically geared towards your audience, catches their attention. In Indigenous communities, the use of statistics that directly affect the local Indigenous population is likely to catch the audience’s attention more so than a statistic showing effect on world population. Another captivating way information can be portrayed in Indigenous communities is providing information on what that specific tribe’s original agricultural practices were. Retelling stories that have been with a community since creation, link the people more intimately with the behavior you are

encouraging by providing personal contact with the audience, modeling sustainable behaviors of the past, and integrates community goals; which are all aspects CBSM requires for effective communication.

When this is done, it is important to be careful to use credible sources. When information is delivered by someone the community trusts, such as a tribal official or elder, who has background in or specific knowledge of, the information they are providing it increases influence on the audience (Eagly, 1975). Moreover, the message should be specific and easy to remember. Origin stories have been around so long it is easy for the audience to remember them; however, they can sometimes be lyrical, so in retelling them make sure to highlight the behaviors to which we want the audience to return to or recover.

#### Incentives:

The problem with many program initiatives is that sometimes people simply do not care, or have no motivation or reason to engage, despite knowing their actions are harmful. Simply because people have all the information it does not mean they will act accordingly. An example in many tribes is reliance on poor quality, high fat, salt, and sugar fast or junk food, because of its ease and convenience. Incorporating incentives into your program provides more motivation for the targeted audience to engage in the behavior you are trying to promote. In order for these incentives to inspire a significant amount of motivation McKenzie-Mohr provides a set of guidelines to developing effective incentives (Garnder, 1996):

1. Consider the Size – make sure the incentive is large enough to be taken seriously.

2. Closely Pair with the Behavior – incentives are more effective when given at the time of the behavior, rather than later. For example, providing an incentive for buying local produce as the individual is checking out of the grocery store, rewards the behavior immediately.
3. Make Visible – make sure to draw attention to the incentive.
4. Reward Positive Behavior – in some cases programs use disincentives utilize punishment for unwanted behavior versus rewarding for wanted behavior. Disincentives can be unpredictable and not as effective as rewards.
5. Be Cautious in Removing – stay consistent by keeping incentives in place.

Below are just a few examples of how incentives can be incorporated into a program's goal to reduce dependence on the current food system.

- Points system or punch cards at local farmers markets
- Gift card incentives when you post pictures of your garden
- Friendly competition among community members, post pictures of every night of the week you have a home cooked meal for a month, winner receives a cash prize.

Convenience:

This last tool CBSM involves overcoming physical barriers rather than psychological barriers, no matter how enticing an incentive, how thought-provoking the communication, or how eye catching the prompt; if the behavior is inconvenient the strategy will fail as exemplified by fast food in the previous section. Therefore, the goal of this tool is to make things easy for your target audience. Step 2 should have already identified what physical barriers are preventing the targeted audience from change, this

tool assists in removing those barriers. For example, if the biggest physical barrier is lack of space for a garden then the program can set up community plots located around the reservation or community. If it barrier is lack of tools or hands to get a garden started in the individuals property, the program can provide a service that provide people that ready the space for a garden or loan or give away gardening tools, as has been done with the Haskell Indian Nations University Gardening Project. Helping the targeted audience overcome such barriers make your previous tools more effective.

#### Maximize the Tools:

In many cases, the combination of tools is the most effective way to encourage behavioral change. *See Table 3: Combined Tools*

Table 3: Combined Tools

| BARRIERS                | TOOLS                             |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Lack of Motivation      | Commitment<br>Norms<br>Incentives |
| Forget to Act           | Prompts                           |
| Lack of Social Pressure | Norms                             |
| Lack of Knowledge       | Communication<br>Social Diffusion |
| Structural Barriers     | Convenience                       |

- McKenzie-Mohr, 2010, “Developing Strategies Revisited”

The last phase of developing strategies is making sure that once the proper tools have been developed the information must be brought back to the community again for consultation. Although you have already engaged the community through your previous focus groups and surveys; keeping the community involved throughout the process allows them to be a part of the development before initiative even begin. It also makes sure that the tools are traditionally acceptable and properly tailored to your community.

#### STEP 4: Piloting

Piloting a potential program for Indigenous peoples is essential because a number of reasons. Most obvious is to make sure the program will actually work for that group, because Indigenous populations are so widespread and diverse there is no one model that can be applied to all. For example, if a program that worked very well in Wisconsin was applied to a group in California, odds are it would fail.



The next reason piloting is important is time. There is a substantial amount of time and energy required in any program development. If that program is not piloted at the appropriate scale it could set a community back a few steps. Along with time, another aspect to figure in is the cost of implementing a project for a large community. Piloting a proposed project could potentially save money as well as time by showing which approach is most effective. Yet another reason for piloting is establishing popularity, it is hard to get a program started off the ground when there are so many people to consider; however, when the people see a smaller group experiencing success with the program, it gives more motivation to get involved when it is implemented at the larger scale.

For Indigenous communities, it is especially important to pilot at least two groups, this is because even on small reservations or territories the community can be very diverse. For example, most communities have two separate groups, the traditional and the non-traditional. Piloting members of these two groups could show where the program will be most effective and where changes need to be made.

When measuring the effectiveness of the pilot, make sure you are not only paying close attention to whether or not the targeted behaviors have changed, but also whether or not the pilot project encouraged behavioral change in areas you did not expect. Building on the self-perception theory, in an effort to remain consistent with their initial sustainable behavior people will perform future sustainable behaviors because they feel pressured to by society, this is known as the foot-in-the-door phenomenon (Vaidyanathan, 2003: 514). For example, if the targeted behavior was to get individuals to garden, the foot-in-the-door phenomenon could have encouraged the same individuals

to begin composting. This phenomenon can be beneficial in showing the importance of your program.

#### STEP 5: Broad-Scale Implementation and Evaluation

It is a long process getting to the final step of implementing your program at a broad level: conducting a literature review, observations, focus groups, and surveys; devising a strategy using the right tools; piloting and revising your strategy; and finally broad-scale implementation. The important thing that CBSM stresses at the end is that even after implementing your program throughout your community your work is not finished. Evaluating your program after implementation is important in understanding where the gaps still remain either in your effort or your overall purpose. In addition, CBSM is an emerging field whose efforts need to be publicized once it has been carried out, successful or not. Although Indigenous communities can be vast and different, all are involved in the same battle in revitalizing traditional food practices. Therefore it is important to help other communities by publicizing what work and what didn't so that other communities can learn from your efforts.

#### ENGAGING FROM AN INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVE

*“Science will often tell you things that you already knew. It's only a tool.”*  
- Katsi Cook (Nelson, 2008)

This is not a brand new system, one very similar to approaches used by Indigenous populations for many years before contact with Europeans. It has been given a new name and has been adapted to the societal and psychological barriers specific to this contemporary era, however, the same 5 step system can be translated to acts made by Indigenous communities to foster the desired outcomes in their food production. This is

why I believe this system can effectively promote change among Indigenous communities on and off the reservation.

### Fostering Sustainable Behavior

Indigenous Peoples have long had a history of fostering sustainable behavior as a means of survival in changeable environments where crucial resources might decline in unpredictable ways. Such situations forced our ancestors to create traditions and rituals that enforced restraint and maximized sustainability the moment our cultures began. "...a key point to understanding TEK is to realize that Indigenous Americans integrated spiritual and ecological knowledge and understanding, blending these into a traditional way of life which allowed people to survive over extended periods of time under ecological conditions that were continuously fluctuating and relatively unpredictable. They managed to accomplish this without the use of pesticides, herds of domestic animals, or large-scale agriculture" (Pierotti 2011: 37). Leaders and elders ensured that we were passing on those teachings to our children as well through emphasizing that we always needed to consider seven generations in the consequence of our actions. Unfortunately, with the influence of modern society and its efforts to destroy our cultures and treat them as superstition and fairy tales (Pierotti 2011), it has been hard to effectively maintain those behaviors. As a result, efforts to recover those old teachings could allow for a unique transition if Indigenous Peoples to effectively use this model.

### Step 1

As I have indicated, Indigenous lifestyle choices were focused on sustaining the resources of Mother Earth through the seven generations concept, I presented a quote from Oren Lyons, who refers to the concept that "ensures the next seven generations.."

This concept can also be considered as referring to this current generation, and then three generations back and three generations to come. Regardless of your preferred version, both acknowledge the dedication to our future generations. When relating Indigenous communities to CBSM in Step 1: Selecting Behavior, the selected behavior is the preservation of resources for the benefit of our children, grandchildren, and so on.

## Step 2

In order to identify barriers, Indigenous communities relied on observation of where participation was lacking, storytelling from past efforts or other communities, and meetings among leaders. While they did not have the terms literature review, focus group, or surveys, their actions were very similar to what those terms do today. Storytelling being their equivalent of literature review, meetings that were being used to build consensus being the equivalent of focus groups, and the responsibility of the leaders to bring the issues of the people to the rest of the community through use of social status and ceremony. Therefore, the process of bringing an issue to the other community leaders is very similar to conducting a survey.

## Step 3

Ceremonies are performed in order to give thanks to all spirits that make it possible to live a prosperous life on Mother Earth, so it is obvious that food is associated with ceremonies of Indigenous peoples. These ceremonies allow for the people to commit to the agricultural lifestyle, provide a social norm for the whole community, as well as prompt individuals to participate. Along with ceremony comes “socials,” which are basically celebrations where the people can gather to sing, dance, eat, and share their lives together. These gatherings are convenient, and give the people an incentive after

hard work has been done, so that even if ceremonies seem lackluster, they still have something else to look forward to.

#### Step 4

Indigenous peoples did not have programs to implement necessarily, however, many times ceremonial traditions were not quickly accepted by everyone in the community. A lot of times they were convinced after seeing a smaller number of people participate or get involved; very similar to piloting, Indigenous communities were able to gain further commitment this way.

#### Step 5

While Indigenous peoples were able sustain many resources through their dedication to their ceremonies and community, they were not perfect; rather, there are many stories that tell us what happens if we choose to abandon those ceremonies. My late great-grandmother told me a lot of stories growing up, and I was always so fascinated by the stories of the three sisters because she always related my two sisters and me to the stories. Referring to me as the youngest of three sisters, growing up I was often referred to as the beans, the shy and child-like sister. My middle sister, was known as squash or the wild one. And of course my oldest sister was called the corn, the protector of her younger sisters. In the story my great grandmother told me she told about a time when the Hotinoshonni people started to lose appreciation to the sisters and no longer participated in the ceremonies that gave thanks to them. This made the sister sad and they almost left the people for the spirit world. This story can be an example of how Indigenous people continued to evaluate their value system. Thankfully the sisters did not leave because the people were reminded of their importance, and the ceremonies were restored.

My great grandmother told a lot of stories. Every time she opened her mouth she was publishing her own masterpiece. The greatest thing about her to me, however, was not her ability to tell a story but her ability to bring the old world into the new. She never said “back in my day,” she never talked down on the modern era. As she grew old she embraced change, embraced a world that was different and new. She realized that she could not teach the same way she had been taught, because of this realization she did things that may have been unorthodox for her generation; such as helping author a dictionary, digitize old Oneida stories, and record phrases for a cellphone app. It is because of her that I believe we can take an old knowledge system, translated to a new language to overcome modern societal barriers. My great-grandmother was the old kind of new school.



*Figure 12: Grandma Maria with my sister and nephew Mark Kane*

Table 4: Indigenous Value System

| <b>CBSM SYSTEM</b>                          | <b>INDIGENOUS VALUE SYSTEM</b>  |
|---|---|
| <b>1) Selecting Behavior</b>                | <i>Preserve resources for future generations</i>  |
| <b>2) Identifying Barriers and Benefits</b> | <i>Barriers: Laziness, selfishness, unappreciative behaviors</i><br><i>Benefits: community, plentiful food, physicality</i>   |
| <b>3) Developing Strategies</b>             | <i>Ceremonies brought forth to foster appreciation to all things related for sustenance received</i><br><i>Celebrations or “socials” to share food, dance, sing, and tell stories</i> |
| <b>4) Piloting</b>                          | <i>Small medicine groups</i>  |
| <b>5) Implementation</b>                    | <i>Re-evaluation through stories if ceremonies are not done, i.e. Loss of Three Sisters</i>   |

*\*For more information on current article, cases and developing strategies visit Doug McKenzie-Mohr’s website Fostering Sustainable Behavior at CBSM.com.*

# Conclusions

I simply telling a story that I feel needs to be told. My own experience with losing my traditional self and foodways has taught me how easy it can be for such things to happen. I told a brief story earlier how an experience with fitting my social norm my freshman year of college led me on a path of eating unhealthy and harmful foods. I chose to abandon beliefs that had been with me since childhood in an effort to fit in with a handful of girls, and didn't realize what I had done until years later. I remember the exact moment I realized what I had done.

At the time of enrollment for my last semester as an undergrad I had chosen class on Multicultural Perspectives on Sustainable Agriculture because I had fulfilled all my undergraduate requirements and it was something completely different than any other course I have taken. As part of the course, I had the opportunity to travel to Costa Rica for a two week course dedicated to the Indigenous food systems of the country. The group got to visit the Cabecar, BriBri, and Maleku Indigenous reserves and learn about how they have been struggling with keeping their foodways alive. The communities brought us in, fed us, told stories, and taught us how to make chocolate by pounding seeds with a giant rock. I tried so many different things (especially foods). One night a group was teaching how to dance, everyone was dripping sweat, and getting sore feet, but we were all full of laughter. I remember thinking how great it would be to have something like that; at that very moment it hit me. I did have that, and I have had it my whole life.



Just a few years away from home and I had forgotten that I had a community of my own. I may not have had their exotic foods but I had food traditions of my own. I had dances, songs, and laughter of my own. This experience taught me that there is one thing you can be sure of in this world, change is constant. The world is going to bring us down different paths, in the direction of our traditions and away from them as well. Revitalizing my traditional self and returning back to sustainable foodways is a long process, but I trust that by committing to my food, culture, and community I will get there. This thesis is about some methods to help all of us.

In conclusion, the reason I am passionate about this and why I choose to write this manuscript is not only because I lost my way but because I want to ensure that my daughter and her children do not lose theirs. When I became a mother, the future became so much more important. I made a promise to her that I would give her everything in the world, so first I have to help ensure there are things left on earth worth giving. With the seven generations very active in my upbringing, I want to teach my daughter how to make the world a better place, as my parents, grandparents, and great-grandmother taught me. In addition to that, I have to remember how much she has to teach me.

I recall a time I was trying to show her how to start a garden when she was four-years-old; we had been working for quite a while when I realized she had stayed in the same spot building a small structure with twigs, rocks, leaves, and grass. I asked her several times to come help me and just when I was losing patience she said something that reminded me how pure children's minds are. She looked at me with the most concerned expression and said, "Mom, I am building a house for all the bugs so they won't bother our plants. It's not fair to just take their spot away." She was completely

right, I hadn't even taught her how important it is to be thankful and give something back in return, yet she reminded me.

My daughter, although only 5-years-old, has teaches me more about life every day and I cannot wait to see what she grows up to do. She deserves a bright future.



*Figure 13: Marley and Paul Atkinson, 2014*

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