

# SEVEN CHARACTER TEACHINGS BUILDING POSITIVE CHARACTER

## LOVE – helew – eagle – aigle

Love starts with the love of oneself, and it is understood that if one cannot love oneself, it is impossible to love anyone else.

The Eagle was chosen to represent this law, as the Eagle can reach the highest out of all the creatures and see clearly and accurately. We need to use our Eagle vision to see from other's perspectives and to value their uniqueness. Working to see and value another's perspective and uniqueness builds strong character.



## RESPECT – q<sup>w</sup>isp – buffalo – buffle

The Buffalo, through giving its life and sharing every part of its being, showed the deep respect it had for the people. No animal was more important to the existence of Indigenous families than this animal, and its gift provided shelter, clothing and utensils for daily living. Native people believed themselves to be true caretakers of the great herds, and developed a sustainable relationship with the Buffalo resulting in a relationship that was a true expression of respect. Respect means treating others as we would want to be treated. Putting this into practice builds positive character.



## COURAGE – spe?ec – bear – ours

The Bear provides many lessons in the way it lives, but courage is the most important teaching it offers. Though gentle by nature, the ferociousness of a mother Bear when one of her cubs is approached is the true definition of courage. To have the mental and moral strength to overcome fears that prevent us from developing good character, is a great challenge that must be met with the same vigour and intensity as a mother Bear protecting her cub. The Bear's example shows us how to face any danger to achieve these goals.



## HUMILITY – s<sup>q</sup>áwm – wolf – loup

Humility is shown by considering others before ourselves. In this way, the Wolf became the teacher of this lesson. He bows his head in the presence of others out of deference, and once he has hunted, he will not eat the food until it can be shared with the pack. His lack of arrogance and respect for his community is a hard lesson, but essential for the development of strong character.





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## HONESTY – sćwená'ymx – sasquatch



Long ago, there was a giant called Sasquatch. Sasquatch walked among the people to remind them to be honest to each other. The highest honour that could be bestowed upon an individual was the saying "There walks an honest man. He can be trusted." To be truly honest was to keep the promises one made to others and to oneself.

The elders say that when you are honest and have nothing to hide or be ashamed of, your character is the size of the Sasquatch. When you lie or do something bad and hide it from the people, it affects your character, not allowing it to grow strong. It does not feel good when you know you have done wrong and hidden it. When one does this, it eats away at your character, suppressing it and not allowing it to grow strong. So in order to have a strong character we must be honest to ourselves and to others.

## TRUTH – ʔəl'skʷ - turtle - tortue



The Elders would say, "Never try to be someone else; live true to [who you are], be honest to yourself." The turtle teaches us to be the best versions of ourselves at all times. Don't hide who you are to please others. Strong character is like the strong turtle shell. It makes us who we are and protects us.

The turtle also teaches us patience. As the turtle is one of the slowest moving creatures of Earth, she makes it to her destination no matter how long it may take her. The slow-moving turtle teaches us that the journey of life is as important as the destination.

## WISDOM – ɪqúpeʔ- beaver - castor



Wisdom is being able to see what is right and good to build a strong community. To build a community everyone needs to participate and use their strengths. These strengths must be used to make the community better. The beaver's example of using his special strengths - his sharp teeth for cutting trees and branches which he uses to building dams and lodges - is an example of this. If the beaver did not use his strengths to build, his teeth would grow and grow, eventually making it impossible for him to eat. The beaver knows his strengths and uses them to the best of his abilities.

Native people understand that the Beaver is wise and works hard for himself and his community.