



Native American Wisdom

Kent Nerburn , Louise Mengelkoch (Editor)

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We recognize the philosophy of the original Americans as coming from the earth we walk on, from those who preceded us. As we read the wisdom of these peoples, it is possible to feel a reconnection with our land and ourselves. This beautiful collection of the best of Native American wisdom features the thoughts of Chief Joseph, Sitting Bull, Red Cloud, Black Elk, Ohiyesa, and many others on Native American ways of living, learning, and dying. Taken from orations, recorded observations of life and social affairs, and other first-person testimonies, this book selects a wide range of Native American wisdom and distills it to its essence in short, digestible quotes that are meaningful and timeless -- perhaps even more timely now than when they were written.

Native American Wisdom Details

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Kay says

Thought this book was sweet and sad. I liked how it's goal was to preserve the words of the oral tradition Indians, the Indians now of the past. Their words are still very valuable for today.

L says

I read the book a while ago and then found the audio recording at the library. I enjoyed both versions, but listening to the tape as I drove across the midwest was a special experience. These are wonderful insights and thoughts to ponder and reflect on. I love being out in nature, so the perspective holds special meaning. I enjoyed the way the book was divided into different phases of life. It is a book I will go back to every so often as there is so much relevance and so many connections to our lives now.

Mariah Blanchard says

I really enjoyed this book. It was a quick read -about an hour. A very informative read and eyeopening. The quotes themselves are beautiful to reflect upon.

Ganesh says

So many profound quotes. Some that spoke to me:

"It does not require many words to speak the truth." Chief Joseph

"Silence is the mother of truth." Disraeli

"It was our belief that the love of possessions is a weakness to be overcome. . . . Children must early learn the beauty of generosity. They are taught to give what they prize most, that they may taste the happiness of giving. . . . The Indians in their simplicity literally give away all that they have—to relatives, to guests of other tribes or clans, but above all to the poor and the aged, from whom they can hope for no return." - Charles Alexander Eastman (Ohiyesa)

Kristi Hudecek-Ashwill says

This took only a couple of hours to read and it was time well spent.

This really isn't a book for entertainment and is more of a philosophical read about Native American

spiritualism. But I really can't say that, either because it's a compilation of quotes and brief readings by Indians of yesteryear and even today. It's fascinating and it really has a lot to say and the time it takes to read it just flies by. The topics range from giving birth in one chapter, to living, to dying, religion and Christianity, and how messed up the white man's way of thinking is.

It is not a hate book. It just points out differences in thinking.

I guess I must have been a full-blooded Indian in a former life instead of just the part-Indian I am now because I agreed with everything this book said and I've been practicing it for a long time. Long before I got this book. I'm also teaching my children to walk the Red Road but they aren't like the Indian kids of the past. That's for sure. I was raised as a white person as was my entire family. It came out a few years ago that we have a great-grandmother that was a full-blooded Cree.

There are two books that my kids have to read after they get to certain age. One is Tuesdays with Morrie and the second one is Native American Wisdom. There's a lot to be learned from both books and you don't have to be Indian to appreciate the latter.

Vannessa Anderson says

Native American Wisdom was a book of quotes by various individuals. Some were good and some were very good.

Richard says

This is a great compilation of observations of Native American Chiefs of the 18th and 19th Centuries with particularly pointed critiques of the foreign "Christian religion " foisted upon them.

Michael Motta says

This is not a must-read in terms of pure literary merit but it is a must-read in terms of being able to view and critique Western "technoculture", imperialism and capitalism from an external perspective without taking a thousand pages to do it.

Contains some short and sweet nature passages with Haiku-like aspects at times.

Steven says

This just a little book, but it is chock full of quotes and insight from famous Native Americans. It will give you an entirely different insight about the Native American Experience.

Darian says

I think everyone needs to read this. That's all I can say about it, just read it.

Lynn says

What anyone with half a brain has known all along. This book combines the power of long-term thinking with community responsibility and shows what true leadership really means. Deceptive in its simplicity. One easy read that is definitely worth it!

J. says

Great insights into Native thoughts that make even more sense today.

Melodie says

First of all, I listened to the audio edition of this book. On Goodreads, the audio edition does not give credit to the author, just the editor. I felt this was a disservice to the author, so I am using an edition that clearly states the author.

The book is a compilation of thoughts, quotes of Native Americans taken from historical documents. Not really for entertainment, more for meditation and reflection. I have great respect for the author and his work. I was moved to tears more than once in listening to the simple but so profound thoughts.

The audio edition is very well done with various speakers male and female. And yes, the editor did a fine job. I will be listening again and again. As in the case of the holocaust and any dire historical event, we need to remember and work to be better.

AJ says

This is a collection of observations and quotes from many great native American leaders across the country. The key topics and observations include the ways of the land, the ways of words and silence, the ways of learning, the ways of living, the ways of leading others, the ways of the heart, the ways of believing, the betrayal of the land, the ways of dying, the passing of the ways, the ways of the white man, the ways of civilization, and heed these words. Of course, I am biased so I found this book to be very consistent with my own life (or an attempt to bring back what I know). I did find some quotes from my grandfather that I found interesting:

In the government you call civilized, the happiness of the people is constantly sacrificed to the splendor of the empire. Hence the origin of your codes of criminal and civil laws; hence, your dungeons and your prisons. We have no prisons; we have no pompous parade of courts; we have no written laws; and yet judges are highly revered among us as they are among you, and their decisions are as much regarded. We have among us no exalted villains above the control of our laws. Daring wickedness is here never

allowed to triumph over helpless innocence. The estates of widows and orphans are never devoured by enterprising swindlers.

We have no robbery under the pretext of law. – Joseph Brant (Thayendanegea), Mohawk

Stefan Jernberg says

A collection of thought from of the original Americans. Gives insight into another way, another perspective to look at life.
