

The Smudge Ceremony

A Smudge is a ceremonial cleansing of one's self. It is done at the beginning and the end of the day, before participating in ceremony and at the beginning of a Sharing Circle. The Smudge Ceremony will help the participants centre or ground themselves.

Smudging unifies the energies and the people within the Circle. It can give strength to a weary person, raise the positive energy of the group and dispel negative thoughts. The smoke carries our prayers to the Creator and to our grandfathers and grandmothers of the Spirit world.

Of the four original medicine plants given to us by the Creator, Sweetgrass and/or Sage are usually burnt in a smudge. It is customary to light the smudge with wooden matches. One should remove all metals, such as watches, jewelry and eyeglasses. It is believed that metals hold, much negative energy.

Sage

- A Woman's medicine
- Women can smudge with female sage while on their time
- Dispels negative energies and brings positive
- Purification over your household door
- Female sage is a smaller plant, male sage is taller and carries the seeds
- Use male sage in thunder and lightning conditions

Sweetgrass

- The hair of Mother Earth
- Dispels negative energy, emotions, feelings and thoughts
- Uplifts the spirit
- Kindness and caring
- Pick in August or exchange gifts with someone for some
- Women should not pick medicines when on their time
- Keeps you safe on your travels
- Sweetgrass braids represent
 - mind, body and spirit
 - past, present and future
 - Grandparents, Myself, Grandchildren

Cedar

- Accepts only positive energy
- Removes negative energy and feelings from the circle, buildings, gathering areas
- Used in sweats for purification

Tobacco

- Giving thanks opens the doorway to the spirit world
- Carries our prayers to the Creator
- Offer tobacco when you pick medicines or harvest anything from Mother Earth. Make an offering before your first pick and after your last.
- Pass tobacco when you wish to ask a question or a ceremony of a Teacher/Elder/Ceremonialist. If it is accepted, the commitment is made to grant your request.
- One package of Tobacco = 1 stem + 1 bowl

You can use all, a combination of the medicines, or one of them for a Smudge. You can also use other herbs and medicines such as Lavender. Place the medicines in your cupped hand and roll into a ball between your two

hands. Place the medicine ball in a shell or a clay bowl. It is preferable to use a wooden match or a candle to light the Smudge, not a lighter. You can, but don't have to have a feather or feather fan to fan the Smudge.

In the Smudging ceremony the smoke from the smoldering plants is cupped in one's hands and used to cleanse oneself. Draw the smoke over your head to your eyes, mouth, ears, down your arms, down the front of your body to your heart and down to your feet, then draw the smoke over the back of your body. Pull some smoke toward your heart and say "All My Relations" and the Smudge-carrier will know you are done and will acknowledge this by saying "Aho". Saying "All My Relations" includes the universe and all of creation in your prayers.

We cleanse our eyes so that they will see

- the truth around us
- the beauty of our mother the earth
- the gifts given to us by our Creator
- the love shared with us through our families, friends & communities

We cleanse our mouth so that all we speak will be

- truthful
- said in a way that will empower positively
- caring and kind
- full of words of thanksgiving for our Creator

We cleanse our ears so that our ears will

- be open to the request of assistance from others
- hear only the good things and allow the bad to bounce off
- hear the music of life which surrounds us

We cleanse our heart so that our heart will

- feel the love the Creator intended for others
- will grow with us in harmony and balance
- be good and pure
- be open to show compassion, gentleness and caring for others

We cleanse our feet so that our feet will

- seek to walk gently and respectfully upon Mother Earth
- walk closer to our loved ones, friends and community and help us flee our enemies
- lead us closer to Creator

We cleanse the area we are in. You can smudge the walls, windows, doorways and corners of the room.

There is a proper protocol around the sacred medicines. If you are not sure, pass tobacco and ask an Elder from the community for advise on protocol in that community. Following are some issues of protocol that you should become aware of:

1. The medicines should not be handled by anyone under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
2. Life-givers should not smudge or be smudged with anything but Sage while they are on their Moon Time. They are already in a purification ceremony and should not participate in two ceremonies at the same time. The Life-givers may be too powerful at this time for the males in the circle.
3. A Marking Ceremony can be done to enable the Life-giver to participate in the ceremony or circle.
4. In some circles women on their time are included but only Sage is used in the Smudge.
5. In some communities pregnant women may be excluded so her energies may be directed toward nurturing her baby. In some communities pregnant women participate and her strength is shared and multiplied by the new life she has created.