



# SHINING LESSONS FROM STANDING ROCK

An update from Lenore Norrgard

The Water Protectors of the Sacred Stone Camp continue to be a source of tremendous inspiration to social justice warriors and defenders of the Earth around the world. Let's look at some of the key stances they have taken that lift everyone involved to a higher spiritual plane:

- **Protect the Sacred.** Refuse the powerless frame of 'protesting' to the powers that be, and instead stand in their sacred duty to protect the Earth as their prime directive, following it wherever it takes them. Protecting the Sacred is tantamount to physical and cultural survival, and stands above any personal needs or desires.
- **Take direction from the Ancestors and Great Spirit.** Rather than debating strategy from a human-centered perspective, seek spiritual wisdom all day, every day, and particularly before and after every strategic action. Decisions are spiritually integrous, rather than materially 'realistic' or personally expedient.
- **Prayer as action, action as prayer.** Every action taken, whether preparing food, setting up a sweat lodge, or holding the line from encroachment by police, is performed with fidelity to Spirit. By staying in constant alignment with Spirit, the corporate Faustian bargain for oil is exposed for what it is.
- **Peacemaking.** Indigenous nations with centuries-long feuds made sacred ceremonies to end said feuds with mutual honour, in order to come into harmony and defend the Sacred together. Such unity on Turtle Island had been unprecedented.
- **Inclusivity.** Non-indigenous solidarity, predicated on respecting indigenous leadership, was fostered, not only in the form of donations and legal support, but also in action on the ground, in shoulder-to-shoulder community. Non-Natives experienced a kind of love and community never before known. This created an unbreakable solidarity in defending the Sacred.
- **Centre women's leadership.** While the beloved indigenous youth founded this movement, and Water Protectors honor all their elders, it is the women of all generations who have been honoured as the central leaders of the various camps. This is a struggle to Protect Life, and indigenous people know women are the carriers and nurturers of life, and their leadership must be centred.
- **All are One - Really.** The Water Protectors have refused to be divided from those assigned to suppress them. On arrival last spring, each Water Protector walked down a long police line, stopping to smile into the eyes of each officer and shake his hand. Even as the officers have acted on orders to attack them, the Protectors remind them that they are protecting the water for ALL their children -- the children of those attacking, as well as those defending. When, in the dead of winter, the Morton County Sheriff's Department put out a call for supply donations on its web site, the Water Protectors sent them a hefty in-kind donation from their own cache. Imagine this: Supplying those bent on suppressing you.
- **Nonviolence.** When we truly know we are One, violence is not an option -- any violence becomes violence against oneself, one's family and tribe, because there is no 'other'. By abstaining from violence and remaining prayerful, the violence of the State is thrown into relief.
- **Healing is always possible.** When veterans came to Oceti Sakowin to pledge fealty to indigenous leadership and place their bodies between the Water Protectors and the police, the Lakota conducted ceremony in which any veteran who wished could atone for the genocidal history of the U.S. military. Members of the 7th Cavalry, which in 1890 massacred 200 Lakota, participated. Forgiveness was bestowed. Many tears were shed, and many hugs were shared. A bloody part of history started healing that day.

The power forged by adherence to the above principles is superhuman in nature, and cannot be conquered by guns. What would it mean to apply these principles in other struggles? What if, instead of an anti-Trump movement, the U.S. managed to birth a generation that defended sacred Democracy in a sacred way?

In a recent shamanic circle, we worked to bathe the entire world in love. In my personal journey, my spirits showed that we need to infuse Donald Trump with great love; that he doesn't know what it is, and it's the only thing that will actually disarm him.

the midst of conflicts, in a way that brings about harmony and connection. Because one of the root problems - if not the root problem - on the planet, is the illusion of separation. Not only separation from Spirit, but from one another, from the Earth, and sometimes from ourselves. I feel that the danger in getting very vociferous, is that we end up feeding that separation.

So, we need continually to ask our spirits how to enter into these crucial conflicts in ways that reduce separation, and in ways that bring about the sense of interconnection. That is the very foundation for shifting our relationship with one another - and with the Earth.

This shift in consciousness is crucial, or we can get all caught up in how 'evil' Monsanto is. Actually, we could say that Monsanto is the ultimate expression of the human illusion of separation - thinking that we can somehow manipulate genes, that we can take land and seeds from other people and destroy their lives, and not be affected ourselves. We've created that - humanity has created that illusion of separation. Monsanto actually is a manifestation of a fundamental misunderstanding on the part of humanity.

**You're onto something. Separation is our guiding illusion, and propagates fear and greed, which are like the forces of Mordor driving the human world today. So when we are going into an activist setting, going in with an angry 'Us versus Them' attitude is a dangerous thing. I think the best way to get to an equanimous state is to try to see things as the spirits do. And often the spirits have an agenda. But if they have an agenda, I'm willing to work for it - I trust their agenda more than I trust mine! Tell me more about the interfaith activism.**

That really started when I attended the West Coast founding Conference of the 'Network of Spiritual Progressives (NSP),' which was initiated by Rabbi Michael Lerner in 2005. The Conference was overwhelmingly Christian and Jewish and White. So I helped start a

