

Wewena Ji Bmmaadziwin • Living Well

THE SEVEN GRANDFATHER TEACHINGS



For millennia, Indigenous communities have shared their cultures and beliefs through dibaajimowin (storytelling)—de-bah-ji-mo-win.

The Seven Grandfather Teachings are a set of Anishinaabe guiding principles that give people the tools for how to live a good life. They have been passed down from generation to generation for thousands of years through stories and ceremonies.

The Seven Grandfathers—spiritual beings guiding humanity—saw that people struggled to live in harmony with Creation. They sent the Oshkabaywis, a trusted helper, to find someone worthy of receiving their wisdom. After seven attempts, the Oshkabaywis returned with a baby.

The Grandfathers sent the child on a seven-year journey to learn from Creation. When the child returned, each Grandfather bestowed a sacred teaching, offering guidance on balance, respect and harmony with the natural world and one another.

The Town is honoured to uphold the tradition of dibaajimowin in partnership with our Indigenous community, promoting these teachings for future generations.

We recognize the profound loss and lasting generational impacts experienced by Indigenous peoples and take responsibility for fostering healing. Through education and meaningful dialogue, we seek to build bridges of understanding.

Deeply committed to truth and reconciliation, we strive to honour these teachings as a vital part of our community's shared future.

You'll see within each animal image the symbol of the medicine wheel which is a sacred symbol in Indigenous cultures. Its four quadrants correspond to the four directions, seasons, stages of life, aspects of well-being and sacred medicines, guiding individuals toward harmony with themselves, others and the natural world.

Orangeville is home to a medicine wheel garden at Bravery Park, a dedicated space that honours Indigenous teachings and provides a place for reflection, learning and connection with nature.



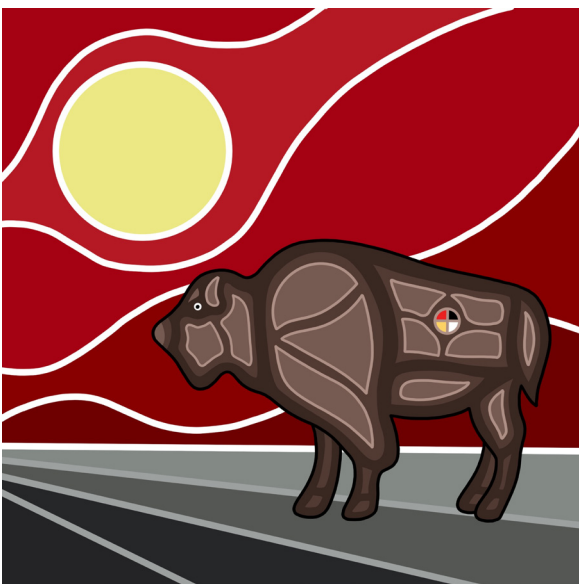
Nbwaakaawin (wisdom)
nuh-bwah-kah-win

Wisdom means using knowledge for the good of all. It involves good judgment, knowing right from wrong and considering how our actions affect others and future generations. The beaver represents wisdom, using its sharp teeth wisely to build strong, helpful homes. Like the beaver, we each have special gifts, and we show wisdom when we use them to help others and create a better world.



Zaagidwin (love)
zah-gid-win

Love is unconditional and freely given. It begins with loving ourselves so we can truly love others. When shared freely, it returns to us—love is mutual and reciprocal. It connects all of Creation, human and non-human, and brings harmony through our actions and words. The eagle symbolizes love, carrying it and the wisdom of all teachings to the four directions of the Earth.



Mnaadendimowin (respect)
mnah-den-dih-mo-win

Respect is mutual and reciprocal—to receive respect, you must give respect. All of Creation deserves to be treated with respect. Represented by the bison, once a vital resource for the Anishinaabe people, which gave every part of itself to provide food, clothing, and shelter. All beings must be valued for the gifts they offer.



Aakwa'ode'ewin (bravery)
ahk-wa-odeh-win

Bravery is to face fear with integrity and do what is right even when the consequences are unpleasant. Bravery is represented by the bear. The mother bear has the bravery and strength to face her fears and challenges while protecting her young.



Gwekwaadziwin (honesty)
gweh-kwah-dzih-win

Be honest in your words and actions. Be honest first with yourself, and you will more easily be able to be honest with others. Honesty is represented by the raven. The raven accepts itself for who it is and does not try to be like others.



Dabaadendiziwin (humility)
Da-bah-den-dihz-win

Humility is to know yourself as a sacred part of Creation. You are equal to others, but you are not better. The wolf represents humility because of its giving nature and devotion to protecting and working for the good of the wolf family and the welfare of the pack. Wolves are generous and caring, demonstrating the qualities of cooperation and support that our community should embody.



Debwewin (truth)
deb-weh-win

Truth is speaking only about what you have lived or experienced. Do not deceive yourself or others. The turtle represents truth because it is one of the oldest animals on our planet and is said to have witnessed Creation. The turtle is grounded, methodical, careful and attentive to details—important qualities for those who speak the truth.

This plaque was created through a collaborative effort between the Town of Orangeville, Dufferin County and our local Indigenous community group The Brave Canoe.

Artwork: Marissa Indoe, an Anishinaabe artist from Chapleau Ojibwe First Nation.