

ĊV·Δ·ᐅ tapwewin

“If I make a promise to someone, I have to do it. That is ĊV·Δ·ᐅ tapwewin.”

Elder Mary Delorme, August 24, 2018 ¹

In Cree legal tradition, the principle and related laws of ĊV·Δ·ᐅ *tapwewin* “require that the obligation to speak the truth be meticulously followed when a subject matter has been considered and dealt with through the spiritual traditions and ceremonies of the nation” (Cardinal, 2000).²

ĊV·Δ·ᐅ *tapwewin* may also be simply defined as “the act of telling the truth” (LeClaire & Cardinal, 2011)³ or “speaking with precision and accuracy” (Cardinal, 2000).⁴ According to one knowledge keeper, this principle implies self-knowledge originating from being aware of “where you come from” and it may be practiced authentically by living according to the principle of ᐅᐱᐃᐅ ᐱᐱᐱᐅᐅᐅ *nehiyaw pimatisiwin* (Cree way of life).⁵ Other interviewees emphasize that ĊV·Δ·ᐅ *tapwewin* is demonstrated by showing integrity of character as well as by building accountability and trust.⁶ Being true to your word is, by extension, connected to this foundational principle.⁷

Many interviewees describe their responsibilities regarding ĊV·Δ·ᐅ *tapwewin* as being closely connected to being honest and transparent in their general behaviour and in the quality of their communications.⁸

Related obligations are adapted to the circumstances and to the specific context. For example, in the event of an unexpected occurrence such as an accident, individuals witnessing the event may be expected to gather and relay the information to others in an accurate and reliable way.⁹ Other interviewees describe how they hold themselves to a high standard of integrity no matter how harshly it reflects on them personally or how difficult it is to act upon and/or maintain.¹⁰ In the practice of storytelling, one Elder explains how the obligation of maintaining a high level of honesty in the narration may imply the admission of having forgotten a part of the story.¹¹

Another Elder highlights the importance of listening attentively and respectfully to others when they speak, thus allowing the listener to recognize whether the words being spoken are truthful teachings in accordance with the principle of ĊV·Δ·ᐅ *tapwewin*. If the words being spoken reflect the truth, then it may be necessary to take

action to follow the teachings.¹²

Some interviewees highlight how the Nation's leaders are expected to demonstrate honesty and transparency in how they conduct the Nation's business as well as in their leadership and management styles. They must ensure that the Nation's objectives are followed through in corresponding actions and behaviour.¹³

Endnotes

1 From interview with Elder Mary Delorme, August 24, 2018.

2 Cardinal, H. (2000), *Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan: Our Dream Is That Our Peoples Will One Day Be Clearly Recognized as Nations*. University of Calgary Press.

3 LeClaire, N. & Cardinal, G. (2011). *Alberta Elders' Cree dictionary: Alberta ohci kehtehayak nehiyaw otwestamâkewasinahikan*, University of Alberta Press.

4 Cardinal, H. (2000), *Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan: Our Dream Is That Our Peoples Will One Day Be Clearly Recognized as Nations*. University of Calgary Press.

5 From interview with Tom McDonald, July 23, 2018

6 From interviews with Elder Mary Delorme, August 24, 2018; Elder Philomene Moberly, April 26, 2018 and Elder Russell Wanyandie & Carol Wanyandie, April 25, 2018.

7 From interview with Elder Mary Delorme, August 24, 2018

8 From interviews with Elder Philomene Moberly, 2018 and Elder Russell Wanyandie & Carol Wanyandie, April 25, 2018.

9 From interview with Elder Russell Wanyandie, April 25, 2018

10 From interviews with Elder Mary Delorme, August 24, 2018 and Elder Philomene Moberly, April 26, 2018.

11 From interview with Elder Philomene Moberly, April 26, 2018.

12 From interview with Elder Jane McDonald, July 11, 2018

13 From interviews with Elder Philomene Moberly, 2018 and Elder Russell Wanyandie, April 25, 2018.

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