

## **Rituals to remind us we are part of the web of life are essential**

John Seed

A couple of years later I was privileged to witness a ceremony held in a Hopi village high on a mesa in the Southwest of the United States. It was so like the Council of All Beings. The masks representing plants and animals were more splendid, of course, the drums more confident. And people assured me that they had continually celebrated thus for thousands of years.

Since then I have searched in vain for a single example of an indigenous culture still connected to its traditions which didn't have such ceremonies: Regular rituals to testify that the human family is one strand in the larger web of life, to acknowledge all our relations.

This suggests that the tendency to disconnect from the natural world might not be just a modern phenomenon as I had assumed. The fact that indigenous people invariably practice such ceremonies speaks of the human tendency to forget who we really are and wander off into socially constructed identities. Why else would we need to regularly and powerfully remind ourselves that we are part of the web of life?

Most peoples have always had cultural processes to counteract this tendency. So many solutions have been found that allow the human community to continue to cleave to the whole Earth community. This had been lost from our culture, suppressed by inquisitions and ignorance and now reemerges in a thousand ways.

Even more than "community therapy," I think that "cultural reclamation" encapsulates this work that reconnects. Deep ecology experiential processes that have been developed and extensively tested over the last twenty years are described in detail elsewhere. [7]

We work with three major processes:

-Despair and Empowerment, or work with feelings.

-Deep Time, Evolutionary Remembering, The Cosmic Walk.

-The Council of All Beings.