



Original Instructions: Indigenous Teachings for a Sustainable Future

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Original Instructions: Indigenous Teachings for a Sustainable Future From Bear & Company

Indigenous leaders and other visionaries suggest solutions to today's global crisis

- Original Instructions are ancient ways of living from the heart of humanity within the heart of nature
- Explores the convergence of indigenous and contemporary science and the re-indigenization of the world's peoples
- Includes authoritative indigenous voices, including John Mohawk and Winona LaDuke

For millennia the world's indigenous peoples have acted as guardians of the web of life for the next seven generations. They've successfully managed complex reciprocal relationships between biological and cultural diversity. Awareness of indigenous knowledge is reemerging at the eleventh hour to help avert global ecological and social collapse. Indigenous cultural wisdom shows us how to live in peace--with the earth and one another.

Original Instructions evokes the rich indigenous storytelling tradition in this collection of presentations gathered from the annual Bioneers conference. It depicts how the world's native leaders and scholars are safeguarding the original instructions, reminding us about gratitude, kinship, and a reverence for community and creation. Included are more than 20 contemporary indigenous leaders--such as Chief Oren Lyons, John Mohawk, Winona LaDuke, and John Trudell. These beautiful, wise voices remind us where hope lies.

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Editorial Review

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This historically and environmentally edifying volume consists of essays and talks presented between 1990 and 2006 at the annual Bioneers Conference, an annual gathering of native leaders and “eco-visionaries” from over 20 nations who collectively seek ways to avert a global environmental catastrophe. Stemming from the indigenous ecospiritual concept that when we corrupt and poison the environment, we “make war against Mother Earth,” speakers address such diverse issues as the loss of Acoma shrines to coal and gas mines, the impact of mega dams, mines, and deforestation on the land belonging to the Canadian Cree, and the pollution of water sources at the Isleta Pueblo, downstream from Albuquerque. The reader becomes familiar with projects like RAFT (Renewing America’s Food Traditions), which works to protect heirloom seeds and conserve native ecosystems, and the Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN), which focuses on environmental and economic justice issues affecting indigenous peoples, who are “disproportionately impacted and burdened” by toxic contamination. These indigenous activists have much to share, and they serve as crucial voices in the worldwide effort to restore our ailing planet. --Deborah Donovan

Review

“Buckminster Fuller once complained that the earth had come without a good operating manual. In fact, though, there are an awful lot of instructions that have stood the test of time. Since we’re clearly making a mess of things at the moment, it might be wise to pay some attention.” (*Bill McKibben, author of The End of Nature and the forthcoming The Bill McKibben Reader*)

“*Original Instructions* shows how human beings can actually play a richly positive role in the web of life as a keystone species that creates conditions conducive to life for all beings. Here is the sacred geography of a world where all life is revered and animated by spirit.” (*Kenny Ausubel, author of When Healing Becomes a Crime and coexecutive director of Bioneers*)

“Melissa Nelson, in collaboration with Bioneers, has produced an invaluable resource of Indigenous wisdom. This book is a must-read for every socially conscious political leader, member of the clergy, educator, activist, community worker, and entrepreneur interested in participating in the creation of a new and more ecologically sound worldview, one that will be capable of sustaining society in an era of significant global climate change.” (*Gregory Cajete, founding director of the Institute of American Indian Arts, Santa Fe, New Mexico, an*)

“These indigenous activists have much to share, and they serve as crucial voices in the worldwide effort to restore our ailing planet.” (*Deborah Donovan, Booklist, Feb 2008*)

“ . . . a remarkable reminder that there are people out there doing critical work to safeguard our very existence. This book contains detailed information about the current programs and teachings from some of the best minds on the subject.” (*Kathryn Price, book editor, WomensRadio*)

“ . . . will appeal both to New Age and Native American collections . . . an eye-opening survey of sacred geography and a spirit-driven world.” (*The Midwest Book Review, Apr 08*)

“ . . . this book presents ‘How To’ earth wisdom that should be at the forefront of global efforts to restore the planet.” (*Griselda Steiner, Scene4 Magazine, Mar 08*)

" . . . cogent advice on how people in the world's old growth indigenous societies conduct their relations with each other and the Earth--are couched here in starkly modern terms as questions of sustainability become global fare. . . . The subject matter of this book is eclectic, ranging from toxic chemicals to global warming, changing roles of women, revival of Native languages, "bio-justice", "bio-ethics", and "bio-democracy".
(*B.E. Johansen, CHOICE/Current reviews for Academic Libraries, Vol. 46, No. 5, Jan 2009*)

"The general themes running through the writings . . . are all very applicable to current problems, and thought provoking. The book has a wealth of information, and many resources for further research and study." (*D. Tigermoon, The Pagan Review, May 2009*)

"I highly recommend this book. It's the dawning of an era and we must do our part to ensure a positive future for our children." (*Vesta Elliott, Alaska Wellness, Nov/Dec 2009*)

From the Back Cover

ECOLOGY / INDIGENOUS WISDOM

"Buckminster Fuller once complained that the earth had come without a good operating manual. In fact, though, there are an awful lot of instructions that have stood the test of time. Since we're clearly making a mess of things at the moment, it might be wise to pay some attention."

--Bill McKibben, author of *The End of Nature* and the forthcoming *The Bill McKibben Reader*

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--Kenny Ausubel, author of *When Healing Becomes a Crime* and coexecutive director of Bioneers

For millennia the world's Indigenous Peoples have acted as guardians of the web of life for the following seven generations. They have successfully managed complex reciprocal relationships between diverse biological ecosystems and multitudinous human cultures. Awareness of Indigenous Knowledge is reemerging at the eleventh hour to help avert global ecological and social collapse. Indigenous cultural wisdom shows us how to live in peace--with the earth and one another.

Original Instructions evokes the rich Indigenous storytelling tradition in this collection of presentations gathered from the annual Bioneers conference, a yearly meeting of some of the world's most seminal environmentalists and social visionaries. The book depicts how the world's native leaders and scholars are safeguarding the Original Instructions, reminding us about gratitude, kinship, and a reverence for community and creation. Included are more than thirty contemporary Indigenous leaders--such as Chief Oren Lyons, John Mohawk, Winona LaDuke, and John Trudell. These beautiful, wise voices remind us where hope lies.

MELISSA K. NELSON, Ph.D., is an ecologist, writer, educator, and social activist whose work is dedicated to Indigenous revitalization and cross-cultural reconciliation. She is a professor of American Indian studies at San Francisco State University and president of The Cultural Conservancy, a nonprofit Indigenous rights organization. She also coproduced the award-winning documentary short film *The Salt Song Trail: Bringing Creation Back Together*. She is a member of the Turtle Mountain Chippewa Indians and lives in the San Francisco Bay Area.

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