

Pt 2 Women's Societies - Faith Spotted Eagle - OSEU

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In regard to women's society, they also are evolving. So some of the things that may have been true in my grandmother's age and my great-grandmother's age may have evolved to a different place. And that's OK, as long as we are respectful and trying our best. Because we live in a different world, but the thing that will keep us true is the outdoors. So whenever we do any kind of a women's society gathering, we try to do it outdoors so we can listen to the stars and watch them and hear nature speaking to us, because then that keeps us on track.

So a lot of the camps and things that we do or our ceremonies that we practice, like the sun dance, everything is done outside. And so the same thing is true of women's societies. I think that the last thing that I would like to say about the women's societies is that it was probably the most single deterrent to what America calls bullying now, because the girl-on-girl aggression that is happening in America, it was not allowed in camps.

In fact, we had a buffalo ceremony that Auntie Ella describes where if there was somebody in the camp that was gossiping about another girl, or say for an example, sometimes maybe a young man made a statement about a young girl that he had relations with her. And it was entirely unfounded, and the girl knew it. She could go back and tell her mother that he was saying things that were untrue. And so what the mother would do is she would send a camp crier out, El Ayapaha.

And he would go through the camp, and he'd say, everybody, you need to come out here in the camp circle, and we're going to put a buffalo robe out here. And what would happen is that the mother would talk to her daughter, and she would say, are you sure now? Are you certain that this is just, he's just not, this is a lie? And if she said, yes, I'm certain, then she would take her daughter out there, and she would put her on that buffalo robe, and she would say, here, behold, is my daughter. I love her. She is pure.

And if any of you have cause to step forth, you do that now. And if you don't, from this day forward, you have no right to say anything about my daughter. And the whole camp would be standing there. And everybody would agree, including the elders and everybody, that that individual or any individual would have no right to say anything about it. And of course, the girl would better hope that that is the truth, because it would be out in the whole camp circle. And so that was the way that they dealt with the gossip.

And on the girl-on-girl violence, which I know is a problem in America, the aunties and the sisters would intervene. And I've experienced that in the camps that we've had in the last 18 years in working with Brave Heart Society. That will come up, and the girls

will do it, because they've been influenced by Western society, that's just what you do to other girls. And then we will grab them and we'll say, Takoja, this is so non-Dakota. This is not what we do. And so we're able to address that in our society.

And so I think that is a really impactful thing, because really, bullying is a rule of a violent culture. And it's something that is promoted in violent countries. And so those societies can address it on a smaller scale.