

It's time to change some of how we do things



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Aaniin, Anishnaabek, I came across a fascinating quote recently, and it caused me to stop, think and wonder if within it lies the solution to many of the problems

I hear about on a daily basis: “Where there is no vision, the people perish,” Proverbs 29:18. A simple eight words.

As Anishnaabe people, we are taught that each of us comes into this world with a purpose and the essence of our existence lies in the fulfillment of that purpose. And, the key to fulfillment rests in the vision we have for our life. As children, our visioning may start with, “when I grow up, I want to be . . .” Then, through life’s experiences and focused reflection, we can find that vision, learn our purpose and live a fulfilled life. I believe the lack or loss of vision, is the source of many problems we face, not just as individuals but as a people, as a tribe.

These past few months have

seen much trouble in our communities. Life changing experiences, such as losses of homes, jobs and loved ones have some of our people crying out in anger and pain for change! As a tribal government, we have programs in place and hard-working people doing their best to help, but still the battles rage on.

Outside of our communities, some of our people suffer the same life changing experiences (losses of homes, jobs, loved ones), but because of funding limitations, they cannot receive the same help. Some have expressed the additional challenges of feeling separated from the tribe and wanting so much to feel a “belonging.”

And then, there are the “politics.” I refuse to point fingers

at individuals, but the political arena (which consists of politicians AND tribal citizens) can be such a generator of negativity, mistruths and drama, that it creates a whirlwind of activity that only serves itself and prevents people from doing the things that really matter, like serving our people (note: I am NOT accusing ANYONE of not serving the people! I am just making a point that there would be more TIME to do so without the politics!)

American Indian Olympic gold medalist Billy Mills said, “You have to look deeper, way below the anger, the hurt, the hate, the jealousy, the self-pity, way down deeper where the dreams lie, son. Find your dream. It’s the pursuit of the dream that heals you.” I believe that Billy is right. I

believe our tribe, our people, need to look deep, below the anger, hurt and jealousy, and find that dream again. OUR dream.

Perhaps it is the teacher in me that causes me to make time for reflection and introspection in order to find a better solution for growth. Perhaps it is because I am eagle clan that I want to look ahead and find a better way. Then again, it could just be that I am an Anishnaabe woman and have the strong belief that the Creator of us all has a better way — if we would just open our eyes, ears and hearts to the shared vision given to us all.

I spend many hours in meetings, doing what many boards before me have done. I think it’s time to change some of that. It is

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