



# Selected Papers of William L. White

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## Preface

### William L. White

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When individuals, families and communities suffer sustained wounds, revitalization movements rise from the spirit of the people to bring hope, healing and health. The historical trauma experienced by Native Peoples inflicted deep wounds that have bled across generations. That sustained bleeding has left individuals, families and communities physically and spiritually depleted, but not defeated. There is more to this history than a legacy of addiction, disease and violence. There is the deep and rich tradition of resistance, resilience and recovery. That tradition is alive today in the Native American Wellbriety Movement. *The Fulfillment of Prophecy* is the story of the birth and growth of this Movement. It is also the story of the man who has been at the center of this movement.

I first met Don Coyhis in 2000 at a planning meeting aimed at bringing together leaders of grassroots recovery advocacy organizations from all over the United States. This meeting laid the foundation for the historic 2001 Recovery Summit that served as a catalyst for the new recovery advocacy movement. In the subsequent years, I have had the opportunity to

collaborate with Don and witness the fruits of the Wellbriety Movement in both Native and non-Native communities.

This Movement is offering simple but profound lessons.

1. The center of change is the talking circle—a place of belonging, trust and safety.
2. Healing movements must engage the head and the heart.
3. Lies must be expunged and truths told if healing is to occur.
4. The individual, family and community are one; hurting one hurts all, healing one heals all. Body, mind and spirit are one; hurting one hurts all, healing one heals all.
5. A great healing has begun.
6. Personal, family and community healing is guided by spiritual laws—the Medicine Wheel, the Cycle of the Seasons, the Laws of Change, the Prophecies.
7. Intergenerational healing must occur within the context of the community that was traumatized; the healing of historical trauma cannot occur without justice and forgiveness.

8. Communities must draw wisdom from their oldest members, hope from their youngest and strength from those in between.
9. Community healing requires sober/spiritual leadership.
10. Healing and health rest on living in harmony with spiritual values, e.g., respect, honesty, integrity, willingness, cooperation, humility, forgiveness, perseverance, patience, service.
11. Traditional ways can and must be integrated into modern life.
12. People who have been part of the problem can become part of the solution.

These lessons are so deeply rooted in Native American culture that one would not expect them striking a vibrant cord in other cultural communities, but that is precisely what has occurred. The Wellbriety Movement is pointing the way to health and wholeness across great cultural divides and has exerted a profound influence on the larger recovery advocacy movement in the United States.

Movements are about struggle and sacrifice, but they are also about success and celebration. A new generation is coming of age and seeking involvement in the Wellbriety Movement. They are asking questions of their elders about how this Movement began, how it evolved and their potential roles in its future. So let's join Ella and Joe in the coming pages as they learn from Uncle Don about the struggles and successes of the Wellbriety Movement.