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# All My Relations

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**From our deck the world reveals itself slowly detail by detail these summer mornings when morning becomes the ultimate painter. There's a sublime elegance to the way things come together. Light chases shadow into recess and what emerges stands stock still in the slow spill of sunlight as though surprised at its properties and definition.**

To be here as morning breaks is to feel unity. It's to feel connected to everything around you and to absorb it, bring it into the very fibre your being, like learning to breathe all over again. It's to come to understand that you are alive because everything else is. It is to comprehend what your people mean when they say "All my relations."

It means everything. It's not uttered in a casual way nor is it meant to be. In its solemnity it is meant as a benediction, a blessing and a call to this unity you feel all around you in the depth of morning. This phrase, this articulation of spirit, is a clarion call to consciousness.

It means that you recognize everything as alive and elemental to your being. There is nothing that matters less than anything else. By virtue of its being, all things are vital, necessary and a part of the grand whole, because unity cannot exist where exclusion is allowed to happen. This is the great teaching of this statement.

"All my relations," means all. When a speaker makes this statement it's meant as recognition of the principles of harmony, unity and equality. It's a way of saying that you recognize your place in the universe and that you recognize the place of others and of other things in the realm of the real and the living. In that it is a powerful evocation of truth.

Because when you say those words you mean everything that you are kin to. Not just those people who look like you, talk like you, act like you, sing, dance, celebrate, worship or pray like you. Everyone. You also mean everything that relies on air, water, sunlight and the power of the Earth and the universe itself for sustenance and perpetuation. It's recognition of the fact that we are all one body moving through time and space together.

To say these words is to offer a doorway to that understanding to those who hear you. It's to proclaim in one sentence that this experience of living is a process of coming together and that it was always meant to be.

When you offer that doorway, you offer the most sublime truth. You offer the essential teaching.

Your people say these words as an act of ceremony and here in this majestic light of morning you feel that ritual glow within you like an ember from a fire. All things connected. All things related. All things grown equally out of the one single act of Creation that spawned us. This is what you feel and this is what you mean.

You come to realize too, that if we could all glean the power of this one short statement, we could change the world. We could evoke brotherhood and sisterhood. We could remind ourselves and each other that we need each other, that there is not a single life that is not important to the whole or a single thing that is not worth protecting and honouring.

Here in the splendid light of morning you come to this truth again and seek to breathe it into you, to become it even for a fraction of a second. Truth requires only an instant from which to grow.

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Richard Wagamese is the author of 13 titles from major Canadian publishers. Originally published in the *Kamloops Daily News*.



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