

The Inspired Words of Nicholas Black Elk

“I was standing on the highest mountain of them all, and round about beneath me was the whole hoop of the world. And while I stood there I saw more than I can tell and I understood more than I saw; for I was seeing in a sacred manner the shapes of all things in the Spirit, and the shape of all shapes as they must live together like one being.

And I saw that the sacred hoop of my people was one of many hoops that made one circle, wide as daylight and as starlight, and in the center grew one mighty flowering tree to shelter all children of one mother and one father. And I saw that it was holy.

The Universe is circles within circles, and everything is one circle, and all the circles are connected to each other. Each family is a circle, and those family circles connect together and make a community, and the community makes its circle where it lives on the Earth. It (the community) cares for that part (of the Earth) but cares for it as a circle - which is to say in a cooperative and egalitarian way, where everybody is cared for, and everybody is respected.”

Nicholas Black Elk’s famous vision of the **sacred hoop** comes from his life story recorded by John G. Neihardt in [Black Elk Speaks](#). [1, 2, 3]