

## VIDEO #2 – “Usage / Meaning of Ceremonial Items”:

- Boozhoo Diinaahwehmahgahniitook, Geh Neen Anikay-Keesic Dezhahniikaaz, Maang Dodem.
- My given name is EJ Kwandibens and I am an Indigenous Cultural Educator. I originate from the Robinson Superior 1850 Treaty Territory. My First Nation is Whitesand which translates to Waahbiidaahgaah however I reside in the beautiful City of Toronto.
- In this video I want to speak about the issue that relates to the meaning and usage of certain ceremonial items. Before we do that, its important that we understand that each nation of people regardless of where they reside may have varying differences of interpretations and meanings for certain usage of certain items that is of relevance and of significance to them.
- Today, I want to speak briefly about medallions, beaded medallions and medicine bags, medicine bundles or medicine pouches. Medallions are usually items that are depicting some form of family emblems or a clan system or a design that is of some significance to the individual that is usually worn around the neck. Medicine bags pouches or bundles are usually what are worn around the neck as well to carry or hold certain kinds of medicines or at times certain ceremonial items inside the pouch and is only to be handled by the individual wearing the medallion or pouch. Other ceremonial items that we often see are eagle feathers owl feathers, hawk feathers, feathers of some sort. Feathers have great significance to Indigenous culture regardless of the nation one comes from. The symbolism of the eagle and the hawk or the owl or any other winged being holds dear in our ceremonies and our philosophies, therefore we often see the usage of certain types of feathers in ceremonial spaces and what not.
- Other items that relating to hand drums, big drums, rattles, beadwork; that sort of thing all of which are important and dear to the individual and/or the people the person comes from. Again, all these items must not be handled by anyone but the person carrying these items. Its important that we approach the conversation with the individual by asking the question perhaps, “...what is the item that you are wearing or what are the items you are carrying, would you be open to share and speak about this item you are carrying so maybe I can be enlighten what this means”. Or something along that line. There is nothing wrong with having a conversation from person to person asking a question much like religious items worn from other cultures and belief systems like crucifixes, beaded bracelets, beaded necklaces that sort of thing; we never handle these items unless you have permission from the person wearing these items. Just out of courtesy and respect. It is a general understanding that we practice these regardless which nations a person is coming from and or regardless of what the item is, its important that we approach it in a most humbling, caring, and respectful manner as such.
- Ceremonial items are often seen in places were there are ceremonies and often these items are used by Elders, Knowledge Carriers, Medicine People and so forth, again its important that we understand the context of which these ceremonial items are being used, who is conducting the ceremony, the

significances of these items and who can handle these items during certain stages of the ceremony or the engagement the person is handling these items in.

- I hope that some of this information is of use to you and if anything can be taken away to understand much like any culture around the world, Indigenous belief systems of traditional ways of knowing and being also holds certain items that are dear to our people and must be handled and viewed with the utmost respect and care as any other item from around the world that relates to any other religious belief or order.
- I do thank you for listening to this video and if there are any questions you may have, please feel free to ask and let us have a conversation or dialogue to understand together, moving forward.