

This month's čičyε circle teaching



“My name is Brenda Pielle. I was born and raised in Victoria BC and my ancestry is British. I was fortunate to marry into the family of t^hapwot (Thupwuut), the late Susan Pielle. Through my marriage I gained a daughter Jodie, son Troy, and later a son in law Steve and grandchildren Makaela and Mattias. All are members of Tla’amin Nation. My late husband Wayne was a member of the Klahoose First Nation as are the boys we had together: Tyler and Russell. I am honored to be participating in the čičyε circle which supports Tla’amin Nation in the direction of developing child welfare practices that will belong to the community.

When I think of families and traditional teachings, I am reminded of a conversation I had with my late mother-in-law who spoke of the benefits of living intergenerationally. Before European contact when families lived together, there was a lot of built in support for parents, and many opportunities for children and youth to learn from their grandparents. I can relate my memory of Sue’s comments to when my children were six and nine and my father lived in our home. I asked my boys to put their toys away and get ready for a bath. They continued playing. Then their grandfather said, “excuse me, boys, I just heard your mother ask you to do something...you better get to it.” They quickly jumped up and got ready for the tub. The way they responded to that grandparent voice was a big help to me. I noticed this when I used the traditional language, too. I only knew a few phrases but just as my boys responded quickly to their grandfather’s voice, they also did to their ancestral language. I could say “let’s go sit down” and they might linger. If I said, “kwaga hošt k^wanačim (kwagahosht quanichim)”, they came to the table.

When I was taking courses on child development, I was impressed with how much ancient indigenous cultural teachings held knowledge that was just recently being discovered by psychologists in the modern world. For example, that the brain development of a baby is improved so much by the amount a baby is held, touched, and made to feel safe, secure, and loved. First Nations people have been wearing their babies for all time: having ways to have the baby wrapped right onto the mother’s body so that hands could be free for other jobs. Keeping our children and youth close to us by talking with them every day, teaching them who their relatives are, and showing them how to work with food and various materials, are cultural ways that keep that feeling of security and love going for all the growing up years.

I have so much respect for these teachings, and I encourage you to keep them going: welcoming support from grandparents, using traditional language with our kids, and holding, carrying, cuddling, connecting with, and teaching our young ones as often as possible. Lots of love to all.”



- Brenda Pielle, čičyε Circle member