Anishinabe beliefs and values are based on how the human, as a creation of the Great Spirit, should strive to live life. The values are based on how to be of worth to our community; to find our purpose in life.

If many of the individuals within a community all have the similar Anishinabe beliefs and values, then the health and well-being of the community will be influenced in a good way by the individual’s positive behavior and the whole community will be lifted.

This is what our leaders did in the past and many still do today. It was and still is more important for the community as a whole to obtain a better life than it was for an individual to garner wealth in material form.

Individual perception and misperception play a key role in their personal actions which in turn undeniably affect our community. An individual’s perception of their community is an integral part of how that person functions within their community. Individuals can either work to lift the community up (positive) or can bring the community down (negative).

As humans, we have been given the ability to make choices. It is important those choices are based on informed and correct perceptions.

“In community norms research, we gather data from a population not only about people’s behavior, but also about the extent to which their behavior is influenced by their perception of how other members of the group behave. Often, perceptions are incorrect. Due to a variety of factors, we tend to misperceive the positive norm; that is, the goodness that surrounds us, or the positive choices already being made by the group. These misperceptions are problematic because they erode the fabric of trust that is the essence of community. Once revealed, however, the positive norm can be used to educate people and influence their actions in a constructive manner.”

1 “Seed of Fire, Roots of Hope.” (Linkenbach, 2010 – The Montana Institute, LLC).
Using the Anishinabe Values as a guide to a healthy & positive community life

Listen to your Spirit

Watch, listen, assess, and find the possibilities – this is the Science

Based on what your Spirit, your intelligence, life experience and science tell you, take Action

Remember and live the Anishinaabe Values

"SPIRIT, SCIENCE, ACTION is the Framework of The Science of the Positive™ (Linkenbach, 2000 – The Montana Institute, LLC).

A Positive Community Norm

Wild Rice Season in Canada starts the third week in September. As an Ojibwe Native American man, I have participated in wild rice harvesting ever since I was a gooitzence (young man). My family and I would go to White Fish Lake in Ontario, Canada every year to take part in this Ojibwe way of life. As many as seven or eight tents, full of uncles, aunts, cousins, brothers, and other family members, would form a seasonal village [community] at the edge of the lake.

To this day, I can remember sitting beside a campfire, anticipating the ricing that would take place the next day. The scent of the night’s cold dampness lingering on the fallen leaves and campfire smoke, mingled with the scent of coffee and fried walleye.

With early morning air so still, cold, and heavy with moisture we would all head down to our canoes. To start off the day, we always gave thanks to our Creator by placing tobacco on the water before boarding our canoes.

One morning as I looked to the Eastern Sky, I saw an eagle in flight. It soared high into the blue morning sky in acknowledgment that this day my people would have a plentiful harvest and return to camp safely.

I smiled to the world around me, knowing that Life was going to continue as a gift from the Creator. As I prepare to paddle, I turn to my partner and say, “ready.” After paddling a short distance, our canoe swooshes against the wild rice plants. We glide into the first tall batch of wild rice and disappear into it.

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