



Graphic by Joe Sgro

THE STORY OF HUMANS AND FIRE

What is it about Fire that draws us in, that makes a moment feel special?

This story of fire and humans begins at the dawn of creation.

In the time before time, our ancestors lived in a vast, mysterious world—where we were intimately entwined with creation. We moved through this primal wilderness just like all the other animals—though we lacked their gifts of warm fur, fast legs, sharp fangs and powerful wings. We roamed the land, nourished and challenged by nature’s cycles of life and death, just like every other creature. **Then something amazing happened** that would change our way of life forever. **Fire arrived.**

Our relationship with fire changed us. Fire lit the darkness, warmed the cold and cooked our food. And there was something more...

As we began to gather in circle around the flames, we began to perceive things in a new way. Instead of living in the immediate flow of the world like the rest of creation, we were able to ‘step back’ and reflect. We could think about how to do



things differently or better. We could make plans and coordinate actions into the future.

This new awareness, *our new mind*, was endlessly creative. We made different types of shelter and clothing, hunted with new tools and grew crops. We were successful through means unavailable to the other animals.

However, this “gift of the mind” came with a price.

Self-reflection split us apart from our mysterious, living relationships with the rest of creation.

The powerful voice of the mind began to make choices based on its own agenda. We started feeling disconnected from each other. We started acting independently from the world’s other beings. We began to forget who we are as part of nature’s spirit.

The result was extraordinary suffering and destruction for all beings.

But in this story, we were graced with five basic antidotes—remedies to compensate for the drawbacks of the mind.

First, we were given the antidote of **Wisdom**, which is earned and learned by facing and persevering through difficult, even impossible, situations.

Next, we received the antidote of **Tradition**, so we could hold wisdom, preserve it and pass it along to future generations, so that what is learned is not lost.

We received a third antidote, **Ceremony**, to transform our isolation and help us touch the sacred by relating and communing with the mysterious forces of the world.

Next, we received **special Healing Emotions**, to deepen our capacities and heighten our experiences as we move through complex and challenging life passages—**Courage** to help us master our fears—**Humor and laughter** to lighten the burden of our feelings of separation—**Gratitude** to feel kinship and reciprocity for all we receive—**Deep grief** to let go of loss and appreciate all the natural cycles of life.



And finally, we were gifted the fifth antidote of **Keeping Fire**, a special way to tend the fire that fuels the fire-energy in our own hearts and help us stay open and balanced in the face of the mind's constant stories of doubt and fear.

For thousands of years, across many lands, people and cultures remained devoted to these five antidotes. Our minds provided increasingly useful, creative advantages— while staying healthy and balanced by wisdom, tradition, ceremony, our special emotions, and keeping fire.

But over time, the voice of the mind grew louder and louder and more convinced of its own importance.

People drifted away from connection with each other and the mystery of the natural world.

Wisdom was cast in doubt, and then replaced by “information.”

Cultural traditions and wisdom keepers were overrun, neglected and forgotten.

Ceremony was misjudged, unappreciated and discarded.

Emotions became misunderstood, considered a failing, and discounted

Even our relationship with Fire changed. Instead of being the center of community and spiritual life, Fire became a utility, feared and highly controlled.

We are living in these times of imbalance NOW.

Never-before-seen technical marvels have brought us great material comfort. But conveniences come at great cost. Anxieties, mistrust, isolation and disconnection are at an all-time high. Fears fracture our stability as we face an unknown future with what can feel like little common ground with others.

But once again, something amazing has happened.

The Spirit of Fire has returned to help people reconnect with their true natures.



In 1996, Grandfather Fire mysteriously appeared and spoke to an American named David Wiley at a meditation retreat center outside of Mexico City. This apparition led David on a journey to find two indigenous elders, who recognized the apparition and took David as their student. After years of pilgrimage, medicine and ceremonial training, David was initiated into the Huichol and [Nahua](#) spiritual traditions to help people through healing, pilgrimage, teaching and ceremony.

Also during this time, **Grandfather Fire began speaking to public audiences around the world about the Five Antidotes.** About how to reclaim lives of wisdom and wonder. About how to balance our mind's independence and creativity with our heart's ego-less knowing. About how to live in relationship with the world the way humans naturally were made to be.

Grandfather's presence among us has sparked a movement, including the founding of the [Blue Deer Center](#) in New York's Catskill Mountains, and [Sacred Fire](#), a global network of initiated firekeepers, teachers and healers who offer people opportunities to personally experience the benefits of Fire's sacred presence in the world. Sacred Fire is helping to make the past the present, for the benefit of all of our futures.

Learn about Sacred Fire's [Community Fires](#), [LifeWays Programs](#) and [Grandfather Fire Speaks](#) events and read excerpts from [Grandfather Fire's Wisdom](#) on the Sacred Fire website, sacredfire.org.

