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Beauty is in the Eye of the Beholder – The Beauty Way

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Beauty is a word that is often associated with the feminine. We are much more likely to talk about a beautiful woman than a beautiful man and it seems more important in our culture for a woman to be physically beautiful than it does for a man. Yet Webster's dictionary defines beauty as, "the quality present in a person or thing that gives deep satisfaction to the mind or the senses," which doesn't seem to relate to gender. In more woman honoring indigenous cultures, there is a different sense of beauty that, perhaps, is more closely aligned with the dictionary definition.



The Beauty Way is a way of being in the world, a way of using your energy, thoughts, voice and actions to honor in all things and to uncover with your self the quality of beauty or spirit that is already present. My first experience with the Beauty Way was from American Indian teachings at a

women's camp I was participating in out in Montana. It seemed that every woman there was a different shape, size, age, and background, yet as we danced on the Earth together, there was beauty both inside and all around each of us. A song that was given to one of the women by the ancestors of the land as we sat out on vision quest was a prayer, "May I walk the Beauty Way with every step I take and may I speak the Beauty Way with every word I make."

Beauty is a quality that exists in all things if we know how to look. How we see determines what we see, thus, beauty is, indeed in the eye of the beholder. When you are walking the Beauty Way you have learned how to see beauty in everything, especially in your self. Now women in our culture seem to be immensely concerned with their own beauty, or what they see as the lack of it. I observe older women fretting about wrinkles and younger women who are quite thin thinking they are too fat. How would your life be different if you had been taught by your mother and grandmother how to "see" beauty; if you had known, without a doubt, that you were inherently beautiful from the time that you were old enough to look in a mirror? Very young children know this and then, somehow, they begin to doubt as our culture imposes its distorted view of beauty through ads, adults, stories and TV. Then when they look in the mirror they have become blind to beauty and instead see illusion created by their own minds.

Learning to "see" again is not too difficult. It requires the ability to appreciate the uniqueness of things, people and yourself. Even things you think you don't like can be appreciated



if you look deeply. Start with little things – a color, texture, sound – and use all your senses to experience the everyday objects that serve you and surround you. Then move to appreciation of your body. When you shower, appreciate your hands, your hair, your skin, your legs and feet, your mouth and nose. Take a deep breath to appreciate your lungs and feel your heart beat to appreciate your heart. What is there about yourself that you cannot appreciate? You have the perfect body costume for the unique play that is your life and it isn't meant to look like any other costume. Once your eyes start to open and you get a glimpse of the beauty that is present in each moment, you will never go back to the old vision that judges, compares and limits your world. In the words of a song that came to my sister and friend Brooke Medicine Eagle, you will:

Walk in Beauty, *it's all around you*

Walk in Beauty, *let love surround you*

Walk in Beauty, *make it around you*

Walk in Beauty, *with love for all.*