

## Circle of Courage

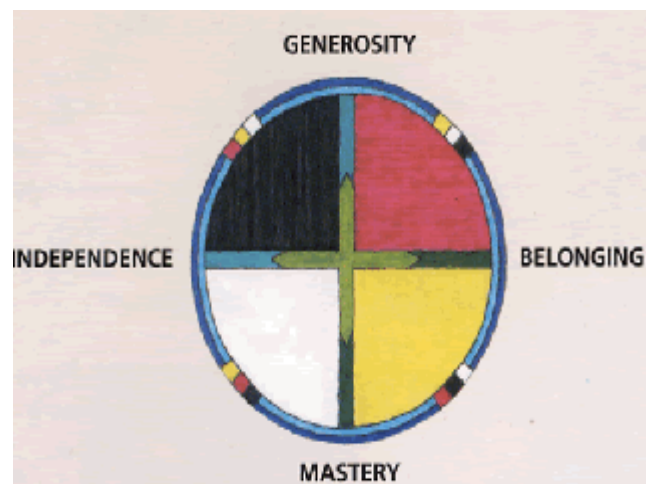
The Circle of Courage as described by Brendtro, Brokenleg and van Brockern, relates to the interactive components needed to develop a healthy individual. This methodology forms the basis of the transformation of the Child and Youth Care sector in South Africa.

This philosophy is centered on a deep and fundamental respect for the child, and an understanding that in order to develop a secure sense of Self in the world, the child must feel held within a "Circle of Courage", experiencing a sense of belonging, mastery, independence and generosity. This philosophy strongly challenges the authoritarian, punitive, and often abusive approach to child development in our society.

Particularly for a country which is in the process of healing, and especially for young people at risk, the key concepts as embodied in the "Circle of Courage" encompass values and principles which if practiced, can produce wholeness and developmental well-being for a country, a nation, a family and an individual. People who are whole are able to be responsible and are able to contribute back towards the continued healing and growth of a nation, community and/or family.

### Restoring life's wisdom

Inherent in every encounter with wilderness is the potential for an evocation of the traditional wisdom of the indigenous nations of the land. By way of honouring this truth, one of the challenges adopted in the Transformation of the Child and Youth Care System is to bring to the youth of the country the traditional wisdom and stories of community elders. A wilderness-based experience for young people provides an ideal context for this to be made possible.



Educo Africa's **Siyavuka Programme** for young people at risk initiated a process within which community elders guided young women and men through a wilderness experience in the bush of the Eastern Cape. Bush walks imparting knowledge of medicinal plants, elders' councils providing answers to the enquiries of youth, story-telling to impart lessons on how to conduct oneself in life, basket-weaving and mat-making with indigenous plant material, history-telling through singing and dancing, and the sharing of food cooked in the ways of old.

Source: See Research done by Jacqueline Roberts in her book *Wilderness, a Circle of Courage, and the Wisdom of Elders* (Published 2000, Department of Welfare)