

# The Cherokee Way

In addition to the many lessons of the Medicine Wheel, the Cherokee have a couple of specific “rules” or lessons based on these concepts. We make no claim to these “rules” as belonging exclusively to the Cherokee, as the beliefs and concepts of many indigenous nations of North America are very similar.

## The Rule of Acceptance

Everything happens for a reason. We do not always know what that reason is, and we may never know. All we can do is accept what has happened, learn from it, and continue on with our lives.

### Lessons from the Rule of Acceptance

“In the traditional way, there is no one moral to a story. The power of it lies in the listener’s subjective experience of the story. What ever lessons are most needed at the time emerge for the person as the spirit seeks to grow.”

“‘The past is the past. Let it be.’ The self-destruction that occurs through guilt or blame takes on out of harmony and balance, though these things, too, offer important lessons. However, once something is done, it is done. And all you can do is the best you can do at the point in time given what you have available to you. So once something has happened, all you can do is the best you can do from that point on, with also may mean having an opportunity to correct or compensate for, as is the traditional Cherokee Way, wrongs committed in order to restore the balance and peace.”

“The past is the past. And yet, regardless, it is also very much alive in our hearts. It is very much a part of who we are. For who are we but the culmination of all of our experiences and memories and perceptions?”

“The Rule of Acceptance Teaches up about the importance of listening and opening up our spirits by giving away the *need to control* or change other people, the *need to control* things, or the *need to control* situations. The things remove us from the harmony and balance of the Circle, and just make life difficult when it does not have to be.”

## The Rule of Opposites

Everything exists in a Circle, where there is no beginning and no end. Truth lies somewhere within this Circle, its exact location depending upon where in the Circle a person stands. Instead of opposites lying at the end of a straight line continuum, they lie on opposite sides of the Circle. This creates a blending of the opposites from where one ends the other begins.

“There are grave differences between an approach emphasizing ‘this and that’ and the approach emphasizing ‘this or that’ or, in the extreme, “this *versus* that.”

# Life Lessons from the Rule of Opposites

## Lesson 1

“Opposites are extension of themselves, like tow opposing hands of the same body; one opposite implies the other.”

## Lesson 2

“We choose our own (discordant) opposites wherein *we* are the true source of the difficulty we experience.”

## Lesson 3

“Everything serves a meaningful and important function in our lives. “

## Lesson 4

“Asking the right questions, instead of asking for the right answers, allow us to know the *function* rather than the *effect* of our choices. “

## Lesson 5

“Questioning our assumptions allows us to recognize underlying meanings or truths and the relative value of choices made. “

## Lesson 6

“Understanding underlying truths eliminates any need for discord in our lives. “

## Lesson 7

“Through choice of perspective and appropriate action, we are free to balance ourselves as we see fit. “

All quotes are from the book *Walking on the Wind* by Michael Garrett, 1998

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We recommend consulting *Walking on the Wind* for more detailed information on the Seven Life Lessons of the Rule of Opposites. **Please remember that these lessons are not inclusive by any means.** We also recommend the book *Cherokee Full Circle* by J.T. Garrett and Michael Garrett, 2002, ISBN 1-879181-95-9.