

The Thanksgiving Address

The Words That Come Before All Else

Today we have gathered and when we look upon the faces around us, we see that the cycles of life continue. We have been given the duty to live in balance and harmony with each other and all living beings. So now, we bring our minds together as one as we give our greetings and our thanks to each other as People.

Everyone: Now our minds are one.

We are all thankful to our Mother, the Earth, for she gives us all that we need for life. She supports our feet as we walk about upon her. It gives us joy that she continues to care for us as she has from the beginning of Time. To our Mother, we send thanksgiving, love, and respect.

Everyone: Now our minds are one.

We give thanks to all the waters of the world for quenching our thirst, providing us with strength, and nurturing life for all beings. Water is life. We know its power in many forms — waterfalls and rain, mists and streams, rivers and oceans, snow and ice. We are grateful that the waters are still here and meeting their responsibility to bring life to all of Creation. With one mind, we send our greetings and our thanks to the spirit of Water.

Everyone: Now our minds are one.

We turn our minds to all of the Fish life in the water. They were instructed to cleanse and purify the water. We are grateful that they continue to do their duties, and that we can still find pure water. So we send to the Fish our greetings and our thanks.

Everyone: Now our minds are one.

Now we turn toward the vast fields of Plants. As far as the eye can see, the Plants grow, working many wonders. They sustain many life forms. With our minds gathered together, we give our thanks and look forward to seeing Plant life continue for many generations to come.

Everyone: Now our minds are one.

With one mind, we turn to honor and thank all the Food Plants we harvest from the garden who feed us with such abundance. Since the beginning of time, the grains, vegetables, beans and fruit have helped the people survive. Many other living beings draw strength from them as well. We gather together in our minds all the Plant Foods and send them our greetings and our thanks.

Everyone: Now our minds are one.

Now we turn to all the Medicine Plants of the world. From the beginning they were instructed to take away sickness. They are always waiting and ready to heal us. We are happy that there are still among us those special few who remember how to use these plants for healing. With one mind we send thanksgiving, love, and respect to the Medicines, and to the keepers of the Medicines.

Everyone: Now our minds are one.

We gather our minds together to send our greetings and our thanks to all the Animal life in the world, who walk about with us. They have many things to teach us as people. We are grateful that they continue to share their lives with us and pray that it will always be so. Let us put our minds together as one and send our thanks to the Animals.

Everyone: Now our minds are one.

We put our minds together as one and thank all the Birds who move and fly about over our heads. The Creator gave them beautiful songs. Each day they remind us to enjoy and appreciate life. The Eagle was chosen to be their leader. To all the Birds-from the smallest to the largest-we send our joyful greetings and thanks.

Everyone: Now our minds are one.

We give thanks to the Stars who are spread across the sky like jewelry. We see them in the night, helping the Moon to light the darkness and bringing dew to the gardens and growing things. When we travel at night, they guide us home. With our minds gathered together as one, we send greetings and thanks to the Stars.

Everyone: Now our minds are one.

We gather our minds to greet and thank the enlightened Teachers who have come to help throughout the ages. When we forget how to live in harmony, they remind us of the way we were instructed to live as people. With one mind, we send greetings and thanks to these caring teachers.

Everyone: Now our minds are one.

We have now arrived at the place where we end our words. Of all the things we have named, it was not our intention to leave anything out. If something was forgotten, we leave it to each individual to send such greetings and thanks in their own way.

Everyone: Now our minds are one.

This translation of the Mohawk version of the Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address was developed, published in 1993, courtesy of: Six Nations Indian Museum and the Tracking Project All rights reserved.