



JUSTIN *Secakuku*

For Justin Secakuku, Hopi from Shugopavi, Arizona, Native love is respect.

While the traditional roles and duties of men and woman may differ from one tribe to another, Native women should be treated with utmost respect, he says, “because they are the life of your family and your people and your culture, and because they carry on the family name.” Women traditionally play a vital role in both the family and the community, he says. “They should be honored and loved for what they do and thanked on a daily basis. Without them your legacy can’t be carried on.”

He notes the Hopi people are a matrilineal society. “Everything pretty much starts with the woman. When you are born you take your mother’s clan, her village, and her ethnicity. If someone from a different tribe has a baby with a Hopi woman, the baby would be full-blooded Hopi.... The more girls there are in a family the longer the clan will live on.”

Secakuku says Hopi women, like his great-grandmother, who is in her mid-90s, pass on important cultural traditions and perspectives. “They are self-respecting and respectful of others,” he says.

Native love is also “taking care of each other,” adds Secakuku. Maintaining strong family ties and not falling out of relationships is critically important everywhere.

Speaking against the mistreatment of women, he encourages men to “really think about all your partner does for you, your community. . . . Women are life because they bring life into this world; they carry on the family.”

Individuals and communities must gain the courage to speak out if women are being mistreated, he says. “I know a lot of communities are scared to hurt their image . . . or meddle in other villages, but (it is important) to speak up.”

More effective law enforcement is also needed, he says. “It is very difficult to prosecute offenders. . . . (They) go to jail for only a day or a few hours.”

JUSTIN SECAKUKU is a member of the Hopi Tribe of Arizona and lives in the village of Shugopavi. On camera, Justin shares the Hopi view of white corn, known as the corn mother, and likens it to the value of women in Native communities to give and produce life. Justin was interviewed as a part of a joint project of the Indian Law Resource Center and the National Indigenous Women’s Resource Center to define Native love. To help restore safety to Native communities, the project is raising awareness about violence against Native women and empowering Native people to speak out about traditional cultural values that honor and respect Native women.



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