



Sunny Dooley Interview
Diné Hozhojii Hané Teller, poet, and organizer
of positive possibilities for true change to root.

STORYTELLING IS MEDICINE

*"Earth Health is Human Health,
Human Health is Earth Health"*

Interview was conducted by Chelsie Begood (granddaughter)

WHY IS STORYTELLING IMPORTANT TO NAVAJO CULTURE?

As the Diné language wasn't a written language until the 1940's, all teaching, apprenticeships and learning took place within the context of spoken words, stories, songs and repetitive oratory. These repetitive spoken words laid the foundations for Diné wisdom and knowledge held together in Diné Hané/To Tell.

WHEN YOU HEAR OR THINK ABOUT "STORYTELLING IS MEDICINE" WHAT DOES THAT MEAN TO YOU? When I hear the phrase, "Storytelling is medicine" I think of the fundamental understanding of sharing our human capacity to care and have empathy for one other. This care encourages our communities to be resilient. Resilience is necessary to remain well. Sharing our stories is the medicine to maintain the well being of our communities.

HOW DO YOU BELIEVE STORYTELLING INFLUENCES HEALTH? SPECIFICALLY HEALTH EQUITY?

Health Equity is established from the earliest understanding of all life. Injury of every proportion happens in the environment all the time. The concept of health/wellbeing must be understood as perpetual HEAL-ing. The values we as humans assign to all life around us determines the equity/value for our health.

HOW DO YOU THINK STORYTELLING HELPS WITH MENTAL HEALTH? (THE COMMUNITY AND/OR YOUR OWN MENTAL HEALTH)

Diné Hané/- - Diné/To Tell is completely encased in the whole person's well-being. The emotional, psychological, physical and spiritual wellbeing are emphasized in various renditions of Diné Hané. For me, To Tell a Story is to encourage a Healing to proceed, to begin the process for an individual to engage with encouragement, to heal. A 'HEAL-ing' person makes for a well and healthy, healing community.

WHAT DO YOU HOPE PEOPLE TAKE AWAY FROM YOUR STORIES?

My late great grandmother always said that stories are relevant to establishing our understanding and relationships with every living entity. When we stop listening, we lose our connection.

By listening to Diné Hané, I hope the listener will reestablish their relationship, their connection and their understanding. In Diné, we call this Ke'e (relatedness) and Hozho (well-being).