

Avatimik Kamattiarniq Reading

Avatimik kamattiarniq requires we pay careful attention to the environment as an important part of survival and sustainability. The care and importance we place on this also impacts on our personal health and well-being. For all of these reasons, it is important to think about the environment we grow up in and how we become good caretakers and good contributors to a healthy and positive environment. Our lives are interdependent -- on each other, on the animals, on the weather, on the water, on the land. Being keenly observant and noticing the weather changing, the animal movements, the changing seasons enables us to plan for changes well.

The concept of environmental stewardship stresses the key relationship Inuit have with their environment and with the world in which they live. We are expected to show respect for this mutually interdependent relationship and to demonstrate responsible behaviours that seek to improve and protect the relationship in ways that meet global challenges to environmental wellness. We share our environment with others-- other people, plants and animals. Our respect for our environment includes respect for all living things. How we interact always comes back to affect us. As Inuit say: "Our Actions Come Back to Us".

We all have to be aware and respectful of all things around us, our entire environment. There has always been a law we must follow, to never mistreat animals, because all living things are being protected by something greater than us, which we cannot see. It oversees all living things and will see us mistreating them. Even if others never find out, we will still be punished for it. This applies to all living things, small or big, land or water, to everything.

Paying careful attention to the environment is an important part of survival and sustainability. The care and importance we place on this also impacts on our personal health and well-being.

For all of these reasons, it is important to think about the environment we provide for our children to grow up in. We also need to think about how we train them to become good caretakers of that environment and good contributors to a healthy and positive environment. Our lives are interdependent- on each other, on the animals, on the weather, on the water, on the land. Encourage your children to always notice things around them- the weather changing, the animal movements, the changing seasons. Talk about these things with them.

The land used for long stay camps was allowed to rest before a group would move back. For example, the land had to be allowed time to get rid of the smell of humans

before people went back. This was usually for at least a year. The bones were collected and put into one area before leaving the camp. Long ago, the land used to be kept clean so the animals would have a secure/safe migration route. Even bones were not to be allowed to sink into water. The health of fish was always a consideration. When fish are dead in the water, they become awfully smelly. In order to ensure that the fish remained in the same area, the water was always to be kept clean.

There were minor rules that had to be followed for snow houses (iglu). For example, we were not to place anything near the door because it would make the snow pile up at the second door. We were not allowed to place anything near the door or in lee of the door because it might help to pile up snow. In wintertime, the iglu was to face the sun. In this way, the iglu would get the light from the sun and face the North West winds; the doors would not pile up with snow when they are facing this certain direction. In wintertime, that was how the iglu was set up so that it could be a good home for the whole winter.

As children we were taught many rules that we were expected to live by. Here are some:

- Follow expectations about how we treat the land, the animals and each other.
- Watch everything that goes on around you so that you will have a better understanding of it.
- Make people feel welcome when they come into your home or community.
- Never tease or harm animals or people or cause suffering for any reason.
- Never waste or destroy the land, plants or animal parts.
- Never destroy a friendship.
- Always leave a place clean so that no one would know you had been there. Carry out or bury your non bio-degradable garbage. These items include plastics, cans, diapers and other garbage.
- Clean up around your dwelling. Never throw things on the ground.
- Never let things sink in the water that didn't come from the water.
- Don't waste water in the house.
- Don't tear up the land with machinery. Stay on the trails as much as possible.
- Never spill gas into the water or on the land.

- Become aware of the interconnectedness of one's personal dimensions: emotional, physical and spiritual
- To become aware of the interconnectedness of ecological dimensions that regulate the systems of nature
- Promote global connections, through sharing in just and equitable ways
- Understand how the environment is impacted by human behaviour
- Understand the role of stewardship
- View local and global issues as being overlapping, interdependent and dynamic

These are all expectations for following avatimik kamattiarniq in our lives.