

Anishinaabe Bizindamoo Makak

Episode 19: March 16, 2023

Erik Redix (ER): Boozhoo Anishinaabedoog. Miskwaa Anang indizhinikaaz. Migizi indoodem. Odaawaa zaaga'iganing indonjibaa. Gichi-Onigamiing indaa. Ingikinoos'amaage Ojibwemowin Gichi-Onigamiing.

Boozhoo! My name is Erik Martin Redix. My Ojibwe name is Miskwaa Anang. I'm a member of the Eagle clan from Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe Reservation in Wisconsin. I currently live on the Grand Portage Reservation and work as the Ojibwe Language Coordinator for the Grand Portage Band. Welcome to *Anishinaabe Bizindamoo Makak*, a program featuring Ojibwe first speakers telling stories in English and Ojibwemowin, the Ojibwe language.

In this episode, I continue my conversation with Nigigoonsiminikaaning First Nation Elder and first speaker Nancy Jones. She shares some cultural teaching about the spiritual power of women, the significance of finding feathers, and explains why *giizhik*, or cedar, is so important to Ojibwe families after a baby is born.

Nancy Jones (NJ): Boozhoo, niin Ogimaagwanebiik, Bebaamaashiiyaan indigoo Nigigoonsiminikaaning omaa Nindoonjii, Wazhashk nindoodem, miigwech awe asemaa.

ER: When we talked about this a little bit, right, just the logistics of it but what are some of the other reasons we wait to tell our sacred stories or *aadizookaan* until the winter?

NJ: Mewinzha apane gii-pi-noondaanan aadizookaanan Nookomis miinawaa Nimishoomis ningii-wiindamaagoog aadizookaanan gii-dibikak. Mii dash iwe gaa-ikidod gego wiin wiikaa gii-giizhigak (aadizooke, aadizoo, dazhi) dazhindangen aadizookaanan. Omakakii giganooaanik. Mii iye gaye ningii-pizindam niin gegoo gaa-izhi-wiindamaagoowaan (gaawiin) gaawiin (gii-) gii-aanwetanzii. Bezhiig miinawaa mindimowenh ingii wiindamaagoban. Bezhiig iinzan awe oshki-inini (gaawiin) gaawiin gii-bizindanzii. Aa nashke niin inga-yaadizooke wii-niibing idash aadizooke giizhigak. Miizaan awe gaa-ayaad naagaj igo maagizhaa (gomaa) gomaadesogonigak babaa-ayaawag iinzan idi noopimiing goji- babaa-mawiizowag maagizhaa. Ingoding iinzan ogii-bi-zaaga'am gaye inini imaa ezhi bagiwayaanigamigod, apane go naa miziwe gaa-ozhaawashkozid odinaawaan. Mii go ge omaa ozhaawashkozid miziwe "ooohh nashke, mii iwe gigii-aadizooke, gigii-noonaanik aw omakakii mii go ge tezhinaagoziyan gipikwinaang gashkgomaa. Heee miziwe omaa (giniw) ". Gigii-noonaanig o omakakii. Miidog imaa gii-kikendamowagobanen (gaawiin) gaawiin iidog iwe ji-aadizooked (igii) gii-niibing. Niinawind wiin igo (nin) omaa nake'ii Anishinaabeg.

When I was growing up I hear a lot of uh legends, Nenaboosh legends and they were told at night, night time, in the evening. I think it was my father or my grandmother...father that said that you don't tell legends in the day time. Cause if you do a frog is gonna suck blood out of you. I don't know if that were just to make to for me to be scared of not doing it, but I did pay attention to their teachings I didn't say "how come?" haha. I just listened so I didn't do it. And I don't know who told me this, my grandma maybe, there was this young man, you know one of these guys "aah I don't believe that's that's bull." So he told a story, he told a legend during the day time "that's not gonna happen." Well, nothing happened and that night "see told you, nothing happened." And I don't know maybe a few days later, a few weeks later, they were out blueberry picking, they were on their little huts, their little tents

or wigwam. And this young man comes out of his *wigwiwam*, when he walking out and he had blue all over, green all over, and even your arms and "see we told you see that's the frog that did that to you, let me see your back, whoa you're black and blue all over!" And I don't know what happened, I think he was just a lesson to be told later on.

I never tell this legend during the day time, but I worked in the states quite a bit and I meet a lot of different people. And I met a lady there, she said they tell stories during the day time. So everybody has their own way, their own teachings. And the teachings I talk about is only for how I was raised. I see people do other things other than my and I respect their ways cause that's their wa, that's the way they were brought up, they were told.

ER (5:48): Keeping with our theme tonight about winter time activities, a few of the ladies here in Grand Portage were wondering, the beaders, were wondering about beading on your moon time?

NJ: Oh yeah, well...when I was on the trapline, my husband and I we had six kids I didn't have a choice of when I need to do. I had to do what I had to do because I'm alone, I don't have a neighbor to go run to and ask. I'll give you a for instance story here, we had a set of twins. One of the twins I don't know he got ahold of a knife and hit his brother somewhere here with the knife. And my husband was out trapping, usually gone all day. So I know that my husband had a medicine to stop the bleeding and it wasn't mine and I was on that time too, so I grabbed my tobacco I ran in the bush I went and got the medicine. I did not have a choice, I had to do something. So it all depends on where you're at or what needs to be done. I've raised my daughters that way, I had three daughters and my youngest daughter she's kind of a duppy lady. When I when I asked her to do somethings she says "Ahh maa". Then one day I ask says "hey it's your turn to do the dishes, go do them." "I can't mom I'm on my moon time." "Get up and go do the dishes," I said hahaha.

So it's misunderstood in some other ways, but it is a special time for a lady to be quiet if you have the time. And I went to a powwow but I didn't go in the arbour I can watch from the side but I didn't go in to dance. And same thing when you're carrying a child, you do not dance in the arbour but you can go watch. It's a special power time, oh I don't even know what to call it, it's...*Aaniin ekidong iw gii-mashkawiziid awiya (gii-gishkaw) gimashkawendang?* It's a woman's being very powerful on those days. The only thing I was told not to touch is sacred food like food for the ceremony. But I cooked for my kids all the time during that time. But it's a powerful time, it's a gift from the *koko* moon. It's a gift that we're recognized as powerful and the person that give that, can bring another human into the world. I think that was the way I was explained to and that's why I had to respect myself and don't go dancing while you're on your time. And I had to spend ten days away from everybody my first time around haha.

I don't know if they do that anymore, I tried to tell my granddaughters that way but I did talk to one of them. Like todays kids live they're different. So I talked my granddaughter you have to stay home for ten days at least in your house, I said. "Okay, Okay grandma."

And there was something going on at the band office and I said "oh that music sounds good I'm gonna go check it out." So I walk in there, first one I saw dancing there was the one I talked to hahaha. She was dancing around in there hahaha, yeah its different today. When in

those days, my days anyway, I really respect the teachings of my grandmother and grand aunties told me. Another one for this, when you listen to all these, if you're listen and do the things that you supposed to be doing you will have good child birthing years. And I had, I even had a set of twins up on the trapline just my husband and I. Ah let's see if I can remember.

Mewinzha gii-ayaad awiya (gii) gii-gigishkaagod odikwewin awiya gii-onjii aa awe gegoo ji dazhiikang gegoo (gego) gego baazhida'angen. Gego ge-izhaaken owe gego niimiken ingoji gii-niimi'iding miinawaa gego dazhiikangen owe wiikondiwin (gii, gii-izhi-) gii-inaawag igi ikwewag aapiji iidog aa mashkowiseni omiinigoowiziwin owe gookomisinaan giizis gaa-gii miininang. Gaa niish naa mii iye gigii-miinigoowizimin giinawind. Giinawind (gidaa-nitaa gi) gidaa-ondaadizi'aanaan abinoojiinh. Mii iye gaa-onji-mishkawiseg owe gimiinigoowininaan aabiding idash wiin igo owed i gii-ayaa'aang aya'ing owed i wani'igewakiing. Apane gii-ondendi owe indakiyenziyim niin eta omaa indab igi abinoojiinyag. Mii dash ogowe niizhodeyag bezhig omaa awe gii-ayaaaa pakitew'aa omaa mookomaan gii-ayaw howa gwanegonaam miskwi (gaa) gaa-bi-onjijiwan. "Haaa aaniin ge izhichigeyaan" indinendam. Mii ezhi-mikwendamaan mii ezhi-odaapinag a asemaa gii apitoo idi noopiming. Gii-gishkiga'aan mitigoons iw naa zhaashaagomaa aazha ezhi zhagashkinamawag omaa. "howa apane (ingii-) gii-giibiskwe". Mii dash iwe dakiyenziim omashkikiim (gaawiin ingii) gaawiin niin ingii-miinigoosii

The only reason I mention that is the medicine was from my husband. He didn't give me the permission to use it, because were not supposed to be copying somebody else's medicine. But at that time, I didn't have a choice. I did what I had to do, I touched tobacco during my time and went and got medicine during my time... I just didn't have a choice, I had to do something. I guess we're being forgiven when creator sees us. When we have no choice to do other than what we need to do.

Geyaabi na gegoo? Anything else?

ER (13:05): Oh just that question about um if they were supposed to uh bead on their moon time.

NJ: Oh yeah oh yeah we did talk about it in different ways.

ER Yeah, round about.

NJ: Again, I have to say it depends on where you're at and who you got to help you. I had to do all these things because just my husband and I raised our kids. And here, I'm the grandma on the reserve here, so in fact my granddaughter came and bead with me today and we kind of talked about that, what you said, I don't know, I guess I knew you were going to ask me. And that's what I told her that depends on where you're at but if you have a choice don't do it during your time. And then again, I remember my grandmother telling

me "don't do the beading in the night time or even sew at night time you're going to ruin your eyes," she'd say. Night time is quiet time, do you hear, do you hear anybody yelling out there? You can hear wolves, but everything's quiet during the night time. So don't do the beading at night times that's what I was talking to Carmen about today she come and asked

me about beading.

Mii iye miinawaa bezhig gaa-wiindamaagoowaan niin mewinzha. Dibi go eyaayin giishpin bwaanawitoowin awiya gegoo ji-wiiji'ig maanoo gidaa-zhiikaakowaag manidoominensag. Giishpin dash wiin ayaad ayaawaad igo gaa-wiiji'ikwaa gego, gego dazhinkangen gegoo gii dibikak. Maagizhaa giga-ayaa maagizhaa (gi)giga-biingwe giishpin dazhiikawidwaa manidoominensag booshke gonaa awe (gii)gii-gashkigwaasod (gii-) gii-giizhigak mii apii gegoo awiya nashke owe agwajiing gii-inaabiyan kina bizaanid iwidi gaawiin gakina nibaawag awiyag kina nibaawag (gaa) gaan noondaagoziwaad gii-giizhigak. Mii iye gaa onji-bizaad awiyag gii-dibikak. Mii iwe niin gaa-igoowaan.

I do a lot of beading in my own time and now that I'm retired I respect the things that I have, things I do, I was just telling Carmen today I have glasses. Sometimes I have a hard time putting the thread into the needle. So in the day time it's nice and sunny out there and I said I look outside, "Grandpa, Grandma help me, I can't thread this needle, can you help me?" And I go again "woooooo I made it." You know, for me, I'm not alone I live alone but I'm not alone. I talk to my ancestors, I know they hear me and somebody helped me to thread that needle. So when I'm being humble about things, good things happen. I never get mad at my work that's what I was telling Carmen. Don't ever get mad at your work, if you can't do it, put it away, leave it till until you're you feel better.

Mii iwe miinawaa bezhig aa gaa-wiindamawiwaad ogowe gichi-aya'aag niibiwa apane nindazhiikaag manidoominensag ingoding gaawiin niwaabanziin aya'iin zhaabonigan giishpin owe. Owe gaawiin nii-inaab hey nookomis wiiji'ishin, nimishoomis wiiji'ishin, daga wiiji'ishin whooowhoohay haha.

So I believe in things that somebody's here to help us. *Awiya giga-ganawaabamigonaan*, someone watching and listening. Another thing with my grandma, "don't ever swear, wait till your hair is white then you can swear" she'd say hahaha. Now I can swear hahaha. I can god damn swear now hahaha.

Mii iye gaa-ikidod nookomis aahhh gegoo wiikaa anooj igo ikidoken ge owe, owe da izhinaagwad gidoon. Your mouth will go cricked if you do. So I didn't swear as a young person.

ER (17:40): You mentioned a little bit about this but the students here in Grand Portage have these programs with the University of Minnesota Raptor Center and I'm wondering if you had any stories or teachings that you could pass along with their work with the raptors, you know things about Eagles, Golden Eagles?

NJ: Well like I said I was told to respect anything I come across to. I was named with my grandmother back in the day when I was a child I guess, I don't remember, she gave me my

spirit name. And she gave me the ribbon, the sky blue and the sky red. And a few years later, in fact maybe forty years later, I found an Eagle feather on a muskrat trapping. And then I took it to the shake tent and I asked, "what does this eagle feather mean to me?" He said "that's the one that your grandmother forgot to give you before she died. That goes with your name." So the Eagle Feather it represents my spirit name Ogimaagwanebiik,

Ogimaakwebiik. And I have found quite a few Eagle Feathers in my time, especially since I was trapping. And sometimes I know what to do with them. Sometimes I'll give it to somebody and maybe I named somebody's spirit name and this is your *dizhiyon*.

There's a reason why we find Eagle Feathers. There's always a story behind it. I know one of my sons used to always find an Eagle Feather back in the day when he was, he's still trapping. And I don't know how many years later he got he got the vision or was told to make a bustle. So he's a dancer now he's got one of these big bustles and the thing you wear on your cap. So there's always a reason why you're given something, you find something, there's a reason for that, don't throw it away. When you find an Eagle Feather, when I find an Eagle Feather, I'll put my tobacco down and I'll say "*miigwech niin Ogimaagwanebiik*." Sometimes I'm driving, somebody asks me this, I'm driving there's a bunch of Eagles eating there, but I can't stop, there's so much traffic, so I don't stop. So I tell this person "I know I didn't stop over there but when I got home, I put tobacco out and I thanked the Eagles for guiding me as I was coming home, maybe I was coming home from a trip. So it doesn't have to be right there, where you find the Eagle feather. You can do it as you get home or you don't have tobacco, don't worry, you can stop at the store and buy some or something.

Onjida go gegoo owe (gaa-onji-) gaa-onji-mikawindwaa ogowe ayaa'aag migiziimiigwanag maagizhaa ge awe giniw miigwan. Gegoo awiya wiindamawaa (bijiinag) bijiinag gegoo awiya giga-gikendaan aaniin ge-inaabaji'ad a miigwan. Mewinzha niin gii abinoojiyensiwiyaan (nookoo) nookoowiban ingii-miinig wiinzowin niizh Ogimaagwanebiik, Ogimaakwebiik. Mii dash imaa ingii-tako-miinig owe niizhwewaan a'aa senibaa owe gaa-izhinaagwak giizhik ozhaawashkwaa miinawaa miskwaa. Mii dash gaa izhi-mikawag a'aa naagaj igo ge-ani-gichi-ayaa'aawiyaan ningii-mikawaa aa miigwan. Aaniin dash ge-inaabaji'ag go indikid. Gaa-izhi-zhiwinag iwidi jiisakaaning (gaa-) gaa gikendamowaad gegoo gii-miikawaa awe miigwan aaniin ge-izhi'ag. "Oonh mii awe googoo gaawiin ingii-mikwendanzii ji-miinag awe gii-miinik owiinzowin. Mii awe gidizhiyon, mii awe gidizhiyon mii iye gaa-izhid.

So there's always something why you find an eagle feather. Ingoding awiya nimiinaa miigwanan maagizhaa ingoding aa gii-aazhawinamowag awiyag wiinzowin maagizhaa anishinaabe wiinzowin aaaa giga-miinin naa awe. Giga-miinin awe miigwan, mii awe. Gegoo go gaa-onji-mikawaad awiya, always pick up when you find an eagle feather.

ER (22:18): Talking about cedar, why do we hang cedar at the entrance of our houses?

NJ: Aa miinawaa awe bezhig a'aa giishkaandag miinzan owe aapiji gizhewaadizi gii ikidowag. Mii dog owe waabaminang owe gii-ayaaying ingoding gii-gagwaadagitood awiya. Mii dash owe gaa-onji-agoojing imaa aya'iing biindig omaa a'aa giishkaandag. Nashke idi ingoding goji-waabamad agwajiiing giishkaandag agoojinoo giga-aya'aag gegoo go imaa

miinensan izhinaagwadoon. Mii dash iidog awe aya'aa omaamaa imaa miiwan omaamaawiwaan ogowe giishkaandagoonsag. Mii dash owe gii-ayaad abinoojiinh gii nitaawigid. Mii imaa ge-izhi-agoodeg eya'ii owe mashkimodens (gaa-gii-) gaa-gii ginitaawigid a abinoojiinh. Mii imaa izhi-agoodood. Bangii omaa asemaa giga-bagidinaa aapiji iinzan gizhewaadizi awe aya'aa giishkaandag gizhawenimigonaan. Mii iwe gaa-onji agoojing omaa biindig ingoding ge awe gii-ayaad awiya. Gii-madoodood mii imaa, mii imaa

biindig omaa odisaawan niiyo-giishkaandagoon niibiwa gegoo inaabidizi a giishkaandag. Apane geniin inind gii-aabaji'aanaan awe (ga) ingoji gii-nibaayaang wigiwaaming agwajjing mii iwe gaa-aabaji'ing mii aapiji minomaagozi giishkaandag.

I think for me, there's a lot of use of a cedar or cedar tree or cedar boughs. One of the things I remember is I was always told to have a cedar bough hanging in my house the four directions and I have done it. And there's good medicine and when you look around there's trees out there. Seems like they have little berries in them, there's berries in them and then somebody, my mother, somebody, told me that's the mother right there, that's the mother cedar, the one with the berries on it. And whenever a child is born, a grandchild, I have lots of grandchildren. So I was told when you get a chance to bring the placenta home and the baby. And that's where you hang it up on that mother cedar along with your tobacco and then you talk to the tree about what kind of life the baby should avoid or should lead. So you talk to the tree, to teach the baby the life ahead. The mother, the cedar tree is very gentle, very warming, loves us, they wanna help us. I know when we were camping, we used to have cedar boughs on our bed. And it really smells good when you lay on it. And I notice people in their sweat lodge, they drink cedar water and they have cedar in inside their sweat.

So there's a lot of use of the cedar, there's a lot use of all the trees that are out there. They're medicine trees. They're medicine, I was told that never cut a tree down unless you have a purpose. Unless you're going to do something with it. And always apologize to the tree, not apologize, always ask for that medicine what you're cutting the tree for. Or even if you're gonna get firewood. Make sure you put your tobacco down. Everything, I do anyway, I'm always have my tobacco lead me. Cause I believe in my tobacco and when a child is being told to put their tobacco down they should be explained to them why. Cause I hear people say "go put your tobacco down" and that's it, they don't tell them why. It should be explained in there what do we say, why we put tobacco down. What kind of help are we asking for. That's the way I think anyway. Do you believe these things should be talked in the classroom or that we just talked about?

ER (27:25): Yeah, as much as I think we can you know.

NJ: I been asked, I been talking to teachers and principals and all that and I agree that should be including in our curriculum, about the Anishinaabe way of life. I taught for oh, quite a few years and I have my own curriculum at the beginning cause the government didn't know I was teaching haha. So I made my own and I talk about a lot about this, what we're talking about now. For me, it's important to tell who you are as your Anishinaabe name is your spirit name and your clan. And that's my life, that's my self identity is my

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spirit name and my clan. I have Nancy Jones but that's from the book that one. My spirit name comes from the spirits, so that's my real name.

ER: Miigwech for tuning into Anishinaabe Bizindamoo Makak. Support for the series comes from the Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe and the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund. Our producer is Staci Drouillard. The theme song is performed by the Stonebridge Singers. Until next time, this is Erik Redix. Giga-waabamin!

Transcription by Jason Jones