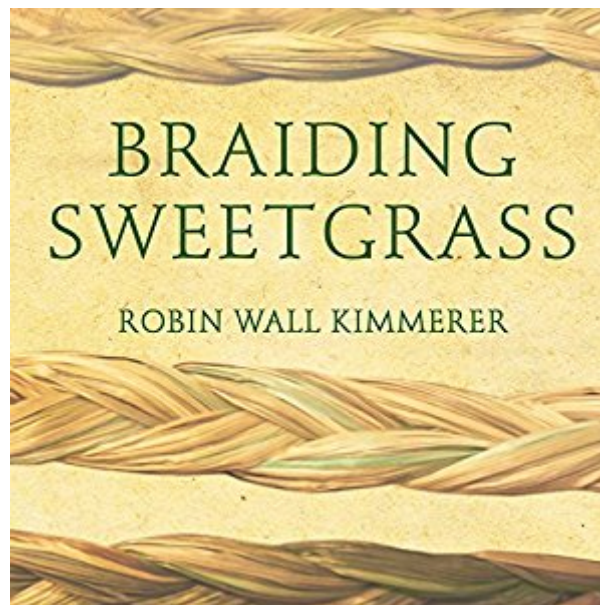


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# Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge And The Teachings Of Plants



## Synopsis

As a botanist and professor of plant ecology, Robin Wall Kimmerer has spent a career learning how to ask questions of nature using the tools of science. As a Potawatomi woman, she learned from elders, family, and history that the Potawatomi, as well as a majority of other cultures indigenous to this land, consider plants and animals to be our oldest teachers. In *Braiding Sweetgrass*, Kimmerer brings these two lenses of knowing together to reveal what it means to see humans as "the younger brothers of creation". As she explores these themes, she circles toward a central argument: The awakening of a wider ecological consciousness requires the acknowledgement and celebration of our reciprocal relationship with the world. Once we begin to listen for the languages of other beings, we can begin to understand the innumerable life-giving gifts the world provides us and learn to offer our thanks, our care, and our own gifts in return.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book changed my life. I have been a gardener most of my life, and have felt a connection to nature even as a city dweller. But reading this book has deepened my experience of the natural world into a much more spiritual level unlike any other book I have read previously. The science is fascinating and understandable; the wisdom is awe-inspiring. It is a book that I open and read whenever I need to plant my feet on the ground again. I can't recommend this book more highly.

I am a person of great enthusiasms although I have learned that they

seldom are communicable. When our hearts are moved and our minds and emotions are dragged along for the ride life becomes illuminated. Recently an acquaintance gave me a book with a powerful endorsement. It was one of those rare books that she had read and will read again many times. What are the chances that her enthusiasm would fire my entire being? Not very and yet! Her gift was one of those events of perfection. Braiding Sweetgrass is the best book I've ever read. I was perfectly poised to inhale the heart, mind and soul that Robin Wall Kimmerer breathed into each chapter. Each stands alone as a eloquently crafted essay/story. She weaves the experiential wisdom of her ancestral elders, her scientific community and the love of a mother who raised her family, stories from a naturalist's life and exquisite philosophical ruminations. All these tales are captured in parentheses of a deep and reverent love of the earth. I've learned, in greater depth than ever before, to appreciate the wisdom of those who live closer to the earth than I. For the first time I was able to feel the creation story of Skywoman and the real ethical messages that it imparts. I learned more about the synergy found in nature from ancestral wisdom than from the scientific perspective but was gratified to see parts of the scientific world heading in a heartfelt direction. As I approached the end of the book I realized that a additional small tendril of umbilicus had been created between my heart and the earth. We live on a world that is in dire need of our love. That begins with the recognition that She is a living being upon whom we are dependent and with whom we can learn the nurturing qualities of our interdependence. That is the essence of the ancestral wisdom. How we go about that task will be discovered in scientific pursuit for some and practiced with elder guidance by others. It is one of the great challenges of our time and not yet recognized by most whose worlds are anchored in the market-place consciousness. This is the best book I've ever read. That is the level of appreciation I have for Robin Wall Kimmerer's creation. It will be a difficult benchmark for some future author to eclipse for I will once more have to be perfectly poised to have my heart opened to inhale their particular wisdom. I look forward to that day and the next 'best book I've ever read.'

I have not yet finished reading this book but I had to write a review. This is one of the most beautiful books I've ever read! I'm an avid reader and read many, many books. Please do yourself a favor and read this one. It just brings such joy to the soul.

Beautifully written. Full of important information. Inspiring. Dr. Kimmerer has so much to tell us about the botanical world and how we can follow Native American ways of relating to plants that support

our lives, in contrast with the way commercial and domestic agricultural practices are destroying civilization.

This is a wonderful book. Ms Wall Kimmerer paints a picture when she writes- that thrusts the reader into 3-D space of seeing, hearing, tasting, feeling & being -This is not usually a book whose subject matter would interest me, but the reviews intrigued me. The book sat on my "to read" shelf for a bit. Around earth day I started reading it and didn't want to put it down. Ms. Wall Kimmerer is a "mother, scientist, decorated professor, an enrolled member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation & a wonderful writer/story-teller" re: " indigenous wisdom, scientific knowledge and the teachings of plants"..topics also include "ecology of spirit", reciprocity, spirituality, climate change, and one of my favorites: "allegiance of gratitude.. the Thanksgiving Address", which reminded me of St Francis' "Canticle of the Creatures" and then some. Her writing transposed me to relocating with the indigenous people, crying at the way our Gov't has treated them; honoring trees & feeling how to properly make baskets, smelling the tree & plant roots and sweetgrass and seeing and listening to the beauty of this earth! She ends the preface with "..imagine a different relationship, in which people and land are good medicine for each other." She ends with: " The moral covenant of reciprocity calls us to honor our responsibilities for all we have been given, for all that we have taken.... Whatever our gift, we are called to give it and to dance for the renewal of the world. In return for the privilege of breath." Love spending time, "Braiding Sweetgrass"!

A positively brilliant work that effortlessly interweaves Indigenous worldviews with Western science. The language is casual but well informed and reading it is a breeze. A must have for anyone in the fields of natural science, history, ethnography, and even philosophy. My undergraduate Environmental Ethics and Aesthetics students have taken to it immediately.

This book has become a constant companion. I listened to a speech by Kimmerer and bought her book while standing in the crowd of water protectors. The book is superb.

I loved this book - warm, loving, timeless - it made me think of the Earth differently. I'm so glad she wrote it. Will read all her books now!

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