



Holding

Kurunna Mwarre “Make My Spirit Inside Me Good”

Holding Men by Brian McCoy

Using conversations, stories and art, the author, Brian McCoy shows how Kimberley desert communities have a cultural value and relationship described as “kanyirninpa” or holding.

If you hold that person , that person will return respect for you.

Holding refers to:

- All ages and genders
- Men at the time of law
- The mother holding her baby: caring, nurturing, looking after, feeding, protecting
- Growing up children
- Older people take responsibility and offering for those they hold
- Respect: relationship between the generations of holding
- Food is a key and essential element of holding
- Being held by country
- The capacity of the elders to look after dependents in a material sense is the moral basis of their authority
- A blending of nurturance and authority that exists between younger and older generation

Iwenhe Tyerrtye by Margaret Kemarre

*We are part of the Land
The Land is us, and we are the Land
That's how we hold our Land.
The Story is the Land and the Land is the Story
The Story holds the people
And the people live inside the Story.
The Story lives inside the people,
And the Land lives inside the people also.
It goes all the way to hold the Land.*

The Story goes out and then comes home. As more people come from that country, story goes further and gets stronger. Story starts in the centre with one person, then it goes wider and wider.

*Our kinship shows us the way, the Rule of the Law.
It has come from our Traditional Land,
And also from the Beginning
To know who we are.*

*Kinship comes out of the country itself,
It comes from the Ancestor Beings
Aboriginal people have grown up
Deep inside the this from Creation
And they live within it and always forever.
Kinship is our roots.*

Two cultures can hold each other

It's a touching way of how you can feel for that person, which is the sacredness of that person to yourself, and of yours to him. There's a big line between that person and yourself. And it's a sacred thing. To keep it alive is one of the things we must do. We mustn't run over ourselves, we mustn't go across, we mustn't twist around. To be who we are, you can't tangle up those lines.

Psychological Holding

This person cares. She can bear to look at my despair without being afraid of it and is not seeking ways to avoid it. She is someone who can feel the despair (empathise) and not break down under it and this gives the person hope that their despair is tolerable.

Holding requires a receptive person who can listen, understand and contain mental pain.

- Holding doubt and fear of the unknown
- Holding over a period of time
- Containing conflict
- Containing anger and helplessness
- Providing a firm containment
- Combining action with insight.

How can communities contain and hold violence and trauma?

- Putting in boundaries
- Limits to behaviour
- Laws
- Having holding people - building on strengths and old time holding
- Holding men
- Holding grandmothers
- Holding country (literally and metaphorically)
- Holding councils of elders

This resource and further information about Creating A Safe Supportive Environment is available to download at www.casse.org.au/resources.

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