

LIPPMAN ELDER WISDOM ACADEMY

ancient practice - new understanding

WHAT'S INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

February Zoom Event

Coffee Circle

The Road to Here

Sam Chestnut
Head of The Lippman School
February 3 - Zoom Event

Standing on the shoulders of Giants
“the inspiration of elders and ancestors”

[Join Our Zoom Meeting](#)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84765030865?pwd=L2kzUFB2UExtbk05V1Vtb2pjYkxQUT09>



Coffee Circle
Exchange House
760 Elma St.
Akron, OH 44310

February 17 @ 4:00

Come join us and circle up for conversation, coffee and more.

Sam Chestnut has over 30 years of experience as an educational leader with expertise in cross cultural and experiential learning. His ground-breaking work with The Northern Cheyenne Nation has received significant national attention and has presented at national and international conferences. For over ten years he has developed programs for schools, adults and families to learn with The Northern Cheyenne Nation. In addition, Sam has developed partnerships with schools in China and facilitated learning experiences for students in China and Israel. Sam holds a B.A. from Kenyon College and a M.A. in Education from The University of Akron.





The Road to Here
Angela Miller
LEWA Volunteer Coordinator

The Kierkegaardian assertion that we can only understand life backward makes more sense now that I am older. For instance, the journey to this elderhood project zig-zagged this way and that over the years. The path from this vantage point, however, is abundantly clear.

I grew up in the American South, where few people practiced rites of passage. Other than marriage and death, most folks stumbled through milestones alone. Yet, I sensed the absence of something just beyond conscious awareness. During life transitions, it felt heavier—as I became a mother, helped my children navigate adolescence, and embarked on retirement. Something vital was missing—the historical bones, almost visible. Lives around me were unfolding without the clarity that only context provides. It was troubling.

By studying other cultures, I learned that in many, rituals developed to ease life passages. Yet my family lacked generational connection—no ancient framework, no cornucopia of wisdom to share—the religious and cultural tables were bare. Perhaps in a frenzy to conquer the New World, forbearers left traditions strewn along origin shores.

Unencumbered by the ballast of history, they “settled” fully inhabited lands. Those they displaced carried their own stories, rituals, and language—the essence of what makes us fully human. That made the settlers uncomfortable—it was a painful reminder of what they had lost. So, they expanded the genocide to wipe out indigenous culture.

Like Israelites in the diaspora, however, Native People held on to their customs. Elders continue to play a vital role in both traditions—the wisdom of ancients still hums in their veins. I approached the Lippman School with this project in 2019 because they are grounded in the Jewish tradition and have a long-standing relationship with the Northern Cheyenne. It is an honor to work with them.

I believe we can learn from other traditions. Though we cannot adopt them, we can use them as guides. Eventually we will gain enough purchase to stand in the gap for our young. We look forward to learning with you and from you this year, my friends.

Welcome to the journey!

The best decisions have little to no immediate payoff.

The best choices compound. Most of the benefits come at the end, not the beginning.

The more patient you are, the bigger the payoff.

FARNAM STREET



I am excited to be a part of LEWA. I have taught in Akron Public Schools for 30 years and have been an embedded technology specialist at The Lippman School for 10 year years. Let me know if I can help with any of your technology needs as we move forward. ;-)