

## Lakota New Year - Ricky Gray Grass - OSEU #1 & #3

Today...the Spring Ceremony...like I said before up there...the calendar New Year is January 1st...a lot of people celebrate that calendar New Year. They go out and do what they gotta do. They do a dropping of the ball and there is a lot of partying going on. But Lakota people...our New Years...is the first day of spring. That is the renewal of life for the animals. Before there was man, the animals owned the Earth. So every time a new year came, the birds gave birth... to the little birds... and the ducks... and the geese. The coyotes had their pups. It was a new beginning. The trees were starting to bloom. The grass is going to be green. That's a new breath of life.

To me, today played a big significance...every year for me...just to make it back...to another year of coming back to step on green grass. And my mom used to tell me, "Whenever that grass is green, you gotta take off your feet and make that connection. Stand on green grass. Make that connection back with Mother Earth. Everything that's on Mother Earth...you're going to feel that on your feet." So, every year, whenever the grass is green, we make that prayer and give thanks. Also, we welcome back the Thunder Beings. We know that spring is here when you hear the thunder and see the lightning. You know the ancestors are coming back...they're making their way back to bring rain...to bring nourishment to Mother Earth...to kill off the rest of the sicknesses that the snow didn't kill off...and to bring that fresh air from the trees and the ground up to make everything pure again.

That's the same thing with the Winter Solstice...when we do the winter ceremony, they pray for snow. Right after Fall, we are taught to pray for snow. Before it ends again, before Spring, we pray for snow...the purification of the snow to purify Mother Earth before the rain comes again. There is always a ceremony. There is a spring and summer solstice sundance. And in the Fall, we get our berries ready to get ready for Winter. There is always a ceremony for the seasons. I like this Spring ceremony that we do. I like to hear the birds sing, the little coyotes barking, and all that stuff. I see, in my community at the nighttime, we hear the bullfrogs and the crickets and all that. So that's my favorite ceremony to do is the Spring.

And in the Fall...I love the Fall weather. We pray for the animals to get ready to help us survive Winter through their meat and their hides and stuff like that. Today, we welcome

them back...welcome the Thunder Beings...it's time for you to come back...and come from the west...and bring those clouds...bring the rain clouds...and bring the loud thunder...show us the brightness in the sky through the lightning. I always enjoy that.

My uncles and my dad used to tell me when I pass and I am no longer here, in the springtime I am coming back through the thunder. Don't be afraid, but pray and give us offering. I'm in that thunder that's coming back. So don't be afraid. We're your friends. So today I welcome them back.

I blew my eagle bone whistle and sing the songs to the Thunder Beings. I'm welcoming you back. So that's what we did today.