

## Definitions of Inunnguiniq from Elders

*Inunnguiniq* starts with childrearing, but it continues throughout life. We cannot make a capable human being all at once. *Inunnguiniq* is a process that Inuit committed to pursuing with each child across his/her lifetime. It is important to regard *inunnguiniq* from a holistic big picture and to consider the many aspects of building a capable human being that are required to be addressed over this long period of personal development.

We also must encourage a child to be able to do things on their own, so when they get older, they will become capable. We are all going to run into obstacles in life, so raising a child to know that he/she will indeed run into obstacles, run into difficulties and preparing him/her well for the future is the best thing we can do for our children.

- Louis Angalik

*Inunnguiniq* is making a human being who will be able to help others with a good heart. Someone with a good heart and mind will always be aware of his/her surroundings. He/she will be quick to think and be able to look at the brighter side of different situations. This person is always ready to help. This is called *inuttiavak*. A person who never really pays much attention to the teaching of his parents and Elders, though they were taught, would not learn much. Little things will make him/her upset. They won't care if the tension inside of them spills out on everyone around them. Even if the parents did their best to help him/her that will have very little effect on that person. We call this *inuttiavaungituq* (a person with bad attitude). This kind of person would be considered as potentially harmful.

- Atuat Akitting

While we were growing up there were principles applied in our instruction. Inuit children from very different territories were raised very similarly because the training was based on the Inuit cultural beliefs that had been in place for millennia. These beliefs were highly valued and so we were taught them with very strict expectations. Rules to live by, such as never causing fear in an animal, are not being followed today since colonization. For example, scaring a polar bear away would never have been practiced. A polar bear that came into a camp would be killed. A polar bear encountered on the land would be avoided. These rules were grounded in Inuit laws. The new hunting regulations imposed by the government caused Inuit to go against Inuit laws. The breaking of Inuit laws and values was an intentional attempt to bring Inuit under government control.

What happens in childhood is carried throughout life and so we have to be very careful what we expose children to and how we care for children throughout their lives. When a child is hurt, it will be very hard to let go of that hurt and to heal. It will stay with him/her into later life if someone is not careful to help resolve the issue with the child through healing. There are things that cannot be done alone and learning to forgive is one of those. Learning to forgive others and resolving conflict is something that is also taught early in life. In Inuit cultural practice, anyone experiencing hardship or prolonged unhappiness was closely observed and counseled so that issues could be resolved quickly and the person could return to productive living. Punishment was reserved only for those who were persistent in their wrongdoing and who had become a danger to others.

- Peter Paniuq

In making a human being they took caution to be very precise and specific in the instruction of a child. They took precaution not to hurt the child's feeling when they were trying to instill knowledge, knowing that if you hurt the feelings this will get in the way of the learning. Instruction was always given in ways that showed an understanding for how the particular child would react. It was tailored to the child and based on the child's personal sensibilities. You also never had expectations for a child that were not suitable. For example, some children enjoy speed and taking risks. Some are much more cautious. You would not expect the cautious child to learn in the same way that would be exciting for the risk-taking child. It is like not wasting bullets by using a scope that is not properly sighted in. We need to adjust our sights for each child so that we hit the target that is specific for them. It was recognized that children had skills in different areas and that it was necessary to have a wide range of skilled people in a camp to make sure that all the necessary services in the camp could be provided. Each person was recognized for his/her specific expertise and every expertise was valued, even by those who had some disabilities which limited the contribution. For example, a woman who was not able to walk was very good at raising and training the dogs. If we think what the definition of inunnguiniq it is the raising of every child to their full potential as a contributing member of the society. Young people, when they know what they are good at and what they want to be, they will pursue that with a lot of energy. Children were never expected to all become the same thing or to be educated in the same way.

- Norman Attangula