



# A Collection of Dreamcatcher Legends





## What is a Dream Catcher?

Dream catchers are arts and crafts of the Native American people. The original web dream catcher of the Ojibwa was intended to teach natural wisdom. Nature is a profound teacher. Dream catchers of twigs, sinew, and feathers have been woven since ancient times by Ojibwa people. They were woven by the grandfathers and grandmothers for newborn children and hung above the cradleboard to give the infants peaceful, beautiful dreams. The night air is filled with dreams. Good dreams are clear and know the way to the dreamer, descending through the feathers. The slightest movement of the feathers indicated the passage of yet another beautiful dream. Bad dreams, however, are confused and confusing. They cannot find their way through the web and are trapped there until the sun rises and evaporates them like the morning dew.

Originally the Native American dream catcher was woven on twigs of the red willow using thread from the stalk of the stinging nettle. The red willow and twigs from other trees of the willow family, as well as red twig dogwood can be found in many parts of the United States. These twigs are gathered fresh and dried in a circle or pulled into a spiral shape depending upon their intended use. They used natural feathers and semi-precious gemstone, one gemstone to each web because there is only one creator in the web of life

*Dream catchers used by adults do not use feathers in the center. The feather of the owl, keeper of wisdom, was kept by the woman; the feather of the eagle, keeper of courage, was kept by the man.*



## Chippewa Dream Catcher Legend

"While our children sleep the evil spirits come to terrify even the youngest of them." Then said the Medicine Woman, to each mother in fear, should she lose her child to the evil ones, for they awoke and cried with the knowledge of terrible demons in their eyes. You must weave a spiders web with love from a willow hoop, using nettle stalk cord dyed red with sacred herbs. As you say the sacred words, with each weave you shall weave with only happy thoughts and playful things. Leave in the center an opening, as your open heart, to let only good things pass. Hang from the loop the sacred feathers, in this way the Good Spirit dreams will find their way through the center hole and float down the feathers onto the sleeping ones. The Bad Spirit dreams will get caught in the web and disappear with the morning light. And so they hung this Dreamcatcher over the baby's cradle board. Dreamcatchers are believed to bestow pleasant dreams, good luck, and lifetime harmony.





## The Legend of the Dreamcatcher

"A spider was quietly spinning his web in his own space. It was beside the sleeping space of Nokomis, the grandmother. Each day, Nokomis watched the spider at work, quietly spinning away. One day as she was watching him, her grandson came in. "Nokomis-iya!" he shouted, glancing at the spider. He stomped over to the spider, picked up a shoe and went to hit it. "No-keegwa," the old lady whispered, "don't hurt him." "Nokomis, why do you protect the spider?" asked the little boy. The old lady smiled, but did not answer.

When the boy left, the spider went to the old woman and thanked her for saving his life. He said to her, "For many days you have watched me spin and weave my web. You have admired my work. In return for saving my life, I will give you a gift." He smiled his special spider smile and moved away, spinning as he went. Soon the moon glistened on a magical silvery web moving gently in the window. "See how I spin?" he said. "See and learn, for each web will snare bad dreams. Only good dreams will go through the small hole. This is my gift to you. Use it so that only good dreams will be remembered. The bad dreams will become hopelessly entangled in the web."



### ***Dreamcatcher Legend** (origin unknown)*

Another tale is told of a Shaman who had been very ill and plagued with bad dreams and visions. He slept with a Medicine Wheel hanging above him attempting to make himself well. One night a spider found its way down to the wheel and began to spin a web. In a very short time the web covered the wheel except for a small hole in the center. As if it were intended, an Owl flying above in the dark of night shed a feather which floated down and became caught in the web where it hung from the center hole. As the sun rose the following morning, the Shaman awoke from a peaceful sleep free of bad dreams and his illness was gone. He looked to the Medicine Wheel feeling that this must be the source of his healing and was amazed to see the web and feather hanging from the hole. From that day, the Dreamcatcher was born and used thereafter to protect and guide the Sleeping Ones.



## Dream Catchers

Long ago when the world was young, an old Lakota spiritual leader was on a high mountain and had a vision.

In his vision, Iktomi, the great trickster and teacher of wisdom, appeared in the form of a spider.

Iktomi spoke to him in a sacred language that only the spiritual leaders of the Lakota could understand.

As he spoke Iktomi, the spider, took the elder's willow hoop which had feathers, horse hair, beads and offerings on it and began to spin a web.

He spoke to the elder about the cycles of life ... and how we begin our lives as infants and we move on to childhood, and then to adulthood. Finally, we go to old age where we must be taken care of as infants, completing the cycle.







"But," Iktomi said as he continued to spin his web, "in each time of life there are many forces -- some good and some bad. If you listen to the good forces, they will steer you in the right direction. But if you listen to the bad forces, they will hurt you and steer you in the wrong direction."

He continued, "There are many forces and different directions that can help or interfere with the harmony of nature, and also with the great spirit and all of his wonderful teachings."

All the while the spider spoke, he continued to weave his web starting from the outside and working toward the center.

When Iktomi finished speaking, he gave the Lakota elder the web and said..."See, the web is a perfect circle but there is a hole in the center of the circle."

He said, "Use the web to help yourself and your people to reach your goals and make good use of your people's ideas, dreams and visions.

"If you believe in the great spirit, the web will catch your good ideas -- and the bad ones will go through the hole."

The Lakota elder passed on his vision to his people and now the Sioux Indians use the dream catcher as the web of their life.

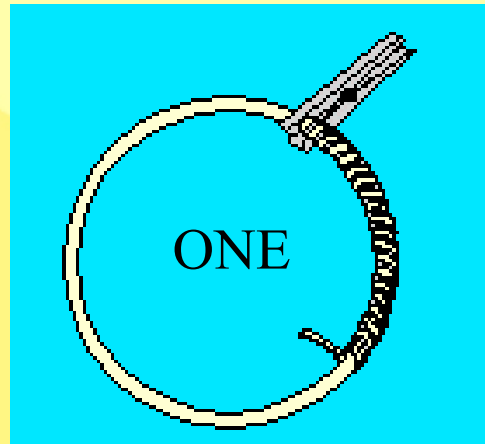
It is hung above their beds or in their home to sift their dreams and visions.

The good in their dreams are captured in the web of life and carried with them...but the evil in their dreams escapes through the hole in the center of the web and are no longer a part of them.

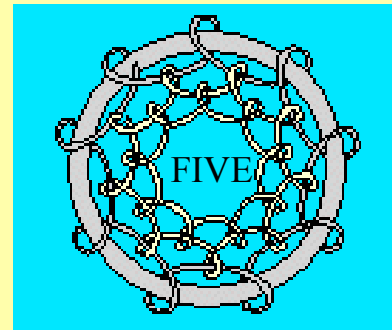
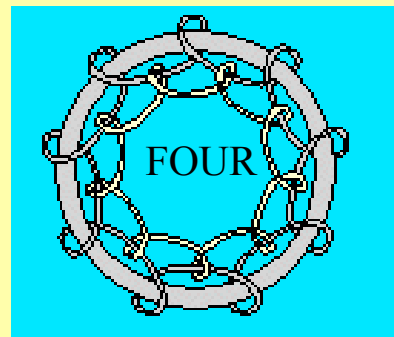
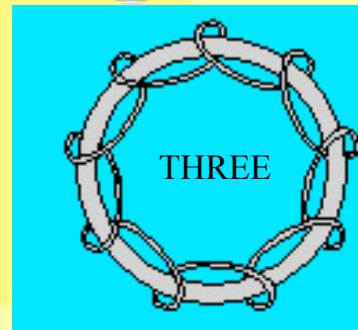
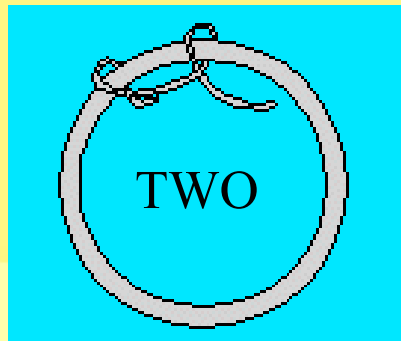
They believe that the dream catcher holds the destiny of their future.

## ***Dream Catcher Weaving Styles***



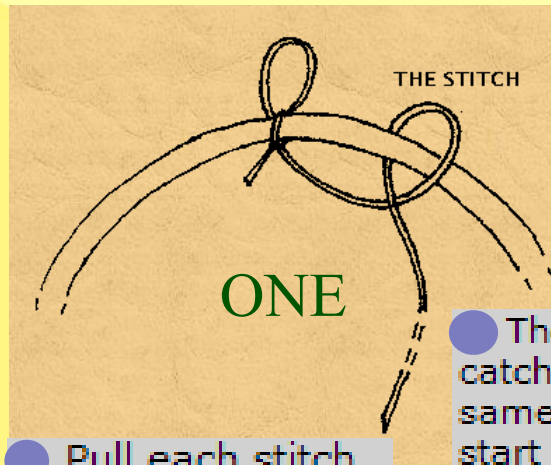


## Dream Catcher Steps



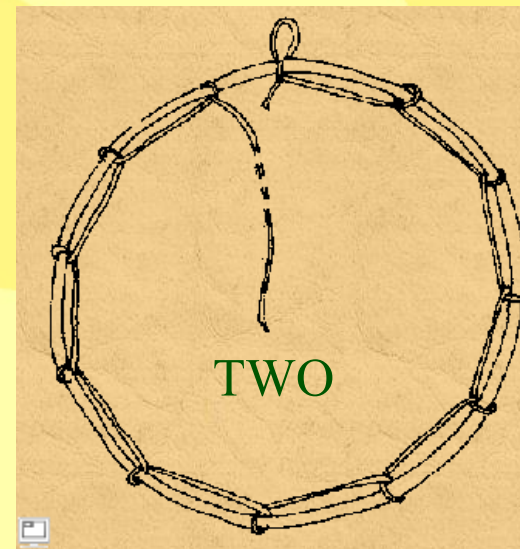


## Dream Catcher Directions



● Pull each stitch taught but not too tight or it will warp the hoop of the dream catcher and it will not lie flat when it is done.

● The dream catcher repeats the same stitch from start to finish. To start, hold the string and place it loosely over the top of the hoop. Move the string around to the back of the hoop (forming a hole) and pull the string back through the hole you just made.



● Continue the same stitch for the first round around the hoop of the dream catcher. Space the stitches evenly, about 1 1/2 to 2 in. apart (making 7 to 13 stitches around the hoop).

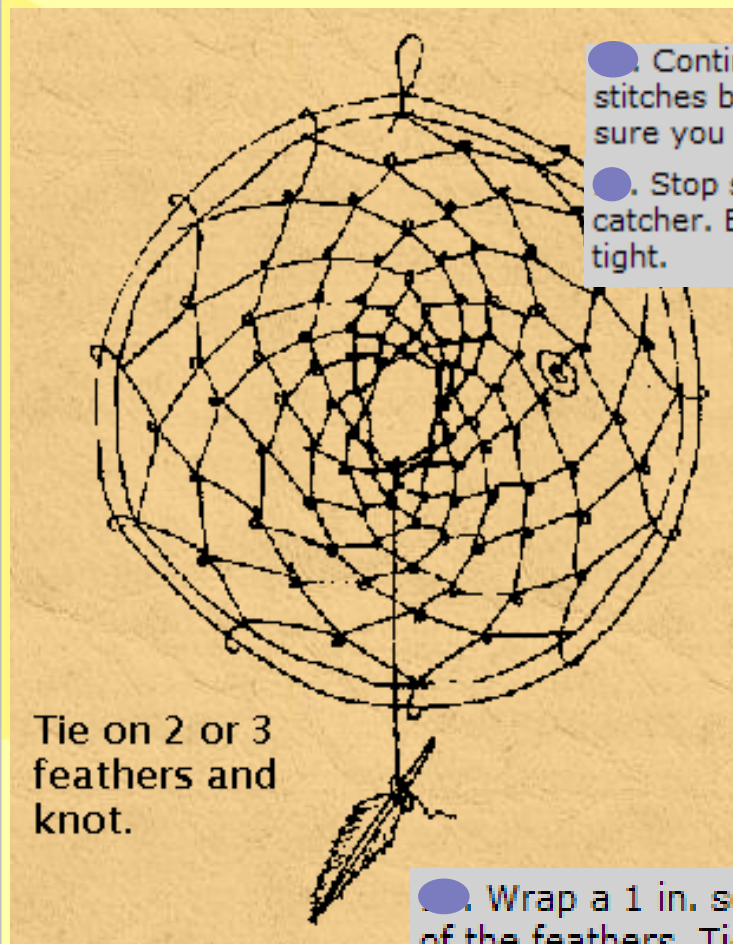


Stitch for the second round:

- On the second and subsequent stitching rounds, place the string around the center of each stitch from the previous round (rather than around the hoop).
- As you pull each stitch tight, the string from the previous round should bend towards the center of the hoop slightly, forming a diamond shape. You should see the spider web beginning to form.



- On the third or fourth round add a bead to represent the spider in the web. Simply place the bead on your string and continue stitching as usual.



Tie on 2 or 3  
feathers and  
knot.

- Continue stitching towards the center of the hoop. Eventually, the stitches become so small that it is difficult to pass the string through. Make sure you leave a hole in the center of the dream catcher.
- Stop stitching at the bottom of the hole in the center of the dream catcher. End by stitching twice in the same place, forming a knot, and pull tight.

- Wrap a 1 in. square of felt around the knot of string and over the base of the feathers. Tie two 4 In. pieces string around the wrapped felt. (Your dream catcher is now complete)