

Some thoughts on becoming a Declared Elder:



**An excerpt from a MKP Journal 2008
interview with Allan Podbelsek, Ritual
Elder**

“In MKP, we refer to Declared Elders as men 50 years or older who have felt within themselves a calling to own their mature energy . . .”

“I tell the man who is claiming himself a Declared Elder what it means for me to be an Elder, what my experiences are, and how I hope to show up in the community. If he’s going to staff, I tell him to show up with some of that part of him that is an Elder. In our Declared Elder processes, I like our Elders to give attention to the man declaring. I ask the man, ‘What is calling you to be an Elder? And, why now? What are you seeing yourself called to do?’ Elders present then give the man feedback on his answers. Finally we create a ritual where that man stands and declares his Eldership.”

It’s inevitable, Allan told me, that a man who becomes a member of MKP will see Elders on his weekend, will go back to his community and see Elders in circles or councils, and he’ll start hearing things about being an Elder, seeing things that involve elders, and he will sit with Elders and converse with them. Eventually, he’ll feel a calling to where he belongs.

“I didn’t say I want to be a Declared Elder from any internal motivation. It wasn’t until other men said to me that they saw Elder energy in me. In 1995, I was with Don Jones at the first Elder Gathering. I was 57 at the time. I heard many men say, ‘I see Elder energy in you.’ I started to do a self-examination. I spent the entire weekend uncertain what it was to be an Elder. At one point in time, when I was alone, this thing just fell on me ... giving me chills. Something kind of fell on me that resonated in my body. The part where the Elder resides suddenly was ignited and rumbled through me. I began to see things, and feel things. It was an awakening.”

“An Elder speaks and men listen. He shows up and men pay attention. Men are attracted to him because he’s older and they feel safe with him. He’s one who cares and is concerned about the man. Men want to sit with an Elder and ask questions, knowing they will not be judged. An Elder is a good supportive friend or mentor.”