

The Two Wolves

An old woman said to her grandson: 'I have two wolves inside me. One wolf is **bad** – greedy, angry, jealous, cruel, untrustworthy, arrogant, and cowardly. The other wolf is **good** – loving, brave, honest, kind, peaceful, modest, and happy. These two wolves are fighting inside me every day. But these two wolves are not just inside me. They are also in you. They are fighting inside everybody.'



After a moment, the boy asked: 'Which wolf will win?'

The old woman smiled and said: 'The one that you feed.'

What do you think is the meaning of this story?

A humanist understanding of human beings

Many humanists recognise that there is good and bad in all of us. Both are **natural**. We cannot ignore the bad wolf, but it is our responsibility to try to keep it under control. They believe we should **feed the good wolf** and encourage others to do the same. We should try to promote our positive capacities and their potential – that way we can live good lives and make the world a better place.

A note about sources of wisdom for humanists

The origin of this story is unknown. Some people say that it is an old Native American tale. Other people say that it has a more modern source. What is important for many humanists is not where a story comes from (although that might be interesting), it is whether a story can help reveal something about us – something that fits with our experience and understanding of human nature or the way we think we should live. Wisdom does not come from one particular source. Wisdom can be found in many different places. For humanists, what makes something wise is not who said it, but whether it helps us to make sense of our lives today.