

## The Babemba Tribe

The Babemba tribe of southern Africa believes that each human being comes into the world as good. Each one of us only desiring safety, love, peace and happiness.

But sometimes, in the pursuit of these things, people make mistakes.

When a person acts irresponsibly or unjustly, he/she is placed in the center of the village, alone, unfettered. All work ceases. All gather around the accused individual. Then each person of every age, begins to talk out loud to the accused. One at a time, each person tells all the good things the one in the center ever did in his/her lifetime.

Every incident, every experience that can be recalled with any detail and accuracy, is recounted. All positive attributes, good deeds, strengths, and kindnesses are recited carefully and at length.

The tribal ceremony often lasts several days, not ceasing until everyone is drained of every positive comment that can be mustered. At the end, the tribal circle is broken, a joyous celebration takes place, and the person is symbolically and literally welcomed back into the tribe. Necessity for such ceremonies is rare!

**This story is originally from the book, *Contact, The First Four Minutes* by Leonard Sunin. The Babemba or Bemba people make their home in an area of Africa that includes Zambia and the Congo.**