The Mi'kmaw teachings of Ms i t No'kmaq or "All my Relations" strengthen our connections to each other and the world around us. The idea that everyone and everything is related is not only spiritual, but physical as well. Through Ms i t No'kmaq we reaffirm our respect for our ancestors, and for the animals, plants and world that we interact with daily.

Families are at the heart of Mi'kmaw communities. The web of family relations has ensured the continuation of traditional knowledge since time immemorial. Before contact with Europeans, Mi'kmaw kinship lines were mapped from the mother's side, or matrilineally. Today we have adopted a patrilineal method of tracking our descendants, based on our surnames passed on by our father's family.

The Mi'kmaw today are starting to research familial connections as we come to understand the significance of the matrilineal clan system. When looking at past treaties signed by the Mi'kmaw, we can see how the signers relate their clan symbols as extensions of themselves. While various Mi'kmaw family names have survived intact for thousands of years, after contact with Europeans, some of these names have changed or have been Anglicized. In the case of Anglicization, the connection to the clan system may have been lost. A number of family names have slight spelling variations, like Julien and Julian, or Gloade and Glode. This may be due to the proximity to, or relationship with, neighbouring groups of French and English.

Help us grow the list! Other families and associations can be sent to Gerald Gloade at The Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq (gerald@cmmns.com).