

## LIVING HAWAIIAN RITUALS: LUA, HO‘OPONOPONO, AND SOCIAL WORK

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The rituals in lua (Hawaiian fighting arts) and ho‘oponopono (process for setting things right) teach us to respect mana (supernatural power) and to acknowledge, first and foremost, that there are higher powers that hold jurisdiction over us. These cultural perspectives play a powerful role in social work as they emphasize relationships, interconnections, and consequences. Since Hawaiians do not always respond well to Western approaches, we identified several practices associated with lua and ho‘oponopono that social workers can use with their clients on their healing journey. On a collective level, we strongly believe much of the positive change we envision for our people will be achieved by learning about and living Hawaiian rituals.

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## WEHENA—OPENING THE CIRCLE

The phone rang at 7:00 in the morning. The caller from Moloka'i asked if we could help his sister who was experiencing noho 'ia, Hawaiian possession. This possession was shown by uncontrollable body movements—twisting of the head, kicking of the feet, and jerking of the hands. We said yes, come over. Fifteen minutes after we hung up they were at the front door. We had very little time to prepare and center ourselves for the rituals. The woman arrived incoherent and somewhat unconscious. Her husband and nephew carried her in from the car by holding her under her arms and the calves of her legs. The moment she was placed on our pūne'e (couch) all the thrashing began. The ho'oponopono (process for setting things right) that we did was a combination of Hawaiian cultural practices, social work, and Christian rituals. Within 3 hours the woman was back to herself, and she could walk on her own. We explained to her that she had been visited by a deceased relative who had come to give her a message.

Before arriving at our door, the woman had received a powerful dream. In it, she dreamed that a spiritual entity was coming for her unborn child. Several years earlier the woman gave birth to a child, who died soon after. Recently, she experienced a miscarriage, and now she had another fetus growing inside of her. She was afraid that the dream meant a spirit was coming to take the child away. The

fear put her into a catatonic state. As a mother, she had a much closer connection to the deceased children than the father or the rest of the family had. But she never had a chance to express her feelings of loss—to really cry her guts out.

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As we began the ho'oponopono, we tapped into her intense sense of loss, and the floodgates opened. She started to uē, to cry. This lasted for several minutes. Her crying was the racking, choking kind of wailing sound that comes from deep within. Her mother was there and her husband was there. They were shocked. They had no idea that she had kept those feelings of loss of those two children within her all these years. When they reflected on how they treated her—telling her that she would be okay, that she was still young and could have more children—they realized that rather than soothing her, their actions may have caused more harm by repressing the feelings of loss and any unresolved guilt.

Before going further, we had to stop her from thrashing around. We had the bowl of Hawaiian salt water, and we did a pikai (sprinkling with salt water to purify) of her body by placing drops on her head and on her hands. Then we started praying that any barriers be removed that were preventing this woman from being fully healed. We also kept talking to her, asking her to say her name to determine if this was a true Hawaiian experience of noho 'ia. If she responded with a name other than her own we would know that we were dealing with a spirit or entity other than herself. We had to rely on her mother to confirm this woman's name. She was brought to us without much background. Fortunately, she was able to give us her name. At first it was a whisper; then it grew in strength. We knew then that this woman was not possessed, that her problem was about unresolved grief. We completed the cleansing ritual, and within a few hours she was able to stand up, gather herself, and use the bathroom.

But the ho'oponopono was not over. We talked to her about the 'uhane (spirits) of the deceased children. We explained that they cannot find rest if she still called and yearned for them. She remembered that she had kept the piko (dried umbilical cord) of the previous child who had been born and lived a few months. Keeping the piko is called mālama pū'olo, when you keep a bundle of parts of a deceased person. In a way you keep the deceased's spirit from moving on to the spiritual world of Pō. This is where knowledge of the Hawaiian life cycle helped us—the physical body through birth, marriage to another, children, death, and on into the spiritual world. We helped her to recognize that she had to deal with the human part. Otherwise, what kind of life would they have in this dimension?

She began to recognize that as long as she hung on to them they could not complete the journey into Pō, the realm of the deceased beloved relatives. So perhaps that was what the vision meant. It was time to let the 'uhane go. We were concerned about the current child she was carrying and said, "You have another baby inside you. You have to take care of yourself." Since she had not been to the doctor for any prenatal care, we told her the vision is right. "You have not paid attention to your body, and it needs to be strong in order for you to carry this baby to full term. Your doctor is the one who can tell you what your body needs. And you won't know this unless you go for a checkup." That was the social work aspect. So it was the

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integration of Christian prayer, Hawaiian knowledge and skills, and social work that unlocked the grieving process that all humans go through, and helped the woman find peace.

Part of what we do in the school of social work is to begin to talk about cultural trauma and historical trauma—the inequities that have happened to Hawaiians throughout time—and their impact as a series of intergenerational traumas today. Social work has to do with helping Hawaiians of today. How do we help Hawaiians when we find that they often don't respond well to Western practices? We go back to traditional practices and culture, which we feel are a more natural doorway for them. So we've targeted different healing practices that social workers can use when they work with clients. One especially effective practice is ho'oponopono, a process of prayer, self-scrutiny, insightful confession, repentance, mutual restitution, and forgiveness between involved parties in consort with the powers they believe in. The ho'oponopono process addresses several levels at once: the cognitive level, which is about information gathering, the level of interpersonal relationships. Then we go to a deeper level of the person to get at underlying issues that often prevent people from fully moving on. That's where the kaona resides, the hidden meaning that references patterns of thought and behavior.

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The example of noho 'ia we shared earlier provides perspective by illustrating how things from the old days might still be happening today. However, many Hawaiians are left without the appropriate measures to deal with seemingly strange Hawaiian happenings. The cultural committee of the Queen Lili'uokalani Children Center's purpose was to rediscover Hawaiian mental health practices of the ancestors that have relevance for today's Hawaiian familial relationship issues. Dr. E. W. Haertig would say that for a lot of Hawaiians the problems persist because the remedy is not available. If Hawaiians have these problems, these symptoms, what do you do about it? Even if they know they need a cultural practitioner to help them, who can they turn to? The knowledge of these practices is limited, fragmented, or even lost. Even in ho'oponopono, there aren't enough practitioners; so one of our tasks has been to train the next generation. Just like in lua (Hawaiian fighting arts), you have to train students for service toward future generations. It is important to find people who are committed and who will be able to carry and pass the knowledge on. If not, then our traditions will not be perpetuated. The knowledge will die off or become something that's kept only in a book.

## RICHARD KEKUMUIKAWAIOKEOLA PAGLINAWAN

I grew up in Waiāhole, a country hick. I come from a family with six siblings and plenty more cousins. My tūtū man, my maternal grandfather, had special gifts, but unfortunately he died when I was in the fourth grade. I didn't get to spend a whole lot of time with him. But my mama carried on the traditions. He was a pale keiki, a midwife, and a healer. My mama was the one my tūtū man relied heavily on as he was partially blind, and she became a midwife too. She learned other healing practices from him like 'ōpūhuli ("turned stomach") and pikai. She would share these rituals with me, but I never realized how important they were until later in life. My mama was a very strong person. If anybody would call for help, she'd be there. And a lot of the time she'd take me. So I learned the power of Hawaiian rituals from her. And from that perspective I was never afraid of spooks or strange cultural happenings.

The family was raised to gather our own food. So we'd do hukilau and lay net (moemoe). We didn't realize how we lived was different from other people. At that time, we didn't have electricity. My job was to do the kukui hele pō—to clean the glass, to cut the wicks, and to fill up the kerosene lamps. We got our drinking water from the upper part of the 'auwai (ditch) and bathed in the lower part. It wasn't until the 1950s that the County brought the water pipeline to Waiāhole School. I went to Waiāhole Elementary and Intermediate. Then I went to McKinley High by accident. My cousin, who I was very close with, told me to use her family's address in Liliha so I could go to school with her at Farrington. But that year the boundaries were redrawn and I ended up at McKinley. But I don't regret it. In hindsight, I'm glad I went because McKinley helped me to get the skills I needed to succeed in later life. My dad worked at Pearl Harbor for 35 years and I wanted to become a machinist like him. I adored my dad. But at McKinley I was given the college entrance exam and much to my surprise, I passed. That was it. I had to go to university. According to my extended 'ohana (family), I'd be the first one to attend university.

I first studied in the Department of Agriculture but later I took a psychological test that said I was better suited for sociology. That's where I met Lynette. My grades were mediocre until I met her and settled down and started applying myself. Still I wasn't sure what I wanted to do in life. It was only when graduation was getting near that my advisor channeled me toward social work. So after my training I went to work at the Salvation Army Children's Facilities under Myron "Pinky" Thompson. The next year I worked for the Lili'uokalani Trust Child Welfare Department which later became the Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center (QLCC).

I was assigned to work with a family who was cursed, that's called 'ānai in Hawaiian. I read the case, and this family was known to eight different social service agencies. Each time when they talked about curses and the misuse of a cultural solution like ho'okē'ai (fasting), the case would be closed and the family would be transferred to another agency. I asked my supervisor, what do you want me to do with this case? I'm trained in the Western way, and this family is having all these Hawaiian cultural problems. He said if I give you the opportunity what would you do? I

said I would talk to my tūtū. And that's how I got Tūtū Mary Kawena Pukui involved. As a result, the QLCC cultural committee was established to look at Hawaiian treatment practices for families in need of help.

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With the cultural committee, I felt like it was a gift that was being given to me. That's why Tūtū Pukui called me up to her house to share all this information about culture and spirituality. Sometimes when she'd talk to people they would cringe at the mention of spirituality, especially when they thought of 'anā'anā (evil sorcery). But I didn't display that same fear. It was good for me to understand, because to be a healer one also has to know the dark part of it, the 'anā'anā side of it. Without that knowledge one cannot heal.

It's the same way with lua. Before becoming an 'ōlohe (lua master), I trained in karate for 15 years and was an instructor (fourth dan) as well. However, I grew disenchanted with karate because it became so commercialized in the 1960s. I was taught the spiritual part of karate, its origin and philosophy. In the original version you could train for 12 years and never receive a black belt. Today with modern dojos that charge fees you can get a black belt in about 4 years, whether you deserve one or not. A group of us heard about lua but we didn't know who the practitioners were. That's how we came to find Charles Kenn. In the process of learning lua, Charles Kenn made Hawaiian culture a very important part of his teaching. I was mentored in ho'omana (Hawaiian spirituality) by Tūtū Pukui so I knew a lot about what he was sharing. But it was good to hear it from him. With Charles Kenn the foundation was about knowing one's self, and to know your culture before you venture into anything. Sometimes he would share something that was different from what Tūtū Pukui said, but I knew if I was going to learn lua from him, I would have to learn it his way.

In my school, Pā Ku'i a Lua, students learn “lua as a way of life.” We practice more than Hawaiian warrior fighting arts; we strive to live by a set of principles rooted in pono (balance, righteousness). We train in offensive and defensive fighting techniques as well as rehearse warfare tactics. Students learn how to fashion and wield traditional weaponry and how to conduct cultural ceremonies and rituals for cleansing and building harmony. Through these processes, students reflect a great deal on their identity, behavior, and relationships to others including relationships to nature and spirits. Above all, they learn how to become a pono (balanced) person and a koa (warrior) for their family, community, and sovereignty.

Lua is a way of life because as you learn how to break bones, you must also learn how to put them back. This philosophy refers not only to the physical part but the spiritual part, too. This is important because as a person you have mana (supernatural power). And mana can be used for good or it can be used for hewa (wrong purposes). We let our haumāna (students) know to beware of how they use lua. We tell them that there are consequences when you come into contact with other people's mana, which may or may not be stronger than yours. In lua we say, those who deliver the first strike are not protected by Ku'i a Lua, the deity for lua. Therefore, the one who strikes the first blow takes a big risk. But the one who returns a strike, Ku'i a Lua will protect them. In other words, lua is supposed to be for defensive purposes, self-protection, not for offense, or to cause hurt. Today a lot of people want to be *tantaran* (show off) and they want to give the other guy lickings. But that's a no-no. You must be humble. Because in lua the philosophy and teaching is that you don't use it unless you, your family, or your sovereignty is attacked.

The foundation for the philosophy of lua, its rituals, ceremonies, and protocols, is best understood in relation to the Hawaiian worldview. It is man in harmony and balance first with himself and his own spiritual beliefs. How we see and feel about ourselves is our personal spirit called wailua. Spirituality is shaped by our forefathers, their actions, and what they have passed on to us. In the Hawaiian perspective, this refers to the belief in 'aumākua. Every person has 'aumākua who are deceased ancestors, elevated to the level of a deity based on extraordinary achievements when they were alive. We inherit 'aumākua from both parents, who inherited 'aumākua from their parents. It is a recognition and acceptance of our intangible connections through our lineages

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with deceased ancestors who watch over us with love and concern. When we open ourselves to this belief, our deceased ancestors are able to commune with us through dreams, visions, sounds, and feelings. They do not intend to scare us, but instead they send warning and solution messages to help us.

The word *lua* has other meanings as well. It means pit and two. The number two is significant for lua because it encompasses the idea of duality, which involves force-counter force, action-reaction, life and death, masculine-feminine, positive-negative, yin-yang, good-bad, right-wrong, soft-hard, to name a few. Duality for the lua practitioner is about understanding the nature of opposites, because it determines the choices you make in every situation. For example, for every force there is a counter force. When a punch is thrown, expect a counter strike. In battle it is about action choices that mean you may live or action choices that mean you may die.

Recently, about two years ago, down at Zippy's Liliha two guys got into an altercation and this one guy who was learning karate kicked the other guy right in the chest. The guy died. Now you can imagine the consequences later on. Not only for the two families but also for the guy who did it. He didn't have the discipline. So the point is that in lua we train people from the beginning that they have to be aware—whatever they are learning, they have to think and not just react.

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So I've integrated those concepts of spirituality and duality from lua as appropriate, and I use it in social work where we deal with violence and abuse. At the same time, lua students are introduced to ho'oponopono. Because if they are the haku of their family, they're the leader, they have to take care of their home front before

they can attend to matters in the community. So my students learn about duality from day one, but to be involved in ho'oponopono they have to be at the third level or higher because it incorporates pīkai, spiritual cleansing, and pule, prayers that set the tone for the work to be done. And duality is important because for the lua person, life is not right or wrong, it's all perspective. In this way, truth is based on your perspective. For example, two individuals can look at the same thing and come out with different conclusions. In ho'oponopono we try to lay all those truths out on the table. So you can observe all the different angles. Doing so gives you a fuller picture of the situation.

## LYNETTE KAHEKILI KAOPUIKI PAGLINAWAN

My dad was pure Hawaiian from Moloka'i and my mom was Japanese, Hawaiian, and a little Caucasian. My maternal grandfather was a healer; he was the Hawaiian-problem fixer. Whenever there was a Hawaiian problem he was the one that resolved it for the family. My grandmother was the one in the family who was extra sensitive, the one who had a connection to the spiritual world. But she often did not know what to do with it. It was my grandfather who did the practice. I was reared with awesome stories of how he dealt with spiritual happenings. I remain in awe of the kind of knowledge and strength that he had. Those in our family born after 1958 never got to know him except through the stories of strange, weird, and powerful happenings. I grew up having had that kind of exposure on my mother's side of the family.

On my father's side, my household was reared in a very Hawaiian way. This was most evident in the way we were taught what were women's and men's roles. Dad was finicky about keeping women's clothes separate from his clothes during wash. We were taught that family was important, and we were raised to show respectful caring behavior toward family. We showed hospitality in our home to family and guests in the way we greeted them and offered food. We always had food on the table like poi, 'ōpae (shrimp), and some dried fish. So when people came we could receive them properly. "Come inside, come eat." My sister and I were reared to welcome visitors immediately and to prepare food and drinks. This applied not just in my own household but my relatives' homes as well. If they had children, they were not expected to prepare the food, but my sister and I were. It was my father's way. Also, whenever we greeted relatives we would immediately honi them. On my mother's side of the family we were the only ones who would do that on our own. The other children had to be told, go kiss your aunty or uncle, or your tūtū lady or tūtū man.

In our house, we had a large, round table that could seat ten to fifteen people. At this round table we often had people come to sit and talk story. My mother was a very compassionate listener. It did not bother my relatives that my sister and I were privy to some of their problems. Later when I was growing up, that round table also became the place where we lingered over coffee or crackers, a place where we could talk about things that were bothering us. It was there that we got the help and the direction we needed. From a young age, we were exposed to this cultural practice of the family coming together to resolve a situation. Living that kind of home life was the groundwork for my destiny in social work.

I knew I wanted to be a social worker when I was at Kamehameha Schools in the ninth grade. But I hadn't made the connection between the way we solved problems as a family and my interests in helping people. I thought social work was something you learned at the university. It was only after I attended the University of Hawai'i that I began to integrate the two parts of myself. In social work you have to know yourself. It's a process that's constantly encouraged. Deliberately

focusing on this meshing of who I am, what I come with, and what I learn helps me to recognize my role, my strengths, and my limitations.

## Generally when family members appear to us in dreams they come out of love, not to deliver bad omens.

After I graduated with my master's degree in social work, I took a position at QLCC. I was excited to work with Hawaiian clients and with the cultural committee that Richard and Tūtū Pukui had started. One of my earliest cases involved a Hawaiian

woman who had been treated in the state hospital. She was a single parent referred for help with parenting issues. She was on medication after having had several hospitalizations and attending a psychiatric clinic at least once a week. My role was to help her with the rearing of her teenagers and to talk about the triggers in her life that caused her stress. As it turns out, during her first hospitalization she had experienced a powerful dream.

In the dream, my client's Hawaiian grandmother appeared wearing a black mu'umu'u (loose gown) and shaking her finger. For this woman, black meant death. She told me about the dream and how she was afraid at that time in her life. But when she shared the dream with the doctors they gave her more medication and kept her locked up even longer. In her struggles to gain control of herself and her consciousness, she'd go to the top of the balcony and she'd do hula. She didn't need the music. She heard the ringing of bells. You could imagine, the doctor would get reports, she's dancing in the hallway and there's no music. And she's talking about hearing bells. This only made matters worse for her at the state hospital.

I asked her why she did hula. The woman said she was hānai-ed (adopted, raised) by her grandparents and lived mostly with adults. Hula lessons were the only time she got to spend with other kids and be happy. So the hula represented her attempt to connect back to that period when she was happy. I asked about the bells. She said, "Aunty Lynette, we live next to the Catholic Church and the bells are always ringing." The bells are a call to the community that church is starting. Again,

church was an avenue that could help her spiritually. For her that's what the bells meant. The doctor did not bother to find out what all these connections meant to her and how they might fit in with her attempts to regain control of her life.

After a few weeks, I sensed that there was a large Hawaiian component to my client's situation. I suggested that we approach Tūtū Pukui to see what she says. In one of our discussions the woman talked about her grandparents getting a call at night that somebody needed help. Because my client was the only child, they had to take her with them. So Grandma put on her black mu'umu'u and took her Bible and off they went. It turns out, Grandma did ho'oponopono. When I presented this information to Tūtū Pukui, she asked for more details about the grandparents. Then I shared the woman's ominous dream. Tūtū Pukui said, "Loved ones come back out of concern or when something is amiss in the family." So this woman comes to QLCC at a time when she needs help. Just like those people who would call her grandma in the middle of the night and she'd perform ho'oponopono in her black mu'umu'u. So the interpretation of the dream was not that black meant impending death. Rather, it was that Grandma is wearing her black mu'umu'u asking, "How come you're not getting ho'oponopono?" That interpretation opened the door to an incredible transformation. We began using ho'oponopono, and in a matter of months my client turned her life around. There were no more hospitalizations, her medication was reduced, and she spent less and less time at the psychiatric clinic.

Through that case I crystallized criteria for deciphering the interpretation of a Hawaiian dream. First, it is important to ask what the family member who appeared in the dream was like when they were alive. What did they mean to you? What did they do? Second, generally when family members appear to us in dreams they come out of love, not to deliver bad omens. Third, if they appear to us in a dream it is because there is a situation occurring in our life that needs resolution. Lastly, the family member may not give you the name of the solution but they will give you a hint to it. So when I hear a dream, I have to determine whether it is a Hawaiian dream or not, whether it has cultural and spiritual significance, or if it is simply a dream where one's mind wanders.

All of these experiences led me to learn more about ho'oponopono. In 1972, the cultural committee reached a point where they were ready to implement ho'oponopono in family treatment, and I was asked to participate. But first, I had to deal with the maka'u, the fear, of entering into ho'oponopono. It's not so much

that it's a sacred practice. But when you do ho'oponopono, it is a great responsibility, kuleana; you deal with people's lives on a much deeper level. If you're not careful you can make mistakes and injure people. You could also injure yourself and your family because you're doing something in a hewa (wrong) way. When I was younger, I was a student of hula under Iolani Luahine. She taught me that some Hawaiian traditions are reserved for certain individuals. While many may take to something like hula, only a few grasp it with the fullness required. And that's a kuleana (responsibility) that I had to decide very early regarding ho'oponopono.

So I had to determine, through my ancestral lineage, whether or not it was okay for me to do ho'oponopono. On my mother's side I believed it was alright because my grandfather did it. It is part of the historical cultural practice that comes down in our family. On my father's side I wasn't aware of it because when we had our discussions around the big round table he'd often leave. I went to Tūtū Pukui and she provided me with details of my genealogy. The names that she gave linked me to a person who was of chiefly status, who was a keeper of the Kālai Pāhoa gods during the reign of Peleiholani. The Kālai Pāhoa gods were the series of gods that Kahekili and Kamehameha I each wanted control over. The records show that as kahu (caretaker, guardian) of those gods, my ancestor Kaiakea did not abuse his

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power but instead took care of his people. It was the successive generations that used these gods in an 'anā'anā way. So through this genealogical connection I received the message that rituals like ho'oponopono can be used in a positive way or in a black magic sort of way.

When I told my parents that I was going to pursue ho'oponopono, my mom gave her blessing but my dad was adamant against it. He was raised in Hālawa Valley on Moloka'i where the 'anā'anā side of ho'oponopono was very prevalent. More than anything he was concerned for my children's safety. He did not want them to be punished for my actions. I also had an aunt who tried hard to dissuade me. On one visit, she questioned me in front of my mom, and my mom had a strange experience. My mother's posture gave me the clue. She was sitting erect; her back wasn't touching the chair. She was ramrod straight. Her eyes seemed different and they appeared to be looking into my soul. All the while my aunt kept questioning me about ho'oponopono. I responded to her by saying that I will admit my limitations, that I will be honest with people, and that I will let them know that if I don't know the answer I will seek

out the right help. When I looked back at my mother she said, “The silent stranger is leaving, your way is clear.” And that was it. My aunt got up and collected her things and implored me to be careful.

Before my aunt left, I asked my mother how she was feeling. She said her shoulders were sore. From Tūtū Pukui, I learned that the ‘uhane that comes to possess sits on the shoulders. When they leave the body their weight is no longer felt but the muscles of the possessed person often remain tired. The other thing Tūtū taught us was that a negative ‘uhane, one that is not good, enters through the toes. And when they enter the toe, the feet become cold and this sensation continues up through the body so that the leg feels chilled. I asked my mom how her feet were, and she said they were fine. That told me that the ‘uhane who perched on my mother was a spirit with good intentions.

At first I thought the ‘uhane was my grandfather, the Hawaiian-problem fixer. I took this situation to the cultural committee, and they asked me a series of questions. In the course of their questioning I realized my grandfather kept gods in a private room in the house. At night, he would prepare gin or whiskey, and he’d take it into this room. My mother, being the nosy one of all his kids, would ask, “Papa where you going with that? Who’s that for?” He would scold her and say, “Never mind. You don’t need to know.” Tūtū Pukui and Dr. Haertig explained that my grandfather’s ‘aumakua was a stranger to my mom. Even though she wanted to know about it my grandfather kept it a secret from her. So the “silent stranger that is leaving” might have been my family ‘aumakua. That gave me my answer. I had just been given sanction by my ancestors to study and practice ho’oponopono. As a result I shed all my fears and I entered ho’oponopono with an attitude that no one can stop me.

## HOPENA—CLOSING THE CIRCLE

There is a critical concept that links together Hawaiian rituals like lua and ho’oponopono, as well as the practice of social work. This concept is essentially spiritual in nature and is experienced as mana. Mana expresses an invisible connection that ties the living with the dead. It is a spiritual support that allows us to do something above and beyond what we’re capable of doing right now. We

inherit mana from our kūpuna (ancestors) and our ‘aumākua, but we also receive it through our personal achievements in life. Everyone has mana. The rituals in lua and ho‘oponopono teach us to respect mana and to acknowledge, first and foremost, that there are higher powers that hold jurisdiction over us. These cultural perspectives play a powerful role in social work as they emphasize relationships, interconnections, and consequences.

Let us return to the story of the woman who experienced noho ‘ia at the beginning of this essay. We presented her case to the students at the University of Hawai‘i’s John A. Burns School of Medicine, the Native Hawaiian Center for Excellence. We asked them, what would you folks do if this case came to you in the emergency room? The students and doctors collectively came up with 11 neurological possibilities. The first thing they said they would have to do was to run a series of tests. I reminded them that this woman would be tossing and turning around, almost flopping over the gurney. So they said they would have to put her in six-point straps. The tests might take 2 to 3 days to complete, and they might not know

what is causing her condition after that time. I asked what might be the ballpark figure for the bill for these tests, even though she could very well be discharged in the same condition. We were told it would cost upward of \$30,000.

These days the spiritual part of life is often overlooked, especially Hawaiian spirituality. In the treatment provision services as a social worker you might use Culture-Based Treatment (CBT) and that will certainly have an impact on Hawaiian clients.

But this approach is mainly cognitive—it’s from the head, not the gut. Whenever possible, we involve our clients in some kind of cultural practice or craft, so they get an insight into the Hawaiian essence of the art. Perhaps more important than the form of the art are the protocols and the kapu (restrictions) associated with its practice. Again, these rituals are necessary components for the healing journey. They take you past the human level to the sphere of working with the spirits. As a continuum, ho‘oponopono deals with the mundane and insight on individual behavior all the way to the point where you begin to engage with those forces that are more spiritual. It’s the weaving of the two that provides for different levels of intervention to impact change and affect well-being up to a very spiritual level.

The rituals in lua and ho‘oponopono teach us to respect mana and to acknowledge...that there are higher powers that hold jurisdiction over us.

For the Hawaiian, ākua and 'aumākua surpass all humanness. As such, prayer is a very important aspect of healing. We try to get to the heart of the matter by talking to our clients about spiritual beliefs. That means talking about the potential impacts of unseen forces and strange entities. You've got to make conscious what is a lot of times unconscious. This is where rituals and ceremonies come into play. They make things concrete by first recognizing our relationship to the spiritual world and second by laying out a prescribed set of actions to remedy different situations.

**Prayer is a very important aspect of healing.**

In the Pā Ku'ī a Lua, students learn how to do mahiki, which is exorcism or getting rid of spirits. We are often called upon to perform these rituals. In one year the pā (lua school) might receive eight to ten calls. The calls are mainly from Hawaiian families who are experiencing spooks in their house. We have the knowledge, so we treat the problem. We do exorcisms very thoroughly. I learned from my mama and also from Tūtū Pukui that there are different kinds of exorcisms. Pikai is salt water with turmeric or 'ōlena, and you take the mu'ō, the young shoot, of the ti leaf and you use Hawaiian salt. This mixture is used for purification. First, you must purify the persons going inside the house. They have got to be pono. To perform mahiki you enter and start from the right and move all the way around the dwelling. You have to open up all the nooks and crannies, all the doors, the cabinets, the refrigerator, everything. You need to take special care with dark corners because these are common spaces for spirits to hide. You eventually guide the entity out through the main entrance or other exit door. Interestingly enough, with Hawaiians and non-Hawaiians alike, after we go through this process there's no more pilikia (problems). Whether the ritual was something they believed or not, it doesn't matter. What matters is the outcome, which is good.

In ho'oponopono, as with other healing arts, the practitioner is only the vessel. The real healing comes from a higher power. But oftentimes we have human trash in our lives such as addiction or abusive behaviors, and these negative elements will always repel the healing process. Therefore, you have to deal with the human side of things first; as a healer you have to connect with that person and put that trash to the side. Only then, as people open themselves up and want to deal with the issues, will the process work.

These days we devote ourselves to sharing the knowledge we were made privy to with trusted individuals. One cannot be an ‘ōlohe without a disciple, a haumana to teach. At the same time, some cultural knowledge is not meant to be shared with any Tom, Dick, or Harry. There’s an expression in lua, “Hūnā nā mea hūnā,” keep sacred that which is sacred. So we assess our students carefully, a process that takes a long time. We look for specific characteristics: the right attitude, the proper state of readiness, the level of commitment, and the student’s ability to maintain pono in their life. We’re looking for people who are sincere and are going to be responsible with the knowledge. So what’s that behavior? We look for students who don’t flippantly talk about it to everybody and show off but instead are selective in how they present it and to whom. We’re looking for haumāna who are going to ponder and digest the information and say, “‘Ōlohe, I was just going over my notes and this part I’m not too clear on.” This demonstrates that they have taken their kuleana to heart, identified where they’re uncertain, and know the source to go to for clarification. They’re seeking authentic wisdom and not

We’re looking for people who are sincere and are going to be responsible with the knowledge.

just acquiring a mass of information and then trying to organize it. Those are the things that we look for to determine if a person is ready.

If you look at the word *haumana* there are several clues to what it means to be in a kumu-haumana (teacher-student) relationship. *Hau* refers to the mastication of the ‘awa (kava). When you masticate the root, the juices go down to your na’au. In the Hawaiian frame of reference your na’au, or intestines, is the seat of your intellect. Na’auao means a person is intelligent. Na’aupō means quite the opposite, that you’re ignorant or even full of it. What you’re taking down, what you’re chewing, is the mana that the teacher is giving you. As you start chewing on it and digesting it, then hopefully your intellect will be fed. Tūtū Pukui and Charles Kenn exemplified this approach, because when they selected a disciple, it was for life. This is true in lua, ho’oponopono, and in our opinion, all of the kahuna arts.



Lynette and Richard Paglinawan

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#### ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Richard Kekumuikawaokeola Paglinawan was born in Honolulu in 1936 and raised in Waiāhole. He received his bachelor's degree in sociology and master's degree in social work from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM). A veteran of the Hawai'i Air National Guard, Richard was a social worker with the Salvation Army and the Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center (QLCC) where he helped establish the cultural committee with Mary Kawena Pukui and Dr. E. W. Haertig that produced the *Nānā i Ke Kumu* series (1979). He trained in karate before becoming one of the first modern lua students of Charles Kenn, and he continues to teach lua in his school, Pā Ku'i a Lua, and works as a cultural consultant for QLCC and the Queen Emma Foundation.

Lynette Kahekili Kaopuiki Paglinawan was born in 1939, raised in Pauoa, O'ahu, and graduated from the Kamehameha School for Girls in 1957. She received a master's degree in social work from UHM before joining QLCC, where she pioneered the use of ho'oponopono in social work. She is a faculty member at the UHM School of Social Work, a cultural consultant for the John A. Burn's School of Medicine, and was executive director of the Bishop Museum's Native Hawaiian Culture and Arts program.

Richard and Lynette received the Native Hawaiian Education Association's Educator of the Year Award in 2010, and in 2011 both were honored with the Kaonohi Award by Papa Ola Lōkahi. In 2006, Richard was honored as a Living Treasure by the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawai'i. Richard and Lynette received a special recognition by the UHM School of Social Work for their careers of compassionate service on behalf of Hawaiian families, and in 2012 both were honored with the I Ulu I Ke Kumu Award by the UHM Hawai'iunuiākea School of Hawaiian Knowledge. Lynette was also honored as a Living Treasure by the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawai'i in 2012.