Mihi

Hinewirangi Kohu-Morgan

Waka Oranga Kuia, Hamilton

Hutia te rito o te harakeke,
Kei hea te kōmako e kō?
Kī mai kī ahau,
He aha te mea nui o te Ao?
Maku e kī atu,
He tāngata, he tāngata, he tāngata …

Pluck the heart from the flax bush,
Where will the bellbird be?
Ask me,
What is the most important thing in the world?
I will reply,
It is people, it is people, it is people.

This proverb comes from a kuia, who wept her heart out, because she could not give birth. She was barren. This was her plea, this was what was most important to her, humanity, humanity, humanity. This pūrākau became a very strong value in my work. The work of healing; not being healed by others, but by the healer within.

I came to Waka Oranga at the invitation of Ahihana Daly, a woman of substance, a beautiful, strong and loving wahine Māori; to speak at a New Zealand Association of Psychotherapists' (NZAP) conference around my story, and finding my healer within. It was at the hui in Napier that the waka was formed — out of need, for Māori psychotherapists to gather as tangata whenua to develop a He Ara Māori pathway, and other important things.

I was new to psychotherapy, but excited to learn from those that I knew were a part of this movement. This was a movement calling for recognition of the Māori women and men working in this discipline. Psychotherapy fascinated me; as I met women like Barbara Niania who practiced Hakomi, and she gave me all her books and resources to learn. I met my own relation from Ngāti Porou, Margaret Morice and her hoa rangatira/partner Dr Jonathan Fay, who follows a European practice of psychotherapy.

At that hui I met up again with my relation Haare Williams from Ngāti Ranginui. I was so pleased, to me he was my tuakana/eldest, he was an artist, a poet, and storyteller, and so

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was I. What happened at that hui also made me protect him from women who don't know the protocols of honouring the elders. I stood to protect him; he was being attacked.

From that day I have attended almost all of the hui and have loved growing the waka with others. The waka is still growing, though people have left hurt and never returned; it is a clash of personalities, and we have to learn how to deal with the strong women in this organisation. We have to learn to talk with each other — their training allows them to keep on talking, but it still needs solutions.

We are looking at traditions, without realising it, with modern and contemporary eyes, trying hard to have a modern conversation around a traditional concept.

We are still growing our kaupapa, He Ara Māori pathway, and what that means for us. We have still a long way to grow that kaupapa, because it isn't a monocultural way of working: we are not Māori, meaning "Indians, Aboriginals, Islanders"; no, we are not. We are inter-tribal peoples, with different kawa, tikanga, pūrākau, whakapapa, waiata; so how do you think we have to create this pathway? It is not going to be a monocultural way, and we are still trying to grow this as a waka, because our training has been in that monocultural way.

The greater question: can NZAP accept our way as another discipline and be happy to implement that learning in the different schools in this country?

I have worked for many years, creating the first Māori Women's Centre in Aotearoa, for sexually abused women and children, using our own Māori modalities of practice. It was a political stance, because we wanted to heal our people our own way, without the Western narratives and frameworks.

Then I created the first Māori Women's refuge and my father named it Te Whakaruru Hau/the guardian, again trying to implement Māori kaupapa. We worked for years creating resources in our communities for our women and children, but there was a part of this picture missing: our tāne/men.

I then entered the work of Waikeria Prison, to work with our men, to try to understand the paedophiles and other men who come to prison. I worked there for a number of years, then the Maori Focus Unit was opened, and I worked under the wing of Errol Baker, a man with insight, a man with a lot of aroha for our men. With Arrin Clarke of Ngawha prison and Don Hutana of Mangaroa prison I wrote the programme which we call Mauri Tū Pae. Our men respond to things Māori, and this was what I brought to Waka Oranga.

I began He Ara Māori learning with Jonathan Fay, for whom I have a great deal of aroha and respect. He would give the learning to me in his way and I would go home and study it in my way and take it back to him, so we could have a conversation around what I was learning. I wanted to learn the Western models of practice and discover if our tūpuna worked in a similar way. I found our tūpuna worked in a whole way, discovering how every part of the whare/body was, because they inter-related, whereas the Western models worked to separate the hinengaro/mind from the whānau, the wairua, and the tinana/body. And learning that was the point of rereketanga/difference; not wrong, just different.

This is what I believe we have to learn, together as a people, rereketanga. If we did this then we could work together with so much more understanding and willingness to learn the way also, but that is another story.

I wanted to come to the waka with this tūpuna kōrero, to share with those on the waka, and walk into our future, everyone rowing the waka in unison. The waka is the place where

our people can come to learn. I believe we need to understand this waka and who sits in the waka, and what they come with. Each one doesn't sit in this waka without knowing what it is that they come to share and what it is they have come to learn. I know if we do this and recognise each other's magnificence, we would guide this waka further into its future, but right now it is sitting still because the hoea waka/rowers are but few. We have to ask ourselves why? And again, we won't get one answer, there will be several and we have to work on those one at a time, in order to honour that why.

The waka is a magnificent waka, it has a beautiful and steadfast kaihautū/kaikōrero in Haare Williams: a poet, an artist, a wonderful father, friend and partner, a voice of the tūpuna from the ancient world, with the old language, not the modern; and a rangatahi walking in his shoes, Wiremu Woodard, who walks in humility and aroha for the waka.

The waka has three great and beautiful kaimahi, kaikaranga, kaiawhina, wāhine Rongonui, wāhine purotu, wāhine ataahua Māori, Margaret Morice, Dr Alayne Hall, and Cherry Pye. Accompanied by ngā wāhine kaimahi nunui, Fay, Verity, Rui, Anna, Gina, and also by Russell Waetford. It is a waka full of talented and gifted people and the waka needs to profile these people and their achievements. From the knowledge that we each carry, we could begin to offer at the same level our tūpuna knowledge so we truly can walk biculturally.

These people have worked tirelessly rowing the waka and when a tsunami comes, they navigate that wave with great precision and come off that wave with strength and aroha for the challenge. These people's songs are heard and are being sung, and we hold close the work they have done over the years bringing this waka to this place. They know that they need to make changes in the way we operate the waka in order for it to gush forward into a new future. There they will take up the new challenges and I am proud to be a part of the continued changes it makes.

Mauri ora,
Hinewirangi.

Hinewirangi Kohu-Morgan (Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Kahungunu ki Nuhaka, Ngāti Ranginui ki Tauranga Moana) is an artist, poet, and a visionary. She is the Vice Chair of the International Indian Treaty Council and is a Representative for the Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific movement. Hinewirangi teaches in New Zealand and abroad, conducting workshops on all aspects of Māori philosophies of mental, physical, and spiritual well-being. Her areas of expertise include traditional Māori parenting and healing using music, taonga puoro to "sing the soul back into being". Her work is based in lived experience and she uses those experiences to help men, women, and children to heal. Contact details: hinewirangi@xtra.co.nz.