

Nga Kawai Rangatira O Te Wheke Kamaatu
(The Eight Noble Tentacles Of The Great Octopus Of Wisdom)
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Believe it or not the above statement has powerful imagery for me, and helps me to sort out life's challenges. It helps me to honour my total well being, and to uphold those traditions that enable me to do so. It links me into the oneness of everything that exists.

My total well being is not only paramount to me, but is paramount to my children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren, because I am a unique being who links them up with the past, present and future. I am the one that can share the traditions and teachings of our ancient ancestors with them. I am the spring of water from whence they came.

Today I want to share some of the sacred teachings in regard to my total well-being, and keeping myself SAFE. Te Wheke Kamaatu Mai I Te Toihanga O Nga Rangi Tuhaha (The Octopus Of Great Wisdom From The Uppermost Of The Far Flung Heavens) is an ancient symbol that we have referred to for thousands of years. It is not based on theory, as suggested by other educationalists, who appear to believe, that like them, I identify with the western world. The truth is, is that I am like an iceberg, who reveals one tenth of myself as a 'jet setter', with a lot of insight into the western world, while actually practising ever so much more from my own cultural traditions and beliefs. Born into the 'Kohanga' (birthing home), and the 'Kura Huna' (mystery school), of my ancient ancestors of the Urewera, I cannot help but identify the way I do.

Are you prepared to walk with me for a time on the ancient path from "before the mists of time"?

The path is well signposted for each one of us, and gives the sustenance we need more than ever, in today's changing world.

Are you prepared to look deeply into yourself by using the eight dimensions of the ancient world ?

You have your own ancient path, and your inner universe to help you deal with an absolutely unique situation.

Are you prepared to perhaps use and share what you learn with others?

I am on about helping people remember their own power and wisdom if they have forgotten.

The Octopus of Great Wisdom with its three hearts can take us to so many different levels. I never cease to be amazed at the amount of knowledge that can come into one's existence.

Let us begin our journey and see which dimension comes into focus. I don't know about you, but the first one for me is the 'Wairua' (Spirit), because I believe I am a "Spirit" having a physical journey. We will look at the sign post of the Wairua, remembering that the spirituality of each one of us is private and personal to the individual. After flowing with 'Wairua', we will then move on, and link into the other seven dimensions.

WAIRUA (Spiritual Dimension. Spirituality - two waters. I need to keep myself spiritually safe)

He Atua! He Tangata! (I am Divine! I am Human). From as far back as I can remember, both my maternal and paternal grandparents made me feel very special, and always treated

me as their equal. For them, I was born with special gifts, and had my own set of 'guardians' to protect me on this earthly plane. I know how to provide sustenance for my own spirituality. I do not need religion, or someone else to mediate on my behalf. I have a direct link to the Source of Life, and the ONENESS of everything that exists. My Wairua is eternal. There are so many things that are spiritually uplifting for me. The following are some examples:-

- the keening voice of women welcoming and responding in the name of kinship ties; or farewelling friends and relations who have 'passed over', or paying tribute to ancestry;
 - having a hongī (pressing of noses) in greeting,
 - your loved ones being there for you, when you need them most;
 - the birthing and the loving care of babies, and celebrating the way they just are;
 - the beaming faces of happy contented people;
 - tribal brothers cooking to feed manuhiri (visitors);
 - gathering food or rongoa (medicines) in the bush;
 - planting, weeding, nurturing, and harvesting vegetables;
 - hearing karakia (incantations/prayers), waiata (songs), haka (posture dances);
 - walking in the rain, in the bush, or on the beach
- and so the list goes on.

I try to radiate goodness, that is the essence of me, and what I believe is the essence in everyone else. Should I deviate, or find that someone else does, I have to work on another approach to reinstate goodness. I resonate to the Divine in a way that is appropriate to me, and so do you, and so does everyone else.

MAURI (The Psychical Dimension. Life force/principle, psychical self, middle self. How safe am I psychically?)

This next dimension like every other dimension is paramount. I believe in pursuing experiences and people who are positively uplifting. My life force, my psyche, my mauri came into existence at my conception, and is sacred. Some people help my life force to wax and not wane. On the whole, these people, are 'family', close friends, and spiritual healers.

If anyone brings negative energy into my space, my presence, I move into 'neutral', so that I can move back from the situation that brought us together, to find the solution. I refuse to have people lumber me with their "baggage". My mother did not give birth to me, a "Miracle", just to have someone, trample, insult, or violate me. I deliberately take time out, to go into the Urewera bush to "recharge my batteries", as well as to help replenish

bird numbers, and to regenerate plants, as part of a Hapu (sub-tribal) project I'm involved

with. I call this reconnecting with Papatuanuku, Earth Mother. Her mauri (life force) is precious to me. She gives, and she gives. How do we reciprocate?

My grandparents, my mentors always spoke across, not down to me. I was treated with great respect for as far back as I can remember. As a child I was referred to as a Kaumatua (ancient being on a spiritual level), and was empowered by my mentors.

MANA (The Personal Dimension. My vested authority and absolute uniqueness from the Godhead, and my ancestors. Just how safe is my vested authority as a traditional Maori person in this country?)

Taku mana, taku mana, mana motuhake 3 x's
Taku ihi, taku ihi, taku wanawana 2x's

My absolute uniqueness, my vested authority is paramount,
My authority, my life force is awe inspiring.

There has never been anyone else exactly like me, and there never will be. I am a unique being, born with the God given right to be me. I have the good fortune of knowing my whakapapa/genealogy and the vested authority I have within that. I have Mana Atua/ Divine Right. Everyone has the same Divine Right, no more, no less. He Atua ! He Tangata! I am both divine and beautifully human.! I have a direct line to the Source of Life, and I do not need anyone to mediate on my behalf. I cannot repeat this enough times.

I am from Ra Ngati Ra (The living breath from the beginning and the ending of the Central Sun, the Divine Spark) and so are you.

Again I will not let negative energy move into my 'sacred space' if I can possibly help it. I was brought up to believe that I was perfect, unless and until I compared myself with someone else. I was brought up to believe in and love myself, particularly in terms of my whanau (extended family), my hapu (sub-tribe), and iwi(tribe). I believe in celebrating what all this means. This is the greatest tribute I can pay to the Atua(god/esses) who begat me.

TAHA TINANA (The Physical Dimension. Again the question of just how safe am I, physically?)

My physical being is sacred and should be cherished as much as possible. When I was in my mother's womb, I was nurtured, protected, baptised, massaged, cherished, and loved. My parents whanau as a whole, including my grandparents and great grandparents 'across the board' made sure my mother had the best food they could get for her, from both the sea and the bush. My mother told me her parents, grandparents spoke and sang to me, while I was still in the womb. She formed a closer, greater bond with them, and

she also had a very positive attitude toward the four Tohuna who helped her to give birth to me.

Our country is famous for its awesome natural environment. Waikaremoana is no exception. I was encouraged to participate in all forms of recreation and physical exercises

to help me develop agility, dexterity, rhythm, coordination, balance, harmony, poise, stamina, and the sheer joy of being human. My whole body is sacred, particularly my head and lower body. I was told to always take very good care of myself, and not to let anyone touch any part of my body. I was encouraged to cover my head, as one way of stopping people from touching it. It is something I practice to this very day. I was put on this earth to be cared for with unconditional love.

WHANAUNGATANGA (The Social Dimension. Immediate and extended kinship ties to family, all peoples, including all other living things across Papatuanuku, Mother Earth, and Ranginui, Sky Father. How safe am I socially in terms of the people I interact with?)

I come from a large extended family who believe in embracing and caring for all peoples. We have never limited ourselves to just immediate kinship groups. We care for and respect all living things. We care for the natural environment the same way, as one would care for a parent or child. Papatuanuku is our Earth Mother, and she is hallowed ground all of her. We cannot continue to pollute and violate her, or her 'many children', the way we have done, for so long. Our 'Divine' side has to help us treat each person, each living thing, with the graciousness and awareness that is befitting one who has the privilege of coming in alongside other fellow beings in a world, we all belong to. We need to celebrate kinship ties that move in the four directions across Papatuanuku, all galaxies, all universes.

The "hongi" (nose press) in a traditional Maori greeting, reminds us about how we inter-relate with all living things, as we come face to face with each other, for eg:

*the eyebrows, remind us of the wingspan of the 'Great Eagle', and the fact that we are related to all the birds;

* the forehead reminds us of the 'crown' of a tree, and the nose, the 'trunk', and again we need to care for the well-being of trees, in terms of their belonging to the greater family;

*the eyebrows also remind us of the 'tail' of the whale, and the nose, its body, so that all the fish, and their importance in terms of 'whanaungatanga', come into focus as well;

*when we press noses, we also share the same 'hauora' - Hau O Ra (the breath from the Central Sun, the Divine Spark)

I know I maybe biased, but to me, the "hongi" is the most sacred greeting that I know.

HINENGARO (The Intellectual Dimension. The Hidden Mother, the Intellect, the Mind. How safe am I mentally in this country?)

The Mind can be so powerful, and can move in an infinite direction, and should not be limited in any way. The mind is very loyal to you, and will adhere to your bidding. As a

Traditional Healer I cannot emphasize the importance and the influence of the mind enough, in regard to helping people heal themselves. Some people pollute their minds through thinking negatively about themselves and others. For example "self pity" is a

'toxin' that can be extremely detrimental to one's well being.

My mentors made me think for myself, and to find the answers to my questions from within "Tamaroto", my inner universe. Hinengaro has twin children, the Left Brain "Tumatauenga" her son, and the Right Brain "Rongo" her daughter. Tumatauenga is her rational logical 'child', and Rongo is her creative intuitive 'child'; together or individually, these 'two children' can help a person achieve and experience the aristocracy of the mind.

Mind 'travel', mental telepathy, intuitive intelligence are 'sciences' the traditional Maori see as a natural part of their makeup.

Even as a child I knew that my Pakeha (European) teachers in the State Schooling system were basically 'left brain' in their learning and thinking. Several of us could 'read' the teachers, and exploit them in various ways, depending on what we wanted from them. Their knowledge of the natural environment, and its many resources and their uses was very limited. We knew how to care for both the vegetable and flower gardens, and were a great credit to the school. All our insight and knowledge came from our 'parents' and 'grandparents' across the Maori community. On reflection I can best describe them as 'wisdom keepers'.

TAONGA TUKUIHO _ (Cultural Dimension. The cultural treasures and heritage of my forebears. How safe is my culture?)

I have interacted with at least 140 nations across the world, and I have yet to meet a nation that can welcome people the way the Maori can in New Zealand, when we apply all our rituals and protocols. Both the men and women can bring in imagery, vibrations, and movement into their welcome ensuring that the energy, the sacredness, the spirit of the occasion is presented and performed at the highest possible level.

Our rituals, our beliefs are interconnected and integrated with the 'ONENESS of everything that exists'. We have a holistic approach to life, and do not follow a 'bits and pieces' knowledge code. Papatuanuku, Earth Mother, and Ranginui, Sky Father, are concepts that enable us to appreciate and care for the natural environment and elements. The haangi (food cooked with an earth oven) is sacred because it is cooked using the four elements, air, earth, fire (symbolising the sun), and water. Every breath, everything that we see in the natural environment, reminds us of the importance of taking responsibility for ourselves and our Earth Mother and everything that she stands for, in terms of the survival of humankind.

Intergenerational teaching and learning are an important part of our culture, so that the extended family are seen as a natural vital part of learning and sharing together. We also know that learning continues in the womb, and that children are born with innate traits and gifts. The assumption we make, is that a child is born with a great sense of knowing.

Our culture sees the past, present and future as being one and the same. The Maori of New Zealand are still regarded as the finest conservationists and social scientists in the world,

and those of us who were born into our traditional Maori heritage have a responsibility to transmit this heritage the best way we can.

WHATUMANAWA (The Emotional Dimension. The 'ALL SEEING EYE of the HEART', the senses, including intuitive intelligence. Just how safe am I emotionally?)

This dimension is closely linked into the Divine in us. The 'all seeing eye', the healing eye in us, like our Spirit, is close to The Central Sun, The Divine Spark from whence we came, and ensures we have a direct link to The Source Of the Oneness of all things. We were encouraged to use all or most of our senses all of the time, and to develop intuitive intelligence to the highest possible level. Extra sensory perception is seen as second nature to us, and is now being accepted by the western world as a science. I remember having my elders and mentors being ridiculed and called "witch doctors" because of the way they healed us, and refused to use Western medicine. This country had an Act in Parliament up until recently, called the Tohunga Repression Act. Some Maori leaders in Parliament introduced the Act which was fully supported by the 'House'. How could any "authority" believe it could repress the spirituality and the soul of a people?

I am sharing these things because those of us who are Tohunga from the Kura Huna (the mystery school of our ancestors) are working constantly on both a temporal and spiritual level, to help bring about a lot more understanding amongst all peoples. We also openly support organizations worldwide who care for Papatuanuku, by:

- helping to plant millions of indigenous trees to help heal her ravaged, scarred body
- standing up to protect the total well being of all living things
- helping to heal all forms of pain
- fighting for the spirit of freedom, justice and truth.

My life of self discipline, true obedience, and insight has upheld my right to be spiritually, psychically, personally, physically, socially, mentally, culturally, and emotionally safe. I have had numerous challenges over the years from people in authority, trying to make me identify with a western culture, because they firmly believed that my culture has no place in today's world. All I can say is, that my culture ensures that I have "Safety First and Safety Last".

I AM ONE WITH EVERY PART OF MOTHER EARTH, SKY FATHER, INDEED ALL UNIVERSES, ALL GALAXIES.