

A woman stands in the shallow pool at the base of a tall waterfall. She is wearing a black and white patterned Māori-style outfit, including a crop top and leggings, with a red tassel hanging from her left arm. Her arms are outstretched, and she is looking upwards. The waterfall is surrounded by dense green foliage.

Our Sacred Māori Voices

Kelli Te Maihāroa & Adrian Woodhouse

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Mauria te pono
Believe in yourself

Edited by:
Kelli Te Maihāroa
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Tīmatataka | Introductions

We are delighted to introduce this book, *Our Sacred Māori Voices*, which draws together the early year learning experiences of six Māori learners, all of whom have graduated through the Capable NZ undergraduate degree programme. It is envisioned that this book will contribute to the Indigenous autoethnographic space as an introductory text, not only as an exemplar of how one may wish to write a reflective piece on their early years within a cultural context, but also to add to the richness and diversity of Indigenous voices and experiences in this field. It may also be a useful tool for other Indigenous writers who are contemplating writing about their own reflective life experiences or for future Capable NZ learners to encourage them to consider their unique life pathways, ponder, and explore their potential future. The inspiration for this book came from the editors who are part of the Capable NZ whānau (family). Based in Dunedin, Capable NZ offers a suite of online degree and postgraduate programmes and qualifications within the College of Work Based Learning at Otago Polytechnic, Aotearoa New Zealand.

In this book, we focus on the scholarly contribution of six Māori graduates from three Capable NZ undergraduate programmes: Bachelor of Applied Management, Bachelor of Social Services, and the Bachelor of Leadership for Change. Capable NZ offers an online opportunity for experienced adults to gain an undergraduate degree, Master's or Doctorate that

validates, extends and affirms the learner's knowledge, skills and experiences gained through work or community-based practices. This book includes contributions from a variety of early life experiences, backgrounds, and locations throughout Aotearoa. We seek to highlight the diverse experiences and lives of Māori learners, affirm Māori ways of knowing and being, and the resiliency within these whānau, hapū (sub-tribe), iwi (tribe) and hāpori Māori (Māori communities). We can learn much about ourselves when we pause to fully consider our life's journey to date, reflecting upon our family of origin, the influential people in our lives, the events that have shaped us and the lessons that we choose to carry with us moving forward into our future. In the process of reflective writing, there is also healing for Indigenous people who have been subjected to colonisation and in how we navigate our lives within these spaces.

Indigenous people have nurtured and protected the sacred wisdom and knowledge held within Indigenous cultures for thousands of years, treasured and passed on to the following generation through oral stories, songs, incantations, dance and multiple art forms. For Māori, the passing on of these gifts that are handed down as i taonga tuku iho, treasures handed down by the ancestors, has been disrupted due to the imposition of colonial practices over the last two hundred years of colonisation in Aotearoa. This has resulted in uplifting the critical importance of mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge systems), perspectives and ways of knowing, that are increasingly, and rightly so, now being more fully recognised and valued within the tertiary education system.

Within each life story, there are elements of colonisation threaded throughout the author's life experiences and their responses, some conscious, some less explicit, to resist the lingering process of colonial control and domination. As a counter narrative, this book celebrates the unique strength and resilience of Māori voices, perspectives and lived experiences in an effort to uphold the mauri (life force, essence) of Māori innate potential, resistance and hope. It aims to generate an awareness of the dynamic and sometimes multifaceted lives of Māori, to engage whānau Māori, readers, and teachers of Māori learners to be aware of the cultural continuum complexities. Having insight into diverse cultural backgrounds and the rich tapestry of experiences that learners and whānau bring with them, helps build cultural understanding, competencies and empathy

between people, both within the place of work and place of learning, where culture, identity and language are paramount in order to ensure cultural safety and create a conducive learning environment.

*Mā te rongō, ka mōhio
Mā te mōhio, kā mārama
Mā mārama, ma te mārama
Mā te matau, ka ora*

*Through resonance comes cognisance
Through cognisance comes understanding
Through understanding comes knowledge
Through knowledge comes life and wellbeing*

Introducing Autoethnography

Ethnography is the descriptive account of peoples and cultures, with particular foci on their traditions, customs, habits, behaviours and practices. As a qualitative research method, one of the main aims is for the ethnographic researcher to immerse themselves within the community of interest in an effort to observe patterns of behaviour and social interactions. Autoethnography has been defined as 'research, writing, story and method that connects the autobiographical and personal to the cultural, social and political' (Ellis, 2004, p. xix). The process of witnessing, observing, deconstructing and (re)constructing one's own intimate patterns of interactions, triggers and behaviours can be undertaken to explore a fuller, deeper, understanding of self.

Autoethnography calls for an enquiry into 'the intersection of self and others, self and culture' (Ellingson & Ellis, 2008, p. 4). It can also be used as an analytical tool to explore the self within wider social contexts or the position of cultural locatedness, historical trauma and colonisation, as a way of reaching out for shared understandings and new learnings. 'It may be that we feel the connection between ourselves and others most readily in the wake of pain, fear, and loss, but we also construct our positive meanings in relationship with others' (Ellingson & Ellis, 2008, p. 14).

Autoethnography is being increasingly used by Indigenous people to express themselves authentically within spaces that have been dominated by Western thinking, with minimal

attention on Indigenous experiences of cultural locatedness. Hana O'Regan's (2001, 1997) contributions of *Ko Tahu, ko au: Kāi Tahu Tribal Identity* explored her southern lived experiences, a thesis and book very much valued by Kāi Tahu in the South Island of Aotearoa. Pita King (2019) used autoethnography to examine his families' experience of disconnection and reconnection of ancestral homelands. Darnett and Rhodes (2021) drew on the research methodology of autoethnography through keeping a running journal to explore Aboriginal identity, whilst McKenna and Woods (2012) discussed the use of 'artful autoethnography' as a research method to affirm Indigenous Aboriginal stories through art and as a vehicle to reawaken and decolonise Indigenous people.

Indigenous Autoethnography

Although Indigenous autoethnography has developed from within the field of autoethnography, it is also intricately connected to 'Native' ethnography (Ohnuki-Tierney, 1984); Indigenous ethnography (Gonzales & Krizek, 1994) and ethnic autobiography (Bergland, 1994; Holte, 1988). Indigenous autoethnography has emerged as a tool to challenge misperceptions of Indigenous peoples across the multiple domains of social, cultural, political and historical contexts (Houston, 2007; Tomaseli, Dyll & Francis, 2008; Whitinui, 2014). This relatively new discipline has evolved in response to the worldwide Indigenous movement of the '70s and '80s, where a growing number of Indigenous scholars have argued that Indigenous people have the right to see and speak of their own world views from their own authentic perspectives (Bishop, R., 1999, 2005; Smith, 1999).

Indigenous autoethnography is a comparatively new methodology and method for systematically exploring and self-analysing first-hand experiences within an Indigenous cultural context (Bishop, M., 2020; Carey, 2016a, 2016b, 2018; Houston, 2007; Kainamu, 2012; Pham & Gothberg, 2020; Whitinui, 2014; Woodhouse, 2021). As a research method, it is a relevant and meaningful tool to self-deconstruct and re-construct Indigenous peoples' lived experiences to provide a deeper understanding of the Indigenous self. Accordingly, Whitinui (2014, p. 465) argues that 'by engaging in the (re) validation of being who we say we are as Māori, we also seek to legitimate our stories through a process of self-determination that is both liberating and empowering.'

Within Aotearoa, Reena Kainamu (2012) drew on Indigenous autoethnography to explore mauri as a key element in the development of self within the context of mental health and wellbeing. Melissa Carey (2016a, 2016b, 2018) has adopted Indigenous autoethnography as the overarching methodology in a case study, to reconnect with the transformative praxis of kaupapa Māori within the writing process and cultural advancement. Adrian Woodhouse (2021) utilised Indigenous autoethnography to explore the role and power of whiteness in creating the loss of Māori identity and historical cultural trauma.

Internationally, Indigenous autoethnography is increasingly being used as an interdisciplinary research methodology to examine colonisation, decolonisation, anti-oppression, action research and affirm Indigenous ways of knowing and being. Houston (2007) identified two research junctures to affirm indigeneity: i) an Indigenous response to societal challenges and ii) as an affirmative research method in a space where Indigenous peoples have been pressed to create distance between the research 'self' and the subject of investigation. Here she claims that the 'Indigenous researcher - burdened with the challenge to perform academically rigorous research and the desire to practice this research respectfully - is often overwhelmed with internal conflict' (Houston, 2007, p. 45).

Pham and Gothberg (2020) used autoethnography and Indigenous autoethnography to analyse the decolonial aspects of the lived experiences of an Indigenous woman. Similar to the goals of this book, Michelle Bishop (2020) outlines three aims for her contribution to this space: i) to support the growing literature on Indigenous autoethnography, ii) offer alternative pathways for Indigenous scholars, and iii) illuminate and normalise Indigenous practices for non-Indigenous researchers. Here Bishop (2020, p. 367) states that 'Indigenous autoethnography allows a space from which I can expose (and resist) the abnormality of the 'normal'; fulfil cultural, ethical and relational obligations; and re-centre axiology and ontology as a starting place for research.'

The significance of deploying this tool to privilege Indigenous voices within academia is a significant move towards highlighting Indigenous lived experiences, positioning Indigenous realities at the heart of cultural self-analysis, recognition, understanding and being. The beginning of a life-story is important, as it sets the context

for the narrative to be placed within a particular time, place and space. Whitinui (2014, p. 466) states that how we choose to start a 'story' is not only an important determinant in how we place ourselves within, but is also dependent upon how we really see ourselves in, the world we live, through pondering the following questions:

1. Who am I and where am I from?
2. How well do I know myself as being an Indigenous person?
3. What do I believe in as an Indigenous person?
4. What angers me or lifts my spirits as an Indigenous person?
5. What are the rules of conduct I set for myself as I make my way in the world and how do these rules relate to who I am as an Indigenous person?
6. What am I willing to defend as an Indigenous person and to what lengths am I willing to go to defend it?

In many ways this book is an attempt to illuminate the sacred Māori voices of emergent Indigenous scholars, to shine a spotlight on the koha (gift) that is offered as a glimpse into the authors' lives. As co-editors, we sought to provide a platform for Māori and Indigenous readers and writers to see aspects of themselves reflected in another, and for the enquiring mind of another to seek and identify aspects of the self through the experience of another. The six contributors are supported to express themselves in their reo-a-iwi (dialectal language), upholding the mana of each unique tribal dialect. We hope this text will provide an opportunity to gain insight into the lives of these authors, and the factors that have contributed to shape and influence their lives, their lived realities, and worldviews. Within each chapter, the author presents their life-story as an insight into their world, framed through their own lens and experiences. Each text elucidates the cultural background of the writer's familial relationships, influential patterns and the lives that they made for themselves and that evolved out of these contexts. As editors, we feel a sense of honour and privilege to be able to offer the following brief introduction of each author's text, which will then lead into the authors' Indigenous autoethnographic chapters which form the body of this book, followed by a concluding editorial discussion which draws the narratives together.

Tracy Te Wake

Ngāti Hāua Ki Taumarunui, Te Ati Haunui-A-Pāpārangi,
Ko Ngāti Apa, Ko Ngā Wairiki



Photographer: Roxy Whiteman

Ko au te awa, ko te awa ko au. Tracy Te Wake walks with her tūpuna beside and alongside the Whanganui awa (river), where she holds deep reverence for her ancestral river ecosystem; 'ngā taonga o te pōuri me ngā māpihi maurea a ngā wāhi ngaro,' 'these are treasures to be found in the dark and hidden places.' As the whakataukī signifies, the ancient treasures will be revealed in time, and the significance of her birthplace, time and space, her hopes and dreams. Her aspirations of navigating te ao Pākehā and te ao Māori hold many similarities to her ancestral river, finding ways to flow together. The whenua and river teach the importance to whakarongo (to listen carefully) on the marae, to the maunga(mountain), a childhood spent encircled by the comfort in knowing these ancestral places. Tracy speaks to the pivotal moments of her life, being falsely accused of cheating at school, the inherent racism and her role in challenging these unfounded assumptions, fueling her passion for alternative education.

This journey has led her to work within her community with Takawai and Chris Murphy, decolonisation advocates, to increase historical awareness of how Māori have struggled to achieve equity and justice and raise awareness and commitment to the struggle. This quest of nationhood building has led to Tracy being an outspoken advocate for Māori to access and gain quality education as a legislative right under Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Literacy is a lifelong journey and Tracy identifies strongly with a variety of Māori literacy modes, such as pepeha (tribal saying), whakapapa, waiata (songs), whaikōrero (formal songs), whakataukī, mōteatea (chant, lament), pūrākau (stories of the past), wānanga (discussions), haka (tribal dance), kōwhaiwhai (ornamentation), tukutuku (lattice work), whakairo (carving), and tā moko. She welcomes the inclusive learning environments provided by the whenua, kaumātua, whānau, hapū and iwi. Here she learnt the art to whakarongo, to wait for the tohu to proceed forward, critiquing the domain of Western knowledge alongside ancestral knowledge.

When Tracy came to realise the power and strength of ancient waiata within the Native Land Courts and the Whanganui River Claims she knew that she needed to provide an oral submission for her degree as a way to make space for Indigenous ways of knowing and being. Tracy is descended from an extensive line of tohunga (experts), intricately connected to te taiao (environment), and the Whanganui awa is her source of inspiration, healing and ancestral connection. It is through whakapapa and whanaungatanga that she is confident to hold this space, the importance of being grounded.

Tracy Te Wake

Ngāti Hāua Ki Taumarunui, Te Ati Haunui-A-Pāpārangi,
Ko Ngāti Apa, Ko Ngā Wairiki

Treasures of the Kete

*Ko Ruapehu tōku maunga
Ko Whanganui ko Mangawhero ko Whangaehu ōku awa
Ko Aotea, ko Kurahaupō ōku waka
Ko Ngāti Hāua ki Taumarunui, ko Te Āti Haunui-a-
Pāpārangi,
ko Ngāti Apa ko Ngā Wairiki ōku Iwi
Ko Ngāti Hāua, ko Ngāti Hine O Te Rā ko Ngāti Huru Te
Rā ōku hapū
Ko Ngāpuwaiwaha, ko Ōtoko, ko Kauangaroa ōku marae
E rere kau mai te awa nui mai te Kāhui Maunga ki
Tangaroa
Ko au te awa, ko te awa ko au*

Walking alongside my tūpuna, my journey has been one of acknowledging the deeper understandings and knowledge of a people who respect the sacred ancestral river. The ecological systems that support life and their influence on the natural order and values of the river people. It is my people's understanding that the whenua holds, speaks to and of ancestral knowledge and ways of knowing and being. Along with my own life experiences, this understanding has framed my thinking and

produced my life mantra: 'Ngā taonga o te pōuri, me ngā māpihi maurea o ngā wāhi ngāro': 'There are treasures to be found in the dark and hidden places.' Treasures of an ancient people, to be remembered and revealed in time.

In Taumarunui in the early 1800s a high ranking Ngāti Hāua ariki (chiefly) woman, Katarina Te Waihanea, daughter of Te Awhitu and Te Waihanea Uruweherua married Alexander Bell, the first Pākehā to settle in Te Rohe Pōtae, the King Country, and they had a daughter, Pareuirā. Pareuirā and Whakakeho Phillips had a son, Richard Hikairo Phillips, my grandfather. Maraea Te Peo and William Reed Chadwick, an Englishman, had a daughter, Tini Jane, who married Hori Te Rangiao from Kauangaroa. Their daughter Rewa Alice Rangiao and Te Kawau Himiona, a respected tohunga from Ōtoko on the Whanganui River, were parents of my grandmother Ruihi Lucy Kawau. My father, Colin Phillips, was born to Richard Hikairo Phillips and Ruihi Lucy Kawau in Waitara. In the upper reaches of the river at Tāwata, Titi Tihu, tohunga and grandson of Te Kere Ngātaierua, brought up his nephew, Joseph George Te Ao Tangata Allen-Tihu. My koro Joe, alongside my grandmother Ruihi Lucy Kawau, raised my father from childhood.

My English and Scottish ancestors, concerned with the welfare and future of their family, emigrated to New Zealand. John and Isabella Fletcher-née McGlashan arrived on the *Otago* in 1873 into Port Chalmers. John and Sarah Radford née Messenger arrived in Lyttleton on the *Mermaid* in 1862, acquiring land and settling in Gebbies Valley. William Fogerty arrived in Dunedin in 1880. After setting up a business as a bootmaker, he sent for his wife Annie Wilson and children to join him. They arrived in Lyttleton in 1883. James Fredrick Moodie arrived sometime around 1893, after following Emily Jane Moodie, William and Annie's daughter, back to New Zealand after a family trip that had taken them back to Scotland to visit family. My mother, Suzanne Mary Phillips, was born to Alan Logan and Miriam Eva Fletcher née Moodie. My grandfather was in the armed services before turning his attention to teaching and my grandmother raised her family before continuing with her nursing career. My maternal grandparents' association with the river began when they resided in Matapuna on the banks of the Whanganui River in Taumarunui then continued in their later and final years when they settled and lived out their final days in the River City, Whanganui where the river meets the Tasman Sea.

Ngāpuwaiwaha, the meeting place of the waters, and also the name of one of my marae, is on the upper reaches of the Whanganui River near the junction of the Whanganui and Ongāruē rivers in Taumarunui. In our tribal history Taumarunui was geographically important. The junction of the Whanganui and Ongāruē Rivers was a focal point, the meeting place of descendants of the Aotea, Tokomaru, Tainui and Te Arawa waka from the great migration. It was here, in Taumarunui, that the worlds of my ancestors converged and I was born to Colin Phillips and Suzanne Mary Fletcher, fresh out of Ardmore Teachers' College and beginning their careers in the education sector. The significance of my birthplace, the intertwined worlds of my ancestors, their kaitiakitanga (guardianship) of mātauranga Māori and Pākehā knowledge alongside their commitment to educating the next generation has not escaped me, and is a constant reminder of who I am. A weaving together of people, places and the hopes, dreams and aspirations of those that have gone before which find passage in and through my life. My journey is one of discovery, learning to navigate te ao Pākehā and te ao Māori, sitting with the tension that can exist in this space and being prepared to listen and learn in order to walk confidently in both worlds. Like the river, as the many waters converge, navigate the terrain and find ways to flow together, this too is my journey.

The Māori concept of whakarongo has a much deeper breadth of meaning than just listening. Whakarongo involves engaging in all one's senses in order to hear and understand. Whaka is the action of doing, or making something happen, or quite literally to engage in; rongo to taste, hear, touch, smell and feel, all the senses apart from sight. In having heard one would then take action. Te ao Māori has a rich oral tradition that lends itself to teaching and learning approaches that value oratory, observation and listening. Intentionally carving out space and time in my life to be still, to 'whakarongo' has become an important requirement of my learning journey. In surrendering to the flow and being prepared to leave the safety of the riverbank, that which is known to me, has allowed me to engage with all that unfolds with each unique bend and turn along the way.

When I consider my journey, the richest experiences have occurred when I have engaged in learning in this way, with care, purposefulness and a surrendering of what I know in order to observe and allow the hidden to emerge. My understanding

of what this means can be attributed in part to the example of my father, who taught me to appreciate nature and my surroundings. Time on the marae, whānau gatherings, and a childhood spent on my whenua, maunga and awa. The kōrero and commitment of my Koro Joe and Koro Titi to live according to the 'ways of the old people' provided many opportunities through my formative years to observe, listen and learn. My experience of whānau taught me how one's actions have the ability to impact positively or negatively on oneself, whānau and the wider collective. It has been in the seedbed of connection to each other and the environment that I have learnt to whakarongo, calling forth a response to fulfil my obligations to my tūpuna and mokopuna.

Several significant events shaped and acted as signposts early in my journey. I was unaware at the time of the significance that these encounters would play in my life moving forward. The first was an experience of racism as a young taura (student) in high school, being accused of cheating. Based on previous experience, the young teacher had quite wrongly assumed that Māori were unlikely to be capable of such results. In retrospect, with the support of my mother in arranging a meeting with the teacher concerned, I discovered I had a voice as a young girl of thirteen challenging the racism and injustice of this situation. A few years later, after becoming pregnant I negotiated remaining at school to continue my education, advocating for myself and for those who would follow, in similar circumstances. Much of my adult life has been spent working with rangatahi (youth) who have not found their place or have experienced barriers to success in mainstream education. Initially as a youth worker and then engaging with school leavers and secondary students in the alternative education sector.

Education for me has never been for education's sake, recognising that knowledge serves a purpose and is intrinsically linked to one's obligation to the collective, thereby enabling one to upskill to serve one's community more effectively. This has led me into unexpected waters, in directions that had not previously been part of my life plan. Much of my learning journey has been in response to what is alive in my world, including those whom I journey with in my mahi. One would assume that in my many years working in the education sector, completing a teacher training qualification would have been the path forward, however it was youth and social work, coaching, mentoring and leadership training that provided the

skills needed to better serve the rangatahi and whānau with whom I work.

A sense of wanting to see young people, in particular Māori tamariki (children) and rangatahi Māori, reach their potential led to another unexpected turn involving advocacy for change. So began my involvement as part of the leadership team in a community wide professional development programme for educators. A long-term commitment to facilitate change, to challenge unhelpful mindsets, to grow teacher awareness and capability to engage with Māori tamariki, rangatahi and whānau. This can only lead to better relationships and better educational outcomes for Māori.

It has been a privilege to engage with Takawai and Chris Murphy who deliver the Te Pumaomao Nationhood Building course, providing opportunities to wānanga across our community with educators and associated staff. A commitment to the challenging work of raising awareness, that te ao Māori in mainstream education is not just a consideration or for the privileged few, but the right of every taura Māori under Te Tiriti o Waitangi. The ongoing nature of this mahi, as staff come and go from our community, requires us to intentionally put ourselves back in this learning space. One that can be extremely uncomfortable, yet entirely necessary if we are to continue to challenge each other to grow, to take ground and occupy territory afforded us by Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

In the report, *Te Kawai Ora* (Māori Adult Literacy Reference Group, 2001), literacy is defined as the lifelong journey of building the capacity to 'read' and shape Māori and other worlds. The report suggests that in order to ensure better outcomes for Māori a shift is required in our thinking to one of nationhood building. The paradigm shift needed to make this change requires us to recognise that attempts by the Crown to address Māori success in the education sector have been driven by Western hegemonic values and ideals that have failed to acknowledge te ao Māori perspectives on how knowledge is defined, framed and measured. Knowing that true partnership and power-sharing must be actioned calls us to do more than just engage in dialogue in order to effect change and to make room for te ao Māori ways of knowing and being. In order to be the change that we would like to see, it is crucial that we challenge ourselves to practically walk this out with regards to our own practice at the coalface, whilst

continuing to have courageous conversations advocating for change in our respective places of work at management and governance level.

Slowly but surely, we are seeing an attitudinal shift that is making a difference in and outside of the classroom for our rangatahi and tamariki Māori. A shift in the sincerity and respect towards Māori beliefs, language and culture has been observed as has an increase in the provision of contexts for learning where identity, language and the culture of Māori learners and their whānau are affirmed. A tiki tour to sites of significance for Māori in our area came from the most recent Te Pumaomao hui and flowed naturally from the community wide commitment to staff professional development to increase understanding and participation in te ao Māori. The Tiki Tour, a kaupapa Māori learning experience intended to build connection to people and place, enables participants to gain further experience and growing comfortableness in te ao Māori, 'enlarging the circle' to further develop relationships with iwi and our Māori community. We purposely chose not to frame and assess the learning experience from the familiar reading, writing and mathematical perspective. The intention was to deliver a rich learning experience, through oratory, pepeha, waiata, and placing our feet upon the whenua, as we listened to the kōrero of kaumātua, effectively creating the opportunity to intentionally whakarongo.

The prelude to the Tiki Tour quite unexpectedly came on the drive home from Northland, when I came across the Bachelor of Leadership for Change programme offered by the Otago Polytechnic's Capable Learning community online, a course that offered opportunity for tairua to contribute, to explore and to exercise rangatiratanga over their own learning. A weaving together if you will, within a flexible structure of the learning and life experiences of tairua, written I am sure with the likes of me in mind.

When considering my life experiences and the many challenges along the way, the convergence of the Bachelor of Leadership for Change programme and the Tiki Tour provided the perfect conditions for the discovery of new treasures, along with the uncovering and remembering in my own life of ancient understandings, those of my tūpuna. The Tiki Tour became the catalyst that led me into uncharted waters, with regards to my own experiences as a learner in the Bachelor of Leadership for

Change programme, where I chose to submit an oration for my project report, and not a written report as required, challenging the status quo, holding space for mātauranga Māori, and using my voice for change.

Perhaps I did not seek this but indeed it sought me, creating time and space for the revealing of ancient ways of knowing and being. In the pursuit of my tohu mātauranga (qualification), quite ironically it was the many other tohu that guided and directed me in the way I should go, acting as landmarks, points of reference to help chart the way ahead. I found myself in a situation where I could not write and the words were not forthcoming. I did what I knew to do and went home to Taumarunui to my awa to reflect. As I stood in the river, with the wai (waters) of both the Ongārue and Whanganui awa washing over my feet, my pepeha came to mind, 'Ko au te awa, ko te awa ko au,' 'I am the river and the river is me,' reminding me of the streams of wai that contribute to the life force of this awa. I reflected upon my educational journey, the dominance of Western models of knowledge, thinking and understanding and as I allowed myself to whakarongo, I realised that there were other streams of thinking and understanding that I needed to make space for in my life. It was now their time.

This was the first of several tohu on this journey home. The second came when I went to visit whānau, and was reminded of a submission to the Native Land Courts early last century, with regards to the Whanganui River Claim, an ancient waiata, holding within it the whakapapa and rich history and indivisible relationship of the awa and the people. The power, beauty and wealth of knowledge contained in those spoken words were enough, although official documents recorded that the kaumātua simply came, sang a song and left. It was in that moment that I knew I was not meant to write. Out of respect for the kaupapa (topic) of my particular project and to make space for Indigenous ways of knowing and being, I considered how best to honour my learning.

The third tohu: a kete (woven basket) carrying the wāhi rua design gifted to me by my aunty, of which she said, 'this is you.' I had little understanding of what she meant at the time but as my journey has unfolded so too has my understanding of the significance of that gift. The wāhi rua design can literally be translated as 'two places, two moments, two people.' A reminder for me of where I come from. The two streams representing

both my Māori and Pākeha whakapapa, one no more important than the other, both deserving of equal significance. I am that kete, a receptacle of knowledge both ancient and new and poised to hold that which is yet to be discovered.

The Māori word for the process of constructing the kete, raranga (to weave), is also the word used for direction, course, bearing and to blow gently. When considering how I bring rangatiratanga (leadership) to my own learning and that of others, the process I have engaged in is one of the weaving together of people, contributing to setting a course to bring direction and creating opportunities where self-direction and self-determination can be exercised. In coming to recognise that this kete is me, I began the process of discovering the taonga within, treasures of great worth, knowledge, understanding and learnings that I have gathered along the way. The first is my awa, the Whanganui River, a source of healing, inspiration and a reminder of my connection to my tūpuna and of their values and beliefs that inform and drive my practice. My journey, ever changing and growing with the need to adapt to the environment along the way.

My practice is influenced by Mason Durie's work (2003, 1999), in particular, *Te Whare Tapa Whā*, and Chellie Spiller's *Wayfinding Leadership*, both of which hold true to the necessity of balance and harmony and have a holistic perspective to them. One that acknowledges the interrelationship between multiple dimensions, physical, emotional, spiritual and intellectual and draws upon ancient ways of knowing and being Māori in Aotearoa. *Wayfinding Leadership* is deeply intuitive and requires recognition and a response to what is happening. Staying still and adjusting to the signs around you and being responsive rather than reactionary. In essence being still enough to whakarongo. I am reminded of my connection to and obligation to the whenua, my tūpuna whose hopes, dreams, and aspirations I carry and to my mokopuna, those who will come after me. Pohatu's work (2010), *Ngā take pū*, the elements of which are rangatiratanga (respectful relationships), ahurutanga (safe space), mauri ora (wellbeing), kaitiakitanga (responsible stewardship) and taukumekume (tension both positive and negative) has provided a sound base of good practice for life and work that I have endeavoured to live by, in order to carry out those obligations.

I see and feel my tūpuna around me, and reflected in the mauri of nature, reminding me that I come from a line of tohunga, carriers of specialist knowledge. The native kawakawa speaks to me of the need for balance and harmony, reminding me to consider my own hauora (health) and that of the collective. For me the kawakawa leaf, itself not perfect yet potently powerful, is a reminder that leadership does not require perfection but a commitment to the wellbeing and growth of others and self. The āwhiowhio (spiral) also used to describe a whirlpool reminds me of the interconnectedness of relationships between myself, whānau, hapū and iwi, and the importance of these in all seasons of life. In as much as ahau (I, me) relates to myself, hau refers to breath, wind, the essence of a person or place, to be heard, resound or to spread news. I recognise that leadership requires me to speak life, hope and encouragement to others, to be authentic and the change that I want to see.

Authenticity requires bringing my true and best self to my learning and to my relationships, growing my strengths and looking to explore and discover the hidden me. To do this, I have learned how important it is to continue to develop my reflective practice. Whānau, as well as representing my family and those who I work closely with, also means 'to give birth to.' This speaks to the breaking of new ground, innovation and the opening of new opportunities, and the pursuit and discovery of new horizons. It is whanaungatanga, the working together, the shared experiences and observation of rights and obligations to oneself and the collective, that has provided environments where healthy relationships flourish. Whakapapa, primarily one's genealogy, but also the layers and history attached to the organisations and communities that I interact with, has helped me in making connections to people and place and is a key component of the process of whakawhanaungatanga. The importance of making connections with others, relationship building, creating platforms and opportunities for others to find their place to stand and grow in te ao Māori is intrinsically linked to whakawhanaungatanga (process of establishing relationships).

Finally, the āwhiowhio to me is a reminder that the learning journey is often fluid and in movement, challenges are commonplace and rarely does one find a direct route from one point to the next. By remaining open in anticipation and enlarging the circle one discovers the potential for growth in others and ultimately oneself. It is with this in mind that I consider

the whakataukī: 'Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi engari he toa taki tini', 'My strength is not that of an individual but that of the collective.' My appreciation has grown as has my understanding of the value of recognising the strengths of the collective and engaging in ongoing critical reflection. I am reminded of the importance of having an awareness of my own limitations and strengths and those of others as we move forward in order to be responsive to what is emerging. Recognising that within this understanding of collective power lies the key to the sustained change, health, and wellbeing of any organisation.

It was due to this collective power that I was able to take my stand, by not submitting a written report, holding space for Māori understandings and the practice of oration. A practice used for generations to define, hold, and pass on knowledge alongside other forms of Māori literacy such as whakapapa, whakataukī, mōteatea, pepeha, pūrākau, waiata, haka, kōwhaiwhai, tukutuku, whakairo and moko, reflecting places of significance, the environment and its various elements, and the kōrero of the people. And in doing so acknowledging that Māori forms of literacy have as much relevance and validity as the cultural norms of Pākehā literacy.

The journey is ongoing, has at times been tough and required much courage in pushing the boundaries and creating conditions for the acceptance of mātauranga Māori in my own learning and the wider education experience. Writing was never the challenge. To write would have been the easier option, requiring less time, effort and energy. The challenge was to become the change I wanted to see, to advocate for te ao Māori ways of defining, framing, and assessing knowledge. The risk was potentially not being awarded a degree in taking such a stand. However, in not making a stand the risk was that we continue to do what we have always done in education, propping up a system that has historically not served the purposes of my people, meaning that another generation is impacted negatively. My stance was, if not me, then who? If not now, then when?

My decision to raise awareness of mātauranga Māori, was based on what I believed was best for the collective and not necessarily for myself. In challenging the dominant discourse within education regarding how knowledge and learning is captured and measured, I know that I am playing my part in ensuring an improved educational landscape for my mokopuna. I take

courage from the example of my tūpuna whose life work was on behalf of the Whanganui River and people, in the longest running litigation in New Zealand history, the outcome of which reminds me that the fruits of our labour are not always seen in our lifetime. However, I have confidence that what I do in the time given to me can and will make a difference for tomorrow.

The Tiki Tour project and research in and of itself encapsulated some wonderful discoveries and learnings for me and our community. Consolidating and developing my leadership skills and attributes, and more importantly, however, reminding me of who I am, allowing me the opportunity to stand in who I am as a Māori wahine and helping to reconcile within myself that which I bring to the table is unique, of value and enough. I have found my voice in the process of giving voice to those who have been silenced, namely Māori. I have learnt to be comfortable with the uncomfortableness of change. To embrace it and allow the emergence of the new and unexpected. I have learned to be still, to wait, to listen, to observe and to trust the process, running contrary to what Western culture values as productive and successful and in a world that says you must be 'doing.'

Being still has led me home to my whenua and awa on many occasions, reminding me of the importance of remaining grounded, of reflection, listening to the whenua and awa speak and affirming my purpose. As I stand at the crossroads, ask for the ancient paths and remember the ways of those who have gone before, I acknowledge that this spiritual journey has opened spaces for the act of remembering in order that I might recognise that the time is now. Much like my tūpuna, who embarked on the long journey to Aotearoa, brave, courageous, adventurous and looking to discover new horizons, with the intention of doing what was best for the collective. I find myself responding to the call. The call to new lands, territory, experiences, and adventures out beyond the shoreline of the awa. Feeling the wind at my back, the calling of my tūpuna, accepting of what is, acknowledging the unknown, surrendering to the flow and leaning in to what is to come.

*E rere kau mai te awa nui mai I te Kāhui Maunga ki
Tangaroa
Ko au te awa, ko te awa ko au.*

*The river flows from the mountain to the sea, I am the
river, the river is me.*

Keri Ropiha

Ngāti Kahungunu



Photographer: Jo Renall

Keri Ropiha lives in her hometown with her partner and daughter. She was born to a young Māori mother of 18 and was promised to be a treasured whāngai (adopted) child to an aunt who desperately wanted a baby boy. When Keri was surprisingly born a daughter, her aunty changed her mind and Keri was placed in the gentle care of Marama and her husband Hone, their whānau of two sons, nine and ten, and daughter, six. Keri exclaims that this life-changing event was meant to be: 'I am the baby of this magical circle of people and always will be. I had found my place in the world to live out my childhood.'

Keri was placed within a loving, giving, charitable whānau, who were community minded, hard-working, loyal and dedicated to their whānau. Her father is the second youngest of 17 and her mother the eldest of nine, all born within ten years. As the eldest child of multiple young siblings, Keri's whāngai mother had to learn early the challenges of being in a house with many drunken parties as their mother played the piano. Keri revelled in the joy that her parents had a solid relationship, where her father took extra cousins on holiday because he wanted every kid to feel loved and enjoy some holiday fun. She adds that his kindness knew no bounds. Her parents became a successful business couple who travelled the world, including taking ten members of a kapa haka group to America for the Te Māori exhibition.

Some of the key learnings that Keri gained growing up within her whānau were to be kind without expectation, forgive without judgement, and to know your whakapapa. Growing up within a large whānau meant that she had 36 first cousins and learnt to treat others with kindness, even if this was not reciprocated. As she grew older, Keri learnt the importance of knowing her whakapapa intimately, and the benefits of a happy extended whānau, church-going, skilled in kapa haka, often with large whānau gatherings and reunions.

Life hasn't always been rosy, with her brother passing away in a car accident and her parents separating, but coming back together as a whānau when her father was dying. In a home where you didn't have time to get sick, her mother and father continued to show that the ultimate language of love lasts forever. 'I am unique, I love that. I never bow to anyone's wishes if they don't make me happy.' This is the language of self-love and respect.

Keri Ropiha

Ngāti Kahungunu

Whāngai to Whānau (Foster to Family)

My name is Keri, and I was born on the East Coast, Central Hawke's Bay, in 1973. I have a partner of 17 years, Anaru, and a 26-year-old daughter, Whiri. We have lived in my hometown for the last 15 years after I spent 16 years living in Wellington.

When I think of my start into this world and my early influences I must go right back to the beginning. I had an unusual introduction into this world in the context of 'what is normal' by anyone's standards. I will endeavour to outline this in this chapter, how my early years have impacted on my life and influenced how I see the world, how I treat others, but mostly how I see myself.

My mother was 18, alone, and having a child out of wedlock. She had tried for a few months to live with my father; however, this was not meant to be, and she decided to pack her things and move back to her parents' house in the country. Nobody outside of her immediate family was aware that she had been trying to do things 'the right way.' A child out of wedlock in the early '70s was still not acceptable, and as our family were church-going people, this was especially not a favourable position. For many months I was thought to be a boy. As such, my Auntie Ria put her hand up to adopt me should my mother decide not to keep me. Auntie Ria had four daughters and was desperate for

a son to complete her family and fulfil her husband's dream of a son. At least this way, a new child would remain in the whānau and be loved as much as their own. As it turned out, the day I was born was a shock for all those concerned, especially my biological grandmother, Ani.

She had the job of ringing Auntie Ria and delivering the news that her daughter had given birth. There was a burst of excitement down the phone until my nan explained that things were not as they thought. I was not a boy, I was a 7lb girl; Auntie Ria cried. She called back several hours later to say that they would not be taking the baby. My Nan cried. Then she rang her sister and brother-in-law for some advice. Marama and Hone were in the middle of packing their house up in Hastings and moving to rural Central Hawke's Bay when the phone rang. Marama's father was in a rocking chair in the corner, directing the chaos that was moving day, and all three kids were bustling about with their boxes of stuff, jostling for position in the truck.

Suddenly Marama put a hand up and told everyone to be quiet. 'Miss Hana has had a baby girl. Do we want to adopt her?' There was a resounding 'YES' around the room as three excited little faces came right up to her and asked, 'When can we have her?' Marama went back to her sister-in-law and said 'We are moving today. We will be there in two days to get her. Is that ok?' With a huge smile, Marama put the phone down. Her father roared from the rocking chair, 'You cannot do that. It is preposterous, you cannot adopt a baby over the phone. What are you doing?' Marama thought: I am filling my cup with my four babies. Two days later they came to get me at the maternity hospital. My mother, my father, two brothers, aged nine and ten years old, and my sister aged six years old—my family. The people that would forever change the world I grew up in and no-one would ever know from their love that I was not born of their pure flesh. I am the baby of this magical circle of people, and always will be.

I had found my place in the world to live out my childhood. My family were so loving and giving, involved in the local church and golf clubs, members on all the local committees, good charitable people that devoted their time, love, and home to helping others. My cousins say I was spoiled, and I agree. I was indeed the baby of the family, the most respected family in our local community, and I was proud of it. I am grateful every day for this turn of fortune.

My Parents

My early childhood meant a lot of time at other people's houses, whether it was to help them out for a day building something in their house, my parents being counsel to some of the rockiest marriages around, or generally donating their time to whatever the community needed. My father headed up the restoration of our meeting house at our marae and was the supervisor of building our waka (canoe) for the 150-year celebrations. These were big jobs and required many hands to be at the ready to help whenever time was free, and the weather permitted. My father was a true leader. My mother was the staunchest supporter of all my father did or got involved in. He was a shearing contractor, competitive golfer, a bit of a comedian, but above all, he could plan things and see things with an engineering mind, despite not having an education.

The unfortunate death of his parents when he was 11 was a lifelong reminder for him of not having a stable and loving home, and this was a bugbear for my dad. He was the second youngest of 17 children, so when his parents died, he was shuffled around his older siblings' homes, trying to fit in and around their own growing families while trying not to be a burden. He was expected to work like a man due to being a sibling, although he was the same age as their own kids who were treated as children. He is the hardest worker I have ever known.

He had to pull his weight and to leave school. He did this and gained many skills at an early age in various industries. My Uncle Eru was a racehorse trainer, and so the skill of breaking horses and training them was a privilege that he earned and learned at this early age. When the training season was over, he was shipped to another brother where they ran a crew of roading works. Here he learnt how to drive big machinery, how to be a mechanic, and how to take pride in works that were for public use. He also saw what it took to feed a family with 11 children, most of whom were younger than him, yet he was their uncle. He was expected to do household chores with the other children, despite having been out in the crew with the men all day.

These years were a few before he joined the Army and served in Malaya. These times instilled in him the need to love and nurture his own family one day, and not to let anyone go

without. This was his true nature. During his service in Malaya, my father also became useful in cooking, as the others learned. He was quite skilled in this area having come from a big family and cooked for them almost every day. He also knew how to make a little go an awfully long way. His skills in the kitchen, as well as those outlined above, are a few of the proudest things I learned from him.

During his illness in 1990, we had a lot of alone time as my mum and I were his main nurses. As I was 16 years old and my siblings were quite a bit older, they spent their time partying with friends but used our house as a base. I was doing Sixth Form pretty much by correspondence, as my mother and I had moved to Wellington shortly before discovering my father's cancer. I have always wished since his death that year that I had said to him all the things I was proud of him for. He was so busy telling me, while he could talk, that he was proud of me and who I am, that I relished in this praise knowing it was going to end very soon. I am proud of the lessons I learned from my father; he is indeed the most upstanding, loving, and open-hearted person I have ever known.

My mother was the eldest of nine, all born within ten years. Her mother was an amazing pianist and was often picked up by aunts and uncles to go play at their parties, or to host the party in their home with no notice if one of the kids was sick and she couldn't go out. Papa would join the fun to keep an eye on Nan, and so it was left to my mother to raise the kids, feed them, wash them, get them to school with lunches and keep them in line and honest. My mum was staunch, my uncles say. They were all scared of her because she could wallop them a good hiding when they played up. She tells me they were terrible, always testing her to the fullest when Nan and Papa were not around. She was trying to be a mother while still a child herself, and they would try to ruin everything to get her in trouble and distract their parents from their own naughtiness. She had to be the adult in a house full of children, trying to protect them from drunks and parties, and as much as I hate to admit it, incest.

She is a staunch protector of her family, and I believe this is why she was so solid at supporting my father in everything he did, and why they were so amazing together. They were both about doing things for the family and kids and doing it well. We did not go on family holidays with just our little family; we took

every cousin that was not going to get a fun holiday, whether it was because their parents didn't do holidays, or they couldn't afford to. My parents jammed all of us kids into as many cars as they could muster, our caravan crammed with camping and cooking gear to set up house anywhere for at least a week. They wanted every kid to feel loved and enjoy some holiday fun, and to be well fed at every meal instead of just when their mums got home from work to cook dinner.

My mother just wanted a safe haven for kids with no incest or drunkenness around them; they both lived up to this full heartedly. Neither of them liked drinking alcohol except for an occasion, so they were the best and most frequent hosts of all the local parties. Their partnership in managing a crowd, a drunk or two, or a situation, was respected and effective. All us kids were looked after by our older cousins, in the safety of the downstairs floor, away from adults and alcohol. Our home was open to everyone all the time, and it was always full of people.

My early influences come from my father, because his ways and his style were truly ingrained in me after his death. I have relived moments with him from my childhood for the remainder of my life and been proud to be told I am like him. His kindness knew no bounds, and although my male cousins saw him as strict, they also acknowledge how much he taught them and how they can see now as fathers themselves, why he was that way. Everything my parents were involved in revolved around supporting others and helping them to find a better life than the one they knew. They were successful entrepreneurs in a business called Total Image. It was the new miracle weight loss programme of the day, and my parents built a hugely successful business for themselves and helped others do the same. They did this with every business they had.

They travelled the world and furnished our house with things they dragged back from Turkey and the Middle East. They were so loving and natural at sharing and teaching love, and that included sharing the experiences they had overseas. We have a family kapa haka group which also led to lots of travel, and for my mother a trip to the United States as a member of a ten strong group to open the Te Māori exhibition in 1981. They also met the Pope. All the things my parents did have influenced my life in such positive ways. They taught me to be kind without expectation of returned favours, to be forgiving without judgement, and to do for others as you wish to be done

for you, even if you know that will not happen. They taught me that even when people taunt you about 'blood is thicker than water,' knowing your own whakapapa can be hugely beneficial in having the upper hand. It is what you choose to do with that knowledge that sets you apart. They taught me this skill very well.

My Birth Mother

I have always been grateful, every day, for the blessing of being taken into the right home for me. In contrast, my birth mother (Miss Hana) raising me would have been a disaster for both of us, and not a safe or happy life at all. She is very rugged and rough, preferring a poor gypsy lifestyle, while her younger brothers are all members of the Mongrel Mob. I would have had a neglected life if not for the saviours that became my destined family. Miss Hana was also in love with someone else during her pregnancy with me and left my father a month before my birth, so she wouldn't be forced to marry him. I finally found my biological father just before my 40th birthday. His life has not impacted me or my life until now, so I don't talk of him from here.

Miss Hana married the man she was in love with shortly after I was born. They had three children over nine years. Their marriage ended when their children were ten, eight and three years old (I was 12 by now), and they were dragged around her poor gypsy lifestyle in a rundown caravan for three years until their father finally won custody and took them back to their family home. I could not imagine what my life would have become if I had been the oldest child living in that situation, and I don't want to, I wasn't meant to.

Cousins

My mother's family, understandably, are incredibly close siblings, as are we, their children. We are 36 first cousins who all grew up in each other's homes and pockets. My cousins were cruel to me at times, particularly when our parents weren't in witnessing distance. They used to throw stones at me, tell me about how blood was thicker than water, that I didn't belong, and I was just a spoilt little brat who got lucky. They would punch me in the face, leave me at the river and drive off, reject me from outings, and pick on me when the older cousins or siblings weren't around. As my siblings were so much older

than myself, they had gone off to boarding school or left home by the time this stuff started. These incidents instilled in me a sense of putting walls up, guarding my feelings, and not letting anyone in. When I was nine years old, 12 of us aged 8-15 years old went to the river jetty to hang out and swim so we could give our parents and nan a break from our noisiness for a few hours. The mean incident that unfolded within an hour led to me being punched in the face for no reason by a girl cousin and then making me walk back to nan's beach house two kilometres away while they drove behind me in cars, pretending they were sorry and trying to get me into the car. When I refused to cave in and walked the whole way back, they realised I wasn't going to cover for their cruelty this time, and they would have to explain how I got a black eye and bleeding nose.

My Uncle Piripi took me aside to tell me he had been watching their behaviour and them tormenting me, and he was waiting for me to stick up for myself. I was too scared to do that. They outnumbered me by far, and I didn't want to be banished by all my cousins at once. Our parents knew what was going on, but since I wouldn't tell on my cousins for fear of being outcast further, none of our parents knew how to deal with it.

My Whakapapa

My father was in Australia, shearing at this time, so my Uncle Piripi decided he would teach me the truth of my biological link to my mother's family. He was sick of hearing them taunting me about how blood is thicker than water, and I am not really one of them. We sat and talked about my whakapapa, my adoption, and about my true place in this family. His talk changed my life forever, and I admired him even more after that and ever since.

I didn't know that I had an actual blood link to my mum's side until that day. I had been adopted within my dad's family, the Robertses, and everyone older than my generation knew the blood link between his and my mother's family, the Solomons. When my mother fell pregnant, my parents eloped to get married in the Napier courthouse. When they returned home to announce their happy news, they were met with disdain instead of delight. Neither of them knew that through several generations of both of their families, they were in fact second cousins and would not have been permitted to be together, let alone get married.

It was only by the marriage of a Miss Solomon's daughter to a Mr Roberts that the name change came into effect. However, this meant that my father was two generations of Solomon bloodline ahead of my mother's side of the family. Hence, even though I was their great niece by birth, I was a generation ahead of my Solomon cousins in the bloodline, I am in my mothers' generation. This was very satisfying to know. My uncle went on to tell me that he did not share this with me to spite the others, but rather to help me understand that I do belong, and more than any of those that were taunting me about how I did not.

We then discussed my options for using this information. He said to me that he trusted I would use this information to enhance my own life and however I chose to use it, he knew it would be the right thing. I chose to keep this to myself, knowing inside that I did belong, and let their constant teasing and ridicule roll off my back for many years. It was frustrating for my cousins who could not understand where this newfound 'sticks and stones' attitude had come from. Needless to say, in time the novelty wore off, and my quiet disposition would come into play when I was 22, much to the embarrassment and dismay of the cousins.

It was Christmas, we were all at my nan's beach house with our kids, and we were talking about those childhood Christmas holidays with the marquee up, performing songs and dances for our family as entertainment and the conversation turned to the taunting of me. My uncle made a remark about me knowing exactly where I sat in the family and how wrong they all were to treat me that way considering they should be calling me Aunty. They all turned in shock and were questioning what he meant by that. He turned to me with a wry smile and asked 'Did you not tell them? All this time still, you did not set them straight?' I replied to him that I did not need to. He had taught me my whakapapa and made me feel safe; he said I could use the knowledge how I felt fit, and I did. I had used it to confirm to myself each time they taunted me that I knew better, how dumb, and stupid they were going on about blood being thicker than water, when I was the one with thick blood. I did not need to throw it in their face, I knew inside who I was and where I belonged, and that was all I needed. I thanked him for enlightening me and letting me choose. He was so proud he hugged me and gave the others a slight giggle. They all looked at me in shock. My cousin Miss Heeni blurted out, 'And

you knew this all along, and you still put up with us. We were so mean' Her words drifted off, and I could see the look on all their faces that I had waited so long to see, the look of shame, the shame of treating someone so cruelly, when I was always so kind and inviting, and despite their cruelty still begged my father to take them on holidays with us.

Family Influences

These are the times that have influenced my life the most. These things taught me humility, how to use information, research skills, how to ask questions the right way if I want a particular answer, how to shape things for myself, and how my family would forever know that even though I might not speak up or against them, it doesn't mean I don't know.

When I look at how my parents treated others, how they raised me to treat others, and all the kindnesses they bestowed on others, I feel proud. Yes, I may have been seen as a walkover sometimes, but I am proud of that too. I may not seem the strongest person, but I guarantee I am. I have a will to get through tough times which has been tested over the years, but I have sought the help I needed to teach me how to deal with these things. I have taken the greatest and best things about my parents' marriage and life together and embraced them as my own life. Everything from church, kapa haka, family gatherings and reunions, parties, looking after others, and the total respect for them from everyone, I can see right through it all and live it.

I have learned a lot from my family, but my biggest influence outside of my parents and siblings was my Uncle Piripi. His knowledge and understanding of others and me, how to talk to me and instil the things I needed to know while willing to let me choose the path I took with that knowledge, has always stayed with me. He was extremely close to my dad, and even when my parents separated, he was the one from the family that kept that closeness. Everyone else thought it best to take my mum's side and shun my dad, Uncle Piripi did not. I was later to discover why, although looking back, I always knew why. My dad had the secret to my uncle's life, and they treasured each other as confidants with their innermost secrets. This was an unusual friendship for in-laws, but my mother respected it. My uncle was married with five children, our kapa haka group leader, a university professor, and well-respected whakapapa man around the country. He was also secretly homosexual for

most of his life. My father knew this and accommodated many discussions and promises to keep the secret for my uncle. He carried this secret to his grave.

My uncle came out 15 years ago, left his wife of 35 years and came clean. My mother's family were horrified about how this reflected on them; typical, really. I took my chance to return the favour he had bestowed on the nine-year-old me. I let rip at my family about how disgraceful their selfish thoughts were. Here is a man of national standing, a proud man, and this is not easy; this is his pain, not theirs. Is this really a surprise? I wondered how come my dad knew all about it, and they did not? Were they all so blinded by their own lives that they didn't see their brother was unhappy? They were so used to going to him for advice and support they never thought he might need some, and now that he does, they are turning their backs. I told them I was ashamed to have them as family.

That comment changed everything for my mum and her siblings, and it came from me. Little old quiet me who always sat and took the taunting, and never dished it out. It was astounding and amazingly freeing. I felt so liberated, and rightly so. I had also returned a lifelong favour, and my uncle could feel how much I absolutely loved and respected him, without me saying it. My dear uncle passed away in January 2020 after a bypass operation which he did not recover from. I have felt quite alone as a new marae trustee, something I did with his approval and support. Co-ordinating his tangihanga of 5,000 manuhiri over four days was overwhelming and the biggest challenge of my life, without his support and guidance. I miss him, like I miss my dad, but I take comfort in knowing they are watching over me together.

Outside Influences

There were other significant influences in my life, like teachers and matrons at my boarding school. Napier Girls' High School is a standout time for me, the best thing my parents ever did for me, I believe. Being from a small town there is only one college. At my time of schooling, the academics here were not great, and my father, believing fully in my nerdy intelligence, wanted better for me. NGHS was a turning point and escape place for me. My parents were divorcing, some of my cousins were moving to Australia, and those that were staying were the ones from my stories above. I was grateful to have my own space,

even if I shared a dorm with nine other girls and a hostel with 150 more.

My Standard One teacher, Miss Wilson, was a huge influence for me. She was young, a larger lady, single, and extremely intelligent. She had a mathematical mind like I did and sparked my interest in all things numbers. Her style has influenced my life the whole way through. I have been called a nerd, which I am proud of by the way, because of this inclination. Funnily enough, whenever I have started a new job, and they find out my attraction to numbers, I have ended up being the finance person or been nominated to be the Treasurer for whatever committee I am serving at the time. I am now using this knowledge and skill to start my own online organic business and to complete my degree that I have long yearned to do.

My next teacher that influenced me was for Standard Three, Mr Jamieson. He was very tall; I would estimate now probably around 6-foot-7, very lean and wiry, but super smart. He used to push me on things I was shy about, in particular, speaking up in class when I knew the answer or getting me to pronounce Māori words and phrases for the class to understand. I liked the way he would question me about why I didn't want to do things. I usually didn't have a reason, just that I was shy. That is all he wanted me to say really. It took a long time for me to understand that this was his intention, and when I finally said it, he shook my hand and said he was proud. Saying you are shy or don't know something is a skill he said, not something to be ashamed of. I have carried this with me through my life also, in my professional capacity. I have learned to read an audience or board members around a table and ascertain when to own up to not knowing, present a new point of view, or just sit back and assess what's being offered by others at the table. I am often sought for an opinion after the meetings anyway.

When I got to my teenage years, my mother's youngest sister and her husband took over our whānau kapa haka group. By this stage, the group had been going for around 10 years and was a regular at the regional and national kapa haka competitions—we were raised in this group. In 1988 an opportunity came for our junior group, comprised of our whānau who attended Porangahau School (I attended there when not at Terrace School). It was an amazing offer to provide a teenage kapa haka group to be accompanied by the New Zealand Symphony

Youth Orchestra at the World Expo '88 in Brisbane in August of that year.

Auditions were held at our local marae as there were 20 positions available and around 30 members that wanted to go. My aunty and uncle ran the audition process which made it unfair. They were the parents of the main instigators of my torment and were often helped financially by my parents. At the auditions I was confident, I was just as good as my cousins, and we had performed together all our lives. There were 20 positions available that were to be fully subsidised by NZ Post, who were the sponsors of the Youth Orchestra. There were a further four spaces available to those that did not make it through the audition, however, they would have to pay for their spaces to go on the trip, \$500 per child. Four adults were also paid for, my aunty and uncle and two guitarists. The age limit was 15-18 years old, and the trip to Brisbane was for two weeks with an extended week to travel to Melbourne and perform at schools and churches.

My parents got the phone call the day after the audition; I was not in. My aunty went as far as to tell my mother I was tone-deaf. If they wanted me to go, they would need to pay for my place in the group. I was astounded at this. Out of everyone in the group, I was the one who had played piano since I was eight years old, had singing lessons as did my sister, and yet my parents seemed to accept this without question. I was heartbroken and totally embarrassed. They made a public announcement of those who made the group, and those who would pay for their place. I was even further distraught to find that two members who had been chosen were not even old enough to be in the group. One was their youngest daughter, the other the daughter of my uncle, who had led the group since its inception. He had handed this project over to them as it would be intensive, require most weekends to be done as wānanga (learning sessions), and as he lived in Wellington, he would be the leader of the group rather than a tutor.

I was devastated. My parents were oblivious to my distraught feelings. My father would have paid any price for me to be in that group just to support me. He was the one that told me he did not believe them with the tone-deaf comments. He and I discussed my confidence, not letting them get me down, and that all I needed to know is that they did this for their own gain,

to take their own child for free. They saw this as their right. These actions and words were soul-destroying for me for a long time, even now. I still don't trust this family, although I have tried many times. I went to all the wānanga, did all the singing, but also struggled with the change. I was later to learn that the risk of exposure to undesirable situations for the young ones in their absence was a part of their decision to take them on the trip. Somehow, I was put in with my cousins my age (their daughters) who were alto singers. I was not an alto. As per my lessons from my singing teacher, I am mezzo-soprano. As a soprano, I later discovered, would have meant a chance at solos on the tour, as we did not have many sopranos in the group with strong voices to lead certain songs and hakas. As such, my aunty picked up the soprano parts that we lacked within the group, and I was once again shoved aside and shunned by my own family. God forbid the outsider should prove to be worthy on a world stage.

During this training time, at the end of May, we had two weeks' reprieve from our intense weekend training as our tutors were to travel to Brisbane and check out our accommodation there and were also planning an extended trip to Newcastle and Melbourne for us to perform on tour for a further week. This required fundraising which was done amazingly well and paid for the extended trip. Family and friends who lived in Melbourne were happy to billet us out and to attend our performance. This was also the case in Newcastle; however, this part of the trip was still paid for by NZ Post as the Symphony Orchestra would be joining us for this portion of the extension, just not to Melbourne.

Since we had the weekend off, I attended my friends playing basketball at the Rec Centre in Napier. I was in boarding school, and this was the only escape from the hostel. I was allowed to attend their game as the hostel staff, and school knew of the hard work and intensive live-in weekends I had been enduring since January. They also thought I needed a bit of release from being locked up all the time. And so, I was permitted to go and watch.

When the game finished, we returned to the hostel. As we got out of the taxi, I noticed that there were seniors and house prefects standing around the staircase as we walked in the front door. Such an odd occurrence as at this time, 7 p.m., it was study time, and nobody would be walking around the hostel.

As we walked in the front door, one of them turned to me and said the Head Matron, Mrs Shirley Laughton, wanted to see me in her office and I should take a friend with me. We all thought we were in trouble for smoking, but this was not the case.

We walked into her office, and she brazenly looked over and waved her hand at the two seats in front of her desk. Her cigarette had a long ash on it, and I was waiting for it to drop on her beautiful mahogany desk; it did not. She was a master of that, reminded me of my Aunty Rau. She spoke in a deep voice, and I felt like she was trying to avoid eye contact. She got up from her seat and looked out the window and told me that there had been a change of plans. I was to return home for the weekend. My aunt and uncle had not gone to Australia after all, and so we had a wānanga for practice instead. I was to have some dinner in the kitchen, pack my bag, and my parents would collect me soon. I was confused. My father had called me two nights earlier to say he had dropped them at the airport, and everything sounded so exciting. He was pleased I was going on this amazing trip, the trip of a lifetime he called it. Dazed and confused I went to the kitchen with my friends, the prefects still standing around the foyer and looking at me with stony eyes. I thought they were just jealous. How wrong I was. How wrong it all was.

While I was in the kitchen dishing up dinner with my three mates, I saw my Aunty Amy and another aunty from Levin pull in the driveway. I suddenly felt my stomach drop, and my heart sank. Something was wrong, terribly wrong, I could feel it. I started to shake. My friends grabbed me and asked what was wrong. I remember mumbling that Mrs Laughton lied, my aunt would never pick me up, she is elderly. Where were my parents?

My friends walked me out to the front foyer and my aunty walked in the door. I asked why she was here; I was expecting my parents. The look in her eyes is one I will never forget. She reached out for me and said everything was going to be ok.

They took me to Mrs Laughton's office, and there they explained to me that there had been a terrible accident, my brother had died in a car accident in Australia and I needed to come home right away. My entire world fell apart right there. I felt weak. I remembered the prefects. My friends cuddled me. As I walked out of her office, assisted by my aunty and friends,

I started to climb the stairs to my room, I realised everyone had lined the stairs and were looking at me with pity. Most of the girls were crying, I was hysterical, and everything became a blur. I remember sitting on my bed and the girls asking me what I wanted to pack and me replying 'I don't care, whatever you pack.' All I could see or think about was Earl and how this could not be real.

The next few weeks were intense. As my brother had died on a Friday in Australia in the outback, his body was taken to Sydney for an autopsy. It happened to be a bank holiday weekend over there, so there were no coroners to do the autopsy, and they wouldn't even start this process till the following Tuesday. Due to it being a car accident, we did not get his body back to New Zealand for a week. A whole week we waited. It was awful. My sister was living in Sydney and struggling to cope with arrangements, so we sent my dad over to bring him home. We had to hire a bus from Auckland to bring his girlfriend, friends, and family that had returned with his body, as well as Earl. His death changed my cousins and how they treated me.

It also changed my aunties and uncles, but it was too late. The pain and hurt that they had inflicted on me for just shy of 15 years was already as deep as it could go, and their looks of sorrow and cuddles meant nothing. Their stupid words of, 'Be strong for your mother and father' rung in my ears as tripe. I wanted to scream 'What about me.' Indeed, what about me. I was lost. Earl was my second oldest brother, nine years older than me. He used to save me from our older brother Karl all the time. Karl thought I was a doll and used to dangle me by my leg from the upstairs balcony over the concrete patio below. He thought it was funny. I have a fear of heights ever since these episodes. Of course, if I told our parents, he would do it again to teach me not to be a nark. I miss Earl every day still. That never goes away.

All of these episodes with my mother's family had major influences on my life, how I treat people, how I make a judgement of others' behaviours, and how I treat others, mainly in my workplace as that is where I have spent most of my adult life to escape my hurtful personal life. I became a workaholic to avoid having to go to family dinners or to see my family.

When my father became sick 18 months later, our house was even busier than usual. He was a stand-up man with many

friends and family that cared deeply for him. I must say, during the seven months that we nursed him at home, I used to look at my mother in utter amazement. They had split up. She did the most honour filled duty a woman could do, and I admired that.

When he got sick, she came back to nurse him, day in day out, his number one nurse. She did what most ex-wives would not: she showed him utter love, respect, and admiration like he had done for her all those years. My mother was not this type of generous person I thought. I quite often think about her tenacity to do that, what it took for her to do this, I was the one watching it every day. Changing his bed and nappies, washing, and bathing him, trying to feed him as he got weaker and weaker and eventually, he lost his speech the weekend before he passed. There was no home help in those days, and nurses came once a week to change his sheets. We of course being Māori needed this done almost every day to keep him fresh.

My cousin Ana returned from Perth with her family. It was beautiful. She was studying to be a nurse and showed us how to roll him to change his bed, how to wash him without hurting him, how to know when he needed water, ice-blocks or just a cuddle. She could read him. It was both extraordinary and amazing. She helped us understand when no-one else could. This was my first influence of communication without speaking and loving your job without being paid for it. I saw in my mother's eyes her appreciation for what we had struggled to provide to him, and the relief that we could do this without making him feel pain. He often cried in pain, and we would both jump to try and help him, more often we didn't help, but we tried.

During all this time, it was mostly my dad's family that visited and helped us. My Uncle Ru was dad's best friend; he was there from beginning to end with us. We will never forget his care for my dad. Mum's sister Jana was nurse number two, every day, to support mum and because she was Uncle Piripi's twin, she had a deepened love beyond an in-law for my dad.

But it was my mum's influence here that struck me the most. She had never let us be sick. You didn't get to be sick in our house. There were always jobs to be done, the house to be cleaned because it was seven bedrooms, two storeys, and always full. There was a lot of cooking to do and if not those things, ironing, dusting, polishing, washing. She was a machine, my mum, so to

watch her be by his side every day like that was astonishing. I made sure the house still ran like clockwork because I was so taken with her care of and for him. I had always seen my dad madly in love with my mum and wondered if she felt the same. Obviously, she did, and quite obviously he had always known it. It was only me who did not see it.

The next two years were turbulent for me. I moved back to Wellington with my mother, finished Sixth Form and then found a job and moved out. I didn't come to see her for about five months. I blamed her for his death. He had died of a broken heart because of her. Of course, I was wrong. He died of colon cancer caused by Agent Orange, used in Malaya when he served in the Army. I did not find that out until I was about 30 and I had blamed her all that time.

When I think of all the people who influenced me, built, and destroyed my beliefs in things, gave me the capacity to decide what was right and wrong in their behaviour, and helped me to develop a sense of who uses you and who is genuine, I bring it all back to my family. My dad's side was always grateful to be around us. They loved us, all of us. My mother's side was totally challenging, yet they were the ones I grew up with day in and day out. I used to call them the torture chamber in my own mind.

So, although all my goodness came from my parents, and their love for one another and us, church, most family, friends, and their families, I am acutely aware of the negative influences that have been in my life all along. I have no shame in saying I am unique; I love that. I never bow to anyone's wishes if they don't make me happy. I am strong. I am my father's daughter. I am also my mother's daughter and take my writing skills, my work skills, and my relationship skills from her.

I have had some amazingly influential people in my life and have been lucky for that. I have a few childhood regrets, but these too have shaped who I have become and most certainly how I treat others. Through seeing my mother go from shearing gang wife to running courses at the YMCA in Hastings to elevating herself to the professional consultancy world in Wellington, I was influenced by climbing the ladder. I understood, now, a lot of what she and my father used to discuss at home around the table. They thought the same, they wanted the same, they

loved the same, and they spoke the same loving language. Their influence has been the most outstanding thing in my life, and I am grateful for that. Everything else is relative to who I am today, but mostly I am like half of each of them, and I am proud of that.

Bobbi-Jo
Waikoukou Tuwhakaea Clark-Heu

Waikato Tainui



Photographer: Erica Sinclair

Bobbi comes from a whakapapa line of hardworking wāhine toa (warrior women), where her young Māori mum was conscious of the need to be industrious, often working several jobs, to provide a brighter future for Bobbi and her siblings. Bobbi's father is a humble man who always saw the good in people and knew how to nurture relationships, connecting with a wide range of people. One of the key messages that Bobbi gained at a young age was that life would not guarantee you what you want on a silver platter, and that you had to be dedicated and work hard to forge ahead in life and pursue your dreams. Her whānau are committed and loyal to the vision of their tipuna Te Puea Hērangi, known as Princess Te Puea, an influential Māori leader of the Kīngitanga movement, teaching the beliefs of work, faith and pan-Māori unity. Bobbi holds steadfast to the whakataukī (proverb) of this era that represents tribal cohesion: 'mahia te mahi hei painga mō te iwi,' which roughly translates to 'do the work for the betterment of the people.' Bobbi's mother and grandmother provided a culturally rich home where te reo Māori me ōna tikanga (Māori language and customs), were cherished and supported through their involvement at te kōhanga reo (Māori language immersion preschool).

Many of these cultural rituals are maintained to this day by Bobbi and her whānau, an expression of he taonga tuku iho (a treasure handed down to the next generation). As is the case with many young talented Māori sports men and women, Bobbi excelled in sports, learning many lessons through the highs and pushing past the lows of competitive sports. She discusses her relationships with teachers and coaches that helped shape her into the wāhine toa that she is today, and how she learnt to enjoy and excel in chemistry through the chemistry of whanaungatanga (kinship, family connection), aroha (love) and manaaki (hospitality). Bobbi carries her nannies through her tā moko (tribal tattoo) where they are represented as manaia (stylised figures) as her kaitiaki (guardians), which reminds her that with support, encouragement and determination, remarkable things can be achieved.

Bobbi-Jo Waikoukou Tuwhakaea Clark-Heu

Waikato Tainui

Tōku Ao (My World)

*Ko Tainui te waka I whakawhiti mai I te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa
Tainui is my ancestral waka that crossed the Pacific Ocean*

*Ko Waitako te awa e riporipo ana
The rippling waters of the Waikato is my river*

*Ko Waikato-Tainui tōku Iwi
Waikato-Tainui is my tribe*

*Ki te taha o tōku Pāpā
On my father's side*

*Ko Maungatautari te maunga e tū tapu ana
Maungatautari is our sacred mountain that stands tall*

*Ko karapiro te roto I whakamanawatia I tōku hapū
Karapiro is the lake that blessed my people*

*Ko Maungatautari te marae, te kāinga o ōku tipuna
Maungatautari is my marae, the home of my ancestors*

*Ko Ngāti Korokī-kahukura tōku hapū
Ngāti Korokī-kahukura is my subtribe*

*Ki te taha o tōku Māmā
On my mother's side*

*Ko Pirongia te maunga e tū tapu ana
Pirongia is our sacred mountain that stands tall*

*Ko Kawhia te moana I whakahauoratia I tōku hapū
Kawhia is the ocean that nourished my people*

*Ko Te Tihi-o-Moerangi te marae te kāinga o ōku tipuna
Te Tihi-o-Moerangi is my marae, the home of my
ancestors*

*Ko Ngāti Te Wehi tōku hapū
Ngāti Te Wehi is my subtribe*

*I mārena au I tētahi tangata nō Ngāti Maahanga, nō Te
Papa-o-Rotu marae, nō te whānau Heu
I married a man from the subtribe of Ngāti Maahanga,
from Te Papa-o-Rotu marae, from the Heu family*

*Tokorua aku tamahine, ko Amaia te mataamua,
ko Piata te pōtiki o te whānau.
I have two daughters, Amaia is the eldest and Piata is
the baby of the family*

*He uri au nō Tainui engari I whānau mai ahau, I tipu ake
ahau ki Tauranga Moana*

*I am a descendant of Tainui but I was born and raised in
Tauranga Moana*

*He māmā ahau, he hoa wahine ahau, he kaitūao hoki
ahau
I am a mum, wife and volunteer*

*Ko Bobbi-Jo Waikoukou Tuwhakaea Clark-Heu tōku
ingoa
My name is Bobbi-Jo Waikoukou Tuwhakaea Clark-Heu*

My Whānau

I come from humble beginnings, and this is something that I will always remember. My parents were hard workers but more so my mum. My dad was someone that everyone loved and got on with and because of this growing up things came easier to him—work, opportunities, and he seemed to make friends very easily and sometimes with highly successful people. My dad is a soft and caring person and he always sees the good in people. I remember him being your typical Kiwi bloke and he would give anything a go and try his hand at DIY even if it did not work. My mum on the other hand came from nothing and has spent her whole life making up for it. She is the hardest working person I know and a lot of the attributes and values I have is because of what I learnt from Mum!

Growing up it was my brother and me; I also have an older half-sister from my dad's first marriage. My brother being the eldest child of my parents was spoilt by older cousins, aunties, uncles and grandparents. He's a free spirit, a surfer, he's outgoing, easy to get along with, he just goes with the flow and it's no surprise that he's made lots of mistakes. He was just your typical teenage boy but the confrontations he had with my parents and the trouble he got into showed me what I should be cautious of. My brother was my rock growing up and even though I annoyed the hell out of him, he's always looked after me.

My Mum—Te Wahine Toa

Now in her fifties, Mum is financially secure and debt free and I am so happy for her. But this stability has certainly come at a cost. For as long as I have known Mum has worked. I don't have any memories of being a baby or toddler at home with Mum 'cos she's always been at work. She started working when I was three months old and to be fair, she was a teacher aide at the kōhanga reo my brother and I attended but nevertheless she's worked my entire life. I remember being at school and thinking it was not fair that I was the only child whose parents didn't come to any school assemblies, performances, school trips or sports days. Because they were working. I remember quite clearly thinking when I grow up, I am not going to be like that. I will make sure I am there for my kids.

I even remember Mum working on Christmas Day one year and sometimes she would have left for work before I got up or would occasionally come home when I was going to bed. I even have memories of finishing sports training after school and then waiting till Mum had finished work before coming to pick me up. My mum has done everything from working in a takeaway shop and cleaning to being a debt collector and working for a private investigator. To me, Mum is the epitome of a wahine toa.

We didn't have much growing up, but I know my parents had even less and Mum has told me many times that she tried her best to make sure that my brother and I had a better childhood than she did. I remember being young and I overheard Mum talking to a friend one day and she said 'that because she was young and Māori and a woman that all odds were against her and that she had to work extra hard to get recognised for her own efforts and merits.' That comment has stuck with me my whole life and helped to prepare me for some of the obstacles I have faced in my career. Mum also told me to 'never expect or assume anything' and that 'nothing gets handed to you on a silver platter. You have to work hard for it.' It's been comments such as these that have helped guide me as a young Māori girl to the strong Māori woman I am today.

Not only have I learnt from examples that my family members have shown me, but I've also learnt from their mistakes. I have taken on board learnings from my family's successes and achievements but also learnt from their mistakes and failures. My parents separated when I was young and after a few tough years they divorced. I have seen more than my fair share of sorrow not only from my immediate family but extended family also and those scenarios provided learnings for me as well, all of which I hold dear to my heart as, although some are very sad and traumatic, they have helped shape the person I am today.

Learning from My Grandmothers

I never met my grandfathers, but both my grandmothers have been a big part of my life. Even now as an adult, although I lost them young, their memories are still strong and the values and learnings I have from them are still prevalent in my life today. Both my nans were soft, caring women who took great care of their families and loved their mokopuna (grandchildren)

unconditionally. They were part of a generation that lost their language, their culture and their livelihood. I can't imagine how hard it must've been for them growing up but the knowledge they passed on to their kids and grandchildren was a true treasure—he taonga tuku iho. Of course, both my nans were very traditional, and had some outlandish practices, but the values they passed on to us and the tikanga from our ancestors is part of my rich heritage.

Taupoki was my dad's mother and what I learnt from her was the importance of water. 'Ko au te awa, ko te awa ko au'—'I am the water, the water is me.' My nan taught me that water can be used to cleanse, heal, provide comfort and strength and my father continued this practice after his mother passed and has shown me how significant this tikanga is to Māori. When we need to, we go to the water, say a karakia and use the water on ourselves, our whānau and our surroundings. When we are sick, we go to the water. When something bad happens, someone dies or if we are about to go on a long journey, we go to the water. What I learnt from my nan was that it's the small things that matter and that we can find solace in.

Olive was my mum's mother and she was hospitable to anyone. Even though she worked full time she still found the time to care for her mokopuna. I remember my brother and I would sometimes go to her house in the holidays. She would take annual leave from work not only to look after us but my cousins too. Her door was always open to anyone and her home was always warm and full of aroha. My nan was one of the first people who showed me the meaning behind Te Puia Herangi's tongikura (proverb) 'Mahia te mahi hei painga mō te iwi'—'Do the work for the betterment of the people.' Nan showed me that caring for others and manaakitanga is a value not to underestimate.

Other Influencing People and Factors

My parents were active people although my dad's sporting career ended early after a bad injury, accident and arthritis. Mum continued to play rugby, touch, netball and indoor netball, so from an incredibly young age my brother and I were no strangers to the field or court and this is something that I have done with my own children, returning to sport when they were only a few weeks old.

Being in a community and sport environment also provided a positive influence and a good space to learn about working with others. I must've had a lot of energy to burn as a young child because I enjoyed any and every type of sport. I enjoyed cross country running from the age of five and then started playing netball early at six. When I was at school, normally you wouldn't start playing netball until seven but because most of my friends were in the year above me, they were already playing netball and I wanted to play with them. Luckily, my friend's mum was the coach and let me play anyway. We kept our same team for about three or four years and progressed every year eventually winning the competition in our third year. Unbeknown to me, starting young and playing with older kids would help me in the years to come. At the same time, I was also progressing with my running and leading the school in my age group.

Once I got to Intermediate and more options became available, I also encountered teachers that encouraged me to try my hand at other sports including sprints, swimming, basketball, touch and triathlon. Mum would also get me to fill in for her touch team when they were short of players too. I loved being in an environment where I was offered opportunities to try new things and was supported to do well. Again, with the more sports I participated in, the more I grew and progressed. I was approached by my swimming and triathlon coach to submit my sporting achievements for the Sports Girl of the Year award, I did not expect to win but the more people and teachers that congratulated me on entering, the more excited and anxious I got. Everyone was sure that I would win however, when I did not, not only was everyone shocked but I was extremely upset, and this was my first lesson on accepting defeat. Even though I got a diligence award and I knew I had done well overall with my sporting achievements, not winning the sports award was a loss I struggled with and took a while to accept. Without fail I pushed and worked harder the following year to not only win the Sports Girl of the Year award but a principal's award also.

With great sporting achievements in Intermediate it was a real shock to go to college and be amongst a whole lot of talented people who were older, bigger, stronger and faster than me. Going from a school of 300 to 1,400 was definitely a revelation and being 'good' at sport wasn't necessarily going to get you into a top team. It was fair to say that although I was good at running and swimming, I certainly was not at the standard of some of the other girls in my year. However, touch and netball were still strong avenues for me.

Back then touch wasn't as big as it is today however netball had a strong presence in the school. I was able to make the top team in Third Form and I was pleasantly surprised in Fourth Form when I was asked to trial with the seniors. I never expected anything to come from it but knew it would be a valuable experience. When I was named in the top team of the school and being the youngest person to ever be named in the team, I thought it was a mistake.

Learning from the loss in Intermediate I was sceptical about celebrating too soon and also was curious to see how I was put in a team with seventeen- and eighteen-year-olds who were double my height and size. When I found out it wasn't a mistake, I knew I was out of my league. I knew I had a lot to learn and, as a fourteen-year-old playing in a women's league, I knew the journey ahead was going to really test me and be challenging.

High School wasn't easy. On the one hand I was known for being a great netball player, a nice and caring person who knew lots of people but, on the other hand, I struggled to cope with balancing school and sport, things at home, my nan being diagnosed with cancer, and I did not really have someone close to be able to talk to and confide in.

For netball I had two great coaches during my time at High School, but they were quite different. The coach that selected me young to be in the top team was strict and a bit grumpy. She really pushed us as individuals and as a team and she did not take crap from anyone. In the beginning I was really scared of her but as I got older and changed coaches, I realised that although she was a tough coach, she was supportive in her own grumpy way and certainly crucial in how she helped me grow as a player and reach my potential.

My other coach was the complete opposite. She was young, fun, caring and she really connected with us as players. She was incredibly supportive and encouraging. On reflection, even though my coaches were completely different, they were both working towards the same goal to grow us as individuals and as a collective. These coaches were also teachers in the school so knowing them outside of the classroom helped the relationship I had with them.

Teachers were also a substantial influence for me in High School. Some good, some bad. The bad ones I don't really remember but it's more about the way that they made me feel. The teachers that didn't support me in High School were the ones that treated us all as students, nothing more and nothing less. I started college as a good maths student but almost failed in Fifth and Sixth Form which happened to be the years that I did not relate to or understand my maths teacher. I remember asking for help one day during class and she rudely said to me, 'well if you didn't talk and muck around so much then you might understand the work.' I don't think I behaved badly in class and my talking was more trying to ask for help from friends but a comment like this in front of the class really took me back and prevented me from asking any further questions in class. A couple of times I went to lunch time tutorials, but wouldn't go in if she was there. I'm not sure if teachers realise, but they have quite an impact on students.

There were a couple of teachers who were also helpful and supportive of me. Two deputy principals and my dean, all of whom gave their condolences when my nan passed and were supportive of Māori students and their achievements. My dean was the Māori achievement teacher in the school and helped us when we needed extra help and was understanding when things weren't going well at home. Not just for me but all Māori students. The two DPs would always say 'hi' to me around the school; one of them is the reason I went from hating science to really enjoying chemistry and the other just had a beautiful caring nature about her and would always seem to really listen when you talked to her.

Not many people in my wider whānau had finished school. A couple of cousins had but definitely not my parents or brother. Even though I struggled when my nan passed, and I went through a rough time, I was determined to finish school and go on to study afterwards.

Not having much as a child has kept me modest. Modest in how I talk about myself and accept praise and it's this humility that keeps me grounded. Similar to the whakataukī, 'Ehara te kūmara e kōrero mō tōna ake reka' – 'The kūmara doesn't speak of its own sweetness.' I've learnt that it is only because of my humble beginnings that I strive for more and with all my successes and achievements to date, I still hold an image in

my head of the small little Māori girl that once was and it's only because of the lessons, learnings, events, and people in my life that I'm the person I am today. Knowing that people can come from nothing and still be successful is something that keeps me motivated.

My dad being a kind and caring person taught me to see the good in people and I find this crucial in a work environment. We can work with people whose personalities are not compatible with our own or they may have different views and opinions but, if we look to see the good in them and their positive attributes, then we can find common ground and a way to move forward. This is also helpful when nurturing relationships.

My carefree, troublesome brother helped me to be cautious in any situation. Because I was able to see first-hand the consequences of his mistakes, I too learnt lessons while reviewing and reflecting on his actions. I can honestly say that he made enough mistakes for both of us and I'm lucky and grateful for what he has demonstrated for me. I know it wasn't his intention to do this and I'm sure that he was hoping for me to make similar mistakes to take pressure off him but nevertheless what I learnt from him was invaluable. The caution I take not only on a personal level but with my mahi has enabled me to analyse a situation and consider other people and aspects before making decisions and reacting. My brother demonstrated to me what can happen when you react too soon or with too much emotion and this is definitely a good attribute to have in a business environment. Messages and actions can easily be misconstrued when emotions are high so keeping a level head at work can help in any situation.

When I think of my whānau and the upbringing I had, it provides me with empathy for others in terms of contributing factors outside of the workplace and, although we do our best not to let our 'home life' impact our 'work life,' sometimes this can be difficult. Our family should be the most important factor in our lives, not our work, so I do my best to get to know my colleagues, peers and their families also. I feel that knowing or being aware of a person's family really helps to understand who they are and can strengthen your relationship with them. I also think that showing care and understanding

of someone else's whānau helps them to understand me, my whānau and my circumstances too. If home life is good, then it enables work life to be good too. For some, home life may also consist of caring for older parents or grandparents or they may even care for another child which can contribute to additional responsibilities and pressures. Having a big family to care for or challenges in the home environment can bring commitment, financial and emotional pressures, so being aware of other people and their circumstances helps to understand who they are and how you can offer support, advice and empathy towards them. This is another way to nurture relationships and help both in our personal and professional lives.

While I was not fortunate enough to meet my grandfathers, I was privileged to spend time with my nannies and their memories are still strong in my mind and heart. The care, love, traditions, and cultural customs demonstrated from my grandmothers showed me the importance of my culture and heritage, which now provides me strength and comfort as an adult. 'Mahia te mahi hei painga mō te iwi' is knowledge passed down through my whakapapa and this was reiterated at kōhanga reo and primary school and was comforting to hear as an adult in my work environment also. I will forever carry my nannies with me as they are depicted as manaia in my tā moko on my back. This being a small gesture to pay respect to the beautiful taonga (treasures) they were.

I'm glad that my parents led active lifestyles as this environment has also influenced the person I am and skills I have today. Participating in sports taught me how to work with others. As an adult, I realised that in a work environment it's like a sports team. We are sometimes put into teams at work or apply for roles in teams with people that we don't know. We may be put with people that have different views and backgrounds to us or we may work with others who have personalities that clash with ours. Nevertheless, work still needs to get done and we also need to find ways that we can work together regardless of our differences. I mentioned earlier that I started playing netball young and as I grew up, I continued to play with others who were bigger, better, and stronger than me. These experiences prepared me for the workforce where I would be working with others who were more mature, more experienced, more confident and had different skillsets, however, I was able to draw on my experiences as a child. Even though at times I may

have been out of my depth, I had the skills to work through these scenarios and the ability to learn and develop.

What I also learnt from playing sport as a child is the measure of success and, while playing sport as a kid should be about having fun, it also teaches us about achieving success. As I got older, in high school playing in a women's netball league, it exposed me to a different approach to sport, an approach that was more focused and required determination and demanding work on my behalf. I knew that I was out of my depth, however I knew that, if I was committed and put in the hard work and did my job well in the team, I was still able to contribute to the team's overall success. These learnings have been beneficial as an adult and in my career. If I work hard as an individual, I'm able to contribute to the success of my team.

These attributes can also work in reverse, where leading by example, I can inspire others with the same mindset to work hard and strive for success as an individual to contribute to the overall success of a team. Sport has also enabled me to experience leadership at an early age and by being captain of a team or leading by example, again these experiences added to the multitude of skills I have today.

Learning how to maintain and nurture relationships with teachers and coaches were tasters and examples of how I would come to understand interactions as an adult in dealing with managers and senior leaders in my career. I have already mentioned my experience in netball, having two different coaches with different teaching styles realising that they shared the same outcome. My coaches pushed me to be the best I could be and helped me to reach my potential on the netball court. Again, I have been able to draw on these experiences in my career to understand that whether we get on well with our managers or not or whether we agree with their delivery methods or not, I can appreciate that they are trying to achieve the best outcome for the team.

Looking back over the years with the teachers and coaches I have interacted with, I'm able to understand that different people have different leadership and management styles, and this has helped in shaping the leader I strive to be and the management style I want to achieve. I'm aware that people look to leaders for inspiration and motivation, but they can also look to them for support and encouragement. I know first-

hand how this has impacted me, where teachers have made a difference to my wellbeing with the comments they have made, both positive and negative, and this is something that I have always remembered. Sometimes a simple kind gesture can mean a lot to a person struggling and a short, sharp message delivered in the wrong way can really break a person's spirit. With this in mind, I strive to be a positive leader who inspires and encourages others, while supporting and caring for the people around me.

When I reflect on how whānau, sport, teachers and coaches have impacted my life, there is one person whom I owe an incredible amount of thanks to, which is my mum! She doesn't even know it but what I learnt from her has been the biggest influence on the person I am today.

When Mum said 'nothing gets handed to you on a silver platter. You have to work hard for it' she not only meant it, but she lived it. I have seen Mum work for everything that she has, and she never took the easy road. Her determination to create a better life pushes me to do the same and I can certainly see how you are able to reap the rewards from the seeds you sow.

Mum taught me to be independent. Having your own career and earning your own money so, if necessary, you are able to stand on your own two feet and not have to rely on others. From a work perspective, I also learnt from her to be aware of possible disparities in that, because I'm a young Māori woman, I have to be prepared for criticism and doubt. Mum's strong work ethic also rubbed off on me and, like her, I work a lot. I'm determined to be better. I have high standards and when I commit to something, I give it my all. Mum's mistakes also provided insights into how I can do things differently to avoid similar outcomes and, even though there are times when I have periods of high workloads, I make sure that I make up that time with my family. I think Mum is proud of the person she raised, a young Māori girl from humble beginnings who is now a strong Māori woman.

I'm grateful for all the experiences from my childhood and in return, to show my gratitude, I want to make sure that I do justice to all those who have impacted my life in a positive way and contributed to the wife, mother, leader, and strong person that I am today.

Mauri ora.

Kera Baker

Ngāi Tahu



Photographer: Chris Stanley.

Kera Baker started her life in the urban setting of Wellington, when her parents were fortunate to buy a new home through the Department of Māori Affairs. When her parents separated, she moved with her māmā (mother) and brother to her maternal grandmother's home at Arowhenua, near Timaru. There Kera lived with her namesake, Kera Brown, the matriarch of their whānau and Arowhenua Marae, who gained a QSM for her service and commitment to Ngāi Tahu. Kera had a traditional upbringing, raised within tikanga and mahika kai (food gathering practices), learning karakia (prayer), reading tohu (signs), following tikanga and kawa (protocols) of the marae (meeting house) and being a good kaitiaki of the whenua. Her love of māhika kai included gathering watercress, īnaka (whitebait), trout, tuna (eel) and home-grown vegetables, eggs, hens and local meat. The weekends were also a time to follow the tikanga of Tangaroa (the deity of the ocean), collecting kaimoana (seafood) on Sunday drives.

Her Ngāi Tūhoe father was from the Uruwera National Park, and here she learnt a different type of kai (food) from the bush: pigs, deer, rotten corn, pīkao (fern frond) and her nanny's rēwena bread (homemade fermented potato bread) and fried treats. From her Tāua Kera, an activist for the Ngāi Tahu claim, Kera understood that whakapapa was not to be written and people would travel from far and wide to learn from Tāua Kera. The Arowhenua Marae is aptly named Te Hapa o Niu Tireni (The Unfulfilled Promises), which became a cornerstone for the Ngāi Tahu Treaty of Waitangi Claim. As her tāua (grandmother) was a stalwart for The Claim, Kera carries many of these traits such as the ethics of loyalty, dedication, responsibility and accountability to her tīpuna and her people.

Kera's māmā and tāua were also great musicians, and here a young Kera discovered her love for kapa haka (Māori performing arts), musical instruments, singing and dancing, which took her offshore to enjoy the nightlife of Australia. Faith and wairua (spirit) are also important to Kera to shape and guide her and she is connected to a number of Māori religions: Ihairaira, Ringatū and Rātana. Kera claims that her upbringing and tikanga were solid signposts for her growing up in how to behave and complete tasks throughout her life. 'I follow tikanga, to work honestly, to work hard to be the best of my abilities.'

Kera Baker

Ngāi Tahu

I was born in Pōneke-Wellington, the capital city of Aotearoa, 'Land of the Long White Cloud' in New Zealand in 1961. Both of my parents are of Māori Indigenous descent. My father was from Te Ika a Māui (North Island) affiliated tribally to Ngāi Tūhoe, and my mother is from Te Waipounamu (South Island) affiliated tribally to Ngāi Tahu and Scottish blood tracing from the Royal Stuarts of Scotland. We lived opposite Parliament buildings and apparently Sir Keith Holyoake, a prominent politician at the time in the 1960s, used to greet me as my mother pushed me in the pram on daily walks. My father had an occupation at Lion Breweries, as a brew master, which helped him in applying at the time through the Department of Māori Affairs for a home loan and partnership with my mother to obtain a grant that enabled a brand-new home to be built in suburb known as Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt.

I grew up with my brother, Gary, who was born three years after me. My mother had a job working at a local chemist part time, so both of my parents were seriously dedicated to striving towards paying for their first home. After 10 years, life dramatically changed for me when my parents separated and began divorce proceedings sometime later. So, my brother and I, along with our mother, moved back to her hometown at Arowhenua, Temuka, situated in Te Waipounamu (the South Island). We moved in with my tāua, Kera Brown, who spent her time running the kitchen and managing Arowhenua Marae in

Temuka and my grandfather known as Buster, who worked at the Ministry of Works.

It was a lifestyle that was soon to shape my whānau life forever. Temuka is a small country town known nationwide for its Temuka Pottery, with a population at the time of approximately 3,000 people. It was originally known as Te Umu Kaha. My grandparents' home was situated between two rivers known as the Opihi River, which was plentiful with accessible mahinga kai (food gathering) such as watercress, inaka (whitebait), trout, tuna (eel); and the Temuka River where, before running tap water and electricity, my tāua collected water for her household that was used for cooking, drinking, and washing.

Living there, they had a hen house with chickens and ducks out the back, sheep in one paddock, horses in another. My brother and I had to do jobs such as collecting the eggs daily and feeding the hens and ducks. We were responsible for keeping the water trough filled. At other times we collected mushrooms from the horse paddock. Our grandfather had a great garden also supplying our household with vegetables and fruit. My grandparents also supplied our Sunday roast lunch by home kill. Either chicken, lamb, or mutton would be on the menu, all accessed on Māori land passed down from generation to generation to my tāua that was inherited from her tribal whānau.

Sunday drives were a pleasure for our family as we were packed up with a picnic and driven through the countryside to reach a destination where sometimes we gathered blackberries from the land tāua owned and leased out to various farmers, or perhaps we collected peas or potatoes from her land. Other times, as a family we went eeling, collecting water cress, whitebaiting (catching inaka) which is seasonal from August through to November only, gathering tītī (mutton birding) that were preserved in pōhā (kelp bags) to store them, made by my grandmother as a young girl from the month of May through to July, to collecting kaimoana (seafood) such as mussels (kūtae), pāua (abalone), oysters (tio), cockles, clams, pupu (known as cat's eyes). All food gathering rituals and processes from the sea or river have been passed down traditionally through the ages by our family for hundreds of years.

I feel fortunate to come from a heritage of food gatherers, as we followed customs passed down from generation to generation.

For in these events of food gathering, we learned about tikanga and kawa (customs and protocols) of our people as well. Things like karakia (prayers) before fishing, eating, gathering kai, or even before we travelled to our destination. Karakia were shared before doing almost everything. We were taught to never take all of the seafood, but to allow more to grow and replenish supplies for future generations to come. While we collected food, we were also made aware of safety while in the sea, and to be mindful and respectful, that in tides, even in the rips of the seabed, the wind, the time of the day, the birds, were all signs to be cautious and remain aware at all times. That we must be respectful of our environment of Mother Earth and all its elements that could change at any stage, especially in the South Island, when a warm northwest wind on the East Coast could quickly turn around into a freezing cold, blustery gale in five minutes.

We learnt to read the clouds, the wind and the birds as signs that a change was imminent. We were also taught that we were kaitiaki (caregivers) of the whenua (land), moana (sea), awa (rivers), maunga (mountains), roto (lakes) and all the mahinga kai (food) that these domains produced so that they would always be stores of food for the future generations to come after us. These were taonga (treasures) and koha (gifts) passed to us through a heritage that we never truly owned but were to caretake and look after the land, sea and the elements for our chronological journey on Earth, to pass to our mokopuna (grandchildren) and descendants into the future. This is a part of my life to share with my whānau and moving into the future.

Although my brother and I missed our father dearly with our parents being separated from each other, we learned from him to collect kaimoana in the North Island, such as pipi, as that was my job to collect them. They were unlike any in the South Island, whilst my father went diving for kina, kōura or pāua. His whānau taught us of other various kai practices such as rotten corn, which has been fermented in a river stream, and is quite a delicacy. Collecting pīkiao (fern fronds) that tasted similar to asparagus. My father had been brought up to hunt deer and wild pigs and owned a .303 rifle. Native birds such as kereru (wood pigeons) were also a delicacy from his ancestral land having to do with Te Urewera National Park. I was fortunate enough to go hunting with him as a young girl to learn that certain native trees had healing properties, berries to eat

that fattened the kereru and roots could be eaten and used homeopathically, ethically, to heal. The knowledge he shared with me was endless.

Sometimes his mother, nanny Te Akakura Rua, visited bringing kai such as rēwena (fermented potato bread), hiroi (marinated mussels), kamokamo (large marrow) and homemade fried bread as treats. Living with my grandparents was so interesting. My tāua Kera, whom I was named after, worked in the kitchen at our local Arowhenua Marae. She was in charge of organising and managing all events such as tangihanga (funerals), hākari (food banquets), ceremonies, hui (meetings), noho (sleepovers), whānau, whakapapa (family genealogy meetings) and organising and informing people and relatives of events. She was an activist, 20 years ago now, responsible for setting up the Ngāi Tahu tribal Claim, acknowledging the rights of Indigenous people to our land in Te Waipounamu and solidifying partnership between Ngāi Tahu and the Government, along with other dignified kaumātua (elders) from all over the motu (country).

Tāua Kera influenced me with her expertise in management in the kitchen at Arowhenua Marae. She also was an informative wahine as she was brought up to learn our whakapapa by memory, by word of mouth only, so many people travelled far and wide, all over the island to ask for their genealogical family tree from her. I learned about mahinga kai and gathering from her, how to prepare and cook it.

Tāua was such an extraordinary woman who grew up on Ruapuke Island, opposite Bluff, a seaport town at the southernmost point of the South Island situated opposite Stewart Island and the Titi mutton bird islands. As children, we visited Ruapuke Island, surrounded in the bays, with plentiful kaimoana and weka running wild. It was one of the first times I've ever experienced eating an indigenous bird, weka (indigenous hens). We went there for New Year's Day. It was magnificent. Tāua Kera shared stories with my brother and me of trips to the Titi islands. Every May she took her whānau there where it was her job to preserve the birds. The treacherous Foveaux Strait made it awkward for travelling, so fishermen chose their moments carefully to travel. The famous Bluff Oysters that were world renowned, kōura, pāua bigger than my hands, mussels, pataki (flounder), blue cod, and weka lived on the island, so food was plentiful there.

The only form of transport on Ruapuke in the 1970s was on horseback. In my teenage life, I spent most holidays traveling to Bluff spending time at my uncle's, where every second person appeared to be related to me. There I caught my first freshwater cray at the reservoir and collected pupu to eat.

Growing up with my grandmother's influence, I learned strong, hard-working efforts, as she also owned two restaurants in Temuka. Whilst at school I started work at age 11 helping out in the kitchen washing dishes, cooking fries, salad preparation, folding cutlery, serving customers, waitressing, taking orders, cleaning duties and calculating total amounts on receipt orders. So, I learnt of the hospitality work at an early age. I learned public relationships skills early in my life that helped me to be confident when addressing people. Always greeting people with a smile, speaking clearly and being courteous and friendly were skills that became natural. These skills helped me in applying for positions my whole life.

Le Bistro Café that my grandparents owned in Temuka extended my future capabilities. Tāua was a talented composer, who also wrote waiata (songs) and judged kapa haka competitions. This enhanced my knowledge of modern music, and how these women were so multi-skilled taught me that it is acceptable to be multitalented. We often visited an auntie in Christchurch, a wonderful pianist, and musical composer, and they both sat and composed songs together. My mother was also an inspiration to me, and she went on to sing a few of those waiata and made a vinyl recording with Viking records. Tāua also taught kapa haka, multicultural dance, and judged in Waitaha kapa haka competitions annually. She encouraged me with netball, as she organised modern netball competitions for our area in National Māori South Island competitions, when I played for our local team Huirapa across the South Island. Later, I played netball at secondary school, and we represented South Canterbury netball for a season. This made my family proud.

My mum met a nice man a few years after we shifted to Temuka. He was a joiner by trade, and a musician by night, who encouraged my mum to sing. She had not sung since she attended a Catholic boarding High School at St. Joseph Māori Girls' College as a teenager at Green Meadows in the Hastings District. She received a couple of gold discs for her performance as a soloist singing 'Pōkarekare ana,' a song that

was popular in the 1960s, and tourists also bought the LP vinyl record. Both parents have had a massive impact on promoting my musical ability. I was extremely fortunate to grow up with a musical influence. If we were not entertaining kapa haka at our marae with tāua we would be listening and playing music.

My mum and stepfather performed in a band, travelling around the island, so my brother and I were lucky to have guitars, drums, piano, and microphones to develop our talents and participate in the occasional talent quiz. At one stage we had our family group performing at wedding functions. But I felt more comfortable disco dancing, as my mother who had a soprano voice, was an expectation that I did not quite meet up to. We had moved to Timaru, a port town 20 minutes' drive from Temuka where I attended a Catholic high school. I spent five years there completing School Certificate and Sixth Form Certificate. After that I went to Aoraki Polytechnic Technical Institute to do Business Studies consisting of business law, accounting, electronic data processing, economics and typewriting.

My brother Gary and I were in the local newspaper for disco dancing in a disco dancing championship. My first year there was interrupted. Almost at the completion of that year I won the South Island disco competitions in Christchurch. I won first prize in the under-18 section and a trip to Sydney, Australia, to dance at various disco clubs. I was paid \$100 for 10 minutes' dancing at that stage so that persuaded me to leave my studies in Timaru to pursue my career as a disco queen, and I moved to Sydney, Australia. My family also moved there too. This is where I began to travel, and I fell back on my hospitality skills when my disco career came to an end. My disco queen career wavered when the style of music and dance changed.

Sydney was full of many varied job opportunities, so I signed up as a sales rep selling encyclopaedias door to door and travelling from New South Wales to Queensland and into Central Australia to the Northern Territory. I sold encyclopaedias for an American company, who were opposition to Britannica, as part of a team that was the top selling team in the world for our company at the time. We earned outstanding amounts of money while travelling. It was fascinating and fun. After that, I reverted to the hospitality industry where jobs were plentiful. I eventually worked my

way up the line with chef skills then into management through my dedication to challenging work. It was a thriving, healthy food restaurant that was popular for famous people to frequent, so it was the start of my responsibilities and organising staff, managing money, reporting to the owner, working incredibly hard, a time that shaped me into becoming so much more responsible, in Bondi Beach where I resided in Sydney.

After 10 years of living in Australia, I received a phone call from family to return home to New Zealand as my tāua was ill. Again, I immediately found a position as a chef at a local restaurant. At times I worked in the kitchen at Arowhenua Marae with tāua. It was great to be home amongst whānau. Again, my adoration for my tāua was of the highest. I admired her work ethic, as it was always to do with tikanga protocols that totally governed her whole approach to everything. There were reasons in ways that were tika (correct) related to all things, for if they were not done in the correct sequence then it always amazed me how things would collapse and fall apart.

My tāua was specific as to how food was handled, how food was prepared, how people entered our marae, how koha (gifts, either in food or money) were given to our marae. Many responsibilities were delegated to the men who would be organised to catch tuna, eels, pātaki, mussels, cockles, clams, and prepare the fire if they were to have a hāngī (earth oven). The women would organise to peel the spuds and vegetables, wash the food and utensils, set the tables, prepare the desserts and keep the wharenuī (meeting house) clean and take care of manuhiri (guests). All these protocols are significant to me as I approach my various jobs that I have pursued now and into the future. I believe that having a solid foundation of tikanga and attitude towards my work enabled me to think differently towards others.

Some may prefer thinking outside the box. Customs are important to me and my family beliefs of my hapū / iwi / people are indeed life forming and the way one approaches life. My tāua taught me to follow tikanga, to work honestly, to work hard to the best of my ability. That I am able to transform and deliver whatever position or line of work I am in. I say a karakia at the beginning of each day. Each item or job, each event, each transaction is equally important as part of tikanga protocols, no matter what religion, whether it was Iharaia from

Tūhoe, Ringatū or Rātana, that all derived by Māori guided me to protect all.

That is how my tāua learnt English, through reading her Rātana Bible, as she was working by the age of 11 to 12 years old. Tāua held a leading position within our community at Arowhenua Marae. She was widely acknowledged for having a great rapport with many businesspeople and organisations such as Māori Women's Welfare League, Huirapa Netball Club, was a Waitaha cultural judge at kapa haka, business owner of two successful restaurants, and an activist, along with other reputable kaumātua in Te Kēreme, the Claim for Ngāi Tahu 20 years ago.

Life certainly took shape for me in many ways and forms from my upbringing that has helped me to uphold an ethic of loyalty, dedication, responsibility, reliability, hard work and honesty. I believe that these are all traits that I have applied myself in my mahi and throughout my life.

Kim Gotlieb

Waitaha, Kāti Māmoe, Kāi Tahu



Photographer: Sinead Jenkins.

Kim Gotlieb has a glimpse into a bygone era through her tāua who lived and breathed te ao Māori. Tāua often carried poi (balls on string) with her, reciting karakia (prayer) and viewed the new world through the eyes of tīpuna. Colonisation robbed her tāua of living a life immersed in te reo Māori, tikaka, kawa (protocols) and wairua. Fast forward, and Kim's life was changed overnight when her whānau chose to relocate into a middle-class Christchurch suburb, where people held different attitudes and talked of opportunities. This was a crucial time for her in that people around her were forthcoming with their aspirations and consideration of a broader world view.

A further relocation to Wellington provided Kim with the prospect of realising her own academic success and her world expanded to include international travel. This in turn opened her eyes to the differences between people who had access to resources and fundamental living conditions. It stimulated her passion to advocate for the underdog, to develop strong personal ethics, values and beliefs, and to challenge the status quo and social norms. It was a defining time, with the Springbok tour spurring lots of thought-provoking kōrero. A life changing moment occurred for Kim, when she walked into the Kāi Tahu offices coming across whakapapa expert Terry Ryan. 'It explained my feeling of dislocation, my longing for Te Tai Toka, my connection with my tāua, and the sense of being different and an outsider.'

As an advocate for others, Kim chose to work in various support roles such as the Tenants' Protection Association, Dunedin Community Law and shearing gangs. 'My wee white world had no comprehension of the hard lives these people had.' It was around this time that Kim realised that she had let go of her dreams of making a better world and she sunk into a sphere of fear and hopelessness. After a stint at Queen Mary Hospital to get help she has been clean for 27 years and has since discovered new ways of thinking and living, building resilience through perseverance and commitment and creating hope, empathy and kindness with others who also find peace without alcohol and other drugs. This pathway has led her to work at Mirror Services and to journey with Te Wānanga o Aotearoa, completing Te Ara Reo (Level Five) and certificates in Kāwai Raupapa Māori Performing Arts and Te Pūtaketanga. Kim has embraced her whakapapa, her whānau, strong work ethics and is a champion for social justice. 'E tū kaha ana au I ōku mana me wairua me mauri', 'I stand strong in my power, spirit and life force.'

Kim Gotlieb

Waitaha, Kāti Māmoe, Kāi Tahu

Nō hea koe?

*I te taha o tōku matua
Ko Aoraki te mauka
Ko Waitaki te awa
Ko Uruao tōku waka
Ko Waitaha rātou ko Kāti Māmoe, ko Kāi Tahu ōku iwi
Ko Kai Te Ruahikihiki rāua ko Kāti Huirapa ōku hapū
Ko Puketeraki rāua ko Takutai o te Tītī ōku marae
Ko Gutsell rātou ko Green, ko Leader ōku whānau ikoa*

*I te taha o tōku whaea
Ko Ingarihi rāua ko Kōtarani ōku iwi
I tae mai ōku tīpuna ki Murihiku i te tau 1890
Ko Nutsford rātou ko Grieve, ko Lake ōku whānau ikoa
Ko Robyn Nutsford rāua ko Trevor Gutsell ōku mātua
Ko Katie rāua ko Emily āku tamāhine
Ko Kim Gotlieb tōku ikoa*

I may have been born and raised in Ōtautahi, but I was drawn to Te Tai Toka, the South, where both my parents were born, in Waihōpai. This is the place my heart sang.

My great grandparents, great aunts and uncles lived in the South, alone in rambling southern houses. They were eccentric and interesting in the way only old people can be, each with

their own set of quirky behaviours that I was often a party to. They had a strong influence on me, playing 500 with my great grandmother and saying karakia with tāua, listening avidly to stories they told of their lives, adding a rich diversity to my life, giving me an appreciation for the past and a more than fleeting interest in our whānau history.

My nana and my tāua both had a significant presence in my early life. I never remember them being anything but old ladies. They were both quite different, Nana a little lady, living alone, with a simple, quiet life, and a large pool of time and kindness for her grandchildren. She was the hub of my mother's family. Nana got me, and when she did not, she accepted me. I always felt that very strongly from Nana, that she believed in me, regardless of what was going on. Tāua was from, and lived in, a completely different world, her feet firmly planted in te ao Māori, but visibly affected by the loss of key components of her culture. To the whānau she was strange and eccentric, her behaviours tolerated as a mysterious relic. Tāua fascinated me; she recited karakia, carried poi and saw the world through the eyes of her tīpuna. She told me stories of her life, stories that reflected her life as a kōtiro (girl) in a time when that life was normal.

I felt a sense of bewilderment and resentment at my whānau for the attitude my whānau had towards tāua that I could not understand at the time. I do now. She was an old kuia (elderly woman) living the remnants of her life in a Pākehā world that did not understand. My tīpuna, Wehikore, married an English ship's carpenter in Ōraka pre-Treaty. Kāi Tahu recognised the benefit of advantageous relationships, bringing those men into the whānau, establishing strong ties with a world that could provide plenty. Colonialism dominated and destroyed, taking whenua, reo, tikaka, kawa and wairua. The whānau called tāua Nana Tau (pronounced tau as in cow). I did not understand what that meant at the time; however, I see now that it epitomises the colonisation and loss my whānau experienced. My whānau was so far removed from te ao Māori that no one knew the kupu Māori (Māori word) was tāua (pronounced towa) which means nana. Our whakapapa was a dark shameful secret, never spoken of and my tāua fitted nicely into the 'strange old lady' category, allowing their continued denial.

I grew up with my younger brother in a working-class whānau, our parents both left school early and worked hard all their lives. Dad was a plasterer like his dad, working 'foreigners' (under the table work) on weekends. Mum worked in Eastmonds shoe shop, and they both worked a milk run, always focused on a better way of life. My first years were spent in a new State House suburb in Aranui, where I attended Wainoni School. In those days, the Family Benefit could be used as a deposit on a State House. My parents bought the house, the first in the neighbourhood to be privately owned. Aranui was a new suburb when our whānau first moved there, but quickly became run down. My parents wanted something different for us, they sold the house and bought another one in St Martin's. We were moving into the middle class.

After our move, I attended St Martin's School, vastly different from Wainoni School. There was a different attitude, a deep sense of possibilities, money, and opportunities. We had not just moved houses; we had moved mentalities. It became possible to see that there was more to life than doing what we had always done. Without a doubt, this was a critical period in my life. For the first time ever, I heard aspirations put into words. As their actions showed, my parents were certainly aspirational, but I had not heard that articulated, we never talked about the wider future and the world. Now I could, now I did.

My teacher in Standard Four was Mr Lawrence. He sang and played the guitar, and we belted out a lot of Neil Diamond. He focused time and energy on me, giving me extra work and encouraging me to read more widely, explore new ideas and extend my thinking. I think he was the first person in my life who articulated aspirations. Within my whānau, you put your head down and got on with it. Educationally, no one had ever done better than average or participated in any further education nor had there ever been any discussion about it. Manual work was the end of the line. Mr Lawrence introduced me to a broader perspective of the world; I began to get a sense that I might have some control in shaping my own part in it.

Books were a huge influence on my life, they became my refuge, the place where my imagination could soar. I have powerful memories of the many books that shaped my world. It was a wonderful time of realising there were infinite ideas in the world, that people wrote about them and others read them. It was like the opening of a massive mind for the world to share.

St Martin's was a small primary school where everyone knew each other, however I was also the object of bullying; having the attention of a teacher had its price, as did the new ideas I was discovering. But we then moved to Wellington where I attended Rāroa Normal Intermediate, a much bigger school with different expectations. I had to adapt quickly to what felt like a more modern form of education.

The greatest change though was that I was not bullied nor an outsider at Rāroa. I belonged to a group of friends for the first time ever. I travelled every day with my cousins and newfound friends on the unit from Ngaio to Rāroa, a more exciting journey than the ride on my Loline to school in Christchurch. Maybe people are targets of bullying because they always have been, and I grew up. I gradually realised that in a different context, things could change. It gave me a fresh perspective, I was not necessarily defined by how others viewed me, I could define myself.

It was at this time that both of my parents got much better, well-paying jobs. Dad worked at Air New Zealand, and mum at the National Bank. This meant we could travel. Our first trip overseas was to Australia, where I could sense a difference, although not an overt one, except that the milk came in cardboard boxes. I felt a sense of freedom on that holiday that I had never experienced before.

We then travelled to the USA and UK. Transiting through countries and airports where the array of cultures, languages, dress and social norms were incredibly varied. Lines of refugees in Hawaii heading for mainland USA, and police officers in Los Angeles wearing guns. Disneyland was cool, but New York was scary. Hollywood was rich, but the surrounding countryside was filled to the horizon with oil derricks pumping black gold. The USA felt vast and free with limitless possibilities.

The UK was quite different from the USA. It felt more restricted and confined, but with an astonishing mix of cultures. We travelled in a rented Mini, running the gauntlet on the A40, stunned by the ring roads. It was big and fast, with cities stretching for miles.

We visited dad's cousin and his family in Brighton. Billy owned a three wheeled Reliant Robin which his family could not all fit into at one time. It was when visiting them that I really felt

the sense of confinement in the UK. The families we visited did not have much and they seemed restricted in their world, their focus was inward. That was what my parents had attempted to move away from back in NZ.

I was always a bit of a rebel, a non-conformist. My head was full of ideas, I was compelled to discover more, but it made life difficult. Having different opinions and concepts of the world from my whānau and peers meant I did not slot in well. I always had a best friend at school, but was never truly accepted by my peers, it felt like I was on the outside looking in. I experienced a lot of bullying throughout my school life. I think this happened because I was opinionated and expressed those ideas.

Looking back, I now see that my working-class background set me apart from my peers. I did not know how to 'be' or how to communicate or socialise with others, I was never of the 'in' crowd, but it did mean I always gunned for the underdog. My character, values and beliefs have developed strongly because of this. It was not until high school that I began to meet others who were not so 'in.'

My sense of justice and awareness of inequality set me apart early on. I had ideas that were controversial and sometimes confronting, and those ideas differentiated me from my whānau. I found it difficult to remain silent which could, at times, get me into trouble within the whānau and outside in the world. The housework and cooking were mine and mum's jobs. It bothered me a great deal that it was up to the women of the house to do the cooking and cleaning. I could not get my head around the fact that we all ate, and we all made a mess so why wouldn't we all clean up? I was challenging some of the social norms that I perceived as being unfair and quite frankly, unacceptable. It was a difficult pill for mum and dad to swallow, having a daughter who questioned and challenged their 'normal' a lot.

Tama tū, Tama ora Tama noho, Tama mate

He who stands lives, he who sits perishes

Music was commonplace in our whānau. Mum and Dad had a reel-to-reel recorder that they turned up loud for parties. I first learnt the guitar from Mrs Houston, every week showing up to her tiny sunroom with an array of piano accordions, guitars,

banjos, and mandolins on every surface. Grey and permed, she seemed so old, but she could play all those instruments. We often had nights with the whānau where my cousins and I would entertain everyone, playing guitars and singing. I loved to belt out a song on the guitar, especially with my cousins, it made me happy and went a long way to building my self-confidence.

I always had jobs. My first was collecting eggs from the neighbourhood hens; then riding home with them perched precariously in a box on my Loline. I was a responsible egg collector. My first 'real' job was working during weekends and holidays at the NZ Clematis Nursery. It was there I began to learn about horticulture. Alastair Keay was an eccentric old cricket player with an obsession for clematis. He grew many varieties, sending orders throughout the country. We took thousands of cuttings, and with much care and attention grew them on. I learnt about production and orders but also how one eccentric old man could, with devotion create a remarkable collection of stunning plants.

My working-class background became more evident in the Fifth Form when I moved into the top class to do six School Certificate subjects. Most of the other kids came from well-heeled families in Cashmere; I was a rough diamond. I tended to cope with this by being a smartass, which at times won me the approval of my classmates, but not my teachers.

That summer I worked at a factory that manufactured pottery. In the shipping department, we had to be highly organised and methodical; I enjoyed the busyness and time pressures. A group of young women worked there, only a few years older than me. Their job was to sand the pottery after it came out of the kiln, dirty and monotonous work. They had left school with little or no qualifications. It was at the end of the year, and I was waiting on my School Certificate results when one of them remarked, 'get those qualifications and make good use of them. You do not want to end up like me.' I will never forget that moment, she was perceptive and full of regret and my world was just opening.

By this time, my music tastes had changed. Music was a way I could escape the world and define myself differently from my whānau and the people around me. Music put words to the way I felt and what I could see happening in our society and in the world. I recall going from listening to ABBA and Solid Gold Hits

to the Clash and the Sex Pistols virtually overnight. It opened a new world and did not win the approval of my whānau. I enjoyed being different from the 'clicky' girls at school and began to think of myself as a bit alternative and cool.

In the Sixth Form, I applied and was chosen to attend a biology camp in Kaikōura. It was easy and fun to be with other people who were into the geekiness of science and study. I got a sense that it was okay to be smart, that not everyone resented smart kids. In fact, smart kids liked other smart kids.

It was in the same year that the 1981 Springbok Tour occurred. I felt very strongly that the world, including Aotearoa, needed to take a stand against apartheid. The divisiveness within my community was palpable, I was careful where I talked about my beliefs about apartheid and the Tour. In my whānau my dad expounded that the Tour should go on, that the protestors were 'louts' out to cause trouble. My opinions were not listened to or welcome. This really set me apart. It was a 'flashpoint' in my life, I realised there were other people who felt strongly about the same issues. It set the tone for my life from that point on. It was at this time that I made the decision to stand strong for what I believed in, regardless of the opinions of others.

During that summer I worked on a market garden, harvesting spring onions in the dusty fields and tomatoes from huge, stifling glasshouses. It was owned by a Chinese family who lived to work; the family never seemed to stop to eat let alone rest or sleep. Their parents had emigrated from China, and they lived together in a house amid the fields that alternated between hot dust or boggy mud. I had always been aware of how hard my parents worked, but these market gardeners took it to another level, and expected me to do the same. I did not go back for another summer, but I think I learnt the difference between working hard and working so hard there was no room left for anything but collapsing into bed late at night.

As I grew older, I gradually became more aware of something Māori. As an eighteen-year-old, I walked into the offices of Kāi Tahu, where to my great fortune Terry Ryan worked. Back then I did not know he was one of the holders of Kāi Tahu whakapapa. I told him I thought I was Māori. Without batting an eyelid, he asked 'Who is your grandmother?' When I told him, he responded with a recitation of my whakapapa. He knew my

whānau, he knew where I fitted, and he knew what that meant. It was a life changing moment, all those years of denial unveiled, his kōrero invoking my tīpuna, opening the door and inviting them into the room, they had always been there, I just had not known it.

My sense of self became clearer. It explained my feeling of dislocation, my longing for Te Tai Toka, my connection with my tāua, and the sense of being different and an outsider.

E kore au e ngaro, te kākano i ruia mai i Rangīātea

*I shall never be lost, for I am the seed sown from
Rangīātea*

Despite being successful at school, there was little support or encouragement for me to attend further education. I do not recall careers advice at school and there were no expectations of tertiary education within my whānau. Everyone had always worked at whatever was available. A friend knew of a vacancy at Geo. H. Scales, a shipping agent, where I began the second phase of my working life.

I worked full time as a receptionist/typist. Captain Farr was the Director, a gnarly old sea captain who sat in his office smoking a pipe with a bottle of whiskey handy. He 'liaised' with other ship's captains, who could be heard guffawing loudly from his spacious office. At Scales I answered phones, typed, and operated an ancient Telex machine that needed its own room. I learnt how to hold down a full-time job and began to learn how to work with others. The women were all in administrative roles and did what the men told them. I mostly stayed quiet about the gendered roles I observed; being in a conservative environment was difficult for a young woman with vastly different beliefs. Captain Farr called me into his office one day to tell me that women should have long hair and that my hair was cut too short. He handed me a Scales scarf to cover my head. I resigned not long after. I could keep my mouth shut in order to get on with my job, but I would not compromise my values to that extent.

After realising I needed to do something different, I enrolled at Canterbury University to study Greek History, Political Science and Religious Studies, purely chosen for interest's sake, a sure sign that I had no idea of what direction I wanted to take. I

was unprepared for study and dropped out after a year. It was during this time that alcohol and other drugs took hold of my life. My life changed dramatically here for around 15 years, while my world was taken over by addiction. I did manage to remain functional in the working world sporadically for short periods of time before my lifestyle rendered me incapable of working.

There are other factors that probably led me to make my way down this path without really knowing what I was letting myself in for. I was a rebel, shunning the world because it did not fit with my beliefs. I was not comfortable in my own skin and being bullied and socially inept meant I never felt like I fitted in. There was a history of drinking and violence in my whānau that was never spoken about, and because of that, was normalised. This affected us deeply, permeating every area of our lives. It was not until many years later that I began to understand the nature of familial addiction and the intergenerational impact of the disease.

Despite all this, at 19, I got a job at the Tenants' Protection Association, working as the sole member of staff. I was young and inexperienced and quite a sight in a mini skirt, fishnet tights, Doc Martens and with a mohawk riding a 350 Yamaha. I worked there for about a year, resigning after a landlord who was stealing from tenants (taking their property in lieu of rent arrears) got angry with me when I called the police who threatened to charge him. He sent his ' heavies ' to my office to threaten me, it was not pleasant, and I absolutely learnt that there were better ways to act. But I was passionate about my role and did some decent work while I was there.

After many years of unemployment, I worked in several shearing gangs. We worked hard and played hard; I got a glimpse into a way of life I never knew existed. I quickly learnt that my wee white world had no comprehension of the hard lives these people had. We got up early, travelled long distances, worked extremely long, physically demanding hours and then spent our wages in the pub. It was a futile existence, which I think reflected what I had seen in my young life, people doing the same thing because that was what they had always done but they were trapped there.

It took a long time of using drugs before I finally realised that I had the choice of getting clean but only had one shot at it. I was getting older, the girl and the young woman who had a vision for a better world had fled into blank oblivion, where violence, fear and hopelessness reigned. I finally went to Queen Mary Hospital, Hanmer Springs in 1994, and have been clean for 27 years.

I had to move away from a using life into what we considered to be the 'straight' world, which is how we sarcastically categorised anyone who did not take drugs. Their lives appeared conservative and boring from a drug user's perspective. It turned out that my using life had been the conservative and boring place, loaded with repeating cycles of negative behaviour and dead ends. Filled with shame, guilt and self-loathing I had to gradually learn new ways of thinking, responding, and living. Getting clean was just the beginning, staying clean requires perseverance and tenacity. I had to trust others, especially myself, but also learn I was not always going to get it right, nor would they, and that was okay. I learnt there is always hope and that empathy and kindness can come from the most unexpected places. Self-care was essential, taking drugs all the time meant I did not care about myself, or anyone else. My priority always needed to be my recovery, if I put in the groundwork, I was capable of anything. Gradually I began to find some peace; without drugs I could have a life filled with contentment but also challenges, neither of which I needed to take drugs for.

My life began again after I cleaned up and got my first job as the cleaner and gardener at the Donald Beasley Institute. I had no recent work experience, therefore with no CV, and an unsavoury past, it was hard to get a job. The Institute was an inclusive workplace, into which I was welcomed. It was my first foray back into the world clean. I lacked many social graces, and it was obvious I had a lot to learn. Morning tea was around the staff table where they insisted, I join them. I observed 'normal' life around that table: how to communicate, how to stay quiet and listen, how to respond appropriately, and everyday social norms. Dr Anne Bray was a no-nonsense woman who gave me a second chance. She knew my history, and she trusted me. The day she gave me the alarm code, I stood rooted to the floor dumbstruck. It meant the world that she trusted me, and was willing to give me a chance. Those people gave me a pathway

to finding myself in the world, without judgement. The power of being given a second chance is extraordinary; accepting someone as they are, giving them the space to restore themselves in the world is a powerful social commitment.

I was coming up to two years clean when I went back to study. The Institute provided me with my first reference, enabling me to begin a NZ Diploma of Business. I had no idea if I could study and went on a very steep learning curve. I thrived in the environment. I became organised and focused, and unlike my first attempt at tertiary study, I got help with studying and writing. My skills improved, I realised I could be a leader, and my self-belief grew significantly. I discovered that everyone works differently and that I needed to be flexible, that there were alternatives to 'my way or the highway.'

My first role after studying was at Community Law Otago where I was appointed Kaiwhakatikatika, 'the person who puts things right.' A big name and a big role. I worked with hāpori Māori, to influence change in areas of inequity like legislation, bylaws, regulations, education, and health. I worked closely with Ngāi Tahu Māori Law Centre (NTMLC). Our mandate at Community Law Otago was to work within Article 3 of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, NTMLC worked within Articles 1 and 2. There was extensive deprivation going on right under our noses, but a large portion of society was in complete ignorance or denial of this. There was no comprehension of the cultural loss and trauma that occurred for takata whenua (Indigenous people) resulting in current inequities. It was a fulfilling role, working with people committed to social justice, generously sharing with me significant learning in all areas of my life.

In 2005, after seven years at the Law Centre, I made the difficult decision to leave when my second child was a toddler. I had been diagnosed with moderate to severe postnatal depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (a result of my drug using life). My world shrunk to a pinhole. Not able to function normally, I eventually attended the Psychiatric Day Hospital for care and respite. I had two young children and some days found ordinary life incredibly hard. I experienced depression and anxiety, often unable to make decisions or think straight. It felt like I had been taken over by a very distressed and much duller version of myself. I became highly alert to everything around me leaving me exhausted and vulnerable.

I have a vivid memory of sitting in the waiting room of the South Community Mental Health Team with people I had judged as 'mad.' Compared to them, I thought I looked 'normal.' I was struck by the realisation that there was no difference, we were all suffering from a mental illness that took us to the same place– the bottom of a black pit from which there appeared to be no escape.

I regularly attended Artsenta, an arts community for people with mental health issues. It was a place where I did not have to pretend to be well, I could be myself and be immersed in art, a welcome relief from the persistent distress I was experiencing. Creating art helped me to stay in the moment and find ways to enjoy life again.

Ko Rangi ki runga, ko Papa ki raro

Rangi is above, Papa is below

My encounter with mental health lasted for about 10 years. I got therapy and had a lot of support from friends and whānau, learnt how to manage my distress and slowly began to live life again, albeit in a different way. I realised I was strong and committed to myself and my whānau, I could face difficulties– giving challenges patience, time, and acceptance. On any given day I needed to accept myself just the way I was, recognise my warning signs and manage them.

During this time, I began to manage the Tomahawk Smalls Beachcare Trust Nursery as an independent contractor, running my own small business for the first time, giving me flexibility around my health. I coordinated volunteers at the Nursery during the week, and large planting days with volunteers on weekends. Some of the volunteers were from IDEA Services who had intellectual disabilities. It was a pleasure to work with these guys. They took great pride in getting work done and had wicked senses of humour. I appreciated the value of working in an organisation that actively contributed to the wellbeing of our community.

It was a struggle at times to maintain my work, there was a fine line between pushing through my distress and recognising I needed to give myself a break and slow it down. I no longer wanted my mental health to define me, and I desperately

needed to be a part of the world again. It was a slow and unsteady process, however I managed to keep up the role for a year, until funding ran out.

In 2011 I began work at Mirror Services for five hours a week as an administrative assistant. It was at times, incredibly difficult to be at work. Some days anxiety filled me so much that I found it difficult to get to work and when the phone rang, I would break out in a sweat. But I persevered, and over time, I became less anxious and more confident. My hours increased, as did my workload. It became evident that I could do more, and my role expanded. I gradually moved into policy work and in 2017 was offered the role of Policy and Information Advisor and School Based Drug Policy Advisor.

I began my te reo Māori journey with Te Wānanga o Aotearoa in 2012, completing a Level 5 Diploma in Te Ara Reo Māori and two additional certificates in Kāwai Raupapa (Māori Performing Arts) and Te Pūtaketanga in 2016. It was a remarkable journey, going into immersion halfway through the second year was extremely challenging, however classes were structured to fully support taura and we were encouraged to tautoko one another. We grew together, with noho marae being a beautiful deep dive of immersion into te ao Māori. Learning to speak te reo Māori in public was a big step. I learnt to panic slowly and walk around my fears, supporting others to do the same. I spent a lot of time in wānanga and on the marae. The importance of place, whakapapa and my connectedness to the world became clearer. I gained more self-confidence, coming to recognise the firm foundation that is built under me. There is an openness to my mauri and wairua that was not there before. It has been my opportunity to fully embrace the Māori world as something instinctive and normal, and for the Pākehā world to become strange and uncomfortable.

*He puna wai
He puna kai
He puna reo
He puna ora
Ita-a-ita*

*A spring of water,
a spring of sustenance,
a spring of language,
spring of wellness.
Hold fast.*

I was eventually asked by Mirror Services if I would take over the lead role in the mihi whakatau (welcoming) process which is used when we have manuhiri. At the Wānanga, we were encouraged to take on these roles, with guidance and support from our kaiako (teacher), my kaumātua and whānau. My upoko (head) told me that Kāi Tahu wāhine can and do play these roles, and that my marae and my tīpuna had my back. It is an important role and can be very exposing, requiring a mindset for each occasion. It is important that the team has my back, and there are times when it is not appropriate for me to kōrero.

I kōrero in te reo Māori to welcome manuhiri and lay down the kaupapa of the day. As with most big scary things, it has been exceptional learning. E tū kaha ana au i ōku mana, me te wairua me te mauri (I stand strong in my power, spirit, and life force) with my tīpuna at my back and speak on behalf of all of them and my organisation. It has had a profound impact on me. I have a lot to learn.

I am a white-skinned Māori, very conscious of the privilege that affords me. I am a direct result of the early intermarriages Kāi Tahu made with European men. This continued throughout our whakapapa, resulting in an enduring loss and the eventual denial of our whakapapa. However, I had a strong connection to my tāua and an equally strong connection to the whenua. It is ironic that the very reasons I have not lived in my Kāitahutaka (Kāi Tahu-ness) are the reasons I am who I am. As the years pass, I have resolved to own my whakapapa, to embrace my tīpuna and the essence they breathe into my life. My tūrakawaewae (standing place) is Waihōpai. The powerful force of the whenua flows through me, enlivening and nourishing. Te Tai Tonga is my place, the place of my tīpuna on all sides of my whānau, I belong to that land, I care deeply for that land, it is part of me as I am a part of it.

There are cornerstone events that have provided significant learning and smaller, quiet moments that have shaped my life. The move to a new school and a new 'culture' gave me a broadened perspective and a realisation that things could be different, and that was okay. I discovered that books could be my microscope on the world and that I could stand up and be strong about what I believed in.

Unearthing my whakapapa and finding a sense of connection was significant. But as well as that, it has been a slow burner, making me and marking me over time. My tāua and pōua taught me respect; to respect them, but also respect for their knowledge and lives and the lives of those who went before them. It also gave me an early taste of the effects of repression and cultural loss. The importance of place was evident my entire life, the physical longing and rightness of my tūrakawaewae was and is unmistakable. We all need a place to belong to.

My parents instilled in me a strong work ethic, an obligation to be responsible and committed. But that strong working-class ethic came with what I believe is a tightly bound set of characteristic behaviours that define the expectations of that class. I felt restricted, and when I began to break free, I experienced the bewilderment and anger of those around me. However, my learning came with the gradual development of a wider perspective where I could join others in living and thinking differently.

Bullying and inequality had a different impact. I developed a strong sense of justice and a fierce determination to fight inequality. In my life, that sense is strong, and I respect it in others. I will fight for what I know is right, but I can at times also accept when the fight is done. The flip side of that occurred in Wellington, where I experienced no bullying, the world did not necessarily fall apart because things changed, and that life did not have to be the way it had always been. I learnt to be adaptable, and I learnt resilience.

These events and experiences, the big, ground shaking moments, the smaller shifts that were not obvious at the time and the slow burning developments have shaped who I am and what I do today. Some of them have been incredibly difficult, I stand here as a result.

*Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi
Engari he toa takitini*

*I come not with my own strengths, but bring with me
the gifts, talents and strengths of my whānau, iwi and
tīpuna*

Scout River Barbour-Evans

They/Them; Ngāti Kahungunu Ki Te Wairoa



Photographer: Sinead Jenkins.

The media calls Scout Barbour-Evans a trailblazer. They leave no doubt that they are comfortable to go into uncharted territory, knowing exactly what they want and bravely approaching challenges with an open heart and sense of paving the way for others. Scout has an impressive history of supporting others and speaking out for marginalised people. In their two campaigns for the Dunedin Mayorality they spoke extensively for the need to make their home safe and inclusive for everyone, not only the privileged few. They worked as a peer support and queer youth worker, an advocate for awareness of mental illness, and a voice of political activism and humanitarianism. They own and operate Kahukura Consultancy, a small business dedicated to supporting organisations and projects to become literate in Rainbow, transgender and non-binary needs, and they are a member of the FEDUP Collective, running international support groups for trans+, gender diverse and intersex people with eating disorders.

Identity, respect, cultural affirmation are three crucial components to the identity of Indigenous people, and Scout embodies these through their life's work. Knowing that they wanted to make change as a young person, Scout wanted to change their given birthname to a gender-neutral name, settling on Scout, while their parents chose the accompanying middle name River. Scout is takatāpui (LGBTQI), and has been medically transitioning with the use of hormones and surgeries. They have found themselves in a hybrid space, an in-between grey area, actively challenging gender identity and medical perceptions by becoming pregnant as a transmasculine person. In this chapter, Scout shares their unique experiences of working alongside the medical profession to grow and raise the love of their life. Through sharing their uncharted life experiences, Scout has provided access for other transmasculine people exploring similar journeys, sharing the challenges and opportunities within this transformational process. They reiterate the research findings that social outcomes of transgender birth parents improve substantially when their identities are respected and affirmed (Glaser et al., 2009; MacDonald, 2019; Newman et al., 2021).

Scout River Barbour-Evans

They/Them; Ngāti Kahungunu Ki Te Wairoa

*Tēnā koutou katoa,
Ko Taranaki te papatūwhenua
Kei te noho kei Ōtepoti ināiane i raro i te maru o Ngāi
Tahu
Ko Whakapunake te maunga
Ko te Wairoa te awa
Ko Ngāti Kahungunu rāua ko Ngāti Porou ngā iwi
Ko Takitimu te waka
Ko Kahungunu te tangata
Ko Barbour rāua ko Evans ngā whānau
Ko Scout ahau
Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa*

My name is Scout River Barbour-Evans. I named myself. Scout came from a list of the top 10 gender neutral names on the internet, and I chose it because I'm always seeking out new opportunities to do better for the world. I wanted my parents to be involved in the process of choosing my new name, so they chose River as my middle name. Like a river I spend my days carving out new tracks, new paths, a new way of being. The media have called me a trailblazer. I'm takatāpui and transgender, and I'm raising a strong-willed, passionate, kind little explorer who lights up my every day. I am doing the most important mahi you can do in this life, guiding my little love to play, learn, love, and navigate a world that changes every day.

Nothing has brought me more joy.

I was born in the old maternity hospital in Stratford, Taranaki. My whānau lived in Stratford, under the watchful eye of the maunga, until not long after my fifth birthday. I grew up in Ōtepoti Dunedin, spending most of my days collecting snails, making potions in the garden and reading at the top of the apple tree. When we weren't in Ōtepoti we were exploring the backcountry, climbing cliffs on dad's 'shortcuts' and leaving our mark in every hut book we could find. As a teenager I found myself in Brisbane, at a co-ed school with more Māori culture than I'd ever come across at my historic all-girls Ōtepoti high school. I found myself in an environment where I could explore and understand my gender, and my place in this world. I carved my own path.

As an adult I have maintained a focus of doing good for everyone. I spent five years as a queer youth worker and I'm in my second year as an eating disorders peer support worker. I've worked in politics and activism, but these days I have a more active humanitarian focus. I have a Certificate in Mental Health and Addiction Support and a Bachelor of Leadership for Change. I'm a lifelong learner, and I'm not finished studying yet. My mahi and study at Otago Polytechnic were the genesis of my participation in this autoethnography, and opened doors for me that I am grateful for every single day.

I have a lot of life experience for 26. I have experienced mental illness since I was a child with a feeding disorder, and as a teenager this developed into an eating disorder. It was in the early stages of my recovery that I had the realisation that I was transgender. Eating disorders are a funny beast, and society likes to labour under the assumption that they only happen to cisgender women. This means that systems and services designed to help eating disorder sufferers tend to be geared towards the feminine. It was a funny, but strangely apt place in my life to realise that my restrictive food habits were in order to try and de-feminise myself. Trying to achieve this goal nearly killed me.

I have always wanted to have a whānau, since I was four and my younger brother was born. Being hapū (pregnant) never seemed feminine, but empowering and whole. My parents gave me a doll to help with the transition into being an older

sibling—I named her Gonk and we have photos of Mum and me on the couch together, me with my brother and her with my Gonk. But with my history of anorexia and my transition—by the time I was ready to start a whānau I was on hormone therapy and preparing for a double mastectomy—I didn't really know if it was possible to ever carry my own pēpi. I Googled 'ftm having a baby.' I read an article, and the article referenced a Facebook group. I joined the Facebook group, still thinking that having a non-plastic pēpi of my own was a pipe dream. I read dozens, maybe hundreds, of posts from men, non-binary people, and birth professionals around the world, all discussing the unknown, unspoken world of transgender pregnancy. And I decided that maybe it was for me.

I knew the basics—if I wanted to safely carry a pēpi I needed to stop taking my testosterone. I needed sperm. And I needed to find out if I could be admitted to the maternity ward with a male gender marker on my file. I spoke to my endocrinologist and soon we had even more questions. Would I produce milk after my surgery? Would my testosterone pass into that milk, and how long postpartum would I need to wait before beginning hormone therapy again? How would my mental health cope, particularly my eating disorder and gender dysphoria? Would testosterone have damaged my fertility? Would years of starvation have damaged it? We didn't have answers for a lot of that, but my endocrinologist reviewed my most recent blood tests and gave me the go ahead to start trying using the sperm donor I'd already scoped out. Forty-one and a half weeks later, I gave birth to the love of my life.

My experience of the systems designed for pregnancy ran in parallel to my experience of the eating disorder recovery systems. Everything was so, understandably yet painfully, feminine. Even the legal contract I signed to bring my midwife on board described me as 'the woman,' and signing it felt like committing fraud. I was now lying about my gender on a legal document, an experience I was very used to by now but no more comfortable about. If I did not lie I wouldn't have anyone to help me give birth. At least when I went through eating disorder treatment, I should not have to lie about who I was to get help. I avoided hospital care while hapū, an impressive feat when you suffer from hyperemesis gravidarum, and I gave birth at home so I could control who was in attendance. I went to extraordinary lengths to avoid a system which showed every indication that I wasn't supposed to be included.

Through my pregnancy I had to become incredibly literate in the subject of transgender pregnancy. I had to keep track of the latest research, however limited, and decide which risks I might be okay with taking. My pēpi and I became my test subjects. And my literacy and resourcefulness and networking skills became my biggest assets. However, I began to realise that not every transgender person had these skills or the contacts that I did. I was studying the Bachelor of Leadership for Change at Otago Polytechnic, and I chose to focus my final undergraduate year on creating a health resource for other transgender people hoping to make informed choices about our fertility and our whānau.

I found myself invited to work alongside expert, professional academics who were undertaking the largest survey on transgender health that has ever been done in Aotearoa and I was able to contribute my particular experiences as not only a research participant, but as an advisor. Being privy to what at the time were confidential statistics gave me pointers that I was really privileged to have. Counting Ourselves Community Report (Veale et al., 2019), a survey of 1,178 transgender people across Aotearoa, showed that only 34% of survey participants had been informed about fertility options when accessing transgender healthcare, and that 19% of participants would like to become a parent one day. This statistic was higher in the Māori population, with 32% hoping to become parents one day. This was especially poignant to me as a young Māori parent. Our whakapapa runs through our veins and whānau is everything to us; reproductive justice is a Māori healthcare issue.

The research on transgender pregnancy and lactation is thin on the ground, but all of it has followed similar themes. It's understood across research from academics such as Trevor Kirczenow MacDonald (2019), Glaser et al. (2009), and Maxwell et al. (2017) that the social outcomes of transgender birthing parents are better when their identities are respected and affirmed by health professionals, and that pregnancy services need to be adaptive to the needs of their clients to ensure the best outcomes for whānau. We know the same thing about those of us who whakapapa Māori, that understanding our whakapapa and having community and whānau and identity improves our wellbeing hugely. Indeed, it was my personal experience that being honoured as Māori through my journey

to becoming a parent, as well as having my gender honoured throughout the process, went so far to creating what I have at time of publication—a thriving, close-knit, extended whānau unit of both chosen and biological whānau. Standing in my own mauri made my little whānau what it is.

My values as a Māori researcher highly influenced the research I chose to highlight. The most important aspect of much of the research I have outlined above is that it is written by the transgender community, for the transgender community. I am a firm believer of the adage ‘nothing about us without us.’ The research I found valuable as a researcher was done in a way that understood the needs of the participants, so answers given would have more weight. And they therefore asked the questions that the transgender community, particularly the transmasculine community, really needed to have answers to.

One of the great drawbacks of tertiary study and academia is that it seems impossibly difficult at times to meld into your real life. Working, studying, and raising a whānau all at once is not easy, and yet so many taura around Aotearoa are undergoing this exact mission. I would be remiss not to acknowledge that difficulty. The tertiary education system, and supporting systems, do not bend easily to fit into the needs of a whānau—indeed, it hasn’t changed much from its colonial outset. What do you do when one of your tamariki gets sick and you have class? What do you do when you’re hapū and can’t take any parental leave? Tamariki don’t like to make their needs convenient for colonial systems, that’s for sure.

I was so privileged through my degree that the class delivery and one-on-one time allowed me to make my studies much more flexible, and allowed me to lead change in a realistic manner. I had an extraordinary amount of wriggle room to make my deadlines realistic, clear, and adaptable. This facilitated the use of these natural skills of mine, to adapt my schedule where I needed to to meet my pēpi’s needs first and achieve work-life integration. The kaiako got excited for the days they’d see me in person because they would get pēpi cuddles. I could parent while I studied in a way that did not impair the needs of other students. Tamariki can be distracting, and make noises and smells that affect the ability to focus in a classroom or work environment.

Studying online meant I could attend class from anywhere. The recording of classes meant that I could always catch up or revise what was covered in a class, in a way I never could while in other schools. The flexibility allowed me to flourish as both a parent and a worker, and meant my pēpi didn't miss out on having me in her early months. This support is invaluable, and it will be a loss if the tertiary sector does not increase the flexibility across other schools of study as well.

As the parent to a small being, flexibility is the key to getting anything done. It's also a skill. I struggled with rigidity before I became a parent, needing to make a plan (and a plan B) and not deviate from it. Planning was an intuitive skill of mine, and it came in handy. My original plan for the third year of my degree was to open a transgender health clinic here in Ōtepoti Dunedin. It was a lofty goal, without a clear process, which would have been much more intensive than the project I undertook instead. Through being hapū I was incapacitated by hyperemesis gravidarum. I realised the plan needed to change. I needed to give myself space to recover from being hapū and grow into parenting. And I'd obtained such rich life experience from being hapū—it would have been a shame not to use it to create change. I decided to refocus my efforts to creating a health resource for transgender people who wanted to carry children instead.

I began by undertaking a lot of research for my own health while I was pregnant, throughout the 2018 academic year. I had a lot of questions that were specific to my situation, that my midwife, obstetrician, endocrinologist, and GP didn't have answers for. It was necessary for me to complete this research so that I could advocate for myself in the best way possible. I empowered myself with this knowledge in a way that few people going through the medical system are able to. This involved many hours of networking with other transgender parents, and by the end involved answering the questions that other prospective birthing parents had.

My role as a Community Advisor for the Counting Ourselves project (Veale et al., 2019) aligned with my journey as I was planning to conceive, as I was hāpu, and as I was a new parent. As mentioned prior I realised through this process that there are significant reproductive health inequities, and the knowledge I had obtained through my pregnancy might close the gaps.

From here I changed my project plan and began to work on a collection of literature for my own use, a presentation for health professionals, and then a health education resource for transgender people who are transitioning medically and have an interest in having children one day. I hoped that this resource would give information not only to my own community but also to the doctors who are prescribing hormones too. I choose to assume the best nature of everyone, and hope that the doctors who don't tell patients about fertility options just don't know which options are available. The Family Planning when Transgender Web resource (Barbour-Evans, n.d) was reviewed by Associate Professor Gareth Treharne, who was already in my networks as an expert in transgender health. This gave it a credibility that I didn't have as a young Māori undergraduate student, so that it would be received more readily by health professionals.

I presented my work and project in May 2019, at the Transgender Health Symposium at Waikato University, to a great reception. I was really privileged to present alongside Dr Ruth Pearce, a British sociologist from Leeds University who has done similar work within the transgender health sector. I was even able to present my research while feeding my pēpi, which was incredibly fitting given the topic. The health resource was not yet complete nor published at this stage, so I used this opportunity to practice communicating these health issues in a plain and accessible way. The difficulty, of course, was that most attendees were already health literate and were geared to better understand the information I was presenting. I met a lot of new researchers and health professionals over this weekend and was able to bring them into my networks. I also became a founding member of the Professional Association of Transgender Health Aotearoa, or PATHA, at this symposium.

I am a single Māori parent, I live with disability, I live with mental illness, I volunteer and work. Without a basic frame for operating, I wouldn't be able to succeed and thrive in so many of these areas.

I use, on a daily basis, a WRAP (wellness and recovery action plan) that is informed by Sir Mason Durie's Te Whare Tapa Whā. This is my kete of all the things that allow me to continue functioning at a base level and mitigate a crisis. This model has been so successful for me that I present it as a training workshop

in numerous volunteer contexts. As a plan that's been informed by Te Whare Tapa Whā, it addresses every single aspect of my wellbeing (hauora) in a holistic way, fueling me to do other tasks like my degree. My own wellness is my first priority at all times, because if I am not well, I am not working sustainably. This base is not spoken of or encouraged enough in Aotearoa's education system, so it was imperative that I hold it for myself.

By self-caring through the steps in my WRAP, I am building a resilience in myself that facilitates *how* I overcome hurdles and challenges. If I am using work-life integration to juggle every plate, that means that some days nursing my own brain is significantly more important than writing a few more paragraphs. My commitment to sustainable practice has become so much more resolute through my undergraduate study, and I plan to hold that while in the professional workforce too.

Beyond *how* I work, a large part of creating meaningful change this year has been understanding *why* I work. I have discussed up to now my values in part, but when it came to finding a framework of practice that I could see myself in I found it more logical to write my own.

Te Huruwhenua - Ko Wai Au? is a framework I wrote to find a place for myself in the academic world. Each fern frond began furled, growing and unfurling as my skill sets and values grew and matured. As I moved past these skill sets, the fern fronds withered and fell dead, representing knowledge I still hold but no longer need to use.

I began my study with a very insightful vision of who I was, what I would be, and where I wanted to go. My first iteration of Te Huruwhenua showed fern fronds on the verge of unfurling, large and healthy. My second iteration shows these fern fronds at their most mature stage, and more growing and preparing to unfurl—education and self-development never end, not even when you finish a degree.

Irrespective of whether this does become my life's work, the skills I've learned and the growth I've made while doing this project will serve me well in any field. Te Huruwhenua discussed my values, my core self, and what drives me. It showed that Te Tiriti o Waitangi was integral to everything I do—if takatāpui people are a taonga, we have a Treaty obligation to make life

better for our community. It discussed how I worked, using the model of Tu Rangatira. I am a networker, he kaikōtuitui, a worker, he kaimahi, and an advocate, he kaiarataki. It discussed how I use the three types of empathy: emotional, cognitive, and compassionate. While not all of those types of empathy come naturally to me, by understanding all three I can use them as tools to be the most effective helper and change-maker through my own lived experiences.

The final iteration of Te Huruwhenua showed most of the ferns had unfurled. I added a fully unfurled fern titled 'Professional Practice', which discussed all the aspects of what I am that make me one of the best people to be researching transgender pregnancy. I am a researcher, active citizen, a thinker, a patient, an advocate, a leader, a decolonist, a spokesperson, a parent, a carer and a facilitator. I am tangata tiriti (non-Māori person of the Treaty) as well as tangata whenua (Indigenous person), my whakapapa guides me from both worlds. And my list of personal values has extended to include a 'life with dignity,' the ultimate goal for this work I'm undertaking. Some new furled up ferns grew in this final iteration too – what do I want to be, and why? Who am I and how am I? How do I keep using my personal experience to improve the health sector and give others better experiences than I've had? At my core, I am a lifelong learner, and 'what next?' is a crucial aspect of my being. I will always strive to do better and better things. My advocacy work and the fight for our lives will never end, but it might no longer be my day job.

My project, as with most of real life, did not fit neatly into the bindings of an academic year. After I completed my degree, I did a verbal submission in Te Whānganui-a-Tara Wellington on the Abortion Reform bill, where I discussed the need to write intentional legislation that includes everybody who needs to use it, transmasculine and non-binary people included. I have been preparing to present my patient experience at the next Midwifery Conference alongside my midwife, we are very committed to improving health outcomes together within this community. I've continued doing media articles to normalise transgender parenting and in the hopes that others might realise that they can have tamariki too.

And at the time of editing this chapter, I am recovering from a life-saving hysterectomy—I had both Pre-Menstrual Dysphoric Disorder and Endometriosis, which took up so much space in my life. I'm grateful to be healed from them. I look forward to one day welcoming more pēpi and tamariki into our home through foster care or adoption. As I complete this chapter the sun has only just risen, and I've not left my bed yet. My pēpi, now two, and her four-year-old flatmate are playing in the hallway, appearing in my doorway every few seconds with glowing smiles and shouting 'boo!' at me. Their excitement is infectious. After Playcentre today my love will spend some time with Nanny and Grandad, probably making elaborate constructions with building blocks again. We are in the right place for us, and our whānau is not whole yet but it's ours, and it's right. I am so glad to be here.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

cisgender an adjective which means that someone identifies as the same gender as they were assigned at birth.

endocrinologist a doctor with a specialty in the body's hormones, including reproductive hormones.

ftm 'female to male', an outdated but useful term that describes a transgender person who is transitioning from 'female' to 'male'.

transgender an adjective which means that someone identifies as a different gender to what they were assigned at birth.

transmasculine an adjective which describes a transgender person who identifies on the masculine end of the gender spectrum.

Kōrerorero | Discussion

*Inā kei te mōhio koe ko wai koe, I anga mai koe, i hea,
kei te mōhio koe, kei te anga atu ki hea*

*If you know who you are and where you are from,
then you will know where you are going.*

This book has gathered the rich and diverse personal narratives of six Māori authors, who have been brave, courageous, and gracious in sharing their life stories of growth and challenges, healing and resilience, and the meaning made from these experiences. The aim of this book is twofold: firstly, to honour and uphold the mana of the contributors and to shine a light on their narratives and experiences shared through their own reflective writing; and secondly, to contribute towards the current literature on Indigenous autoethnography within Aotearoa, other Indigenous communities, and broader audiences.

The process of gathering one's thoughts and writing an Indigenous autoethnographic piece focused on the early years of learning is the first task for all Capable NZ undergraduate and postgraduate learners. Unpacking the formative years is an analytical journey as the individual recalls key people and events in their lives and provides the crucial ingredient of: 'so what does this mean for me as an adult now making my way through

the world?' For Māori as Indigenous people, as takata whenua within a colonised nation, there is an extra layer of re-calling and re-storying Māori experiences as a way of sensemaking and deriving cultural understanding and meaning of their lives through reflective personal accounts.

In this book, the authors have shared their triumphs and challenges, their life journeys to date, as not only Indigenous survivors, but Indigenous thrivers, navigating their own life-pathways within, and sometimes without, their whānau, iwi, hapori Māori and wider communities. The dilemma of when, how and what to share with a wider audience, rather than keeping the kōrero within the realms of the qualification is not taken lightly, as it potentially widens the lens of understanding and potential examination. As editors, we have held these taoka precious, with ngākau aroha (compassionate care), acknowledging the strength it takes to share parts of themselves that can be hard to share with another.

Here, we seek to demonstrate how Indigenous autoethnography informs academia in a way that is authentic, decolonial, inspirational and aspirational for readers, Māori whānau and the next generation of academic scholars. It is hoped that sharing these stories, provides an opportunity for Māori to see themselves reflected in the narratives and struggles of cultural, spiritual, social, and political identity as tangata whenua of Aotearoa. The stories reflect the richness, depth, beauty, and uniqueness of being Māori, at times revealing pain and hidden trauma. As a way of drawing the synergies and differences together between the authors, the following conclusion will consider how each narrative speaks to another within the context of the six postulated questions of Paul Whitinui (2014, p. 466) which we have taken the liberty to condense into three areas of enquiry:

1. Who am I, where am I from and how well do I know myself as being an Indigenous person?
2. What do I believe in as an Indigenous person, what lifts my spirits and what angers me?
3. What are the rules of conduct I set for myself as I make my way in the world and how do these rules relate to who I am as an Indigenous person and what am I willing to defend as an Indigenous person and the lengths I am willing to take to defend it?

1. Who am I, where am I from and how well do I know myself as being an Indigenous person?

Being an Indigenous person is obviously important to all six contributors, a karaka (calling) that has resonated within each of them at differing times on their life journey. Tracy Te Wake (Ngāti Hāua ki Taumaranui, Te Āti Haunui-a-Pāpārangi, ko Ngāti Apa, ko Ngā Wairiki) descends from the 'people of the river' from Te Rohe Pōtae in the King Country to the Whanganui awa, encompassing her ancestral links from Aotea, Tokomaru, Tainui and Te Arawa waka. She takes equal pride in knowing her English and Scottish ancestry well. Tracy's life mantra is 'ngā taonga o te pōuri, me ngā māpihi maurea o ngā wāhi ngaro', 'there are treasures to be found in the dark and hidden places.' She acknowledges that she is still learning and discovering the depths of te ao Māori and is committed to walking in both worlds comfortably.

Bordering onto the King Country of the Waikato and the ancestral Whanganui awa, the third longest river in Aotearoa, traversing to the east coast of the Waiariki, Bay of Plenty, Keri (Ngāti Kahunguru) was born and raised on her ancestral land in Central Hawke's Bay and continues to live in her hometown. Keri Ropiha says in her own words that she had an 'unusual introduction' to the world, through a destined whāngai placement that chose her. 'The people that would forever change the world I grew up in and on-one would ever know from their love that I was not born of their pure flesh. I am the baby of this magical circle of people, and always will be.' Keri was raised on the pā (village), where her father restored the wharenui on their marae and supervised the building of a waka for the 150-year celebrations. She is now a marae trustee and had the privilege of overseeing her uncle's tangihanga with over 5,000 manuhiri.

Bobbi-Jo Waikoukou Tuwhakaea Clark-Heu (Waikato Tainui) hails from Waikato-Tainui tribes on both sides of her parents, and is married to a Tainui man. She has strong Waikato roots where she is now raising her whānau, despite being raised herself in Tauranga Moana. Bobbi acknowledges that she was raised through unconditional love from both her hardworking parents and nannies. Her nans considered her and the other mokopuna taonga tuku iho (true treasures) derived from the atua and tīpuna. Bobbi symbolically carries her two nannies

with her to this day, through the manaia in her tā moko. The whakatauki 'Waikato taniwha-rau, he piko he taniwha, he piko he taniwhā,' is a continual reminder that there is a Waikato chief at every bend of the Waikato River.

Bridging the north and south islands of Aotearoa, Kera Baker (Ngāi Tahu) was born at Te Ūpoko-o-te-ika-a-Māui, the Head of the Fish at Pōneke Wellington and raised on her ancestral pā of Arowhenua in North Canterbury. As a young girl, Kera took the voyage over Raukawa Moana, Cook Strait, into Te Waipounamu into the tribal rohe of her māmā, being raised as a pā girl within her papakāinga at Arowhenua Temuka. Kera was blessed to be raised with her maternal tāua, Kera Brown, who ran the Arowhenua Marae and kitchen. Kera and her brother also retained strong links with their father in Tūhoe country, relishing time spent with Nanny Te Akakura Rua. Growing up as a country girl within a small Māori village, Kera was raised within a whānau that actively carried out their customary rights of mahika kai on their ancestral whenua, inherited through whakapapa. Raised on the pā, Kera's early years revolved around the marae, whether it was a hākari, noho marae, whānau, whakapapa or tangihanga. Like her tīpuna before her, Kera considers herself a kaitiaki of mahinga kai for her mokopuna of tomorrow.

Staying within the southern Waitaha landscape, Kim Gotlieb (Waitaha, Kāti Māmoe, Kāi Tahu) descends from the three primary southern iwi and was born and raised in Ōtautahi, although her heart is tied to Waihōpai where both of her parents were born. Like many Te Waipounamu whānau growing up in the deep south, being Māori was not something that was openly celebrated in Kim's home growing up, but something that inspired her to immerse herself in te ao Māori as an adult. Kim fondly recalls her connections with Nana Tau, who continued living a traditional southern Māori life, reciting karakia, sharing interesting stories of her life and always carrying poi with her. Kim is strongly guided by southern tikanga and kawa in her daily life.

Although Scout Barbour-Evans (Ngāi Kahungungu ki te Wairoa) belongs to the northern iwi of Ngāti Kahungungu and Ngāti Porou, they were born in Taranaki and raised in Ōtepoti. Scout says that they were at times more exposed to their Māori cultural heritage at their co-ed high school in Queensland than they experienced in their entire Dunedin schooling. It was through

activism and advocacy that Scout was able to understand this more clearly, examining their life through a decolonising lens. From where they came from to their own values and truths, Scout marches to the future with a rich understanding of their place in their world.

2. What do I believe in as an Indigenous person, what lifts my spirits and what challenges me?

At the heart of an Indigenous person is a sense of place, belonging and cultural safety, the feeling of home where one can be themselves. Many of the authors expressed a deep feeling of being intricately connected to their whakapapa and whenua, as well as a sense of empowerment to self-determine their own life choices. For some of the writers, the pathway towards this has been difficult and challenging, with each contributor able to identify what is life giving to help lift their spirits.

Growing up on the banks of her ancestral Whanganui awa is Tracy's connection to her sacredness. Tracy spent her treasured childhood on the local marae at whānau and iwi gatherings, honouring the maunga, whenua and awa. She is committed to lifelong learning and a reflection of partnership and power-sharing. For balance, Tracy draws on the art of stillness: 'Being still has led me home to my whenua and awa on many occasions, reminding me of the importance of remaining grounded, of reflection, listening to the whenua and awa, sparks and affirms again my purpose ... 'E rere kau mai te awa nui mai I te Kāhui Mounga ki Tangaroa', 'The river flows from the mountains to the sea, I am the river and the river is me.'

Keri is able to find her balance and connection through whakapapa, as a pure reflection of the layers of genealogy that surround her. Keri comes from a loving and nurturing whānau, knowing not to let anyone slip through the cracks and to always be there for each other in sickness and in health. She believes that destiny placed her with the perfect whānau and home for her, where whakapapa is important, along with her 36 first cousins. Keri loved her mother's hardworking and protective attributes and her father's kind, fun-loving nature: 'they wanted every kid to feel loved and enjoy some holiday fun.'

Bobbi believes in her nan's saying, 'it's the little things that really matter,' revealing the importance of holding dear what is true to her heart and soul. Bobbi learnt from Nanny Clark about the importance of water: 'ko au te awa, ko te awa ko au,' 'I am the water and the water is me.' She values water to provide life, heal, cleanse and for tikanga used within customary rituals alongside karakia to lift her spirits and that of her whānau. For Bobbi, her sporting and academic achievements helped to lift her spirits through challenging times.

Being firmly rooted within her southern tribal rohe and whakapapa, Kera believes strongly in following tikanga and kawa, as expressed through the rituals of gathering kai, which encompasses karakia before fishing, gathering kai, eating and travelling. She was taught to respect Mother Earth and to read the tohu the Earth sends to us such as the domains of the atua and reading the weather signs. Kera sees herself as a kaitiaki of taonga for her tamariki and mokopuna to come: 'I feel fortunate to come from a heritage of food gatherers, as we followed customs passed down from generation to generation.' Playing sport and performing kapa haka made Kera and her whānau feel proud. Music lifted Kera's spirits, as she grew up in a musical whānau, with her mother being a solo artist, her tāua always singing and playing music—and she was a disco queen!

Unearthing her Māoritaka (Māoriness) at the age of 18 was a cornerstone for Kim, who believes strongly in the essence of whakapapa as an integral connector to takata (people) and whenua. Kāitahutaka is important to her, expressed daily in how she engages with people, her cultural protocols, use of te reo and deep sense of belonging to the whenua of Waihōpai. When Kim connected with her Kāi Tahu whakapapa, she was able to develop a fuller sense of self and her sense of belonging became much clearer. Her deep dive journey into te ao Māori uplifts her spirits through te reo Māori, performing arts, noho marae. Kim has a deep sense of social justice, and is an advocate for the underdog and what she believes in.

Social justice is a deep-rooted calling for the marginalised, vulnerable, and vibrant and resilient communities that Scout belongs to. Scout draws daily on Te Whare Tapa Whā model as a plan to address every hauora aspect, as a way of maintaining a healthy balance of mind, body and spirit. They created an educational framework called Te Huruwhenua, modelled on Tū

Rangatira, Te Tiriti and their experience as a takatāpui. Being respected and honoured as a Māori person through their transgender journey helped affirm their close-knit community. 'Standing in my own mauri made my little whānau what it is.'

E huri tō aroaro ki te rā, tukuna tō ataarangi ki muri I a koe

Turn and face the sun and let your shadow fall behind you.

The editors were mindful that the contributing authors wrote from their heart and soul, free from any guiding questions or potential analysis on their life's journey to date. Although Whitinui (2014, p. 466) poses the question 'what angers me as an Indigenous person?' the editors felt the phrase 'what challenges me' to be a better fit to reflect the resilience gleaned from 'the rub' of each person's life experience. It has long been said that some of the best life lessons are learnt from conquering personal challenges, which subsequently help to guide, inform and shape our lives moving forward.

Tracy has drawn on the challenges that she faced as a young person to become an inspirational leader herself and advocate for people who may feel marginalised or voiceless. Accused of cheating as a young person, Tracy felt the wrath of racism, injustice and cultural bias. This has propelled her to find her own voice within, which gave her the courage and strength to be an advocate and campaigner for the underdog. She is committed to lifelong learning and reflects on partnership and power-sharing.

As a young person, Keri found out through the school of hard knocks what it can feel like being initially left out of her whānau circles. Although there were times when her cousin initially caused her distress as she was growing up through teasing and bullying, once it was established that Keri was actually whānau, she felt more confident and secure in herself. Nepotism angered her as a young person, a feeling that still sits within her soul, but has given her an insight into bias, preference and discrimination, which in turn has led to an inclusive approach to her whānau, community and marae life.

Although Bobbi experienced varying levels of empathetic teachers, managers and leaders, she came to the realisation that she identifies with inspirational leadership and the ability to be kind to her inner self. 'I still hold an image in my head of the small little Māori girl that once was and it's only because of the lessons, learnings, events and people in my life that I'm the person that I am today.' The ability to detach from harsh critics and gravitate towards people that support her to be the best that she can be, has led Bobbi to develop her own strong leadership style today. She is following in the footsteps of a legacy of Waikato Tainui Māori wāhine.

Although this is not evident in Kera's text, when asked what challenges she faced, Kera said that it was difficult when her parents separated and divorced: 'that had a huge impact on myself and my brother. Mum had to work two jobs when that happened ... and both my brother and I had a job whilst at school.' The challenge of trying to make ends meet in a single parent household meant that Kera and her brother had less quality time with their Mum growing up, with the upshot of them developing a strong work ethic and becoming independent at a young age. Qualities that have stood the test of time for Kera and her own whānau.

A challenge for Kim was the realisation that her Māori whakapapa had been kept a shameful secret within her whānau, where holding onto the culture and customs of the old world was at odds with middle-class suburban life. As Kim experienced bullying throughout high school, she developed an awareness of injustice and inequity, which led her to be an advocate for others later in life. One of her most significant challenges, and greatest triumph, is being drug free for 27 years and being recognised as a cultural leader within a kaupapa Māori alcohol and drug service for young people.

Scout faced the challenge of food difficulties as a child, which led to developing an eating disorder as a teenager. As Scout explored their gender and place in this world as a young takatāpui and transgender person, they realised that the relationship with food was connected with trying to defeminise their body. This journey has enabled Scout to become an advocate for the LGBTQI community and a voice for reproduction and medical rights for takatāpui people.

3. What are the rules of conduct I set for myself as I make my way in the world, how do these rules relate to who I am as an Indigenous person and what lengths am I willing to go to defend it?

Growing up as an Indigenous person within a colonised country can be confusing, sometimes generating a lifetime of complex cultural identity questions, sense of belonging, sovereignty and the right of self-determination. Each of these identity cornerstones reflect what an individual values or focuses on, with each choice carving out an Indigenous life within a settler state. Resilience grows out of the ability to be a sovereign individual, self-determining a pathway of authenticity. In respect to the levels each author would rise to defend what they believe in, each contributor is a strong advocate for whānau and Māori values, following tribal legacies or leading in uncharted spaces.

Tracy's Koro Joe and Koro Titi were committed to live their lives following tikanga and the ways of the old people. She lives by the guiding principles that actions have consequences and impact on not only the self, but also whānau. Tracy views education as an essential lever to uplift not only yourself as an individual, but also raise the level of personal skills to serve the community more effectively. She is dedicated to supporting youth to realise their potential. She is also committed to raising awareness of te ao Māori in a bid to balance a bicultural Aotearoa, especially in education, where she works to build culturally connected communities. Tracy asserts 'be the change that we want to see in the world,' whether that is challenging the status quo, holding the space for mātauranga Māori, or following the ancient ways of knowing and being.

Keri is dedicated to upholding the mana of her whakapapa and valuing the traditional aspects of community bonding. Her life revolves around her Māori community, who help and support each other, where she received unconditional kindness within her whānau. Her kawa is to be unconditionally kind, to forgive without judgement and to treat others as you wish to be treated yourself. Unconditional aroha for whānau shines through in Keri's life: 'All my goodness came from my parents and their love for one another ... I have no shame in saying I am unique, I love that.' Keri finds being grounded in whakapapa helps her feel solid and safe in knowing who you are and where you belong and who you belong with. Keri states that whakapapa teaches you humility, reciprocity and that blood is thicker than

water: 'I never bow to anyone's wishes if they don't make me happy.'

At a young age Bobbi learnt not to expect anything or make assumptions, and to work diligently towards what you want, which have guided her from a young girl to a strong Māori woman. Hard work is in Bobbi's DNA. Her young Māori māmā worked extra hard to get ahead and provide a good life for her children, a value which Bobbi also abides by. She learnt her life's lessons from observing their successes, achievements, mistakes, and failures, to stay humble and strive for excellence. This translated onto the sports field, where she learnt to put in the hard work to do well and to contribute towards team success. Bobbi's Nanny Maihi modelled the whakataukī of Te Puia Herangi: 'Mahia te mahi, hei painga mō te iwi'—'Do the work for the betterment of the people.' From this she has learnt to be determined, work hard, stand on your own two feet and reap the rewards that you sow.

Similarly, Kera is guided by tikanga and kawa as rules of conduct to be respectful to Mother Earth, to not take more than you need and to leave enough for further growth and replenishment. She also learnt about how to come together as a whānau and iwi, to work together and to do her best. From her tāua and namesake, Kera Brown, a staunch supporter of Te Kerēme, the Ngāi Tahu claim, she learnt about the power of activism, political and cultural rights. Kera is also strongly guided by her faith in Māori religions, namely Iharaira from Ngāi Tūhoe, Ringatū or Rātana.

Kim is well guided through her strong personal beliefs and ethics from an early age, and her self-commitment to not compromise her values. In both her mahi and her personal life, she endeavours to uphold her Kāitahutaka, following and at times leading tikaka and kawa where necessary. Kim is passionate about the opportunity to educate people about the cultural loss and intergenerational trauma for southern Māori and the chance to replenish one's kete through te reo and rāraka. Although being a young Māori wāhine in the deep south can be a culturally isolating environment, she has learnt to walk in her own mana and has also grounded herself through whakapapa and mātauranga Māori. Through her journey to maintain a 'clean' life over the last 27 years, Kim has learnt to trust herself and others: 'I learnt that there is always hope and that empathy and kindness can come from the most unexpected places.'

Scout shares a similar story of backing marginalised communities, people that may experience prejudice, bigotry or exclusion. They are a strong-willed advocate for the takatāpui and transgender community. As a young Māori researcher and youth campaigner, Scout promotes their work as written by transgender, for transgender. They live for their little whanau: 'our whakapapa runs through our veins and whānau is everything to us.' Scout campaigns and reminds mainstream that reproductive justice is also a Māori healthcare issue: 'we know (that for) those of us who whakapapa Māori, that understanding our whakapapa and having community and whānau identity improves our wellbeing hugely.'

Kōrero Whakakapi | Concluding Words

This conclusion draws together the six authors' Indigenous autoethnographic texts in a way that upholds and maintains the mana and uniqueness of each writer's authentic voice. There is healing in telling our stories, and sharing them with another person creates pathways of understanding self and another. These stories represent an interwoven whāriki (floor mat) of whānaukataka, intricately interconnected through the personal and collective insights that sharing these stories creates into the writers' lives through their early years and beyond. The editors considered Paul Whiting's (2014, p. 466) six questions as potential starting prompts when embarking on writing an Indigenous autoethnography. These six questions were then further condensed into three primary questions which formed the analysis framework for the conclusion.

The first question used in this conclusion chapter is 'who am I, where am I from and how well do I know myself as being an Indigenous person?' This inquiry invites the writer to consider their early years in a reflective way, their whānau of origin or the whānau that raised them and the opportunity to observe and/or heal from these experiences. One of the authors was raised with whānau outside of her family of origin parents, but within her ancestral lands, and one of her writers was welcomed as a whāngai pēpi into her wider whānau, only to realise that her whakapapa links were a lot closer than initially thought. Another writer, born in Taranaki and outside of their Ngāti

Kahungungu and Ngāti Porou tribal rohe and being raised in Ōtepoti, reflects on their minimal opportunities to engage in te ao Māori and yet they remain a staunch advocate for being Māori and Māori rights.

Four authors were raised in or near their ancestral lands, two in the North Island and two in the South Island. One young wahine was initially raised in Tauranga, but now lives in her tribal rohe of Waikato Tainui, nurtured by her hard-working parents and loving nannies. Another writer was also fostered by her koro, born and raised in Te Rohe Pōtae in the King Country, and intricately connected to her people of the Whanganui awa. Further south, another author was raised on her papakāinga at Arowhenua Marae within her maternal wider whānau and enjoyed a childhood rich in mahika kai practices. Although raised initially in Ōtautahi, and later relocating with her whānau to Pōneke as a young person, one writer's heart remains in her parents' hometown of Waihōpai.

The second question was: 'what do I believe in as an Indigenous person, what lifts my spirits and what challenges me?' Whakapapa is the backbone of Māori society and the heartbeat of whānau, hapū and iwi. Whakapapa creates genealogical layers of interconnectedness, and for one writer, her story of growing up as a whāngai came to a full circle when she found out that she was well placed within her destined whānau of aroha. The journey into tracing whakapapa as an adult was a pivotal moment for another author, which saw her travel down the pathway of exploring and finding her cultural identity, language and love of te ao Māori.

Māori worldviews and traditional values are important to all contributors, and a common thread between two authors who revere the sacred properties of water. One author believes in the spiritual healing powers of ancestral waters and follows tikanga to uphold the mauri of the whānau. Whilst another writer also drew strength and guidance from her tīpuna awa, believing that being grounded within her ancestral landscapes gives her the connection to being her authentic self.

One author believes strongly in maintaining a balanced hauora through supporting their four Te Whare Tapa Whā pillars, the joy of their whānau and spearheading uncharted medical waters. Faith and tikanga are guiding gifts of wisdom handed down

from atua to the tīpuna. One author believes in the traditional cultural concepts of aroha, manaaki and her community of faith. Faith is also important to another wahine, who also upholds the traditions of tikanga, connection to Mother Earth and the ability to read tohu as signs offered from the deities.

The final part of the second question relates to 'what angers / challenges me' as an Indigenous person, and probes into one's individual attitude to overcoming obstacles. One author found that the teachers and coaches that tested her, also provided an opportunity for her to rise above these challenges and become the person that she is today. Similarly, a negative experience of being wrongly accused of cheating at school as a young person inflamed another author's passion for social justice. And for another writer, she remains challenged by nepotism; even though she experienced this initially in her teenage years, it is still a prejudice that sits uncomfortably within her. She also rose to the challenge of being teased and bullied by her cousins, to learn to stand up for herself and others when necessary.

The third and last question is around the rules of conduct and how these rules relate to being an Indigenous person and what lengths does a person go to, to defend their stance? This question encourages the writer to consider at a deeper level what their guiding principles are and what they are prepared to sacrifice or do to achieve and live by their self-imposed rules. One young person is a strong advocate for mental health, Māori rights and the human rights of takatāpui and transgender community. Two authors continue to be guided by their tikanga and their faith. Another contributor is also guided by her Māori faith, following in the footsteps of her maternal leaders towards a passion for political activism and advocacy of Indigenous rights.

For another author, Indigeneity is important and expressed through a strong sense of ethics, fairness, and advocacy for southern te reo and tikaka. Similarly, tikanga and integrity also direct another writer's life, influencing how she makes her way in the world and the wider consideration of the consequences of her own and others' actions. Hard work remains a sign of an honourable day's work and for one writer who grew up in a working-class environment, living by the whānau and iwi vision of 'mahi tahi' (working together) has led her towards sharing individual and collective rewards. Another contributor

believes in the rules and orderly power of whakapapa, and eternal unconditional love that flows from these principles for her whānau.

For another writer, she equally stands her ground and will not let anyone push her around or get in her way of doing what makes her happy. Learning to trust her instincts and to back herself was a lifelong lesson that one author really values, choosing hope, empathy and kindness for herself and others as a priority. This courageousness is echoed by another writer who is an active advocate for marginalised people and communities within the medical field. For them, holding courageous conversations as an advocate on transgender issues and reproduction as an equity issue for Māori is part of who they authentically are.

One author has a vision of making a collective difference for second chance learners and working towards the greater good of a bicultural society. Being guided by her whānau and kuaia's mantra of doing her best for the betterment of her people, one author holds a collective vision of wellbeing for her Kingiitanga people. For another writer, despite numerous challenges in her early life, she has risen above these odds to defend the right for people to be given second chances, and has dedicated her life to generously serving her people and showing manaaki and aroha to whānau through tough times.

The sharing of these reflective experiences reveals whānau stepping out of their life history, self-empowered to make transformative change in their own lives and touch the lives of those around them. Māori have unique and diverse experiences, but what binds Māori together is whakapapa expressed through aroha, shared cultural understandings and collective identity. Their narratives reflect times of triumph, resilience, determination and a celebration of their beliefs, customs, values, wisdom, and identity that have shaped their ira takata (human elements), spiritual and physical beings into the caring, courageous, compassionate, and loving people that they have become.

Through the process of drawing these stories together, we were particularly mindful of the multiple types of colonial trauma inflicted on Māori communities, but also the decolonial approach to provide counter narratives from the six authors, bearers and nurturers of future generations to come. The art

of writing one's life-story and in particular, the focus on early life influences, can incite emotional memories that continue to be a part of Indigenous experiences and scars. The sharing of Indigenous stories is in itself a decolonial tool, in an effort to reaffirm and shine a light of hope on the human spirit, and to showcase how resilient Māori are.

As these narratives have shown no-one, no-body, and no-thing can take away the birth right of being Māori, being takata whenua in Aotearoa; a true reflection of pride through one's unique whakapapa and life journey, a spark that cannot be diminished over time. Māori continue to rise up and step out of the shackles of colonial oppression, to celebrate and reclaim te reo me ōna tikaka, culture and identity. This book makes a small, but valuable contribution towards the affirmation, validation and regeneration of Māori lived experiences through exploring and sharing the personal lives and rich cultural narratives threaded within them. We hope that the pūrākau shared within this book inspires you to consider the strengths within your own life that may help you to build and create a legacy for those that will follow in your footsteps.

Mā mua ka kite a muri, mā muri ka ora a mua

Those who lead give sight to those who follow, those who follow give life to those who lead

About the Editors

Kelli and Adrian are both Associate Professors at Te Kura Matatini ki Ōtāgo, Otago Polytechnic. Kelli Te Maihāroa gained her Doctor of Philosophy qualification, focusing on Waitaha peace traditions, from Te Tumu School of Māori, Pacific and Indigenous Studies, and the National Centre for Peace and Conflict, University of Otago, in 2019. She completed the first kaupapa Māori thesis and was the first Māori female doctoral graduate from the National Centre for Peace and Conflict. Adrian is the first Doctor of Professional Practice graduate and first Māori graduate with this doctoral qualification from Te Kura Matatini. His thesis explored colonisation, cultural trauma and identity dislocation for Kāi Tahu and how these impact within his profession of culinary arts.

Kelli holds the role of Kaihautū: Te Kāhui Whetū (Executive: Capable Māori), working primarily with iwi cohorts and she is a mentor and assessor for the Capable NZ Professional Practice programmes. Adrian is the Head of Programmes at the Food Design Institute, teaches in the culinary arts and is also a mentor and assessor for postgraduate programmes at Capable NZ. Both editors have whakapapa links throughout Te Waipounamu and hold mana whenua (Indigenous rights and responsibilities) to their ancestral lands. Adrian Woodhouse is Kāi Tahu with whakapapa links to Rakiura and Taiari. Kelli Te Maihāroa has whakapapa links to Waitaha ki Te Waipounamu, Kāti Māmoe, Taranaki, Te Ātiawa and Ngāti Rārua.

*Ko Aoraki rātou ko Pukeone, ko Taranaki ōku mauka ariki
Ko Waitaki rātou ko Motueka, ko Waitaha ōku awa tapu
Ko Waitaha tuturū rātou ko Kāti Māmoe, ko Taranaki, ko
Te Ātiawa, ko Ngāti Rārua ōku iwi
E toru kā ūkaipo, ko Wānaka rātou ko Motueka, ko
Ngāmotu ōku tūrakawaewae
Ko Kāti Rākai te hapū
Ko Te Maihāroa te ariki rakatira me te poropiti
Ko Te Maihāroa te whānau
Ko Eruera Te Maihāroa rāua ko Dorothy Bennie ōku
tīpuna mātua
Ko Gaynor Te Maihāroa tōku māmā
Ko Jay, rātou, ko Ben, ko Josh, ko Isaak, ko Jake āku
tamariki
Ko Kelli Te Maihāroa tōku ikoa*

*The ancestral mountains that shelter me are Aoraki
Mount Cook, Pukeone and Taranaki
The sacred waters that nourish me are Waitaki, Motueka
and Waitaha
I affiliate with the tribes of Waitaha, Kāti Māmoe,
Taranaki, Te Ātiawa, and Ngāti Rārua
The ancestral lands that are my sanctuary are Wānaka,
Motueka and New Plymouth
The sub-tribe is Kāti Rākai
Te Maihāroa is the chief and prophet
I belong with Te Maihāroa family
My grandfather is Eruera Te Maihāroa and Dorothy
Bennie is my grandmother
Gaynor Te Maihāroa is my mother
I have five sons, Jay, Ben, Josh, Isaak and Jake
My name is Kelli Te Maihāroa*

Here I introduce myself through my whakapapa, to acknowledge those that have paved the way for us to be here, the sacrifices and celebrations they have shared on our sacred whenua and waters. I am guided by the light, hard work and dedication to our tipuna Te Maihāroa (chiefly ancestor), who carried the responsibility to uphold the mana (prestige, status) of our southern Māori people. I am a mother, an educator, a peace advocate and passive resistance activist. My doctoral thesis explores Waitaha ki Te Waipounamu histories, dreams and aspirations of my people and my area of research interest lies within Indigenous knowledge systems, Māori educational initiatives, cultural revitalisation, and Indigenous peace traditions. I was fortunate to be a part of two academic teams who coedited Indigenous focused books. The first book, *Peacebuilding and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (2017) was co-edited with Dr Heather Devere and Professor John Synott. The second book, *Decolonising Peace and Conflict Studies through an Indigenous Lens* (2022) is co-edited with Dr Michael Fusi Ligaliga and Dr Heather Devere.

Ko Motupōhue te mauka
Ko Te Ara a Kewa te moana
Ko Takitimu te waka
Ko Tahu Pōtiki te whare
Ko Te Rau Aroha te marae
Ko Kāi Tahu te iwi
Ko Adrian Woodhouse tōku ikoa

Like many others who whakapapa to Rakiura, I am a descendant of a mixed-race marriage between a Kāi Tahu wahine and a European sealer. As a Southern Māori, I am proud of my bi-cultural identity and feel at home in both te ao Māori and te ao Pākehā. In my professional life, I have been a chef and have taught culinary arts at Otago Polytechnic for the last 20 years, with my research interests centred around education, identity, and food. As an educator and a scholar, I am interested in challenging institutional and cultural norms which act as modes of subservient social reproduction. This is evidenced in my doctoral thesis, *Torn Identities; A Kāi Tahu pūrākau (story) of whiteness* (2021), which explores formal culinary education as a site of indoctrination into euro-centric ideologies and cultural norms. It is a work that resonates deeply with the Southern Māori narrative, as it speaks to our shared history of colonisation and its impact on our cultural and professional identities.

Ahakoā he iti, he pounamu.

Despite being a small contribution, it is of great value.

Glossary of Māori Words

ahau	I / me
ahurutanga	safe space
ao	dawn, world
Aotearoa	New Zealand ('long white cloud')
ariki	chief, chiefly
aroha	love
atua Māori	Māori deities
awa	river
āwhiowhio	whirlpool, tornado, spiral
haka	tribal dance
hākari	food banquet
hāngi	earth oven
hapori Māori	Māori community
hapū	kin-group of descendants of a common ancestor, pregnant
hau	breath, wind
hauora	health
hiroi	wash

hui	meeting
hui whakapapa	family genealogy meetings
īnaka	whitebait
iwi	tribe extended kin-group of descendants of a common ancestor, bones
kai	food
kaiako	teacher
kaimoana	seafood
kaihautū	navigator
kaikōtuitui	executive
kaimahi	worker
kaimoana	seafood
kāhui	flock, group
kaitiaki	guardian, steward, trustee
kaitiakitaka	guardianship, responsible stewardship
kamokamo	large marrow
kapa haka	Māori performing arts
karakia	incantation, prayer
kaumātua	elder
kaupapa	topic, agenda, plan, objective
kawa	protocols
kererū	wood pigeon
kete	woven basket
kina	sea egg / urchin
koha	gift
kōrero	talk, discussion, narrative
koro	elderly man
kotiro	girl
kōura	crayfish
kōwhaiwhai	ornamentation
kuia	elderly woman
kupu Māori	Māori word

kura	school
kūtae	mussels
mahi	work
mahi tahi	working together
mahika kai / mahinga kai	food gathering
māmā	mother
mana	prestige, status
mana takata whenua	Indigenous rights and responsibilities
manaaki	to take care of, protect
manaia	stylised figure/s
manuhiri	visitors
Māori	Indigenous people of New Zealand, normal, usual
Māoritaka	Māoriness
marae	meeting house
mātauranga Māori	Māori knowledge, views & perspectives
maunga	mountain
mauri	life force, vital essence
mauri ora	wellbeing
mihi whakatau	welcoming process
moana	sea
moko	traditional tattoo
mokopuna	grandchildren, descendant
mōteatea	chant, lament
motu	island, country
ngākau aroha	compassionate care
noho, noho marae	sleep-over
ora	be alive, well, safe, healthy
pā	village
pātiki	flounder

pāua	abalone
pepeha	tribal saying, tribal motto, set form of words
pēpi	baby
pīkao	fern frond
pōhā	kelp bag
poi	ball on string
pono	true
pōua	grandfather
pūrākau	story, stories from the past
rangatahi	younger generation, youth, fishing net
rangatira	leader
rangatiratanga	self-determination, attributes of leadership
rāraka / raranga	to weave, weaving
reo	language
reo-a-iwi	tribal dialectal language
rēwena	fermented potato bread
rohe	country
rongoā	Māori medicine, to treat, to preserve
roto	lake/s
takatāpui	identify with LGBTQI community
takata / tangata whenua	Indigenous people/person
takata / tangata Tiriti	non-Māori person of the Treaty
taio	environment
tamaiti	child
tamariki	children
taoka / taonga	treasures, anything precious, greatly valued
taoka / taonga tuku iho	treasures handed down

tāua	grandmother
tauirā	student, apprentice
taukumekume	tension, both positive and negative
taumata	orator
te ao Māori	the Māori worldview
te ao Pākehā	the Pākehā worldview
te kohanga reo	Māori language immersion preschool
Te Ika a Maui	North Island
te reo Māori	Māori language
Te Tiriti o Waitangi	The Treaty of Waitangi
Te Wai Pounamu	South Island
tika	correct
tikaka / tikanga	Māori customs
tiki	to fetch, to proceed, go
tino rangatiratanga	absolute integrity
tio	oyster
tīpuna / tūpuna	ancestors
tītī	muttonbird
tohu	to instruct, advise, guide,
tohu mātauranga	academic qualification
tohuka / tohunga	expert in field of knowledge or endeavour
tongikura	fermented mussels
tukutuku	latticework
tuna	eel
tūrakawaewae / tūrangawaewae	standing place
ūpoko	head
urupā	cemetery
waharua	pattern used in weaving and tukutuku, representing commitment and courage
wahine / wāhine	woman/women

wāhine toa	warrior woman/women
wahi rua	split, divide
wai	water
waiata	song
wairua	spirit
waka	canoe
wānanga	discussion, learning session
weka	indigenous hen
whaikōrero	formal speeches
whakairo	carvings
whakakoha rangatira	respectful relationships
whakapapa	genealogy line of succession and connection
whakarongo	to listen, hear, taste, smell, feel, obey
whakataukī	proverb, significant saying
whānau	family, extended family structure
whanaunga	kinship, family connection
whanaungatanga	process of establishing relationships, and relating
whāngai	foster
whānui	wider, extended family
whare	house
wharenui	larger house
whāriki	floor mat
whenua	land, ground, territory, placenta, afterbirth
whetū	star

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