

TĀNE WHAKAPIRIPIRI: MATUA.  
Traditional Māori Fatherhood in Contemporary Times.

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An exegesis presented in partial fulfilment of  
the requirement for the degree of  
Master of Applied Indigenous Knowledge

Te Wānanga o Aotearoa  
2018

**Abstract**

Tāne Whakapiripiri: Matua is about Traditional Māori Fatherhood in a modern context. It discusses the forces that interrupted the transmission of knowledge of fatherly practice, intrinsic connection to traditional Māori practice and what that looks like in 2018 for Māori fathers. This exegesis also shows how this rangahau journey fed my story telling via my blog, social media, and on film via the discussions on The Hui, Stop The Bus and in the mini documentary 'I Am Waru'.

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#### **Attestation of Authorship**

I, Joshua Te Kaha Wharehinga, hereby declare that this work submitted to the best of my knowledge and belief, does not contain material previously published or written by another person (except where the acknowledgements are explicitly defined). This also includes material that has been submitted for any other degree within Te Wānanga o Aotearoa, or any other institution.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to begin by thanking my mother, Maraea Cookson. I love you so very much. Thank you for your love and your care. You know how much I love you. I tell you via txt, online and in person everyday. Today I get to tell you in my Masters writing.

To Hohepa Thompson, Karlite Rangihau and Te Rita Papesch, nga toko toru tapu i roto i teneki tohu; kei te mihi, kei te mihi, kei te mihi hoki rā. Thank you for your help centring my practice.

Dr Emalani Mailekaluhea Kanekapolei Case, mahalo nui loa no kou hana kokua. Thank you for helping my voice be heard through all of this writing. Thank you for your package of salt.

To my grandparents, Bob and Jane (nee Katipa) Cookson, and Morgan and Rita (nee Haenga) Wharehinga; my tūpuna, the spring (puna) through which I stand (tū), I hope us mokopuna are who you dreamed we would be. I love you very much.

Lastly, to my children, Phaz, Pou, Jodz, TK, Lu, Ronnie and Sumsum, you are all my reasons in life. It's my privilege to be your father. I love you.

## **Dedication**

I would like to dedicate this to all the people that read, watched and listened to me share my story, to the people who found connection in it all, to the people who saw me and allowed others to see me. And to those who allowed me to see them.

This is dedicated to Māori fathers everywhere.

# Chapter 1

## Gang kid Father

### **Karakia**

Hirahira mai ai te rangi e tū nei,  
Hirahira mai ai te rangi ka hiwa  
Hirahira mai ai te kukunetanga mai o te ira atua  
Ko Tāne tū Wānanga, ko Tāne i te mārama  
Ko te wai nui, ko te wai ora i a Tangaroa  
He wai ki te tāne, he toto ki te wahine  
Koia ko Tāne te rarama ko au  
Koia ko Tāne te korotua ko au  
Koia ko Tāne te hihiri ko au  
Koia ko Tāne i te ata, Koia ko Tāne i te pō  
Ko Tāne rautāwhiri i te mana wāhine, i te mana tamariki  
Tuia ki te pou herenga tapu, te pou herenga tāngata  
kia puta, kia ora, ki te whai ao ki te ao mārama!  
Haumi, hui e, tāiki e!

May the sky be enlivened  
May the celestial realm surge forth  
Tāne the wise, Tāne the discoverer of knowledge  
Sacred waters, waters of vitality from Tangaroa  
Men may summon power, women may summon life  
I am at one with Tāne of shining light, Tāne the creator of a prosperous future  
Tāne the energiser  
Tāne omnipresent in the morning and night  
Tāne who honours the mana of women, of children  
Bond the ancient wise ones to us  
Bring us forth to the world of light!  
Unified, connected and vital!  
Na, S & S Morrison



*Figure 1. 5 year old Josh (own photo)*

**Pēpēhā**

Ko Ahitītī a Pehimana te maunga.

Ko Waihīrere te awa.

Ko Ngāti Kōhuru te hapū.

Ko Pārihimānihi te marae.

Ko Te Aitanga a Māhaki te iwi.

Ko Puketapu te maunga.

Ko Te Arai te awa.

Ko Ngāti Maru te hapū.

Ko Pahou te marae.

Ko Rongowhakaata te iwi.

Ko Hikurangi te maunga.

Ko Waiapu te awa.

Ko Te Whānau a Iritekura raua ko Te Aitanga a Mate nga hapū.

Ko Iritekura raua ko Rāhui nga marae.

Ko Ngāti Porou te iwi.

Ko Whakapaungākau te maunga.

Ko Rotorua te moana.

Ko Ngāti Uenukukōpako te hapū.

Ko Ruamata te marae.

Ko Te Arawa te iwi.

Ko Josh Wharehinga tōku ingoa.



This chapter is about who I was, who I am, and the influences along the way.

This chapter is framed in a kaupapa Māori worldview. The actions, outlooks and perspectives in this chapter, and the wider exegesis, are informed by *tou tātou reo Māori me ōnā tikanga*<sup>1</sup>. This chapter doesn't start in a Te Ao Māori space, however it does show the journey from one predominantly Māori occupied space to another.

I identify myself first and foremost as a father. The simplest qualifier to becoming a father is to have a child, however being a father is more than that. I have four to my first partner and two to my second partner. I raise the four oldest children myself; the younger two live with their mum and are parented between us. My goal as their father is to help them realise their dreams, potential and aspirations. To be an example of what a human being is despite our natural human failings. To make sure they live a different life to mine growing up.

I grew up in Gisborne, and this is where I've chosen to raise my children. I only ever left to go to university.

I had fun as a child growing up in Gizzy (Gisborne). I did all the things that every other Māori boy did; swimming at the beach, rugby at Barry Park, playing a game of bullrush at lunchtimes, and getting blacker swimming at the Olympic Pools in summer. I did all the usual small town urban Māori things that Māori children did. That being said, my early life growing up in Gizzy had its difficulties.

My biological dad left my mum when I was three years old after which my mum started dating a gang member. She married this man shortly after and he became the man of our house, "The Old Man".

### **The Old Man**

My upbringing was typically "gang". We had car parts and junk strewn about our property, the bucky shed<sup>2</sup>, and alcohol fuelled parties that started on a Wednesday night and finished on Sunday morning. People came and went all the time, purchasing their drugs from the Old Man.

Despite the drug selling, I grew up quite poor. I didn't receive my first pair of shoes until I was eight years old and I remember being reprimanded at Intermediate school for

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<sup>1</sup> Maori Language and customs

<sup>2</sup> Bucky shed is a colloquial term used to describe a shed where alcohol and drugs (usually marijuana) are consumed.

not having shoes. I barely wore shoes at my Primary school and I won awards for running there; so, it wasn't clear why I would need shoes at Intermediate school.

The money earned by the Old Man through his illegal activities could have gotten me shoes. But that money wasn't for me...it was for the Old Man. In fact, whatever came through the front doors because of him belonged to him. This ethos would overshadow my entire life. Not much belonged to me growing up.

Everything was a competition to the Old Man. Comparisons were regularly made between my brothers and I, and also between us as a group of children and the Old Man. The end result was to show that I, or my brothers, were deficient in some way. I wasn't the strongest of my brothers, or my friends for that matter. That was constantly reiterated to me. My brothers didn't do as well as me at school. That was constantly reiterated to them. We were always not good enough, especially compared to the Old Man. If we did do something well, it didn't matter because the Old Man, in one way, shape or form, had been better than us.

Our lives and what we did was always determined by what the Old Man wanted; our concerns were secondary. Actually, our concerns didn't even feature or factor in anything we did or wanted. It's hard to adequately explain how grateful we needed to be if we were to get something from him. It was like our gratitude had to pour out of us all the time, for the rest of time. At every opportunity he would mention what he gave us as a way to remind us of his magnanimity. He would give us things as a way to get rid of his old broken stuff in order to justify buying new stuff for himself. We weren't receiving gifts; we were just dumping grounds for his junk so he could rationalise treating himself. There was no actual generosity in the man. He never gave to us freely and without condition. There were always conditions. There wasn't even a guarantee that what we were given would still be ours the next day. We were reminded that he could take back what he gave us. I didn't fully comprehend the actual selfishness of his actions or the demeaning messages that they sent until I became an adult.

The toughest part of growing up was the beatings. We would get beat. Bad. I now know that due to colonisation Māori drastically changed how we parented. We started to beat our kids. If you spare the rod then you spoil the child the holy word says. If that was the case, then we were definitely not spoiled. All the same, even if I knew all that at the age of eight, it wouldn't have mattered. There's little comfort in the knowledge of systemic racism and colonisation while you're being hit with a metal pipe.

I remember watching my brother being thrown down the hallway. I didn't see him land. I just saw his body fly past my doorway. We were all in tears. Us brothers, my mum and my aunty. It was horrible. In the Bible there's a phrase in Matthew where they say that the people thrown into the fiery pits of hell will suffer so much that there will be 'weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.' It's this phrase that comes to mind when I think back to that night. So many tears. So much weeping. I cried myself to sleep that night.

### **My Mum**

My mum was my stability growing up. I like to describe her as uniquely religious. She has a fire to her that exhibits itself as furious anger sometimes. She's defiant and super independent. She has a deep love for her children and grandchildren, and loves God with all her heart. She made us say the Lord's Prayer every night before bed. We would read the bible and pray blessings upon others. Despite growing up without much Mum always promoted praising the Lord and being thankful to him for what we had.

Mum's love for Jesus drives her to serve. Growing up I witnessed mum help so many people. She fed the many; I saw her literally give the clothes off her back to rangatahi. She gave one her coat and another her belt to help hold his pants up. She would pick up hitchhikers and say 'you never know, they might be an angel'. One hitchhiker stole from her; it still didn't dissuade her from continuing to pick people up. She embodied serving.

It was also this faith and mum's commitment to honouring the word of God which kept us with the old man. She was deeply committed to her wedding vows and the covenant that she made in front of God. If you can't keep your word to God then who can you keep your word to?

In retrospect, mum had the behaviours, traits and the unending faith her sons needed to help get us through that life alive. This was her act of service to us. She was quick to speak her mind and wasn't afraid to do so, which meant she defended us against the world, The Old Man, his friends, his family, and even our schools when we needed defending. She was super independent so she didn't rely on the money that came in from The Old Man's activities. She worked multiple jobs cleaning just to make our ends meet.

Her defiance meant she was super protective of us in the face of others. There was a real threat of sexual abuse during my childhood. When the parties were on, my mum used to make us sleep in the lounge so she could watch us to make sure nothing happened to us. It takes defiance to stand in a crowded room and bed your children down in front of them, because of them, in spite of them. We thought it was an adventure and that you do

things like that as children. I remember we had very innocent outlooks on life. The gravity of what we were doing at that time didn't really hit me until I was in my twenties. When the "penny" dropped, I felt a bit more broken for young Josh and his brothers.

### **Being a Dad**

Nevertheless, I really wanted to be a Dad when I grew up. Adults often tell children what they should be when they grow up. Be a computer technician. Be a lawyer. "Go be a doctor, Josh". When adults would ask us what we wanted to be when we grew up, my friends said things like fireman, policeman etc. I always said I wanted to be a dad. In reflection, I actually laugh, because no one growing up ever said to me "Josh, when you grow up, be a good dad" and yet, that's something we should be saying to our young boys growing up. It should be a given, but just because something is a given doesn't mean we shouldn't still say it.

This want to be a father burned inside me all for as long as I can remember. Upon reflection, I can still feel the desire in the soul of my pre-teen self. I wanted to do all the things that were not done for me, and as I got older and started to understand the breadth of what I missed out on, my list of things to do differently grew.

I started with my brothers. We grew up fighting a lot but when we hit our teens we became closeknit. Only us three really knew the pains we suffered. No one else could understand and that bound us together so tightly. I would try to take care of my brothers as best as a teenager could. I intervened in so many fights. I drove us around all over the place. When we were in our late teens sometimes we would be left at home by ourselves, but not in a neglectful way. By then we were really quite self-sufficient. I would make dinner, stoke the fire, and clean up for when my parents would return from their weekend of roaming. I still feel satisfied from looking after my 'bros' back then.

I blamed drugs for the reason why I grew up so poorly. So I didn't want to have drugs in my life. I was vehemently anti-drugs in my teen years. Selling drugs was central to the Old Man's identity while I was growing up, so I didn't want anything to do with that.

In retrospect, it wasn't an anti-drug decision; it was an anti-Old Man decision. I started to ask what else I could do to make myself distinctly unlike that man. Or better than that man. I found out he left school in his fifth form year. So I decided to make it past fifth form. Which I did. I was two years away from seventh form so I completed my years at high school. I went to university, in part, because it made me better than him.

When he decided to go the straight and narrow, I remember him gloating about the salary he was getting. That became one of my goals. To get his salary. And I did. Ten years younger than he was. Then I doubled it a few years later.

I also became a dad and I chose to do things differently. I loved my children. I was a supportive parent. I went to their sports games and to their haka performances. I was a parent helper. I was on the Board of Trustees. I helped them do their homework. I remembered what it felt like having my brothers being compared to me and I made sure to not compare them to each other. I made sure that they knew who they were as human beings was valuable in all different ways, that everyone was different, that you needed to be satisfied in your differences, that you had to be yourself, but that every day you had to choose to be your best self. I made sure that they understood who they were in the wider world of Te Ao Māori.

It is often said ‘You don’t know what you don’t know’ and as an urban Māori boy growing up in Gizzy, one huge thing I didn’t know was the depth of my Māoritanga. I didn’t know my links into Waipiro, Tikapa and my Nāti-ness. I didn’t understand my Rongowhakaatatanga. I had been to Waihīrere and to Ruamatā in Te Arawa, but I didn’t have the depth of understanding about Ahitītī, Pehimana and Māhaki, Whakapoungākau, Mokoia, Hinemoa and Tutanekai. I wanted to make sure my children knew these places and these people. In order for them to know those spaces and places I had to make sure I knew them too. Learning my Māoritanga, the essence of who and what we as Māori are and the diversity of ourselves, would shape my future perspective about fatherhood and become part of my identity.

### **Key Learnings from my lived experiences**

As a son who had nothing growing up, I endeavoured to ensure that as a father, I would:

1. Be supportive
2. Be encouraging
3. Be a good role-model.

If I could offer at least these three things to my children, then I wouldn’t care what they became when they grew up, so long as they:

- 1) Were happy
- 2) Did their best in everything they did; and
- 3) Always contributed willingly

No one really seemed to care about my goal of being a dad when I was growing up even though it was really important to me, so I was determined to cultivate and nurture what my children wanted to be. The first thing my five year old son wanted to be was a 'Dragon Ball Z GT King Kong' when he grew up. We collectively made a plan on how he could grow up to become this imaginary thing.

I took my children to community kaupapa that I ran and gave them responsibilities. The happiest I was was when I was making other people happy. Like when I cooked for my brothers and made the house warm. So we cooked and gave to others. We cleaned up beaches. We cleaned up after animals. We volunteered.

My children had a voice in our family. But that voice came with responsibility. They were expected to really know what they were talking about before they spoke. Results were directly linked to the strength of their rationale and persuasiveness of their argument.

I was so determined to not be like the Old Man but there were times when his way was the only way I knew.

Emotionally I was either stoic or aggressive. The same belittling words would come out of my mouth when growling my children. I didn't beat my kids like I was beaten, but there was harshness there. Over disciplining. A lack of physical affection. I was still fun and funny, but emotionally I was stoic. Stoic was the best I got from my males so it was the best my children got from me.

This continued on until my son was about 10 years old. I remember yelling at him for something. I don't even remember what I was yelling about; that's how minor the issue was. Then a voice spoke inside me. I don't know why or how; some people have said it was the 'atua', some have said it was my tipuna, others have said innately it was my whakapapa, but inside me this voice said *'Did you have your shit together when you were his age?'*, I replied *'No.'* The voice said *'Then why do you expect him to have his shit together?'*

It happened in micro seconds. As fast as you could think is how fast that 'convo' happened in my head.

And I changed.

I immediately stopped and said to my son *'I'm sorry buddy. I didn't have my shit together when I was your age so it's unfair of me to expect you to have yours together.'* That became my approach every time I would feel an emotional response well up in me.

I was already sharing everything with my children. Anything that was mine was also theirs. I loved my children, flaws and all. I helped my children. But what was missing was a softness, a generosity in the spirit. I would help them, but I would get frustrated at them. I loved them, but it was a love that wanted to fight everyone else to prove itself. I shared but I got angry when things got broken. There was still a hardness of the heart and it was that hardness I carried from the Old Man to my children.

A softening of my heart meant that the sharing truly became unconditional. The help offered to them became just that, an offer; what happened with the help was entirely up to them. I loved them generously and unconditionally. Loving them still meant having expectations of them because I still wanted to see the best from them. To communicate anything less wasn't love; the love was expressed in how that expectation and honest message was communicated.

### **Community**

I always knew I wanted to help Gisborne. This is why I came home after university and have remained in Gisborne despite offers to go elsewhere. Due to having grown up with a mum that exemplified unending service, and also having a personal commitment to better my lot for my children, I started to become active in the Gisborne community. I had already started in myself and with my children. My children were playing on inadequate play equipment, walking down streets that were poorly maintained, and watching the rubbish blow on through the parks due to inadequate rubbish facilities. In order to improve my whānau I also needed to be helping improve my community.

Through the Ka Pai Kaiti resident's association (KPK) I was able to do this. We ran alcohol reduction programmes to improve the health and wellbeing of our whānau. We ran road safety programmes to raise school childrens' awareness of our dangerous roads. If the roads weren't going to improve then we needed to change our engagement with our roads. I was a conduit for the Kaiti resident's voice at the council table. Through KPK one of the first things I was able to help do was help facilitate community kōrero to get new park equipment put in just down the road from where I lived at Tyndall Road park, a park my kids, and many of our kids, played at.

I pushed local and national government and fronted a lot of our issues publicly; as a result I was encouraged to run for the 2014 Gisborne District Council by election. At the time of the by election it was common for human waste to flood Kaiti residents' backyards which meant the council had to flush our sewerage into our rivers. This was due to poor infrastructure being installed in Kaiti and poor governance of previous councils. I won that by election and as of today I still have the privilege of being a Gisborne District Councillor.

I am happy to say that we've just built an even bigger park at Waikirikiri Reserve which is also in my neighbourhood. It's a park my teenagers now play on. We have also committed to investigating the installation of a community facility at Waikirikiri Reserve. We are making the sidewalks and installing cyclelanes to make it safer for Kaiti children to get to and from school. We have fixed 100% of council wastewater infrastructure and are working with homeowners to ensure we never have to flush our sewerage into the rivers again, rivers many of our Kaiti children, including my own children, play in and paddle on.

I am currently also on the Hauora Tairāwhiti District Health board, Te Maruata Roopu Whakahaere: The Māori advisory board to Local Government New Zealand and Te Mana Whakahaere: The board for Te Wānanga o Aotearoa. These are all positions I have actively sought because if I improve the lot for our health needs, our regional needs, our Te Ao Māori needs, and our education needs, then I am helping positively shape the environment my children will grow up in and raise their children in.

## **Conclusion**

These have been my building blocks that have shaped me as a father and influenced my decisions: examples of how to serve, examples of how not to be a dad and being shaped by my children. I also had an innate, unconscious understanding of what Māori fatherhood should be despite having no road map to it. I would later on discover that this would become real, tangible and legitimised through the process of this Masters. This is how I was influenced to be the father I am that fathers the way that I do.



## Chapter 2

### The Knowledge About Us

#### **Introduction**

This Chapter presents my practice, the principles and lived experiences that inform me and the application of my practice. For my whole life I have been involved in the practice of fatherhood. In the absence of a father role model while growing up, I always tried to be fatherly to my siblings. However, I've actively been in the practice of fatherhood for the last 18 years, from the day my eldest was born. In this chapter I will review current and past thinking regarding traditional<sup>3</sup> Māori practices, parenthood, and fatherhood. I will also take stock of historical impacts on Māori to contextualise the current reality for Māori fathers.

#### **Traditional Māori Parenting**

In Pre-European Aotearoa, Māori parents were indulgent of their children to the point of idolatry (Penehira, 2013 p.370). 'Idoltrous Indulgence' is an example of an ideological imposition by Christian colonisers on Māori (Murphy, 2011 p.5) which is inflammatory as the phrase is most often used in reference to the idol worshippers when Moses came down from Mt Sinai with the ten commandments in the Bible, the negative insinuation by Angus being that idolatry leads to indulgence and 'even possibly to immorality' (Burrows, 1987 p.8). Early colonialists interpretations of Māori fatherhood practices as idolatrous and indulgent are supported by Joel Polack's writing that Māori fathers viewed their children as "his pride, his boast, and peculiar delight" (Penehira, 2013 p.370). Polack used this as an expression for how he viewed the fondness with which Māori children were held by their fathers; however, from his cultural viewpoint, Polack thought the children needed harsher treatment to curb their individuality (Jenkins, Harte, & Te Kahui Mana Ririki, 2011 p.22). Māori fathers giving liberally and freely to their children was viewed negatively and frowned upon.

It was noted in the 1800s, during the early colonisation period of Aotearoa, Māori fathers spent a considerable amount of time holding their children, wrapped in blankets, singing oriori (lullabys), pao (chants) and other waiata (songs) to nurse them to sleep (Penehira, 2013 p.370). Pākehā historians noted Māori men as being very kind to women and children; they were supportive and engaged in the raising of the children in the hapū group (Elkington, 2016 p.13). Māori children were rarely chastised; in fact they

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<sup>3</sup> By traditional, I mean Pre-European practices. The author notes that these practices were not homogenous and that they not only varied but could and did change, as all cultures do.

were overtly encouraged to assert their tino rangatiratanga<sup>4</sup> (Taonui, 2010 p.193) and in effect their, individuality was actively cultivated.

Early colonialist observers were very surprised to see how prevalent co-parenting was in early Māori society (Jenkins, Harte, & Te Kahui Mana Ririki, 2011 p.22). Savage (1807) observed that Māori children from an early age are treated with a great degree of parental affection. Cruise (1824) noted that

the infant is no sooner weaned than a considerable part of its care devolves upon the father: it is taught to twine its arms round his neck, and in this posture it remains the whole day, asleep or awake, suspended upon his shoulders, and covered with his mat; and in his longest journeys, or his most laborious occupations, it is his constant companion.

Māori children were trained their whole life for adulthood. Children of both sexes were raised to be effective contributors to their *hapū* group. Through socialisation, the children were being groomed to be caring and affectionate amongst the *hapū* and *whānau* (Jenkins, Harte, & Te Kahui Mana Ririki, 2011 p.12). Cruise (1824) also noted that Māori boys were trained by their fathers to sing waiata, control the waka and mau rākau. Collectively the *whānau*, which can include the wider *hapū* group, educated and grew their young as an investment for the future (Morehu, 2005 p.2).

This kind of gentleness and caring was trained out of me when I was a child. We weren't allowed to cry. We received no gentleness and loving embraces from our male role models. When I was a young parent, I parented the same way. Especially to my son. We didn't cry and had to suck it up. It wasn't until I was older that I started to learn the gentleness of being a Māori dad. Despite this way of being, we sang a lot as a *whānau* and we actively did things together. We had *whakawhiti kōrero* every evening as a time for reflection, education and cultural practice transmission. Raising my children to "be" Māori and educating them for their future pathways has been a life-long driving force for me as a Māori father. They got to choose and will continue to have the freedom of choice regarding what they will do in the future. Their tino rangatiratanga is acknowledged in the forming of their future direction. It has been on me, in collaboration with my children, to help them realise their positions in our *whānau*, *hāpori*, *hapū* and *iwi*.

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<sup>4</sup> Self Determination. See section 'Tino Rangatiratanga' in Chapter 2.

### **Urban Drift**

Urbanisation was the most destructive instrument to the Māori society, language, communities and the traditional Māori whānau unit (Keiha & Moon, 2008 p.5). Land development schemes that were present in rural areas highly populated by Māori were plagued with atrocious conditions and meagre pay for Māori, which meant Māori started seeking employment outside of their tribal areas (Keenan, 2014 p.120). Rapid urbanisation of the Māori people had disrupted the cultural sustainability of rural communities (Paringatai, 2013 p.46) and inadvertently disconnected Māori (mostly males) from their whānau, hapū and iwi groupings.

In the 1930s, 80% of the Māori population lived in the rural areas. (Hawaikirangi-Pere, 2013 p.39) and approximately 40% of the Māori male work force was unemployed (Keenan, 2014 p.119). During World War II (the 1940s), Māori moved to the urban areas to get jobs, and were encouraged and supported to by the Labour government, in industries that helped support New Zealand's contribution to the war effort (Butterworth, 1972 p.183) Post World War II, Māori numbers continued to increase in the urban areas where by the mid-1960s the transformation of the Māori workforce from an agricultural background into industrial-based employment was almost complete (Paringatai, 2013 p.46). By 1986, the urban Māori population had risen to 83% (Derby, 2011 p.5).

Urbanisation was viewed as progressive and necessary by Pākehā (Keenan, 2014 p.111). However, when Māori started to urbanise they often faced overt discrimination by hostile Pākehā, which manifested itself as discrimination in employment, as the managers and business owners were overwhelmingly Pākehā; discrimination in accommodation, as Pākehā were often the landlords or agents; and discrimination in social settings, as evidenced by the pervasiveness of a heavy handed, Pākehā police force toward Māori (Gilbert, 2010 p.234). In 1903 the Bay of Plenty MP William Herries told Parliament that he looked forward to 100 years in the future when “we shall have no Māoris at all but a white race with a dash of the finest coloured race in the world” (King, 2004 p. 441).

I lived this separation of Māori from our culture while growing up. My grandparents were raised up in Waipiro Bay, next to the lake in Rotorua and at Waihirere. However my parents were raised in Gisborne and I lived down Lyndhurst Street, in Gisborne, New Zealand. We would visit Waihirere, but it was to swim at the pool. I never visited

Waipiro bay until I was an adult. The closest I got to Te Ao Māori was visiting Pārihimānihi for 21<sup>st</sup>s and tangi and going to the batch near Ruamata marae in Rotorua during some summers for Christmas.

### **Cultural Assimilation**

Urbanisation, like the process of mass immigration, is an example of a large societal structure undergoing a dramatic change. When this mass societal change occurs at the same time as long term historical social trends, like racism and cultural repression, the result we have is an environment described by Gilbert (2010 p.233) as “Multiple Marginality”.

Cultural repression was a governmental and societal push in the 1960s. The rhetoric at the time by the sitting government was for Māori to integrate with Pākehā society, which led to initiatives like the pepper potting programme<sup>5</sup>, which was heavily resisted by both Māori and Pākehā (Hunn, 1961: p.41). The primary objective of ‘integration’ was to merge the cultures into one, and while this policy allowed for Maori to keep a distinct identity, little effort was made to ensure this occurred due to Māori being seen by urban Pākehā as dark skinned Pākehā with no unique cultural qualities of their own (Gilbert, 2010 p.236).

This view is still held today by some Pākehā about Te Reo Māori (Re., 2018). The state of our current education system is built off the back of, and reinforced by, the 1800s governmental policy of banning the use of Te Reo Māori in the schooling system for the point of assimilating Māori (Te Ara, 2013). This policy has a history of reinforcing the scars of educational racism from 1867 to as late as 1969 (Hawaikirangi-Pere, 2013 p.56). The difference in the 1960s and 70s was that Māori were now largely living in an urban society that was distinctly not Māori. While I was growing up, the reinforcement of those scars wasn’t punishment for speaking Te Reo; that was already taken from me. The reinforcement of those scars occurred in a complete absence of waiata and karakia Māori in my educational journey. I learnt ‘Waltzing Matilda,’ ‘Tie Me Kangaroo Down’ and a whole host of non-Māori waiata and whakapapa. I was literally beginning to personify Herries comments about being white with a dash of Māori, reinforcing the stereotype that I held no unique cultural qualities of my own.

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<sup>5</sup> ‘Pepper potting’ was a policy of scattering individual Māori families among Pākehā neighbourhoods for the purpose of integration.

A lot of urban Māori strongly resisted the attempts by the government and Pākehā society to assimilate Māori into a homogenous “New Zealand” identity, which led to the strong protest marches of Māori in the 1970s (Gilbert, 2010 p.236). While I thank these rangatira for their protests, they were very much separate to me growing up. The influence of these protests were felt, embraced and adopted into my model of Māori fatherhood years later, allowing me to have Māori choices regarding my children’s formal education.

### **Whakapapa Interruption**

The separation of males from their Māori whakapapa was not only due to Māori males having to move from rural to urban areas for work. Once those urban Māori established themselves, the state started to implement removal of boys from their families in two ways. One was a prejudicial process of enforcement on Māori boys for 40 years, starting from the 1950s (Noted, 2018)<sup>6</sup>, the other was due to public sentiment which created a social climate of assimilation.

Prior to the 1950s, making an unwed mother look after her illegitimate child was seen as punishment. However, during the 1950s society softened its view that a child was a punishment, which led to a push by society to adopt, leading to the creation of the 1955 Adoption Act. Traditional Māori adoption was specifically excluded by the Act (Moody, 2008).

The focus on secrecy of the adoption in the Act and its intention to create a ‘clean break’ tore children from Māori parents and any remnant of a traditional Māori upbringing (Law Commission - Te Aka Matua o te Ture, 2000 p.82-84). The Act was designed to enforce an official view of the New Zealand family which was part of the more general policy of forcing Māori to assimilate (Law Commission - Te Aka Matua o te Ture, 2000 p.80). Prevailing Christian-centric thought at the time was that two-parent married families were best<sup>7</sup> and the legislated defining of children born out of wedlock, therefore, was to be illegitimate, which is in direct conflict with Māori worldviews as there is no such distinction of legitimacy. Children born out of wedlock remained legally illegitimate until a law change in 1969 (Moody, 2008).

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<sup>6</sup> I write more about the State’s role in the separation of Māori boys from their whānau in Chapter three.

<sup>7</sup> The Bethany, Motherhood of Man and Alexandra Institution, run by the Salvation Army. for example, ‘began to promote adoption, rather than keeping the child, as the most appropriate option for unmarried pregnant women’ (Law Commission - Te Aka Matua o te Ture, 2000 p.15).

Due to the creation of this law, the secondhand shame of illegitimacy on behalf of your child, and strong public opinion, an environment was formed where unwed mothers were shamed public sentiment about children out of wedlock and eventually would give the children up for adoption (Te Ara - The Encyclopedia of New Zealand, 2012). Due to Māori having a traditional model of shared parenting and whāngai in practice for centuries prior, this different cultural worldview meant Māori parents and subsequently their children were disproportionately affected by the adoption process. This traditional process of whāngai is seen in the litany of Māori culture stories, the separate stories of Maui<sup>8</sup> and Tūtānekai<sup>9</sup> to name a couple.

### **Gang life**

Urban poverty and social exclusion based on class or race are the usual gateways for entry into the modern gang. Denial of decent job prospects and the feelings of alienation can lead to groups of young men forming gangs (Newbold & Taonui, 2011 p.1). Similar to what occurred in New Zealand, problems such as issues with language and school, low socio-economic status and discrimination were cultural factors that pushed young Mexican males toward gang activity in California. The engagement with gangs of a small percentage of Mexican-American youth was due in part to the difficulty of engaging with a new culture in a new urban setting (Bogardus, 1943 as quoted in Gilbert, 2010 p.49).

As discussed previously, Māori were raised traditionally in a society that gave them unfettered freedom and copious amounts of care, a society that affirmed them through the normalised use of their language and ways of being. Māori moved to an environment that actively tried to nullify their culture, marginalised them through their education journeys, then actively in the workplace. The societal environment at large was thus a pressure cooker for males to engage in gang life. Rapid urban change and economic restructuring like this is linked directly to gang formation (Moore, 1991 p.137)<sup>10</sup>.

The formation of gangs, however, was not based on race. Rather, gangs were formed, particularly with urban Māori, because of the previously stated social factors. Gilbert (2010) outlines that these factors were occurring against a backdrop of a more liberal social environment in New Zealand that was challenging social norms (p. 194). Gangs,

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<sup>8</sup> Māui was raised as a whāngai by his grandfather, Tamanui-ki-te-rangi.

<sup>9</sup> Tūtānekai was born after his mother Rangiuru had an affair outside marriage. Her husband, Whakaue, acted as a matua whāngai and treated Tūtānekai as his own child.

<sup>10</sup> In Moore (1991) economic restructuring was responsible for young Chicano's only having exploitative options for jobs (p. 133). This meant they had far less of a chance to find meaningful work that would grant them more options outside of gang affiliation (p.23).

in and of themselves, were a way for Māori to challenge a Pākehā system of assimilation and oppression. In the 1970s, the Black Power, for example, was established to help other Māori boys who had been in state care and were disconnected from their marae and iwi (Radio New Zealand, 2017).

While the establishment of organising into chapters and a hierarchy started with the outlaw motorcycle clubs (Gilbert, 2010 p.182), this structure was quickly adopted by gangs with high Māori membership. Nowadays, these gangs (mainly Mongrel Mob and Black Power) will gather their separate chapters for national meet ups. Prominent ex Mongrel Mob member, Tuhoe Isaacs, explains in an interview that the Māori culture was replaced by ‘dog culture’ in the gang. The Mongrel Mob actively shunned Te Reo and tikanga, like hongi, and replaced all of that with the most anti-social things they could imagine (Isaac & Haami, 2007 p.7-8).

The nature of the gang structure, however, and a conscious effort to create an internal culture strongly reflects that of Te Ao Māori, tikanga and the structure of whānau/hapū/iwi. Gang members themselves reinforce this view by noting that whānau, belonging, contribution and respect are strong core values, (Safe Tairāwhiti Community Trust, 2013 p.14).

For me, there was camaraderie in growing up as a gang kid. The first boy I met at school asked me if I wanted to have scrap. He was a gang kid too. We eventually became best friends because he knew who his dad was and where he came from, and my friend saw the connection to what he knew about himself and what he saw walking past my house everyday before and after school. No one else could understand this, but we could understand this about each other. Social exclusion, separation from our Māoritanga but seeing a familiarity in each other, drew us together, which, as we’ve read above, is the first step in the formation of a gang. He became the youngest patched member in Gisborne. I was very proud of him. Still am. Due to my innate want to be different to The Old Man I didn’t pursue a patch; my journey, instead, would take me on a pursuit for my Māori-ness.

### **Indigenous Space**

I always felt Māori but couldn’t contextualise why I felt Māori. From an early age I was shaped by the absence of a solid father role model which motivated me to want to be a different father; I just didn’t know what that looked like or how I would get there. I felt that what we were experiencing wasn’t Māori fatherhood at the same time as I was

being conditioned into being that kind of Māori male. While growing up invisible to my Māoritanga I really yearned to embody being Māori; at my core there was an intrinsic driving force that made me want to go in a Te Ao Māori direction. Despite growing up in a culture that was a bastardised version of kin groupings and living in an environment that was non-Māori, there was still a very strong call of my whakapapa across the space that was void of my Māoritanga, which drove and shaped me as a Māori father.

This call is reflected in the fact that indigenous peoples work within other spaces, alongside other spaces, and around other spaces (Penehira, Doherty, Gray, & Spark, 2007 p.5). In various Pacific Island cultures, *vā* (or in the Hawaiian and Māori sense, *wā*) is the 'space between people or things' (Ka'ili, 2005 p.89). This 'betweenness' can also equally define people or things in regards to their distance and connectedness (Wendt, 1996). Maunga, for example, can be defined by the absence of space around them and the desolation on them (Case, 2018 p. 19). Similarly, indigenous people can be richly shaped by the absence of experience and desolation in their lives. This kind of 'negative space' features prominently in Toi Māori<sup>11</sup>. For example, in Tā moko it is in the manawa line, which is the empty space that defines the koru patterning (Lewis, 2017), and in carving, the pattern Taratara-a-kae or Taowaru, is as much the empty line defined by the negative space, as the positive space around it (Witehira, 2013, p. 159). This absence in our Māori models resonated with the absences that influenced my yearning for a better fathering model, a Māori model of fatherhood.

Despite a colonised history that prioritised European cultural practices over traditional tikanga Māori (Armstrong, 2016 p.7)<sup>12</sup>, the whakapapa link for Māori is inherent due to indigenous knowledge largely being tacit and experiential (Feary, 2008 p.20). Those who grow up without knowledge of their whakapapa, for instance, still possess whakapapa despite their invisibility to it (Pihama, 2012) and are therefore intrinsically Māori, which became the crucial foundation for me being a Māori father.

### **Maori Fatherhood**

Parenthood for Māori isn't specifically about the nuclear family, or even one's own children (Elkington, 2016 p.10). Additionally being Māori, including being a Māori parent, is centred in whakapapa as a crucial notion through which whānau, hapū and iwi structures are built and maintained (Pihama, 2012) This means that Māori fathers can

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<sup>11</sup> Māori Art

<sup>12</sup> A view which still persists today (Armstrong, 2016 p.14)



take up fatherly roles with, but not exclusive to, their irāmutu<sup>13</sup>, siblings, cousins, and their partner's children to name a few, which is congruent with the diverse family structures seen today (Elkington, 2016 p.20).

There is inadequate understanding of the everyday life of young, expectant, Māori fathers (Elkington, 2016 p.5). This ignorance exacerbates the proliferation of negative views of fathers in social settings and mainstream media. These views are well reported and documented, even though they have repeatedly been demonstrated to be unfounded. Young fathers want to be engaged with and supportive of their children. (Rouch & Johns, 2005).

The diversity of experience is heightened for Māori in everyday life. Marsden (1994) attributes this diversity to indigenous knowledge being dynamic and unbounded and concludes that this leads to different resource development pathways than that of Pākehā New Zealanders (p. 697). This also leads to a difference in the placing of values, rights, assets and behaviours to the governing Pākehā culture (Challenger, 1985) as exhibited by the differences in attitude with land, where Māori view whenua as inextricably linked to themselves and Pākehā tend to take a parametric and compartmentalised view to land (Challenger, 1985 p.80). Inside this distinctly different culture, Māori are also deeply diverse (Herbert, 2001 p.24) across whānau, hapū and iwi groups. Coupled with fatherhood being in and of itself a diverse (Peterson & Steinmetz, 2000 p. 315) and enriching (Mavungu, 2013 p.66) experience, we have the foundations for unique fatherhood experiences for Māori fathers.

The uniqueness of Māori fatherhood provides a unique reality for their children. Māori fathers are important for children identifying as Māori, as about one-quarter of the total recorded Māori births at the 2013 census by Statistics New Zealand (2016) stated that those who were identified as Māori were so because they had a Māori father and non-Māori mother.

Being a Māori father has always been complex for me. Being Māori obligates me to my whakapapa and to my wider whānau, and will define my children's whakapapa. Raising my children while I was a young parent created its own issues regarding how society engaged with me. Being a father of daughters in an environment that often reported biased and unfounded stories about those like me created more complexity. We need to

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<sup>13</sup> Nieces/nephews

give weight to these lived realities of Māori fathers who are parenting in an environment that is distinctly non-Māori in terms of its values, rights and behaviours to try to understand the minefield that being a Māori father is. The map to navigate this minefield lies in our traditional practice of fatherhood.

## Contextualising my practice

There are many principles that guide me in my practice. However, the three key principles are those of Tuakiritanga, Identity; Koha, Generosity; and Tino Rangatiratanga, Self Determination. Overlaying these three is an overarching principle of Aroha.

### **Tuakiritanga**

Tuakiritanga was grown out of two gardens: the first was always being unsure of who I was as a Māori male; the second was the unfair comparisons between my brothers and me as children, and then later as teenagers. I wanted to be sure that my children didn't have to suffer the same things I did while growing up.

Tuakiritanga has been referred to as 'the inner self' (Pohatu, 2006 p.14) and also as something external to ourselves that define us (Mead, 2003); it's the things that Mead (2003) points out, like whenua, awa, ceremony and taonga that develop the Māori identity. Pohatu (2006) posits that tuakiritanga is 'tua,' meaning to be on the otherside of something, and 'kiri' meaning skin, which refers to the elements outside of the body that help shape Māori identity; so essentially, those things external to us define us internally.

Traditionally speaking, Māori identity is centred in the whānau, hapū and iwi unit (Hawaikirangi-Pere, 2013 p.22). As Māori, our identity is inextricably linked to places in Aotearoa where our ancestors were raised, even when we ourselves were not raised there (Robson & Reid, 2001 p.7). Our tūpuna enjoyed and kept a respectful relationship with their lands and the natural resources of the area (Harmsworth & Awatere, 2015 p.274) which were usually described in papakainga/tūrangawaewae, maunga, awa and rohe terms.

Two major categories of Maori identity are prevalent in literature: those that are born from a Kaupapa Māori lens, such as whakapapa<sup>14</sup>, tikanga, and tribal structures, and

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<sup>14</sup> descent

those that are born out of our modern day environment such as socio-economic and lifestyle characteristics (Royal, 2003 p.34-36). This is reflected in the writings of Hall (2014) about the inherent duality of Māori identity. In her research, she found that regarding Tuakiritanga, Māori academics valued their cultural identity higher than their academic identity, using their cultural identity, in the form of beliefs, whānau and whakapapa, as a puna<sup>15</sup> to draw strength from (Hall, 2014 p.199-200).

Inside my model of practice, my understanding of Tuakiritanga has some similarities to that described above. However, I have chosen to extend Tuakiritanga to include choice, contentment and whakapapa.

Whakapapa, in my model's sense, is about knowing who you are from a genealogical perspective and your fit in the wider world. It's about the relationship and connection with your wider whānau (Penhira, Doherty, Gray, & Spark, 2007 p.4). It's about knowing your roots, to understand your past, in order to learn and develop in the present for your future (Hawaikirangi-Pere, 2013 p.21).

Yet, while the Māori identity is indeed shaped inside the whānau (Durie, 1994 in Moeke-Pickering, 1996), we also need to take into account the societal origins of that identity, which can include formative experiences that are not aligned to traditional Māori practice, but are still experiences that are had by a large portion of the Māori population (Houkamau, 2006). This is why contentment in knowing and accepting who you are as an individual is integral to Tuakiritanga. The gaps we may feel we have inside ourselves, or the distance we may feel from our traditional Māori ways of practice, shouldn't define our personal identity. Similarly, from a parenting point of view, contentment is for the purpose of each individual to acknowledge their place inside the whānau while equally acknowledging the different places the other whānau members hold inside that wider shared whānau space.

Knowing where you come from and knowing who you are needs to be coupled with choice. Choice inside of Tuakiritanga is about choosing to be your best self and accepting responsibility for that. This is reflected in Pohatu's (2006) Āta model of practice and is a core part of Tuakiritanga (p. 14). The external, 'ki tua ō tō kiri'<sup>16</sup>, shapes your identity but you get to choose to be your best inside of that shaping. It is the whānau environment that shapes the identity of the Māori tamaiti, rangatahi, or taiohi, to

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<sup>15</sup> spring

<sup>16</sup> outside of your skin

foster a sense of whanaungatanga<sup>17</sup>, tikanga<sup>18</sup> and kotahitanga<sup>19</sup> (Moeke-Pickering, 1996 p.2) for the purpose of creating meaningfulness and a strong sense of belonging. A genuine sense of identity and belonging is directly linked to the Māori person's confidence, self esteem and certainty in who they are (Peters, 2014 p.3). This shaping also ensures a safe space to make mistakes and a gentle guidance towards betterment.

### **Koha**

The Koha or generosity part of my model of practice was born out of the poverty of life we experienced due to selfishness of the old man with his resources. I wanted to ensure that with my children that there was a sense of whānau ownership of all of our things inside the whānau, and the wider taonga that belonged to our community, hapū and iwi; that we helped each other unconditionally; and that, born out of love, we still had expectations of ourselves inside our whānau unit.

The first pou inside Koha is Awhina which connects very deeply with the concept of koha. Koha, in a transactional sense, is most often seen as the giving of money at the marae to help cover costs. However, koha can take other forms such as storytelling (Tanoai, 2009), as a tool of whakawhanaungatanga for clinicians (Mendiola, 2011 p.7), as part of our traditional healing practice (Ahuriri-Driscoll et al., 2008 p.122 in Te Rito, Healy, & Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga (Organization), 2010) or, in the case of this model of practice, as lending a helping hand to those who need it. At its indigenous core, koha is about the establishment and solidification of relationships. First, there needs to be a desire to engage in a relationship, and secondly a willingness to accept the koha to establish the relationship (Durie M. , 2007 p.4).

Tuari, or sharing and serving, is the reciprocal response to being served or helped and reciprocity is an integral part of koha. Reciprocity inside koha is not just about the returning of an equal amount of what is given (Cookson, 2018), it's about the further obligation one whānau has to another. In a relationship that may have a power dynamic, like a researcher/participant relationship, reciprocity is about the participant defining the dynamic of reciprocity and what role the researcher has, which is born out of the mutual kaupapa between both (Bishop, 1999 p.3). Reciprocity becomes a mutual obligation in the relationship when the receiver accepts the koha (Ahuriri-Driscoll et al., 2008 p.122 in Te Rito, Healy, & Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga (Organization), 2010) which further reinforces the Kaupapa Māori goal of inclusivity (Durie M., 2007 p.4).

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<sup>17</sup> collective affiliation and responsibility

<sup>18</sup> a way of doing things, roles and responsibilities

<sup>19</sup> unity, oneness

### **Tino Rangatiratanga**

Tino Rangatiratanga, inside my model of practice as a Māori father, is about strength of voice. This was born out of the same place that many of our Māori male rangatahi have come out of, a place where you were told to sit down and be quiet, a place where children should be seen and not heard. As a father, I wanted to ensure that inside our whānau my children had a voice, not just the opportunity to voice an opinion now and then, but the right to veto kaupapa. But in order to do that, there needed to be some foundations.

The foundations of Tino Rangatiratanga inside my model are Confidence, Engagement and Kia ū ki te Kaupapa.

Tino Rangatiratanga is generally agreed to be defined as ‘self determination’ (O’leary 2015 p.24, Morehu 2005 p.35, Ruwhiu 2009 p.39, Bishop 1999 p.2, Taurere 2010 p.12). However, on a more detailed note, Tino Rangatiratanga is about political, social, cultural, and economic autonomy (Taurere 2010 p.44, Murphy 2011 p.133), and can be widely inclusive, as in equity in decision making<sup>20</sup>, or can be specifically defined, as in gender equity (Murphy, 2011).

Bishop (1999), in addressing Tino Rangatiratanga inside a research context, outlines that the kaupapa must be driven by the participants of the kaupapa itself (p. 4). What is acceptable inside the research, or in our case, the whānau unit, is also driven, determined, and defined by the whānau engaged inside the kaupapa. Bishop uses these as metaphors for Western researchers engaged in Kaupapa Māori research. However there is a similarity that can be applied to engagement inside the Māori whānau unit between parent and child. Bishop’s understanding that the pursuit of Tino Rangatiratanga through inherent Te Ao Māori cultural practice as a framework is ‘taonga tuku iho’<sup>21</sup>, which essentially says that these are the ways our ancestors conducted themselves; therefore, this is our framework within which to seek our own self determination now.

For this to work the members of our whānau need to have an independent voice and be empowered to share that voice inside of the kaupapa. There is an obligation on the person in power (Bishop, 1999 p.2-4), the researcher, or in our case, the parent, to

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<sup>20</sup> Jackson (2000) as quoted in (Balcombe, 2000 p.159)

<sup>21</sup> treasures from the ancestors (Bishop, 1999)

ensure there is equity in defining and driving. That equity under Tino Rangatiratanga must also recognise the distinctness of the feminine (Murphy, 2011 p.5) inside the whānau conversation for our kōtiro Māori, especially for myself as a dad of five daughters. As the person, father, with the most power, I must reduce my influence to be one of guiding, not railroading, while understanding I have the most economic and social privilege inside the group and will therefore need to do the amount of work that equally reflects that privilege. The implementation of Tino Rangatiratanga needs to be in line with Maori notions of accountability and transparency. The decision making process needs to be embedded with Tikanga Māori in order to have equity.<sup>22</sup> This ensures a safe space for disagreement to occur and fosters an environment where opinion can be freely shared.

### **Aroha**

Finally, the overarching principle of Aroha is defined in my model of practice as ‘unconditional but expectational love’. Bishop (1999 p.4) refers to aroha in the context of whānau engagement as mutuality. According to Bishop what aroha looks like in practice is ‘tolerance, hospitality and respect for others, their ideas and their opinions.’ Aroha features quite prominently in Kaupapa Māori research methodologies as Aroha ki te Tangata, which in a research sense is about allowing people to define their own space and to meet on their own terms (O’leary, 2015 p.25). However, in a practical sense, Aroha can be expressed in being receptive, having an open door policy, creating an inviting environment, having people-centred practice and placing high value on the people in the kaupapa (Phillips & Mitchell, 2010 p.22). In reference to Aroha, a rangatahi support worker interviewed by Phillips & Mitchell (2010) expressed that even when the money runs out, the kaupapa (working for the rangatahi) has to live on (p. 17). This is exemplified in a lived expression of a Te Ao Māori whakatauki, ‘E iti noa ana, na te aroha’, (even though it is small, it is given with love). Aroha is an embraced concept which informs kinship relationships inside whānau (Ruwhiu, 2009 p.23). With the relational, come unconditional and expectational.

### **Conclusion**

The journey to this model can be summed up in three words: hunger, discovery and shaping. The hunger to discover this practice was born out of absence. The rediscovery has occurred in spite of an academic and political environment that has disregarded Māori bodies of knowledge. The shaping of the practice of this model has occurred in a society that has stereotyped and marginalised Māori fathers. This model links back to

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<sup>22</sup> Jackson (2000) as quoted in (Balcombe, 2000 p.159)

what the early colonialists saw regarding Māori fathering practices. What this model looks like in a Māori father context is loving our children unconditionally; yet through koha, while honouring te tuakiritanga me te tino rangatiratanga o te tamaiti we can help ourselves meet our expectations of us and each other. Contemporary practice of Traditional Māori fatherhood is giving liberally and freely to our children of ourselves, of our aroha. It's what Māori fatherhood was and should continue to be now.



*Figure 2. After being elected into council in the 2014 by-election. (Gisborne Herald)*

# Chapter 3

## The Conversations About Us

I have always tried to be a conversation starter. I've always tried to tell authentic stories in order to promote meaningful conversations. It is this trait in me that underpins the rationale for my Taonga Tuku Iho.

My taonga tuku iho will culminate in a video talking about my journey to fatherhood. The video is informed and driven by my blog writing and reinforced by waiata written by my daughter. The blog and video will have details of my upbringing, my intention to change things in myself for my children, and in our nation for all of our children. The blog and video will showcase my fathering and provide a platform for my children to give their feedback.

I am undertaking this journey to tell my story. I want to carve out a space in an area that is so often filled with negative stories and portrayals of Māori males. I want this Taonga Tuku Iho to be a narrative against the stereotypical stories that often litter the media, some of which I touch on in this chapter.

What I don't want it to be is a signpost for non-Māori and people who didn't grow up like me to judge the rest of us: a blunt tool for others to say 'Well Josh did it, why can't the rest?' I had enough of that unproductivity and shaming during my childhood. What I want is to connect with those who grew up like me, if only to say 'Hey my man, here I am. Here we are.' I also want the wider group of people who didn't grow up like me to understand how very urban Māori my upbringing was and that we as Māori males have so much in common with each other. Our struggles are similar; our ambitions are too. We have so much to give of ourselves to positively impact our whānau, hapū, iwi and country.

I want this to be a catalyst for conversation with organisations in our country in order to positively impact how we view, treat, and promote fatherhood. I want those organisations to understand the reality of growing up in an impoverished whānau and its effects on us in adulthood.

I want this to change us.



This chapter is informed by reviewing relevant literature on legislation and policy, indigenous realities, and a media environment scan of major themes and articles over the last 20 years regarding Māori males and Māori fathers. I address the brutality of the Māori male experience in the state services sector and explain in great detail how a whakapapa of prejudicial legislative practice separated Māori males from their whānau and created the state of our nation today as it pertains to Māori fathers.

To capture the voice of Māori fathers, I conducted group interviews with men's groups about their lived experiences of being Māori fathers that were engaged in the state services system in some way, shape or form. I draw parallels between our Māori experiences and the experiences of other indigenous cultures, particularly the First Nation peoples of Australia and Canada. Finally, I include an analysis of what men's oriented programmes are available to help address Māori male centric issues around being Māori fathers.

### **Legislation and policy**

In order to understand the current state of our nation's perception of Māori men we have to highlight the structures, barriers and tools of oppression of the past. The following section traces the whakapapa of oppressive legislation and the racist and inequitable application of policies on young Māori males and boys which contributed to the separation of Māori males from whānau, which in the context of this Masters is one of the systemic contributors to the separation of Māori males from our traditional bodies of knowledge.

In 1867, 27 short years after the Treaty was signed, the government passed the Neglected and Criminal Children Act (NCCA) (NZ Parliament, 1867). Earlier in the 1860s, the Australian and New Zealand colonists described their own impoverished children as needing to be 'reclaimed from a condition of nomadic wilderness and brought within the pale of civilisation'<sup>23</sup>. This description was used as an othering technique to distance the civilised English from the poor and used to push for the law to be established firstly in the Victorian provinces of Australia (Twomey, 1997) and then also in New Zealand<sup>24</sup>. It is dichotomous that a country can in one breath assert that protection of children is paramount yet in the same breath also call them criminals. While the creation of this law does not specifically target Māori, social discourse at the

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<sup>23</sup> New Zealand began as a dependency to New South Wales pre 1840 (New Zealand History, 2017) colonists of both countries came from the same pool of people

<sup>24</sup> Being a dependency, NZ was initially governed from NSW. NSW having all legislation creation rights over NZ (New Zealand History, 2017). NZ gained independence in 1841, however was still seen as a state of Australia (Aroney, 2010 p.31). While each states autonomy was acknowledged (Aroney 2010, p.32) and NZ would go on to become a Dominion, there was still appetite in NZ to be influenced and submit to general Australian policies (Aroney 2010, p.38).

time was that Māori were ‘immoral creatures’, our tūpuna were ‘barbarous’, and the Māori of the time were ‘untutored little fellow savages’ (New Zealander, 1949, p.2) the specific point of the article being that Māori needed to become civilised through the tools of the English, which were industrial training, education and moral training.

The law targeted homeless children who were picked up by the constabulary, and also destitute children who were, in some cases, given to the state by their parents. Many of the children, however, were taken from their families by the state. These children were then housed in Industrial Schools with other children labelled as criminals. Then in the 1890s the Education Department started separating out the criminally charged children and the “uncontrollable” children from the other homeless and destitute children (NZ History, 2017). These separated children were then sent to reformatories<sup>25</sup>.

In the legislation, there were many ambiguous qualifiers under which children could be taken and sent to industrial schools. For example, if a child roamed in the streets often, if the child begged, hung around taverns, or was caught sleeping in the open, then that child could be taken by a constable, without warrant, to two Justices of the Peace to be charged and sent immediately to an Industrial school (NZ Parliament, 1867, p.167). The cost of the children to be kept at the schools fell on the parent of the child, most of which were impoverished and couldn’t afford the cost (von Dadelszen, 2011 p.6). The court could issue a warrant to enforce pay, take property or even impose imprisonment as punishment, which resulted in the children staying in state care indefinitely and also the parent being imprisoned indefinitely.

Historically, legislation and political institutions are not setup with or for indigenous people, nor with or for women (Hocking, 2005 p.62). Similarly, in the creation of the NCCA, the groups being focussed on by the English male magistrates were women and their children whose husbands/fathers were not in the house. Wife desertion was prevalent in New Zealand by European men of both European and Māori wives/partners (Newman, 2007 p.62). The desertion created financial strain on the women and a discussion for state support was started at the behest of the impoverished women in 1864 in Victoria. However the officers of the state overlaid a broader social and moral lens on this issue, which led to the discussions of social character and moral fibre of the children of impoverished women. One of the low hanging fruit of discussion was about women

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<sup>25</sup> The phrasing of reformatory and industrial was on purpose. At the time, the word reformatory was associated with criminality, whereas industrial meant the child was on a pathway to industry. The former implying the child was dysfunctional the latter implying the child was subject to forces outside of their control e.g. lacking a male breadwinner (Twomey, 1997 p.181)

who were prostitutes. Social commentary at the time was that the absence of a father in the home led to a decline in wholesome qualities and discipline in the family home, which could lead to unwholesome and ill disciplined children, therefore having a flow on detrimental effect on the nation. Thus the direction of the magistrates started to include women whose husbands had left them, women who had children out of wedlock, and even women whose husbands were working away from the family temporarily (Twomey, 1997) despite the original conversation from women being predominantly about financial hardship.

The NCCA was the state's first foray into state rights over children. This position of moral superiority over women and children was the precursor to the Infants Act 1908 (NZ Parliament, 1908) under which children were taken from "delinquent women". Immoral women<sup>26</sup> and women of colour were specifically targeted and viewed as more deviant in the application of this legislation (Tompkins, 2017).

In 1925 the Child Welfare Act (CWA) was enacted. The state could take children for being neglected, indigent, delinquent, and 'not under proper control' (NZ Parliament, 1925, Section 13 (1)). The issue with the phrase 'not under proper control' was that it was based on a value judgement by the Justice of the Children's Court (Tompkins, 2017 p.11) and was non rebuttable in legal terms<sup>27</sup> (Tompkins, 2017 p.30). Therefore, the judgements were impossible for the parents of the taken children to oppose. Often the value judgement of 'not being under proper control' was placed on children who were wagging, or skipping school, and as a result, children were taken into state care (Smale, 2016) with the family having no recourse.

The implementation of the CWA continued in the same fashion for almost 50 years until the Child and Young Persons Act 1974 (CYP) was established. CYP came under justifiably hard criticism. CYP was responsible for significant anguish amongst whānau and caused a sense of dislocation amongst Māori children that were removed. The act provided little to no recourse for families of children who were removed (Cooke, 2014 p. 202). Furthermore, this was compounded for Māori as the act had inherent problems when applied to Māori, and created cultural barriers when engaging with the CYP department (Iorns, 1986 p.5).

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<sup>26</sup> Women who had children out of wedlock

<sup>27</sup> a legal presumption that no amount of evidence or argument is strong enough to overcome (Your Dictionary, 2007).

At the time, police acted in a manner that was ‘ill disposed’ towards Māori youths, their families and communities. This resulted in an unequal lack of discretion<sup>28</sup> applied to Māori, resulting in over representation of Māori youth arrests and disparate treatment under the CYP Act (Iorns, 1986 p.8). Literature from then until now has demonstrated that there is racial disparity and discrimination in the justice system internationally (Bushway & Piehl, 2001 p.761) and when applied to New Zealand, that there is a substantial risk of ethnic bias against Māori, demonstrated by an over-representation of Māori in the youth jurisdiction and an under referring to restorative justice programmes<sup>29</sup> (Latu & Lucas, 2008 p.86).

It is a fact that Māori progress into the justice system further than non-Māori and receive more severe sentencing than non-Māori (Corrections Department New Zealand, 2016). The damage of the application of the CYP was reported in *Some Memories Never Fade*, a report by the Confidential Listening and Assistance Service (2015) chaired by Judge Henwood. Over seven years the service collected lived experiences of former state wards which goes into detail of the abuses they suffered: beatings with fists and weapons, boys made to fight for the entertainment of boys’ home staff, repeated rapes by foster fathers, isolation, abuse and neglect were some of what was reported.

Puao te Atatu, a report commissioned by the Ministry of Social Welfare slated the paramouncy principle in the CYP act as isolatory and not conducive to a Māori worldview, where whānau hauora is integral to the wellbeing of the child. The report also slated social work practice as contributing to the breakdown of whānau, whanaungatanga and tikanga Māori (Ministerial Advisory Committee, 1986 p. 23 para 72), the act essentially being a tool to reinforce institutional racism (Keddell, 2007 p. 50).

This led to a rework of the CYP Act into the Child Young Person and their Families Act, 1989 (CYPFS) which, like its predecessors, also has been responsible for psychological and emotional harm to children while in state care (Cooke, 2014 p.3). Removal was largely due to over zealous social work practice applying solely the paramouncy principle (Tompkins, 2017 p. 108) without recognition of the other

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<sup>28</sup> Discretion is the legal systems attempt to recognise that there are shades of factual and legal grey. It is a tool for the people who are part of the legal system, from police to judges, to use their judgement on whether to arrest someone, or let them off with a warning, to home detention, or imprisonment.

<sup>29</sup> Restorative justice diverts offenders from the legal system into a conference setting which is an informal, facilitated meeting between a victim, offender, support people and any other approved people, such as community representatives or interpreters (Ministry of Justice, 2016).

principles in the act, which included a child's right to family life. The conflict between state and social workers' views of what was in the child's best interest and that of the whānau were often at odds. As a result, the CYPFS Act also underwent another review, which in some circles was slated as being too narrow (Sandford-Reed & McNabb, 2015), resulting in the creation of the Vulnerable Children's Act (2014) alongside the CYPFS Act. The name received massive public backlash leading to the CYFPS Act being renamed as the Oranga Tamariki Act (Oranga Tamariki, 2017). The changes look superficial but time will tell the impacts of the new legislation. Sceptics aren't convinced the changes will create change (Newstalk ZB, 2017).

Many men over the last two years have come forward about their trauma suffered at the hands of the legislation and the governmental departments that applied the legislation (*The Spinoff*, 2018). There has been an uptake of Māori journalists who want to tell these truthful stories to give context to the current state of Māori males and to shine light on the government's treatment of Māori males. The next section goes into depth about the trauma that they suffered.

### **State of the nation**

Stories of Māori male inadequacy have littered the airwaves and print media for as long as I can remember. I grew up reading about Lillybing, Nia Glassie and the Kahui Twins. These stories of abuse were always intertwined with the subject's Māori identities, a causal relationship was never explicitly stated by media, but always implied. It was common in the early 2000s to read headlines that linked Māori-ness with child abuse, violence and crime, with titles like 'Maori child abuse statistics a disgrace' (NZ Herald, 2003), 'Shock over Maori infant brutality' (News24, 2000), 'Maori crime rate concerns Government' (NZ Herald, 2005) and 'Haka too aggressive for young Maori, says theologian' (NZ Herald, 2005). Incidentally, the comment made about the haka being too aggressive was on a 60 minutes segment talking specifically about Māori crime in April 2005 on TV3 (Broadcasting Standards Authority, 2005).

I grew up watching derogatory "Māori" TV. *Once Were Warriors* was an embellished fiction; the exaggeration in the movie was rampant. Even in comparison to my own lived experiences, it was a gross misrepresentation. Seeing how every assailant on *Police Ten 7* was Māori was also in stark contrast to my lived experiences. I knew criminals and miscreants who were both Māori and non-Māori and I always wondered where the non-Māori lawbreakers were. Even at my young age, I knew I was watching a major misrepresentation on TV.

While New Zealand has gotten better at telling a more balanced story in the media that doesn't focus entirely on race, there are still fragments of antagonistic media storytelling when it comes to our vulnerable children and our at risk whānau, which is in direct contrast to traditional Māori parenting. This antagonism is demonstrated by the excessive use of aggressive languaging. Statements like, 'We have to get tough on these families,' is the antithesis of Tikanga Māori. Statements in the media saying extended families need to 'take children and call parents unfit' is in stark contrast to what Māori parenting and whāngai practice is.

Additionally, teen parenting is often framed as a problem in New Zealand (Strickett & Moewaka-Barnes, 2012 p.3). Media statements expressing that 'There is also concern that rates of abuse will increase as a burgeoning youth demographic fast approaches child bearing age' by Television New Zealand (2016) reinforces the stigmatisation of young parents. The public implication that young parents with babies equal more child abuse can be regarded as irresponsible reporting and fear mongering. As someone who was a young solo father I lived the refutation of these kinds of biased stories. From my lived experience I knew this perception and reporting to be false. When you consider that Māori are two and a half times more likely to be young parents (Strickett & Moewaka-Barnes, 2012), these statements disproportionately stigmatise Māori.

In addition to the fear mongering regarding young parents, New Zealand has always had a problem with Māori boys (Smale, 2018). Smale's article outlines how Māori boys were always at the bottom of adoption lists. As discussed in Chapter two, the parents of these children were victims of public shaming, which forced the parents to give their children born out of wedlock up for adoption, by institutions which were largely faith based (Law Commission - Te Aka Matua o te Ture, 2000), into a state welfare institution that could not look after them, didn't want them, would abuse them, and then go on to ignore their presence by denying an inquiry into the State Services abuses that occurred (The Hui, 2017). The new 2017 government<sup>30</sup> has since said it will launch an inquiry (Radio New Zealand, 2017). However, even the Royal Commission investigation has been found wanting, having it's very make up questioned<sup>31</sup>. At the time of writing this, the Royal Commission was still in the throes of carrying out its work. Many of the men who suffered at the hands of the State Services sector want to do

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<sup>30</sup> Labour led, NZ First, Green Party coalition

<sup>31</sup> It was pointed out by Smale that the cases the commission will be dealing with will be over represented by Māori males, however only one Māori male sat on the commission. The response from the commission at the writing of this was silence.

more with their lives but are damaged from lives full of ‘brutality that has been meted out to (them) in the name of the state: unnecessary uplifting...; solitary confinement for months; torture through electrocution; beatings; rape, including gang rape, of children; lack of education’ (Noted, 2018).

We have public discourse that at its core undermines Māori fatherhood and traditional Māori worldviews through stigmatising young parents, of whom Māori are more highly represented, and calls for getting tough on people, of whom Māori are again more highly represented, who have been brutalised through a racist system, of whom Māori men are also more highly represented. This has motivated me to share my story via online blogs, to support my daughter’s waiata writing aspirations, and to open myself up to tell these stories and share this kōrero via film. In doing these things I offer my lived experience as a counter point to the current public discourse, I expand my fatherhood practice and I make my story accessible online via blogging and via film media, all of which will be discussed in chapter four.

### **Indigenous realities**

As indigenous people’s we share many things: stories, ritual and connection to natural spaces to name a few. Unfortunately, we also share similar trauma. The issues discussed in the previous section have not only occurred for Māori men but for many indigenous cultures across the world. I provide this section to give context to our shared indigenous experiences as a preamble to the indigenous solutions that will follow in the next section.

The term ‘Stolen Generation’ is notorious with Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians alike; it refers to a whole generation of Indigenous Australian children forcibly taken by white Australia. Like in Aotearoa, this was also legislated at the government level. The government legislated ‘protectors’ for every state of Australia. These protectors had full powers of the Indigenous Australians of those states and had near-total control over everything from marriage to their employment (Australia & Wilkie, 1997, p.23).

It was under the protectorate powers that Indigenous Australians were taken as children. A Royal Commission in 1913 debated whether it was preferable for Indigenous Australian children to be removed from their families at birth or at 2 years old. In other states, a blanket removal of all 4 year olds was put in place (Australia & Wilkie, 1997, p.25). This continued into the 1930s.

The government from the 1940s onward used child welfare legislation and the inherent racism in the court and its neglect procedure to forcibly remove Indigenous Australian children from their families. The assessment of these children was disparate to non-Indigenous Australians due to the definition of neglect being based on 'poverty' (Australia & Wilkie, 1997, p.27). Social workers would go in to Indigenous homes, look in the cupboards and declare the family impoverished then forcibly remove the children. It is true that the indigenous were impoverished, but this was also caused by government policy due to Indigenous peoples not qualifying for welfare like all non-Indigenous were able to. This didn't change until 1966.

To Australia's credit, they commissioned a report in 1995, that was completed in 1997, titled 'Bringing Them Home' to address the state sanctioned forcible removal of the Indigenous Australians from their families and to acknowledge this as the starting place of the trauma many Indigenous Australians still encounter today. The Stolen Generation conversation is now one that is commonplace in Australia (Australians Together, 2018).

However, a report in the 90s will not alone heal the hurt of generations. Similar to Māori, this separation of Indigenous Australians from their families, their lands and their cultural heritage has caused a breadth of social problems that are still present today. Indigenous Australian men who came through the stolen generation admit that due to not having fathers, and some not having mothers, they have no idea how to parent properly due to not having seen those examples growing up. Yet, also like Māori, Indigenous Australian fathers want to be more involved with nurturing their partners and children (Raising Children Network, 2013).

Likewise, the First Nations people of Canada suffered in the same way. They're indigenous children were taken to residential schools between 1880 and 1996 for the sole purpose of assimilating their children into Euro-Canadian culture (Miller & Marshall, 2014). Like Māori and Indigenous Australians, the Aboriginal men also came out of those systems full of anger that expressed itself as violence, currently resulting in Aboriginal Canadians being the most socially excluded group in Canada (CCNSA, 2011).

We need to heal these men; we need to heal men in order to heal our societies.



**Whakawhiti Kōrero – conversations and interviews**

The healing process, in part, can be encouraged by something as simple as whakawhiti kōrero. I have been privileged to be invited into spaces to hui and hear men, mostly Māori, talk to me about their experiences as fathers engaged simultaneously with the State. For years I've been a sounding board for fathers in relation to their children when it comes to state services, whether that is family court, justice, counselling or Child, Youth and Family, now known as Oranga Tamariki (OT). A lot of what has been shared with me in a private capacity was reiterated at the hui I had with the men's groups in order to share kōrero with them about my lived experiences and the research regarding Māori fatherhood that I had collected. They in turn shared their experiences are kōrero.

Most of the men at the hui were separated from their exes and children were involved. Most of the men were going through some iteration of the court process. Most of the men were Māori.

The length of the process and the isolation of the dad from his child or children created feelings of hurt and frustration. This frustration can lead to feelings of just wanting to give up. One participant at one of the hui expressed how the court system process to reconnect with his children was both difficult and lengthy. This view was shared by others at the hui and also anecdotally by many Māori fathers across the country.

Reconnecting with your own children is a mammoth mission on its own. In addition to this, some of the men had formed bonds with their former stepchildren. The frustration of engaging in a court process for their own biological children turned to feelings of futility when thinking about gaining access to their former stepchildren. One participant emotionally expressed how hard it was to tell his former stepson that he would not be seeing him again because, in the court's eyes, the son was not the dad's child so he could only apply to see the daughter/sister. He looked at me and passively shrugged, in a 'what do I say?' gesture.

The subject of Police interaction was also brought up, and while there is no official police policy of targeting males, the anecdotal evidence also suggest that when police callouts occur that the male is usually the one who is approached first. When I was working through family court issues, I directly asked a police person I trusted about how high of a risk it would be for me if I had to get the police involved in my parenting issues. My children were young and I was their sole provider so I needed to know the risk and how to mitigate that. I was told in no uncertain terms that if that police officer

were to turn up at a call out then their first act would be to isolate me as the male. They admitted it sounded bad, but the justification was that it was usually the male they were more worried about physically. This is, in a sense, self fulfilling considering the state's marginalisation of Māori males through forced state care and the subsequent abuses that occurred created Māori males who were hostile to the system.

One man expressed to me the difficulty when he was taking his daughter out in her younger years. There was no gender-neutral toilet or parent's room so he was faced with the dilemma of making the women uncomfortable with his presence in the women's toilet or making the men uncomfortable with his daughter in the men's toilet. This kōrero was reflected in my experience as well. Across the room there was agreement that this has changed today with a prevalence of parent rooms and gender-neutral single bathrooms available.



Figure 3. At the Tairāwhiti Men of the Year Awards 2011 (Tauawhi Men's Centre)

### Male programmes

In addition to commissions and inquiries, a very real and present part of those pathways of healings are men's groups, which are appearing all over Aotearoa New Zealand.

Tauawhi Men's Centre<sup>32</sup> based in Te Tairāwhiti, which is my home, is an example of this. Tauawhi literally means 'to embrace, to support.' Tauawhi's motto is:

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<sup>32</sup> <http://www.psec.org.nz/learn-more/tauawhi-mens-centre/>

‘Ahakoa no hea koe ,Ahakoa ko wai koe, Ahakoa he aha te raru ...Ka kitea e koe he awhina i konei.’ ‘No matter where you're from, No matter who you are, No matter what the problem is...You'll find support here.’

They're underlying takepu<sup>33</sup> are:

Whakapono	Truth	Telling it how it is and was – the way you want to tell it – and an ability for staff to appreciate client's reality.
Whakaaro	Mercy	A chance to change and an acknowledgment that this is a long-term process.
Murunga hara	Forgiveness	We are non-judgemental and keep in mind that people are not their behaviour.
Tika	Justice	Accountability in behaviour. Change is fully evidenced, recognised and acknowledged by those who know – i.e. whanau.
Rangimarie	Peace	Can be found when the other elements have been fully worked through.

The idea for a men's centre was proposed in 2007 by Tairāwhiti Men Against Violence (TMAV), an informal group of men in Te Tairāwhiti who aimed to start a revolution of non-violence after three local intimate partner murder-suicides in two months the year before.

In 2009, Family Works Tairāwhiti offered the space above its op shop on Peel Street, which became the Tauawhi Men's Centre. At the time the operation of Tauawhi was very adhoc. Its work programme encompassed saying yes to everything, and its financial future was insecure, but there was work that needed to be done. Nine years later, it is still operational and still changing men's lives in Tūranganui a Kiwa<sup>34</sup> and the wider Te Tairāwhiti. Tauawhi Men's Centre (Tauawhi) is currently funded by Presbyterian Support East Coast (PSEC). In its past it has received support from Family Works, Ka Pai Kaiti and voluntary time and resources.

It should be noted, though, that Tauawhi's intent in its inception was to be bicultural, a safe space for all, but particularly Māori fathers, in light of the over representation of Māori in court matters. This has informed its current activities where Tauawhi tries to

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<sup>33</sup> guiding principles

<sup>34</sup> Gisborne

operate in a way that is bicultural in practice by trying to create opportunities to be Māori centric in a non-Māori dominated environment.

The success in Tauawhi can be seen in the fact that most of the men that come through the front door are self referred or come after hearing about Tauawhi from another organisation. There are some court referrals, but the majority of those engaged come of their own volition. Self-referring is a strong sign that men in my community want to heal and see Tauawhi as one of those places that will help guide them to healing.

One of Tauawhi's main goals has been to help break down the stigma many men feel when asking for help. Tauawhi has counselling and social work services, and serves as a hub for non-violence, parenting and youth programmes. The staff members there also do a plethora of other male oriented kaupapa all for the lifting and promoting of men as integral to the health and wellbeing of whānau and community. This is demonstrated through their promotion of the 'Safe Man, Safe Family' programme, running the Tairāwhiti Men's awards every year since 2011 ((Presbyterian Support East Coast, 2017) and supporting speakers, exhibitions and events around male mental health, suicide prevention and general overall hauora. Tauawhi also runs a month long programme called 'Dad and Me' which is about how to have a positive and respectful relationship with the mother of their children, but also with their children (Gisborne Herald, 2017). The need for more programmes across the country like Tauawhi is high.

Similar initiatives are run in other countries for Indigenous Dads, like a programme called 'I'm an Aboriginal dad' run in Melbourne, Australia by Ron Briggs to help Indigenous Australian dads in their relationships with the mothers of their children and also their children (Mercy Health, 2018). In Canada, there are also examples of father-specific programmes. The Inunnguiniq<sup>35</sup> parenting programme, while being a general parenting programme (Tagalik, 2015), still has a focus of revitalising Inuit parenting teachings and practices, steered by their Elders, in ways that work today (Healey, 2016). There are father-child specific programmes like Nēâh Kee Papa – I Am Your Father by the Manitoba Métis Federation (Roopnarine, 2015, p.225), Sivummut Inuit Father's Group by the Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre (Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre, 2014 p.10) and the Fathers and Sons on the Land programme by the Ilisaqsivik Family Resource Centre from Nunavut (Ilisaqsivik Family Resource Centre, 2014). All are centred in Inuit ways of being and operating as a response to the state trauma that had

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<sup>35</sup> Literally translated in Inuit as 'The Making Of A Human Being'

occurred and all were delivered at the ‘With Dad Strengthening the Circle of Care conference (National Collaborating Centre For Aboriginal Health, 2011).

### **Conclusion**

There’s a long whakapapa to why my Taonga Tuku Iho is important to me, including the history of the legislation that separated Māori males from their families; the history of racist treatment of Māori males by the social workers, police and other administrators of the system; the abuse that Māori males suffered at the hands of “carers”; and the continued stigmatisation of Māori males in the public arena. My Taonga Tuku Iho needs to stand as a signpost that is distinctly different from the one-dimensional stories of warrior-ness and the outright false stories of abuse, risk and abandonment that litters our environment regarding Māori fathers. This chapter summarises why my Taonga Tuku Iho needs to tell the lived truth of Māori fatherhood.

## Chapter 4

### Story is the taonga tuku iho

#### Telling the story

##### *Why*

I've always told my story, mainly as a way to be a voice in an environment that has been largely negative about Māori, males, and teenage parents. When people would say negative things about Māori, Māori parents, Māori males, solo parenting, poverty, child abuse, gangs etc. I was always quick to offer my lived experience as a counterpoint to whatever uninformed narrative was being shared. It makes the argument more real when it's with someone who has lived the subject matter of the argument and personifies the antithesis of the negatively framed argument.

While the conversations amongst my own allies haven't been negative per say, there is still an unknowing about what growing up in a gang affiliated environment is like. I was talking to a close friend about my plans for future tattoo and tā moko work. During that conversation I mentioned that I had gang-influenced tattoos and was planning on getting more. She questioned why and my response was that I didn't choose to grow up gang affiliated, but it is now part of my whakapapa and I am who I am because of it. In the same way that my skin will be adorned with my Te Ao Māori whakapapa, I have to include my non-Māori whakapapa, because I would be incomplete without it. I was met with a nodding of understanding.

I have written posts online about parenting, mental health and growing up in a gang related environment. I've blogged at length about all sorts of social issues that affect Māori males and solo parents. Some have been very controversial and rubbed mainstream NZ the wrong way; others have gone against the Te Ao Māori grain. All have usually been linked to the social climate at the time of my blogging.

I wrote a blog in May of 2017, for example, called 'Dear Māmā' about growing up and how my mum was a pou in those years and still continues to be a pou today. The post gained widespread recognition. I was asked if it could be reprinted on *The Spinoff*. The offer of a koha was made. I asked for that koha to be given to Tauawhi Men's centre<sup>36</sup>. I was also asked if it could be reprinted in a parenting book. I didn't feel like I had enough

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<sup>36</sup> I discuss Tauawhi in Chapter 3

time to consider the request, and in my Te Ao Māori way, it was difficult to give permission to a group of people I hadn't met. I ended up declining. I wrote this blog as a balance to the public conversations I had about how males contributed to my life, where in fact, the most constant influence has been my mum. This resonated with many.

I wrote about my support for Metiria Turei, someone I hold in very high regard, and someone I have pointed to as an example of a wahine Māori for my daughters. I wrote of my lived experience of being a solo parent who had received a benefit early in my parenting journey, the difficulty I endured and the inhumane treatment I received at the WINZ offices. Consequently, I was asked to be a panellist on *The Hui*, to speak as someone who was in public office, like Metiria, albeit more local, and also had a solo parenting/beneficiary background, also like Metiria. Off the back of my 'Dear Māmā' blog and the panel interview, *The Hui* would go on to do a story about me as a solo father who grew up in a gang affiliated environment and was now a district councillor (*The Hui*, 2017).

In May 2018, I wrote an online post about my "journey" to motherhood on Mother's day after my daughter wrote a Mother's day post for me. I'm very conscious of the fact that I am a father. I've never claimed to be mother of my children, although we have engaged in what can be described as motherly activities. We've done our nails together and had "girls" nights. These father/daughter experiences really helped shaped my fathering practice. However, because I knew my male limitations and actively didn't own the female space, I had to make sure I filled that space with wāhine for the sake of my daughters. That post became talking points for other solo father's raising daughters by themselves. Also, through my "journey" to motherhood I discovered writers like Murphy (2011) and Pihama (1998) who have directly contributed to not only this research but also to my practice as a Māori father.

Another set of my online posts that gained widespread popularity was published late in 2017 after I watched the movie *Waru*. For the uninitiated, *Waru* is a feature film made up of eight 10-minute short films, each written and directed by Māori wāhine filmmakers. Each filmmaker contributed a vignette that unfolds around the tangi of a small boy, named Waru, who died at the hands of his caregiver. The vignettes are all subtly interlinked and each follows one of eight female Māori lead characters during the same moment in time as they come to terms with Waru's death and try to find a way forward in their community (New Zealand Film Commission, 2018). Coincidentally,

the movie was a tough watch, but I felt like it resonated with my upbringing. I felt the need to offer more help to our people. I saw our lived stories and knew our community shared some of the same brokenness and I wanted to hug, help and heal. At the same time, I saw some of my friends and whānau also writing about *Waru*. Some posts were quite critical of the movie while other people felt like they just didn't "get" the film. My personal realisation after watching the movie, in conjunction with seeing the negative and indifferent posts from others about *Waru*, made me want to use my story to connect with those who grew up like me and also to help bridge the 'othering' gap with people who didn't grow up like me. I chose to do this by writing about my reaction to *Waru* and how I saw my lived experiences told in the movie<sup>37</sup>.

Telling story in forms that connect with people is the taonga regardless of the medium in which it's told, whether it's in book, blog, on a panel or in film. However, for the purposes of this chapter I will refer to the latest iteration of story telling as my Taonga Tuku Iho, which came in the form of a mini documentary called *I Am Waru*.

### ***Who***

The heart of who contributed to this iteration of the telling of my story can be summed up in one word: whānau.

Due to being vocal about Māori fatherhood, solo parenting and how that motivates me to improve myself, my whānau, my region, and the nation, I knew that someone would eventually ask to tell my story in film as an addition to all the above tellings of my taonga. I've always known I had a story to tell and I wanted to share it, in the right way, through the right people. The issue was trying to find the right person to tell the film interpretation of my story.

The right person has always been my cousin, Angela Cudd; her mother and my father<sup>38</sup> are brother and sister. She is a vivacious young Māori upstart, passionate about Te Ao Māori and who we are as a people. Like many of us, she is driven to reframe the Aotearoa landscape so that it engages Māori differently. We are cut from the same cloth. In addition to having and being ngākau Māori, she is professionally qualified. Ange has been active in the film and television space, particularly regarding kaupapa Māori for a number of years now. But more than that, she is whānau. In the similar vein as the Kaupapa Māori argument that researchers can also be participants of the communities

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<sup>37</sup> blog posts can be found at [www.josh.org.nz/blog](http://www.josh.org.nz/blog)

<sup>38</sup> My biological father, not 'the old man'



being researched, having someone tell something as precious as my life story needed to be done by someone who loves me, because that love obligates us as Māori and as whānau to take great care in looking after our precious stories and treasures.

The main contributors to this iteration of my Taonga Tuku Iho have been my children, both on and off camera. For all of their lives I have helped shape them and, in turn, they have helped shape me. I am the father I am today because of my children. The only reason I have a practice at all, and subsequently something to create, is because of them. My children feature strongly in this film as subjects, interviewees and as contributors to the thinking that informs my kōrero.

The following are brief descriptions of who my children are at the time of this writing. This is for the reader's understanding of who the community of this Taonga Tuku Iho is and also as a marker in time for my whānau, my children, their children, and me to revisit and reflect back on. As of today, they are all doing well academically and in their chosen extracurricular activities.

***Pharaoh Tamateuira Noviskey-Wharehinga***

My son is my eldest; he is 18 years old. Pharaoh is ngāwari<sup>39</sup> by nature. He graduated from high school last year with Merit and is currently undertaking a building apprenticeship. My son is a hard worker, quiet, and gentle. He shows his love by creating things for you.

***Pounamunui-a-te-Waimarama Noviskey-Wharehinga***

My eldest daughter is 16 years old. She is naturally driven and ambitious. She is a published musician. Pou is in her second to last year at Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Horouta Wānanga. Pou is protective, opinionated, loyal and loving. Pou shows her love by speaking up for you.

***Te Kotuhi Maraea Katipa Noviskey-Wharehinga***

Te Kotuhi is 15 years old. She is studious and has a passion for the Asian languages, so much so that she has been selected to travel to Japan in 2019. TK is in her second year at Lytton High School. TK has a strong sense of social justice. She is loving and attentive. TK shows her love by trying to do things for you; one of the ways she does this is by making food.

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<sup>39</sup> Affable, easy-going.

### ***Amoe Maioha Akata Wharehinga***

Amoe is 14 years old. She is clever and a natural athlete. Amoe has represented the region in basketball, netball and rugby. Amoe is in her second year at Lytton High School. Amoe likes the sense of self-satisfaction when she's achieved something. Amoe always thinks of others, is reliable and considerate. Amoe shows her love by doing things for her loved ones; one of those ways is by helping you solve your problems.

### ***Rongomairangiatea Noviskey-Wharehinga***

Rongomai is 14 years old. She is a tactile creative. She is a gifted dancer and has competed in many hip-hop competitions. But she doesn't dance to compete; she dances because she loves it. Ronnie is in her first year at high school. Rongomai is very kind, genuine and has a gentle nature. Rongomai shows her love by caring for people and cheering them up.

### ***Summer Huinga Hanisi Wharehinga***

Summer is 12 years old. She is a performer by nature, quick witted and bubbly. Summer competes in speech and drama every year and likes to perform in shows and personally at home for friends and family. 2019 will be Summer's first year at high school. Summer is bubbly, quick witted and earnest. Summer shows her love by comforting others and trying to relieve sadness by being funny.

My daughter Pounamu plays a special part in regards to this mini documentary. Earlier this year, in April 2018, she released her EP<sup>40</sup> called *Ahako He Iti*<sup>41</sup>. Her waiata from her EP all feature in *I Am Waru*. The details of the inclusion of those songs form part of the next section about the creation of *I Am Waru*.

### **The creation of I Am Waru**

The creation of this Taonga Tuku Iho had three parts: informing myself and my practice of fatherhood over the years; the specific details of pulling a documentary together; and a Te Ao Māori component where people came and gave to the kaupapa, for the kaupapa.

The subject matter of what would inform my kōrero had been coming together over my life journey as a father. As a father of five daughters, I had already read Ngahuia Murphy's thesis *Te Awa Atua, Te Awa Tapu, Te Awa Wahine* to inform myself from a Māori lens of what *ikura*<sup>42</sup> meant for my *tamāhine*<sup>43</sup>. I read the document from Te Mana

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40 An EP is a mini album of 3-6 songs with total play time of under 30 minutes

41 means 'even though it's small'

42 menstruation

43 daughters

Kahui Ririki<sup>44</sup>, and writings from Pihama, Smith, and other wāhine Māori to inform and help shape my fathering practice. I listened to many wahine friends when they gave their counsel. I reflected a lot. I looked at other fathers and I tried to find what I loved about their practice and sought ways to improve mine.

On the back of my personal mission of self-improvement as a father, I decided to formally engage in this Masters. I had heard previously about how Māori men once were gardeners by Moana Jackson (Cutting Edge conference, 2009) as a counterpoint to the “Once Were Warriors” stereotype of Māori. So I solidified my subject knowledge over the course of my Masters to include other areas that are covered in Chapter 2 and 3 of this exegesis. The consolidation of my current understanding of Māori fatherhood, and creation and release of this Taonga Tuku Iho, happened almost simultaneously.

My cousin and I had spoken at length for years about telling my story. It was something we would often revisit as a topic of conversation amidst all the usual whānau catch up kōrero. Early in 2018 we spoke more definitely about creating a mini doco and by March my cousin had successfully applied for funding from Someday Stories as director and producer to tell the parts on my blog regarding my reactions to the film *Waru*.

We video-called and spoke for two hours about my upbringing, about being Māori, being a father, being a solo parent and a plethora of other topics to set the direction for ‘*I Am Waru*’, of which the over arching theme was to be about Changing the Narrative.

Organisationally, there was a lot that went on in pulling all the film specific parts together, things like organising camera crews, call sheets and poster design; those were all done by Ange. The following is about the things I was involved in and how the rangahau fed into my parts of *I Am Waru*.

As part of the creation of *I Am Waru* we captured an interview of my teens, a photo shoot, and two interviews of myself; one in a home setting and another in my professional work setting. During the time of filming, my daughter Pounamu was set to release her three song EP, *Ahakoā He Iti*. Part of *I Am Waru* was also capturing this release.

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44 Traditional Māori Parenting: An Historical Review of Literature of Traditional Maori Child Rearing Practices in Pre - European Times.



Figure 4. Us at The Ahakoa He Iti EP release 2018 (own picture)

The EP release was held on the 13<sup>th</sup> of April 2018 at Toihoukura, School of Māori Visual Art and Design. The release was catered for by whānau; the night was also run by whānau. The next day we held a four-hour interview, the topics of which are addressed in this Masters thesis. We spoke about three main themes: growing up in a gang affiliated environment, my connection to previous media stories about Māori child abuse, like Lillybing<sup>45</sup> and Nia Glassie, and what being a solo father was like, as these were the main topics of my blog posts regarding *Waru*.

The next interview occurred at Te Wānanga o Aotearoa's Mangere campus. The focus of this interview was around my professional career, my children, parenting and this Masters. A week later we had a photo shoot of my teenagers and I hanging out, eating, talking, looking at old photos of us and sharing laughter.

Following this my teens were interviewed. The interviews were essential as they collected unfiltered reflections on their dad, and in the space of this masters, lived, practical and public feedback to another party about my fathering practice. At this interview we also went over past baby pictures of my teens and more recent pictures of us doing things together. Looking at those pictures was a beautiful reflective journey, on where we were and where we've come to as a family.

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<sup>45</sup> At the time Lillybing was in the news I was studying a Bachelor of Social Sciences. Lillybing's reporting in the media was the subject of one of my assignments I did for my Violence in New Zealand paper taken by James and Jane Ritchie.



Figure 5. My four and I at Oneroa, Gisborne. (Screen capture from *I Am Waru*)

Through my cousin's professional networks she developed a relationship with Stacey and Scotty Morrison who wrote a beautiful *tāne* specific karakia for the *I Am Waru* mini documentary. The hononga to this Masters was uncanny. I recorded this karakia at Tūranga FM. This recording opens the mini documentary. The karakia features at the start of this Masters; its translation is as follows:

Hirahira mai ai te rangi e tū nei,	May the sky be enlivened
Hirahira mai ai te rangi ka hiwa	May the celestial realm surge forth
Hirahira mai ai te kukunetanga mai o te ira atua	Tāne the wise, Tāne the discoverer of knowledge
Ko Tāne tū Wānanga, ko Tāne i te mārāma	Sacred waters, waters of vitality from
Ko te wai nui, ko te wai ora i a Tangaroa	Tangaroa
He wai ki te tāne, he toto ki te wahine	Men may summon power, women may
Koia ko Tāne te rarama ko au	summon life
Koia ko Tāne te korotua ko au	I am at one with Tāne of shining light,
Koia ko Tāne te hihiri ko au	Tāne the creator of a prosperous future
Koia ko Tāne i te ata, Koia ko Tāne i te pō	Tāne the energiser
Ko Tāne rautāwhiri i te mana wāhine, i te mana tamariki	Tāne omnipresent in the morning and night
Tuia ki te pou herenga tapu, te pou herenga tāngata	Tāne who honours the mana of women, of children
kia puta, kia ora, ki te whai ao ki te ao mārāma!	Bond the ancient wise ones to us
Haumi, hui e, tāiki e!	Bring us forth to the world of light!
	Unified, connected and vital!

The final cut for *I Am Waru* has my cousin Ange doing the voice over in Te Reo Māori.

All three of my daughter's songs feature in *I Am Waru*. 'Ka Taka Te Pō' is about the night fading away and the sun coming out to shine. This song features as background music in the transition from telling the dark part of my story to the light part. Pou performed 'Te Mata Āriki' at her EP release night. Lastly, Pou's song 'Io Mātua (Te Nonoikura)' aptly features as the final song of the documentary. Pou describes Io Mātua as 'a song of mourning for our babies who have passed away far too soon. It talks about what we go through emotionally' (Pou Music, 2018) which is exactly the sentiment of *I Am Waru*.

### **Principle based model of practice and the project**

My principle-based model of practice is woven throughout the journey of the creation of *I Am Waru*. The details of this model can be found in Chapter 3.

Using Tuakiritanga as a reflective tool, I had to be content with who I am right now in order to be comfortable with sharing my story publicly. This meant acknowledging who I was and owning the mistakes and successes of my past, and also owning who I am going to be and the choices I will make. I wanted *I Am Waru* to genuinely reflect who I am and conversely who Māori men and Māori fathers are.

Aroha is the thread that binds us together, so too it is what weaves this Taonga Tuku Iho together. The aroha amongst my whānau is what engendered trust in me for my cousin. Her aroha for me meant that she was going to treat this kaupapa as earnestly as I would. Aroha between myself and my children meant that sharing was open and free flowing. It also meant they trusted me to give permission to be a part of the documentary. There was an expectation on ourselves and an expectation on each other to look after one another through this process.

Tino Rangatiratanga shone through in many ways. My children were able to speak with confidence because those with the power reduced their influence to be guides rather than directors. We purposefully created this mini documentary as a tool of engagement, a conversation starter for our country, not only with those involved in the documentary, but also with each other. *I Am Waru* is an act of Tino Rangatiratanga; it purposefully speaks out into the space that negatively portrays Māori males and tells the truth about us.

**Conclusion**

This Taonga Tuku Iho is the culmination of years of study, parenting and a lifetime of learning lessons. It was informed by readings from indigenous corners of the planet and academics across the world. This taonga was brought to light by traditional Māori bodies of knowledge and practice. This taonga was woven by aroha with aroha. This taonga is an honest telling of someone's lived experiences and life; it is a pou, a time marker that points back to our traditional practices and reminds the mainstream that our Māori fatherhood practices are much different than what they try to define us as. This Taonga Tuku Iho is about one word: whānau.

# Chapter 5

## And what?

### **Reflections**

This chapter is a reflection on the six-year journey I took to complete this Masters, the knowledge I learnt, the challenges I encountered, and the changes I now believe we need to make as a country.

My journey through He Waka Hiringa started six years ago. I was enrolled in the first cohort, when the strands were still being woven and the programme was still forming. My first cut at trying to critically interrogate my practice and its connection to Te Ao Māori wasn't completely successful. My first attempt was a whenua-based approach but it was incongruous to who I am, how I grew up and the reality of a lot of Māori males who grew up like me.

There were definitely positive experiences and knowledge to take away from the first cohort. I discovered pre-colonial readings describing Māori fatherhood, I found quotes from my tūpuna, and read a lot of Māori land court documents; all were very interesting readings. But only a small amount of it made it into this exegesis because the main point of this writing is to tell the story of where we once were, to then talk about how external powers created the separation between us and our traditional fatherly practices, and then to point to examples of how we are intrinsically still ourselves.

### **Learnings**

In terms of academic learnings, the most interesting one I have taken from this journey is tracing the whakapapa of legislative oppression that dictated what women, Māori families, Māori fathers and Māori male providers could and could not do; the pervasiveness of the influence on legislation of a non-Māori moral compass that was in direct conflict with the Māori worldview, traditional practices, and bodies of knowledge; and how that legislation drew wedges between men and their families, Māori and our ways of being, and separated Māori boys from their support networks, carers, and whānau.

The biggest personal learning I've taken away from this Masters journey is one of self-forgiveness. I learnt that once I got into the space of self-healing and self-forgiveness I was able to have better internal conversations with myself. Having better internal conversations has meant the quality of my external conversations has increased. I am



able to objectively reflect on my practice as a father and formalise what that really is.

### **Challenges**

There were many challenges to writing this Masters. There are the usual suspects. Making time. Persistence. Self discipline. Whānau commitments. I actually used my commitment to writing this Masters as an example of how writing occurs and how much you have to read, write and reflect in order to complete this exegesis. I wrote out in the open with my writing music blaring and I shaped the process of writing to fit my whānau dynamics. I would write for 45-minute chunks and take 10-15 minute breaks to relax my eyes, eat, and chat with my teenagers. This way I was able to example writing but also be able to link in with my teens if they needed me. Having our chats in between writing was a nice respite from focussing solely on writing.

Another challenge was how few colonialist accounts regarding Māori fatherhood practices exist. The ones that do exist don't speak in detail and also provide a racist interpretation of the Māori fatherhood practices. There are a lot of colonialist accounts of pre-colonised Aotearoa. However, the way in which they frame Māori is romanticised and comes from a place of ignorance.

However, the biggest challenge in completing this Masters had to do with my sister. In April, when we had just started creating the Taonga Tuku Iho, my sister was diagnosed with terminal cancer. Halfway through the filming, the paperwork and my Masters writing, my sister was admitted to palliative care<sup>46</sup> after having a near death experience. My sister passed away on the 16<sup>th</sup> of August 2018, one week before *I Am Waru* was released.

I didn't foresee the emotional toll my sister's final months would have on me or how all-encompassing her and my mum's needs would be on my mind, my heart, and my emotions. Even after my sister left us to be with our ancestors, my teenagers and I spent a lot of time with mum as much for ourselves, as we did for her. Writing during this time was impossible.

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<sup>46</sup> 'Palliative care' is care for a person of any age who has a life-limiting illness.

### **Change**

If I could change anything, it would be my sister still being alive today. However, that is outside of my control, so, in reflection, I wouldn't have done anything differently. I have arrived at this place with the experiences I have had and they will colour this Masters experience for me into the future. *I Am Waru* could only have been made this year. My sister was meant to move home to be with us. She was meant to pass away while in our care. She lives in our memories of her. These words of her will be a pou, a timestamp, in memory of her. The government's inquiry into the state abuse of our young who were predominantly Māori boys could only be initiated this year under this government. My Masters was meant to be completed now.

### **Reception of Taonga Tuku Iho**

As with the blog posts and my appearances on *The Hui*, the initial reception of the mini documentary has been profoundly positive. The comments in relation to the mini documentary have all been encouraging, heartfelt and loving. There are three main kaupapa that people are sharing this under: as a challenge to the *Once Were Warriors* stereotype of Māori males; to promote nurturing Māori fathers as opposed to being about punishment; and to push back in a media space that often only talks about Māori males in a negative light.

A lot of people who have engaged with the movie have made a connection with how I grew up, making comments like 'I grew up in a *Once Were Warriors* environment too' and talking about their journey towards change. Others have completely supported the intention of the documentary that 'Māori males don't have a whakapapa of violence (and that) we actually have a whakapapa of massive nurturing' (Wharehinga, 2018) as a direct counterpoint to *Once Were Warriors* stereotype.

*I Am Waru* has become a conduit for people to share their positive personal stories of Māori fathers with the world. A non-Māori woman commented that when she attended a kapa haka regionals she was filled with joy at seeing the high number of Māori men carrying around and caring for their babies. A wahine Māori was sharing with me about how Māori fathers traditionally used to play a very intimate and integral part in the birthing process, something which is extremely rare to see today considering the birthing process is so very far removed from traditional Māori birthing practices.

Teachers who work with rangatahi have contacted me about how they are using *I Am Waru* as a resource to connect with their rangatahi. Men's programmes have let me

know they are using *I Am Waru* as a tool to connect in with their men. I make sure to remind them of the human-ness of our interactions in my whānau and that it's not all whakawhiti kōrero, shared kai, and EP releases. It's a lot of hard mahi, hard conversations, mistake making, apologies and forgiveness. I am humbled by the connection people make with *I Am Waru*, but I need to make sure the kōrero surrounding it is grounded. To not recognise that means that we aren't telling a genuine Māori father story.

The documentary has been so well received that my cousin Ange has presented on two film panels and it's been a point of professional discussion between her and industry experts. In addition to the mahi I already do speaking with teen parents, I have been asked to speak to father groups and solo parenting groups about raising my children, the pitfalls, the hardships and the triumphs, all things I've shared in this exegesis. In this short period of time since the documentary released, I have formally spoken as the keynote speaker at an event in Christchurch called 'First Heroes: Healthy Dads, Healthy Heroes' (Te Whare Manaaki Tangata, 2018) and have been contacted for further speaking engagements in 2019. I have been asked if I have any intention to do something feature length. I have been encouraged to apply for writing mentorships to tell more stories in order to have them told in other media. These future speaking engagements, blog posts, videos and interviews are all continuation of sharing story, which has always been the Taonga Tuku Iho.

### **What next?**

More research needs to be done to analyse the connection between urban drift for Māori in the late 1800s and early 1900s, reformatory schools, wards of the state, gang membership and systemic prejudices against Māori in the justice system from a Māori worldview. I have made a brief connection in this Masters but I definitely think there is space in the academic sphere to draw the connections through these spaces for the purpose of tracking the trauma inflicted on Māori males. This will help contextualise where we have been as a nation to remind us of why we need to change as a country on a systems, policy and personal level.

### **Māori Fatherhood practice**

There is still so much we can do in the Māori fatherhood space. I would like to see more honest lived experiences collected exemplifying Māori fatherhood from our various iwi, immersed in iwi based practice and iwi based perspectives, in order to continue to build

the conversation about Māori fatherhood, and to academically formalise the positivity that we already know exists in Te Ao Māori.

In order to talk the change we also need to be the change. There is undeniable trauma still apparent and occurring in our community that disproportionately affects our lower socio economic community, of which Māori are over represented. This trauma exhibits itself in higher rates in many of the statistics for Māori. Some of them are due to the lens in which the statistics are framed. Therefore, the changing of that lens needs to occur (Cutting Edge conference, 2009). Other's are due to systemic racism, and over representation of Māori in prisons (Latu & Lucas, 2008 p.93). This leads me to believe that there is more rangahau to be done creating and acknowledging Māori models of practice that connect to Te Ira Tāne because we need to make, find and recognise multiple maps to use for those who need guidance and those of us doing the guiding.

There is also space to rangahau existing and future Māori fatherhood practices, programmes and their effectiveness. We need to have a rangahau-based way of legitimising our practice. Māori already know what works: the rangahau is to connect with other Indigenous peoples around the world to see commonalities that connect with their practice. The rangahau into our practice is initially to be signposts for our future generations, but also further than that, it's the start of normalising this Māori fatherhood practice in our minds, hearts and lives. Creating for our own is first and foremost because of the breadth of non-Māori models that were not our own, but were inflicted upon our own. If there is wider utility of these models then that is fine but we need to be focussed on the intention of our Māori fatherhood model creation.

We need to do more to change our narrative.

### **Systemic Change**

If we look wider than practice, though, we require legislative and systemic change. Māori have always lived in a communal manner. We've always been about the collective and also about the collectives within the wider body. We know through practice what whānau, hapū and iwi are, which begs the question of whether or not we need our practices legitimised at a central government level. If central government is how initial trauma was created then are the answers to fixing our trauma at central government level? Considering that Māori have always maintained that authority (mana) is maintained at the ground (whenua) level, should the solutions, decisions and delivery be done at a mana whenua level in order to bridge gaps and heal trauma? Asking these

questions is problematic for central government because logically revenue should follow delivery and that would mean we are asking the questions about whether or not central government should be giving up it's power, resources and money to iwi. I think this would be life-changing rangahau for Māori and also a challenging conversation to have, for our nation, with central, regional and local government.

In terms of my personal contribution to systemic change, I have major reservations about the royal enquiry into the state abuses of state wards. Due to these concerns I would like to contribute to this kaupapa in some way, shape, or form. Whether it's being involved in the enquiry or being a vocal interrogator to the process I plan to make sure my voice is heard in this process.

### **Conclusion**

Personally, this Masters journey has galvanised my commitment to continue to do more for my community. There are lots of other young Māori boys and future Māori fathers who are reflections of me. I owe it to those reflections of myself to do more. I am in a privileged position of having a voice that is listened to, of having a solid education, of having access to resources and having positions of influence. What shape that will look like, I am unsure but I am still committed to improving our health needs, my region and my country for my people. This is how I positively shape the environment my children will grow up in and raise their children in. This is how I will influence my children's lives and be a father long after I have departed this place for the place of my ancestors.

When I first started on this journey, my masters was about balancing the Māori father narrative in academic spaces but as this masters has progressed it has become an expose' of legislative oppression of Māori men, the interruption of the transmission of how to be a Māori father and what we can do to rebuild that link between ourselves, our forefathers and our future fathers. I hope this Masters becomes one of the tools for the repatriation of ourselves.



*Figure 6. Josh and his teens at the Colour Run 2018 (own photo)*

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