



Manaakitanga

A leadership of kindness

Today I'm going to share a little bit of my journey as I complete my Postgraduate in leadership. Through this formal process of growing as a leader I have been challenged to consider my identity and ways of doing as a leader. This led me to develop a leadership model based on Manaakitanga- a leadership of kindness.



Most leaders I have seen, in movies and TV are dynamic, inspirational and motivational leaders. I am in awe of this type of leader, but it left me feeling lacking as I didn't see these as strong dispositions in myself.



To be kind is more important than to be right. Many times, what people need is not a brilliant mind that speaks but a special heart that listens.

F. Scott Fitzgerald

This is a saying that speaks to my heart and reminds me of what is important in relationships.

If In the pursuit of being right, if in the pursuit of righteousness, you diminish someone else's mana, then you are not reflecting Manaakitanga.

Relationships are about lifting each other up, not making someone feel less.

Manaakitanga is the act of caring, and in caring there should always be kindness

“ quote fancy

“Identity combines competence and experience into a way of knowing... It is the key to deciding what matters and what does not”.

► Wenger, 2000.



I am...

Having a deep understanding of our own identity is important to defining yourself as a person, and certainly as a leader.

Research has shown that in early childhood there is very little formal training in leadership. Most leaders learn as they go, using cause and effect as the tool to improvement. This has certainly been the case with me.

We begin to delve into identity when we are training to be teachers and develop a personal philosophy. This philosophy is generally based on developmental theorists, teaching pedagogy and personal values and beliefs. Through developing this philosophy, we identify what matters to us in our teaching practice.

Then we join an early childhood service and this service will have a philosophy. This philosophy will have identified 'what matters there'. It underpins what will be viewed as priorities in curriculum and teaching practice at that service.

What philosophy do we operate under as leaders?

- So, what philosophy do we operate under as leaders? Our leadership philosophy should be developed based on leadership theorists, leadership pedagogy and personal values and beliefs. It will guide us in our leadership practice.
- Leaders who develop their pedagogical leadership knowledge are more affective at supporting people to grow and thrive.
- In my studies, I have been introduced to multiple leadership models, Transformational, transactional, distributed, servant and many more but as a Māori I struggled to identify with any of them. I began to understand that I needed to develop a 'Terri' model that fitted within Te Ao Māori and reflected my identity as a leader.



Kua kaupapa I
au te aroha,
mā koutou e
whakaoti
*I have laid the
foundation of
love, friendship,
peace for you to
build upon*
Nā Te Peeti Te AweAwe

In the square, in Palmerston North stands this statue. This fine fellow is my ancestor Te Peeti Te Aweawe. And underneath him is written this whakatauki.

This is the expectation of Manaakitanga that he set for the people of Rangitāne o Manawatu. It is my whakapapa.

A kaumatua once told me it is the obligation of us, as tangata whenua to manaaki all who choose to visit or settle in the Manawatu.

He didn't mean I had to roam Palmerston North offering manaaki to everyone I met. He meant that the people I am given responsibility for, I need to manaaki. For me this is my whānau, friends, children in the centre, their whānau, the staff and the Trust Board.

Jesus told us to lead you must serve
like a slave. Slaves took care of
others.

As a Christian Manaakitanga is part of
what the lord asks of me.

My whakapapa, my culture, my
identity as a leader is embedded
in Manaakitanga.



**"But it should not be that way with you. If one of you wants to
become great, then he must serve you like a servant. If one of
you wants to become first, then he must serve you like a slave."**

- Matthew 20:26-27 NLT -

Manaakitanga is derived from two principal words 'mana' meaning prestige, status, reputation, self-esteem, and aki - shorten version of 'akiaki' meaning to lift up, build upon, strengthen.

► Ngaroma Williams and Mary-Elizabeth Broadley March 2012

► <https://ako.ac.nz/assets/Knowledge-centre/NPF-09-009-Bicultural-competence-in-ECE/848b95ef53/Tool-Resource-kit-for-student-teachers.pdf>

I have also been told that 'Ki' is the feeling of being satisfied, 'full' after a great meal. So that feeling you have when you've had a great meal and you loosen the top button of your pants and settle into the couch feeling good. That's how manaakitanga should make you feel.

It is important to understand that mana is not gained, it is given. Status in the colonist model can be gained by a high-ranking job but for Maori status is gained by what you do for your people. So mana is reciprocal. By lifting others mana you lift your own.

- This clip is not speaking from an ECE context however how he describes Manaakitanga is lovely.
- Of note in his explanation is the concept that you sometimes need to give someone a push, guiding them towards new learning.



Manaakitanga in Te Ao Māori

Horomono Horo

Cultural Facilitator, Edmund Hillary Fellowship



“One of the criticisms I’ve faced over the years is that I’m not aggressive enough or assertive enough, or somehow, because I’m empathetic, it means I’m weak. I totally rebel against that. I refuse to believe that you cannot be both compassionate and strong.”

– Jacinda Ardern

Jacinda has accepted a huge Manaakitanga role. She has accepted the responsibility to care for all of Aotearoa.

And when the mosque shootings occurred Jacinda showed Manaakitanga leadership in action. Jacinda showed empathy and kindness to those connected to the incident. She displayed clear and transparent direction- “They are us”.

They are us – setting clear direction to all of us. She set strong boundaries- changing gun laws and then continued to be personally available to those affected. Manaakitanga leadership in action.

She is also up there to show that Kindness is not weak leadership.

Kind leadership is not letting people do what they want, or avoiding courageous conversations, it is providing clear, transparent direction and strong boundaries.

It is supporting the people you lead to grow and thrive.

The obligation of Manaakitanga in leadership is to ensure all within your care thrive. That you support them to succeed and grow.

- Kind leaders care about the growth of their people and teams. They don't avoid the hard stuff but accept it as part of their role in showing kindness. It is not kind to allow someone to do a substandard job, or let someone's actions damage their work relationships, or damage their wairua by working somewhere that does not speak to their heart. Kind leaders have a sincere desire to help an employee become **their best**.
- One of my 'aha' moments in relation to enacting Manaakitanga leadership was when the trust of our Centre made a substantial change to the way the Centre ran. Some of the teachers were not happy, some office staff were not happy. They didn't want the change to happen. My initial reaction was to feel helpless, I wanted to manaaki the staff, but knew the change was inevitable.
- After reflecting on this through a manaakitanga lense I realized that my role as leader was to provide manaaki through the change. How could I support them and grow them through this change? Having a leadership model allowed me to analyse and plan with focus and intention.
- Kindness isn't always about taking away the unpleasant or avoiding it but supporting people to work through it successfully.



Manaakitanga extends beyond merely responding to others physical needs, but also encompasses caring for psychological and spiritual domains of others

► Mcfarlane, A, 2010.

Professor Angus Macfarlane calls for us to consider the 'whole' person. Sonja and Angus Macfarlane developed "Te Pikinga ki runga" a social cultural, educational model developed within the Te Ao maori worldview.

When I did this presentation in Palmerston North not all of those present were in leadership roles and so when we did the task (which we will all do soon) they considered their work with children. And so I heard these teacher saying things like "we would research to support the child's learning", "we would engage with the wider community", "we would take time to meet with the whānau to deepen our understandings". It appears we are happy to consider the whole child, to go beyond the teaching environment to ensure we help them to succeed and thrive.

So, isn't this what we should do as a leader? At some stage in our careers we made a decision that led us to being in a position of leadership. We have chosen to lead, chosen to take on the responsibility of supporting the people we lead to succeed and thrive. And if as teachers we understand and are willing to support the whole child then should not be doing that for the people we lead? Manaakitanga leadership supports the 'whole person'.

"Te Pikinga ki runga" uses four specific domains to approach wholeness and wellbeing and I have adapted these domains to apply to manaakitanga leadership. Here is an example of how I apply the domains.

Collaborative Reflection 😊

In your group
reflect on
this scenario

You have noticed that the Room Leader has been leaving notes around the workplace. The notes appear to be addressed to no one in particular. They contain a negative comment and a suggested action (with exclamation mark). They are not signed. You are concerned about this and want to address it with her.

Discuss and
document

Using the domains, discuss what aspects you could take into consideration

Action plan

What would be your next steps?

Hononga (relational)

- Have I supported them to build strong relationships within the service?
- Have I acknowledged their position in the service and how well do they understand this?
- Do I have a bias?

Hinengaro (Psychological)

- what are the barriers or fears resulting in the notes?
- How does this person express their emotions?
- Are there clear understandings about expectations?

Tinana (Physical)

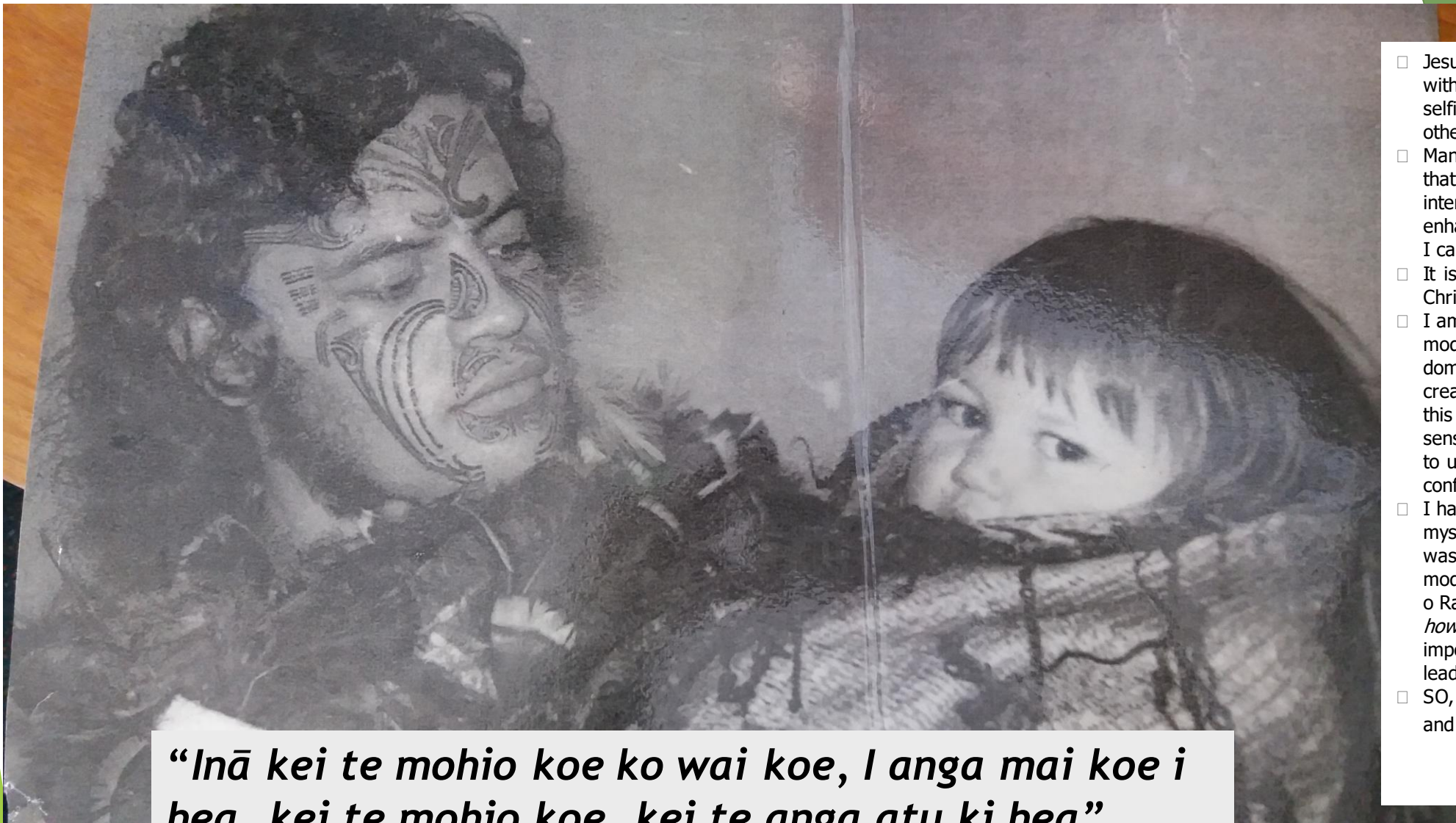
- Have I given this teacher the tools to succeed?
- Am I supporting her physical health and wellbeing?
- Have I created an environment that supports sharing without fear of penalties?

Mana Motuhake (self-concept)

- How might I uplift her mana.
- Have I nourished her identity in the service?
- Am I working within her skills and strengths?

Potential action plan

- Meet with her and show her the notes.
- Ask her how she is feeling about the notes.
- What has happened that has led her to using this form of communication.
- Is she finding this form of communication successful? Has she considered this could be considered passive aggressive behavior?
- Is she feeling supported enough in her role?
- Could she need some PLD in communication and team leading?



“Inā kei te mohio koe ko wai koe, I anga mai koe i hea, kei te mohio koe, kei te anga atu ki hea”.

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

- Jesus told us and showed us how to lead with Manaaki, he cared for others without selfishness, without ego. He lifted others up and supported them to thrive.
- Manaakitanga gives me a leadership model that acknowledges interdependence, where through the enhancement of others mana I can enhance my own.
- It is a model that is true to my Māori and Christian culture.
- I am still on this journey of developing this model. I intend to delve deeper into the domains of manaakitanga and hopefully create a framework but already through this process I have developed a deeper sense of identity as a leader, a philosophy to underpin my leadership practice and confidence in my 'place' as a leader.
- I have been developing this model for myself, it will not suit everyone. When I was having a korero about my leadership model with a Manawatu o Rangitane leader he said, "*that's not how I lead*" and that's okay, because It is important as a leader to develop your own leadership model.
- SO, do you know your identity as a leader and what is your leadership philosophy?

References

- Farnsworth, V., Kleanthouse, I., & Wenger-Trayner, E. (2016). Communities of practice as a social theory of learning: a conversation with Etienne Wenger. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 64(2). P.139 - 160.
- Herbst, P. (2008,). Maori leadership in a globalising world. *Leadership* (July), p. 17-20.
- Macfarlane, A. (2010). An Educational approach to classroom management: Integrating body, mind and heart. *Physical Educator* - Journal of Physical Education New Zealand.
- Macfarlane, A., & Macfarlane, S. (2008, October). *A synthesis of culturally inclusive approaches in special education: from research to practice*. Paper presented at the Education Plus Professional Development Forum, College of Education, University of Canterbury, Christchurch.
- Macfarlane, S. (2009). Te Pikinga ki Runga- Raising possibilities. *Maori Achievement*, 2, p.42-50.
- Miranda-Wolff, A. ((2019). How kindness should factor into leadership. Retrieved from <http://www.linkedin.com/pulse/how-kindness-should-factor-leadership-alida-miranda-wolff>
- Ruwhiu, D., & Elkin, G. (2016). Converging pathways of contemporary leadership: In the footsteps of Maori and servant leadership. *Leadership*, 12(3) 308-323.