



The Spirit of Aloha and the Many Ways We Can Remember to Be Kind

Leave a Comment / by Caroline Muir / June 28, 2022

At the very center of the Aloha Spirit, you will find loving kindness.

The Aloha Spirit is a quality and an attitude that has immense value in Hawai'i. In day-to-day conversation, you will often hear phrases like, *you should go, those guys really have the Aloha Spirit!* And everyone agrees, with big smiles on their faces.

But what do people mean when they say somebody or something has *The Aloha Spirit*? It means that the people or the place (or both) are warm, welcoming, generous, AND full of kindness. Loving-kindness. When the Aloha Spirit is present, we feel a generosity of spirit, hospitality, and caring. Food is always offered and when arriving and departing this environment, caring hugs are the norm.

Our Hawaiian proverb for today describes this.



In other words, a kind, welcoming greeting, and a warm hug is just as valuable as a costly gift. When we feel welcomed, we feel that we have value and that *we are an important part of our community.* Ultimately, we feel connected and cared for which nourishes our spirit.

When we *Practice Aloha* or live within the spirit of Aloha, we find ourselves smiling a lot. We feel good inside and we feel happy because we are practicing the art of loving-kindness.

Practicing kindness is its own reward.

We all feel good when we help someone accomplish something difficult or overcome a challenging time.

I was fortunate that I was able to spend my childhood in the Midwest, the state of Kansas, where the people had the Aloha Spirit. They were kind by nature. I often felt like Dorothy from the movie, *The Wizard of Oz*, as I skipped down the (imaginary) *yellow brick road*, radiating kindness and joy.

The kindest person in my growing-up years was my grandpa. He lived his life full of loving-kindness.

He was a caretaker and healer to large animals. A big animal veterinarian. He would stop to chat with everyone, everywhere he went. Loving-kindness was his middle name; his *patients* all loved him and trusted him. And, he was the first person in my life who told me that I had to go to Hawai'i someday.

Because of him, I did go to Hawai'i, Maui to be exact. That was around 1980, long before the Maui airport had *jetways or passenger loading bridges*. The aircraft doors opened directly to the luscious, fragrant air of Hawai'i. As we waited in the plane for those in front of us to go down the stairs, the scent of the sea, salt air, and flowers drifted into the plane and I knew I was home – home in the land of aloha, the land of kindness.

Coming home to Maui that first time, began a rebirth of a part of me that I had lost during my time living in New York City and other parts of the U.S. I had forgotten what true, loving kindness looked like when it was expressed in everyday life.

I slowly relearned the practice of kindness. First tip: always lead with kindness.

When I would call someone on the phone, I wouldn't just jump in and get down to business like I would in New York. No, that was not the Maui way. Instead, I would begin by asking after my friend – how are you? How have you been? How's your Aunty? We would *talk story*, Hawaiian style until finally, my friend would ask, did you have something you called for?

Later on, when phone calls turned into emails, I carried on my practice of kindness, always beginning my messages by asking after my friends or family members. How are you? How have you been? How's your Aunty? After a few questions like that, I would slowly ease into the reason for my email.

These days, I can learn about the art of kindness from anywhere. Like this quote from a senator from Nebraska, the neighboring state to my home state of Kansas:

Unexpected kindness is the most powerful, the least costly, and the most underrated agent of change.

- Bob Kerry, senator from Nebraska

Expressing unexpected kindness is a simple, direct way we can ALL be *agents of change*. By simply practicing the Spirit of Aloha. We can do this every day, many times a day. Even an unexpected warm smile can be an agent of change.

When we're at the market, trying to get what we came for as quickly as possible, we can stop, and let someone else go ahead of us. It changes their day, *and ours!* Same thing when we are in our car, in a hurry to get home, we can slow down and let the other car in first. It's easy. And it helps change the energy around us and within us into something a little kinder.

Being an agent of change means we are being of service to others.

The most profound way of being an agent of change is being of service with zero expectation of anything in return. I often think about how I am going to be of service to the world, and it gets me excited! There is so much more I can do!

I often think, how can I be of service to you?

And how will that service contribute towards the creation of a world that I want to live in and that I want my grandchildren to live in? These days, the way we choose to be of service to one another, and the way we choose to interact with our fellow human beings is being transformed. It is undergoing a process of rebirth.

This rebirth process is completely unknown and mysterious to us. We still do not know what our world is going to look like during and after this rebirth process. All we know is that our world is not going to look the way it used to look.

Let's start this rebirth by treating everyone, including ourselves, with loving kindness

One practice of kindness that I have cherished from my tantric studies and teaching, is the concept of leaving everyone we are in a relationship with, better than where we found them. How can we treat them in a way that leaves them in a better space? We want to be able to leave them and say farewell with love; leaving them happier, healthier, and more at peace than when we first met them!

My experience is that loving-kindness begins with me, and begins with you. It begins with how each of us loves our body and how we take care of ourselves. We highly regard our human spirit and the soul of our goodness. How can we cultivate that?

I would like to close our conversation by sharing a moment of deep beauty.

I ask you to take in whatever beauty I might be able to offer you. And whatever beauty you might see when you look out into your world. If you don't see the beauty when you look out at the trees and flowers, then see it when you look up into the sky. See it in the clouds, see it in the deep blues and perhaps the many shades of gray. See the beauty in everything and in everyone you come across today.

In the spirit of aloha and in the spirit of kindness, I wish you a beautiful day.

