

**Leadership in Motion**

Women in Leadership Day, University of Waikato

Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> August 2015

An address by

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## Opening

He honore, he kororia, maungarongo ki te whenua, whakaaro pai ki nga tangata katoa...pai marire. Paimarie kia ratou kua wheturangitia, ki te maunga tapu ki Taupiri, te okiokinga a to tatou Arikinui, Te Ataarangikaahu. Moe mai, e Rangi. A, ki tana tama, Kingi Tuheitia, me te kahui ariki kei waenganui i a tatou, kei te mihi. Kia a koe Linda, nau te whakamoemiti ki te rungarawa. Tena koe. E te tumuaki, Vice Chancellor, nga mihi o te ata ki a koe. Mauri ora kia tatou katoa.

When I received the invitation to attend this WILD event, I was both intrigued by the possibilities that such a day might bring, and challenged by the topic that organisers wanted me to speak to. Imagining a small informal and conversational gathering of women, I accepted the invitation. Time passed and I duly received a request for a biographical statement and title of my talk. The event was promoted and in the promotional material, what stood out between circling ruby red panic lights was the venue, PWC. The largest lecture theatre on campus. This was not going to be a talk over a cosy cup of tea. So, what do academics do when they're stressed and feeling a bit rattled? We prepare papers. So this paper responds to an invitation to speak about leadership (personally and/or professionally)". I chose the "personally" option, sort of. I begin today by briefly introducing my father, and then more fully, my mother, and then present a small snippet about myself before making some concluding remarks about leadership. In the short time that we have, I will try to emphasize three leadership ideas that have emerged for me as touch-stones in my work as an academic, researcher, whanau and community member. Without going into definitions or descriptions, I want you to 'take home' the notions of connectedness, positionality and engagement.

## Personal

### Father (Mataamua, Tuakana)

My father, Tamaro Raymond Nikora (born 1932), is the eldest in his family, his father was the eldest in his, and his father the eldest in his. He has six siblings and numerous whangai or foster siblings who came to live with them from time to time. As the first born, he took seriously his responsibility to care for and protect his siblings and parents, something indoctrinated into him from a young age as he lived and grew up in his home environments of Ruatoki and Waiohau, of Tuhoe and Te Urewera. Look after your sister. Your brother is younger than you. Help your mother. Go with your father. Take care of those kids. Sort them out. He also had others to whom he had responsibilities - his cousins, many aunts and uncles, and relatives removed. When one is raised in a small rural Maori community, everyone is related, everyone carries a burden of care and protection. As he grew up and came to have opportunities, the messages and responsibilities changed. Listen and learn. Set an example. Make us proud. Help us out. Find an answer. Solve this problem. And as he developed a track record and competence in learning, problem solving and making a contribution to the life of the community, he was called to other responsibilities. Go to that meeting. Find out what those people think. Represent us here. Show our face there. It was in this way that he was socialised into the traditional mataamua and tuakana leadership roles within his whanau, hapu and iwi. Family leadership roles are not easy to occupy or fulfil mainly due to the teina and potiki (or younger siblings) having the responsibilities to challenge, critique and ensure the accountability as well as the success of mataamua and tuakana. Teina and potiki roles are often cast as supportive junior positions that require mentoring and the benefit of experience, and thus other expectations may fade into the background. The narratives of

Maui-tikitiki-a-Taranga, Maui of the top knot of Taranga, also known as Maui-Potiki, the last born of Taranga, illustrate the mischief and havoc and change that younger siblings can visit upon their older ones. While there is an emphasis on inherited and age related leadership in the Maori world, there is also considerable opportunity to challenge and to dispose of poor leadership. My father gained a Diploma in Town Planning and began a career as a surveyor with the Department of Lands and Survey, an occupation that prepared him well for a later role as a Maori Lands Trustee. He then went on to serve as the primary researcher and authority on Te Urewera lands and history for the Tuhoe Raupatu case heard before the Waitangi Tribunal. He continues to be an active presence in this arena.

### **Mother – Potiki, Teina**

Turning to my mother, Makere Bidy Rangiua. She was the third youngest child in a family of seven siblings. Her two younger brothers died before achieving adulthood, and an older brother died in his early twenties affirming the belief that male lives within our family are brief. This aside, she grew up as the youngest, the potiki in her family and progressively watched her siblings leave the seaside settlement of Uawa / Tolaga Bay to pursue work, excitement and love in the urban environment. With her siblings far away, she was raised with the full attention of her parents ever conscious of the untimely and unwanted earlier intrusions of death upon their family. Her father was an influential presence in her life and she was the ‘apple of his eye’, passing on values of kinship, humility, perseverance, achievement, and aroha ki te whenua. Relationships beyond their small household became important for social connectedness, belongingness, resource sharing, recreation and wellbeing. Those satisfactions found amongst siblings were

sought after amongst cousins, neighbours, church, marae and broader kinship communities. While she enjoyed a broad range of relationships, her parents and other kin relatives 'held her close'. At home, books were an ordinary part of daily life and Makere enjoyed access to her father's library and manuscripts which included the inimitable "Lore of the Whare Wananga" scribed by her paternal great grandfather, bound volumes "Te Wananga" and Transactions of the NZ Institute, and the Journal of the Polynesian Society. The shelves included works by Ngata, Buck, Pomare, Carroll, Hamilton, Cowan and Best, as well as selected fiction. She also enjoyed a similar richness of literature in the Gisborne library of her maternal kuia, Heni Materoa Carroll. It was from this foundation that Makere developed a love for learning, reading and story telling, which lead to a career in teaching with a special talent for new entrants. This area of expertise was recognised when she was asked to establish the Pukeroa Oruawhata Kohanga Reo in Rotorua in the early 1980's. Her tribal knowledge, story telling abilities and whakapapa expertise was taken to another level when she was called on to assist her iwi to complete the narrative of the beautifully carved house Ruakapanga, a narrative that had remained uncertain since its opening in 1943. She rectified that anomaly in 2004, 25 years after she was tasked to do so. In March 2013 she passed, and a few weeks later, her beloved nephew the Hon Parekura Horomia also passed. They lay in state at Ruakapanga, a house they both loved. Now well into his 80's, her husband Tama remains as an "email terrorist" passionately engaged in politics, critical and challenging of contemporary leaders irrespective of iwi, of ethnicity, of location, of status. No one is safe! Least of all me!

## Whakapapa

### The second born

Now that I've introduced my parents, I turn to share a little about me. I am the second born. Everything after that is 'seconds' – second hand clothes, second hand bikes, second hand toys, second hand schools, but thankfully, NOT second hand uniforms. My elder sibling is my brother, I became number two to remember, number two to make parenting mistakes with, number two in the line up of kids, number two for the allocation of duties and delegation of responsibilities, number two in the chain of command. I've become so familiar with the number two, that whenever elderly family members are pushed to remember who I am, I simply say, I'm number two. Of course, when siblings three and four came along, my brother's responsibilities became greater and followed a similar route to that of my father. But so too did my responsibilities increase, especially in regard to the care of my younger siblings. Initially I thought that being number two only had meaning and responsibility within our small urban familial household. In this regard, I was so very, very wrong. My understanding was explosively expanded one day when the female cousins in my paternal family gathered to learn and practice karanga, the first call performed by women to herald the beginning of traditional rituals of encounter that usually take place within marae settings. There we were, cast in the role of manuhiri, of visitors ready to pretend an imagined and fun enactment, when my cousins, much senior to me in age, grouped up behind me to lead us on to the marae. The game had suddenly changed and all pretence evaporated. They were playing for real and very sure about their positionality with respect to my whakapapa seniority. They were clear in their unspoken expectations that I would perform! And of course one does what one has to do

– ahakoa te wiriwiri, te mataku, despite my trembling and my fear – I believe I managed to squawk out something half reasonable but the more important point here was the fact of engagement, with the role and with the women of my whanau. Being number two did not obliterate the fact of being number one daughter, and the responsibilities shared between and amongst women in a gendered Maori world.

### **My elder brother**

In 2011 my elder brother died, suddenly. He was 50, of an age when leadership training begins to mature and engagement obligations in hapu and iwi affairs become more frequent. Now he was gone, leaving one big gaping hole, one that I was to find myself in free falling in. Heads and eyes began to turn my way. I found myself in unfamiliar social situations and conversations. I was called to decision-make in different circles of relatedness and to offer opinions and advice. I was expected to engage with others in a new way – not as a number two or as a number one, but as both, bringing the spirit and wisdom of my brother into encounters and engagements in lived and meaningful ways. I was being asked to be myself, and him, in the same moment. I experienced this again on my mothers passing, which was more in the natural order of things and therefore easier to find my place and to know what to do.

### **Leadership in motion**

A few final statements about ‘leadership in motion’. I titled this paper in this way to draw attention to leadership as a fluid, relational and reflexive dynamic. It is also a cultural dynamic as I have sketched out through my earlier reflections in this paper. Within the academy, leadership training, until recently, never occurred explicitly. It followed a listen

and learn formula. One listened to Professors and senior academics. One observed the nature of their engagements and hoped to benefit from their connectedness. Through a common discipline or work place purpose one aspired to engage meaningfully, respectfully and more importantly, intelligently. As noted earlier, this pattern also occurs in the Maori world. The notion of academic leadership lies within the culture of the academy and occurs in ways very similar to how people are enculturated into Maori World leadership roles. It is something that is symbolised in the colours and construction of our academic regalia, the ultimate headware and robes reserved to the offices of the Chancellor, Vice Chancellor, and so on. Doing leadership is what academics are enculturated to do but in this equation, men are certainly more privileged than others. We continue to live and work in an academy top heavy with male academics and academic leaders who by natural affinity and assumed entitlement, overtly and covertly perpetuate the advancement of their own careers and discriminate against others unlike them. This Women in Leadership Day contributes to reversing this situation and more importantly seeks to 'flick the switch' on your leadership capacity, one that is already there, to be set in motion.

Pai marie.