



Holistic Practices is an Interdisciplinary and reflexive way of practicing a profession

A Summary of the First Year of Holistic Practices Beyond Borders Incorporated

From June 2009 to June 2010, we, the members of, Holistic Practices Beyond Borders, moved from perplexity to precision. We moved from a felt sense of faith in pursuing time and talking together without knowing where it would lead to, and we have surprised ourselves with the outcomes of our first year. Some of us had to travel for more than three hours to attend our monthly gatherings in order to pursue our common goal of ensuring that holistic practices are essential elements of professional practices: for the well-being of professional persons and their clients and for the development of a more caring and ethical society.

Our delivery for 2009-2010 resulted from an initial Planning Day, using the Appreciative Inquiry Framework:

- We gained purpose and direction with our *first, inspirational guest speaker, Pauline Tessler*, author and co-founder of Collaborative Law on the West Coast of the USA.
- *We co-hosted a well-attended seminar* for professional mediators with ADRA (Australian Dispute Resolution Association). **Larissa Behrendt**, author, public speaker, academic spoke profoundly about Aboriginal Dispute Resolution.
- We had as a *guest speaker Wendy Wood*, a mediator member of Mediators Beyond Borders (based in the USA), who shared stories of mediation work with survivors of Cyclone Katrina in New Orleans.
- **Stella Cornelius** is Australia's conflict resolution icon. Stella founded the Conflict Resolution Network and introduced to Australia the language and identity of conflict resolution as well as skill development, and academic validity. *We were honoured by an invitation to share a meal at her home and to listen to her inspiring stories of peacemaking* for more than 30 years, the ups and downs of her own experiences in conflict resolution, and her "secret" of perseverance, never giving up.
- *We had a Training Day* on Holistic Practices led by **Carmen Hetaraka**, Active Bearer from Aotearoa NZ, and supported by Michelle Brenner. This Training

Day focused our hearts, minds, bodies and spirits through the practical insights and wisdom of Hawaiian traditional conflict resolution.

- We held a **Public Forum**, hosted by the Centre for Peace & Conflict Studies at Sydney University, on Hawaiian Traditional Conflict Resolution. Carmen Hetaraka was interviewed by Michelle Brenner and, after questions, Sonia Anderson provided a reflection.

Comments on Holistic Practices by Participants at the Hawaiian Traditional Conflict Resolution Training Day

David Maguire: Our symbols are important if we see them in the right context. From my research, symbol comes from a Latin word "*symbolum*" (Greek "*symballein*") which means to come together or to throw together: a "*symbolum*" is something that points to its complementary other half and thus creates mutual recognition and unity. It is the expression and means of unity. The etymology of the word is of ancient usage: two corresponding halves of a ring, a staff or of a tablet were used as tokens of identity for guests, messengers or partners to a treaty. Possession of the corresponding piece entitled the holder to receive a thing or to receive hospitality. My point is: How do we take a symbol and use it? Our symbols are important if we see them in the right context. (Symbols are not just signs.)

Sonia Anderson: Thank you for the huge swim in a very deep ocean. So much context and symbolism! I am very grateful and excited. During many trainings in mediation over the past 8 years I have not heard many of the words I have heard today. Words like forgiveness, spiritual, love. My new year's resolution is to make sure that when I say something I say something that means something and, inevitably what that means, is that I end up saying something that means something to me. So I can only say how I have interpreted the rich tapestry of ideas and cultural wisdom Carmen has shared with us today. Thank you Carmen from the bottom of my heart!

Marilyn Scott: Thank you for what you've done today! The most complicated, multilayered presentation! It demonstrated the disjunct in our modern life and an alert to nuclear families.

Paul Duffill: This picked up loose threads and whispers from my childhood as a *pakeha* and brought together dissenting ideas in a way that I can see them now clearly.

Fayez Nour: You touched my soul, the power of connection I am grateful to have it (holistic practices) unfolded in this way, the Maori/Hawaiian culture. I am overwhelmed by Carmen's presentation as he put it to us. The alignment makes it so simple, how you put it. Values and powerful ways of action!

A Reflection by Sonia Anderson at the conclusion of the Forum on Hawaiian Traditional Conflict Resolution at Sydney University

What a privilege to have Carmen share this wisdom with us! Now for my interpretation or as Carmen might say, my attempt at pinning the tail on the donkey.

Many of our western courses have drawn an analogy by comparing a person's mind with an iceberg. Our conscious mind being the tip of the iceberg that rises above the surface of the ocean, and our subconscious mind being the vast storage warehouse of memories beneath the ocean!

None of us know what is in our subconscious mind for if we knew what was in our subconscious mind it would no longer be in our subconscious it would have risen to be in our conscious mind. Our disciplines of psychology and psychiatry attempt to provide some insight into the subconscious mind. For many mediators, however, the subconscious mind remains a mystery and, at best, all we can hope to achieve is to uncover the various personal values and interests which drive the conscious behaviour of the parties we are mediating. In large part, the interests and personal values we manage to uncover will be those values and interests our participants are aware of in their conscious minds. Thus much of our work remains above the surface.

In taking Carmen's wisdom, we find that as we go deeper into the iceberg we discover an open ended bottom which dissolves into the greater ocean which is then dissolved into the atmosphere as the sunlight hits the ocean and evaporation takes place. Here there are no boundaries, no limits....only possibility. For some this is our spiritual self, others may call this our "superconscious". Quantum physics calls it the quantum field where ultimate reality is conceived of as an unlimited sea of potential. If we can get in touch with this aspect of reality where we connect with the all of everything, the subconscious mind can be bypassed, short circuited, leaving less to be known and more to be possible.

What I hear Carmen saying is that *ho'oponopono* is a process which follows these steps:

1. There is an ownership of the presenting problem i.e. I can accept that I have wronged you or I accept responsibility for my part in us being where we're at.
2. I am sorry and in my sorrow my heart breaks with sadness.
3. My broken heart allows for something which is akin to "dispersing the wrong doing, the guilt of my conscience".
4. The cracks in my heart allow for the sunshine to touch me and inspiration from the ultimate sea of possibility steps in to provide both forgiveness and a way forward.

For us, as we go about our daily mediations I feel the take home message is to feed our own spirits so that we are able to allow an opening in our process for the light to shine through and to assist conflicted people to feel safe, safe enough, firstly, to assume responsibility and, secondly, to allow their hearts to break.

For it is only then that the light will shine through to offer the inspiration we need to give us the next step forward. Finally, we can be grateful for all of the unlimited inspiration we have received and which continues to be available to us as we practise feeding our own spirit and allowing this inspiration to be.