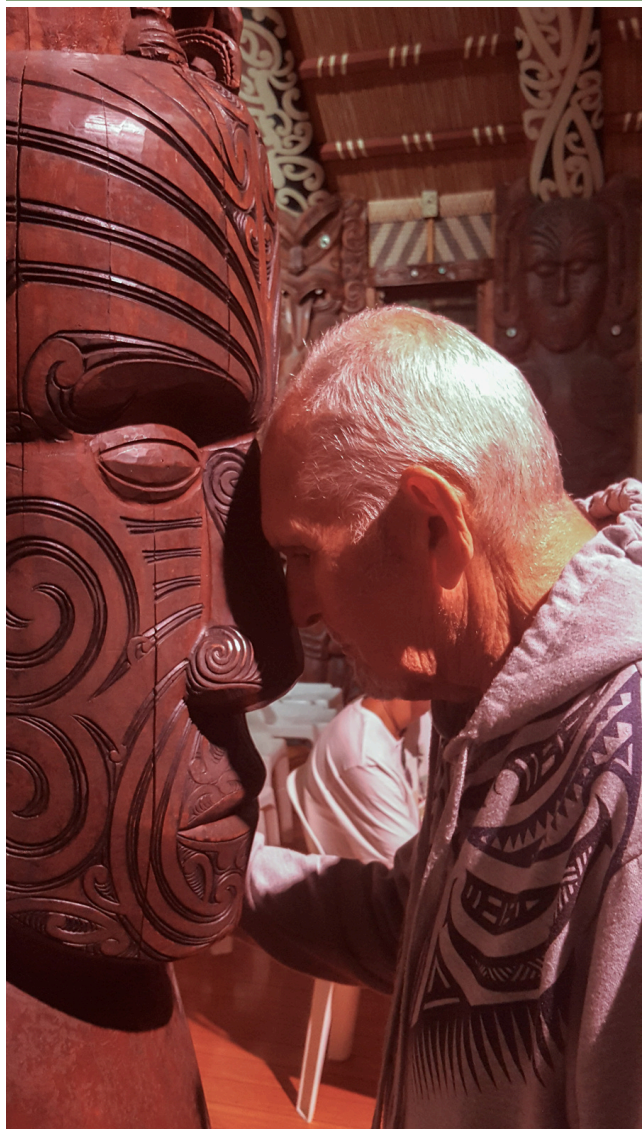


About Rongoā Māori



Disease has a definite pattern to it that is born of our growing dis-ease or disconnection from nature.

It is by learning the language of the land that we access the code to our own well-being.

We are well when we remember how to restore balance by caring for the land that sustains us, reconnecting to our respective cultures and our respective ways of knowing, doing and being.

We are all the living faces of our ancestors.

Maramataka, understanding evolving nature-based cycles can help us re-establish our local and global relationships with our ecosystems; the systems that sustain life on the planet, including our own. Until we truly acknowledge the importance of our brothers and sisters in the natural world with whom we share this planet and our place within the web of life in the Universe we remain a danger to ourselves and the planet's ability to sustain our species.

Mātauranga Māori is the knowledge of the land from the people who belong to the land. It is the result of their interaction with the whenua over many generations. It is the knowledge they have accumulated by living on the land, working with the land, harvesting from the land, all the time listening, watching, caring, to ensure that they can continue to survive (Rob McGowan).

Rongoā Māori and other indigenous healing practices are key to mitigating the effects of climate change, our changing health challenges and enhancing our ability to survive.

No Māori ever migrated to Aotearoa. We were different Pacific Island peoples looking to escape warring factions and food scarcity. Not too dissimilar to the growing number of modern day refugees from war torn territories..

When we arrived here, we had to name every plant, river, wind, mountain, bird etc. Our language was born of this land and we became Māori. Without THIS land, being Māori makes no sense. When we arrived, we were like kids in a lolly shop and overlooked the lessons of our ancestors. There was so much abundance, we ate Moa to extinction, we burnt off large tracts of forest to grow our crops and trade with wealthier nations. With this destruction of natural habitat life started to become hard again and tribal wars ensued. We learnt fairly quickly that if we did not return to caring for the land, we would find ourselves in the same situation we had left behind in our homelands.

Consequently, Māori were reminded of the compelling need and our innate responsibility to care for the natural world, for all who sustain us within the realms of Paptūānuku and Ranginui, our ancestral parents. Unless we care for them they will not be well enough to care for us or our ensuing generations.

There are two realms that make up the world, Kauae runga / kauae raro – the seen and the unseen, the constant and that which is always moving. One cannot exist without the other. They are two sides of the same coin. The kāhu needs both wings to soar gracefully upon the wind.

Wellness is derived from balance. To achieve this the connections between all things, life and death, the physical and spiritual realms must be strengthened. Just like the different muscle groups required to maintain balance on a wobble board. Balance is not a constant in an everchanging world so it is the art of constantly recalibrating our muscle groups /connections in response to the world around us.

Mauri is the name we give to the invisible threads that connect us to each other and to the world in which we exist. The mycelium of life if you like.

There is no separation between humankind and the earth. We are all part of the circle of energetic connections (mauri) that flows from the heavens to the oceans and the land, through the plants, through the animals, through the rocks, through the wind and then through to humankind and back to the land and the heavens. We are all connected as part of a much larger co-dependant ecosystem. The biosphere. Caring for the mauri is caring for ourselves.

Nothing and nobody exists in isolation therefore nothing can heal in isolation.

Rongoā Māori is not mirimiri (bodywork) or panipani (lotions and potions). These things, and others, are merely the tools of our trade. A hammer is not a house. The architect and the builder pull everything needed together to make a house, in a synergistic way that provides, shelter, warmth and hopefully a sense of home for those that will reside within. A rongoā practitioner is much the same, a weaver of mauri connecting the essentials of life in order to help grow wellbeing.

We do this by rebuilding a living connection to the land, to help people walk the land, reclaim our connections to the natural world and as teina help her heal and in doing so heal ourselves.

Death is not to be avoided, it is part of what it means to be alive. Life itself is a terminal condition.

Rongoā Māori has many faces. It helps us understand the way of the world, a gift handed down from our tūpuna. It is not a vocation that we turn on 9-5 each day, if we think it is, we are in the wrong job. It is a privilege to carry the mātauranga of rongoā and share it with those who will one day need it and to help empower others to find the balance they seek at different stages of their life.

When we learn the language of the land we restore our connections to the natural world. When we understand the gifts of the plants, the birds, oceans, and the water to each other. We learn how to heal on both a physical and a spiritual level.

