

To the readers of *What It Is To Be Human*. After 17 years still available in five languages as *Original Wisdom*, etc.

Many people, over the years, have told me how much they like “the book.” I am flattered and thankful. Thinking back on the times when I wrote the stories and compiled them in a book, and then thinking of the comments I have had, I have a sense that I don’t always know what it is these nice people read in that book.

Occasionally I have asked questions like, What do you feel is the most important story in the book? Very few had an answer, but nobody guessed what I think is the most important story: the man who invented and made a machine that everybody knew was a great improvement over the way they pounded rice. They were proud of the man who, with the most primitive of models, designed and made such a wonderful structure — but they rejected his machine to continue their old ways. To western minds that is unthinkable. To me it is wisdom.

A few people have asked me whether I *really* believe that I should not have forced the woman to go to hospital to have surgery; she survived. Not at first of course. But now, Yes, I was wrong to force my western values with western force on a people who had a live, wise, sustainable culture.

Sometimes I think that people like “the book” because somehow it makes them feel good. We all need to feel good. Feel-good books sell. It was never my intention to write a feel-good book, nor a how-to book — the publisher tried to give it a how-to title. I fought against that. My intention was, and still is, to share with you that we, humans, have turned a corner, we are on the wrong path. My stories were meant to bring back how we used to be not all that long ago. I firmly believe—I know, I am very certain—that originally we, as all Life on this planet, knew ourselves intimately related to, part of this world. We lived sustainable lives more peaceful than almost all our lives have become. Many readers have read that as a “nice” reminder, nostalgic, but “of course we cannot go back.”

Why cannot we go back to who we really are? It is in our DNA. Now we ignore our nature and live an illusion. The illusion that we, humans, are something special, that we are not related to nature. That we are above and apart. That we own this planet and so can do with it what we damn well please.

I have written other books. Two others published in paper and as eBooks. They are rated four and five stars on amazon by the few people who have read them. But they don’t sell because they don’t make you feel good. They make you think; we don’t want to have to think about what is important: our survival as a species; Life on earth.

Long ago I wrote a story, Manuía, the first chapter in the book *Ha’ina Mai Ka Puana; Let The Story Be Told* (free, on my web site). A simple story of a visit to a tiny island where I was guided by a man who introduced me to people who had healing skills. Two women who helped with births; and sometimes deaths, they whispered. A man who knew how to set a bone to heal straight. A woman who knew herbs that cleared wounds. When I left late afternoon my guide came wading through the water to see me off. I was already in the canoe that would take me to the motor boat that would bring us back to “civilization” on the main island. He gave me a mat, tradition in Samoa, apologizing that it was not new, but the only one he had. He said **YOU FIRST PALANGI** (white person) **TELL SOMETHING WE HAVE IS WORTH**. Every time I think of that I get tears in my eyes. I am so utterly ashamed of my fellow white-skins.

We, westerners, mostly white people, who have created the most powerful and destructive way of life ever developed, seem to think that the murders we committed have faded in the memories of widows and destroyed children. We pretend we

do not know that the rage against our righteous eradication of humans and cultures in the name of whoever king, queen, religion, still burns deep in the heart of the oppressed. Whenever that rage raises its head we slam that person in one of our prisons. We call it a crime.

We have perfected ways to make enemies. Terrorists we call them now.

I write because I seem to be the only one who really knows, I have experienced, I have heard with my own ears that

“The West won the world not by the superiority of its ideas or values or religion but rather by its superiority in applying organized violence.

Westerners often forget this fact, non-Westerners never do.”

Samuel P. Huntington

A wise Hawaiian woman, Holly Near, said

“Why do we kill people who kill people to show that killing people is wrong?”

Another wise Hawaiian woman, Nana Veary, said

“The only problem facing you in life is your belief in separation from the Source. Solve that one, and all other problems will vanish.”

Mother Teresa, now Saint Teresa, said

“If we have no peace it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other.”

How can we continue to believe that some of us are better than others. How can we believe that we know better than Mother Earth.

Many, many people have said the same thing in similar words.

But it seems we read what confirms our own beliefs.

People often write me that I am too “negative.” They want to read hope. *There are wonderful people who do wonderful things*, they tell me. Of course, I know that. But the wonderful people and the wonderful things they do have not stopped the wars that we take for granted if not approve. The good people have not given us real health services, nor enough good food to raise healthy children.

I too like stories about wonderful people doing wonderful things. But somebody has to remind us that our planet is in dire straits and that it is we who done it. I know that it is much too late to DO much about global warming, climate change. Our politicians have other priorities.

Now it is up to us, We the People, to think how to be ready to ADAPT to a changed planet.

Nobody wants to hear that either. My friends who tell me to be more positive say they need hope, and hope to them seems to mean miraculously everything back to how it was ten years ago, or whenever. The same people told me we cannot go back.

I imagined we could go back much further than ten or twenty years. Back to who we were and still are, deep I inside. I hoped that we could recover that sense of belonging rather than owning. I imagined that, if reminded, we could find again that spark of community, love, rather than competition and greed. I thought WE was more important than I.

I truly cannot understand that we are blind and deaf to the horrors we are doing and have been doing all over the world. Why do we always support with weapons and money the worst dictators? They sit on oil, or some other commodity we

want. For that matter why do we allow our leaders to bail out the banks—now doing very well indeed, thank you—not leaving enough money to bail out the many millions of unemployed people who have no health insurance, lose their homes, are on food stamps or don't eat. And that we call democracy?

We think ourselves the model democracy, and at the same time also the richest and most powerful country of the world. We are not now, and perhaps never have been the richest. But if powerful means killing machines, yes, we probably have more than all other countries combined. Killing machines, manned or unmanned, do not feed nor heal. They are meant to destroy and they do that so well today that we can probably kill all Life on this planet.

Is that something to be proud of? To me that is shameful beyond all shame.

I'm not even mentioning the unbelievable politics that are happening right now in our Capital. A minority of politicians were bought to attack and destroy this country's and perhaps the world's balance. To me, such virulently, utterly unreasonable actions are a sickness; a dangerous insanity. Imagine 0.023% of all humans apparently in a position to destroy the planet, our only home.

We live in a broken world on a badly hurt planet. *What hope there is can only be for a saner future.* Going back to yesterday is not only impossible it is doing the same lethally stupid things all over again. Once I thought—foolishly perhaps—that reminding us of who we really are might help us find ways to reinstall that essential core of who we are. We can't go back to an imagined past. But why not to who we really are?

Who we really are is what I write about: cultures, the way people knew how to live peacefully and sustainably and above all joyfully. Do we know joy any more?

There have been times when people called me a gentle man. I have never been a gentleman, and I am not gentle. I'm a rebel. In this life time I have been fired and rejected many times for doing what my owners did not want said or done. I have never been afraid of what is natural, as many of us seem to be. Now I fear my fellow humans, what they have become. I never thought of myself as important, or that only I have the truth. My most inner need has always been to serve and I have been given the gift to know need. Now I am so old that I cannot serve where I see need any more. The need I feel all around is so enormous that it is beyond what little service I can still give. That hurts more than I can express.

My hope is for a future. It seems the only way we will wake up from a bad dream is after the inevitable total collapse of civilization and the planetary ecology. Only then, remnants of humans, who showed so much promise, may evolve new kinds of human around the core that still is deep inside us.

I wish you strength to cope with tomorrow.

robert wolff, mid july 2011

PS, wish you could see the poinsettia that grows on the edge of my cesspool. Poinsettia grows here, but it blooms on the other, the dry side of this island. Now this plant here is entirely covered with flowers. Another sign of how our weather has changed. it will change more and become more dangerous. Mother Earth is.