

# Actioning the capacity of aroha through evaluative leadership

Louise Were

## Conference and Other Presentations

*Mā Te Rae—Māori Evaluation Association Kai and Kōrero Session*

*Kia Whakatōmuri, Te Haere Whakamua: Looking back to move forward*

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*Online, 11–13 October 2022*

Tēnā koutou katoa.

Ko wai au?

He mokopuna ahau.

Nō Rongowhakaata, me Ngāti Tūwharetoa, me Scotland hoki

Ko wai au?  
He māmā ahau.  
Kō Bryshar, rātou ko Peta, ko Brandyn ōku tamariki.

Ko wai au?  
He hoa rangatira ahau.  
Kō Brant Were tāku hoa rangatira.

Ko wai au?  
He hoa haere ahau.

Ko wai au?  
He Kai  
Aro  
Mata  
Wai  
ahau.

Kia ora koutou katoa. Today we are exploring how we might activate the capacity of aroha through evaluative leadership.

To begin, how do we even come to evaluation? For some, we seek to understand what works best for our communities. I'm sure all of us have different ways of coming to the space through different experiences and different learnings. For me, my journey into evaluation started from a lived reality as whānau and experiences of what happens when decisions are made about people without them. While our daughter was deemed “non-verbal”, she still wanted to be heard, just like many rangatahi (Fleming et al., 2021). As whānau, we were in a perpetual state of building awareness, advocating and demonstrating what good looked like both for our daughter and for us collectively. Ultimately, in the early 1990s we saw the revolving rhetoric of collective responses and whānau-centred decision making, but the reality was that individual families and whānau were having to grind away

at systems while striving to sustain their oranga. Realising the power afforded by services and systems to data, analytics, and research, I picked up the tools of evaluation research to make a contribution to enabling whānau decision making.

Appreciating that while we are all evaluative, not everyone wants to be an evaluator, I have spent the last ten years explicitly developing and honing our craft of evaluation. For me, this has been a positive way to challenge myself about what it means to be an evaluator while remaining conscious of the other, multiple roles and responsibilities I have. It has enabled me to explore and journey with other evaluators who also seek to calibrate, know, and activate themselves as a “responsive instrument” (Symonette, 2004, 2015), in the same way that I come to evaluation as mokopuna, as māmā, as wahine Māori, as hoa haere.

As mokopuna, I am mindful of the interconnectedness we have with place, people, and kaupapa, and this is expressed through my practice by being present, listening for meaning, recognising these ties, and responding with manaaki. As wahine Māori, particularly as Māmā, I seek to infuse my practice with an abundant generosity, that which we experience with and hear through the whakaaro shared with us by whānau. As hoa haere, I am mindful of being of service, that I am there to make a contribution, koha atu, koha mai, recognising the koha I receive through the time, energy, and whakaaro shared with me.

These experiences propelled me towards a space where I could explore my intersectionality within the context of my evaluative practice, in the hope it may provide insight into how our evaluation community of practice can demonstrate their leadership. My master’s study emerged as an exploration of trying to understand the relationship between the theory of evaluation and the value and the practice of evaluation, acknowledging that at the heart of our practice is us,

the mobilisers of evaluation. Over time, I have been fascinated about how we move from a technical instrumental pursuit of evaluation to evaluative practices that are deeply kaupapa, and values driven, and deeply reflective of, and responsive to the people that we are working with and for. Over three years, I focused on the intersections, looking at the spaces in between, the interstitial spaces, as Cram & Phillips reminded us (2012).

Wayfinding<sup>1</sup> through my programme of study began with a set of scaffolded themes. Each provided a platform from which to expand and intensify our understanding of issues of consequence in evaluation. As you accompany me through this presentation, another way-point in our evaluation journeys, I invite you to pause with me, and notice what resonates as we explore :

1. values and how they are manifest (or not) in the actions we take as evaluators
2. from inclusive evaluation approaches to evaluative leadership
3. a continuum of evaluative leadership.

We will continue to wayfind by asking how we can action the capacity of aroha for change through evaluative leadership, and learn from those who are lighting the way. We will then arrive at a way-point where you can determine where you will action or transform what we have come to know together.

### ***Values and how they are manifest (or not) in the actions we take as evaluators***

While many of us have come to know that values are at the heart of evaluation, what does that truly mean for us? How can values be manifested more deeply in our actions? I have come to understand the implications of values for evaluation practice as a continuum of calls for action. That said, I recognise that calls to action do not emerge

devoid of the context of the tenets and tensions of evaluation practice, particularly those related to objectivity and how advocacy can be a mechanism for the redistribution of power. For example, from 1990, Yvonna Lincoln, as the American Evaluation Association (AEA) president, raised her concerns for the evaluation profession, and how these may be addressed. This included evaluation moving less towards being an *instrumental scientific* pursuit, and more towards *artistic conventions of a science of action* (1991, p.1). Specifically, this included:

- cultivating appreciation and systemic listening, to “drop a part of the pretense we have maintained about our value-freedom and our presumed neutrality” (p. 5)
- negotiating worlds, and if we don’t possess what is needed to negotiate space and place, then we need to look to those who do (p. 6)
- “speak truth to power and to make the truth grounded in lived experience and in multiple voices” (1991, p. 5–6)

Inspired by Lincoln and others, I wanted to explore where values and evaluative practices might continue to amplify our leadership. For me, this was about unravelling the notion of advocacy and activism in evaluation, noting Jennifer Greene shone a light on the tension that advocacy “invokes shudders and distaste and horror” (1997, p. 26) among the then evaluation community. That said, this is still an emerging space, with my exploration by no means complete. It has also been quite a tenuous process to get to this point—explicitly wayfinding within a framed academic space of a Master’s programme, as I didn’t know where I was going at many points of my journey. Happily, I didn’t have to go too far to find Indigenous ways of knowing and being that supported my journey, giving me comfort, confidence, and guidance through my struggles. I especially found comfort when I leaned into wayfinding leadership as brought forward by Spiller et al. (2015). This enabled me to be guided by

our Indigenous traditions of navigation in contemporary contexts; respecting that we explore intentionally, in dynamic ways, looking for tohu or “signifiers that we are on track”, and that “the role of leaders is to enjoin people to a shared sense of becoming” (2015, p. 41).

It is also important at this waypoint that I acknowledge Taina Pohatu and his work—Te Takepū Āta, a set of twelve phrases that “gently reminds people how to behave when engaging in relationships with people, kaupapa, and environments towards wellbeing” (Pohatu, 2013, p.15). Pohatu utilises language that seeks to amplify our consciousness of how we are required to ‘be’ when on a journey through te takepū āta. Like a soft breeze he “gently reminds” us to “create and hold space”, to “engage in relationships”, then intensify perceptions by “demanding effort and energy ... by conveying notions of respectfulness and reciprocity”, underpinned by “the prerequisite of critical analysis and discipline” (p.15).

The reclamation and re-remembering—of knowing and of being Māori—created for me a sense of clarity, purpose, and peace. However, the challenge remained to explore more deeply the interconnections between the twelve phrases of Te Takepū Āta. In particular, tensions had emerged from the way I approached the intersection between kaupapa Māori and evaluation and then engaged with the global evaluation literature. These tensions created a state of what Tomlins-Janke (2011) has described as “conceptual confusion”. This is what, some of us—myself included—perpetually experience when we respectfully and authentically need to make sense of things in contexts where there are multiple knowledge systems, paradigms, approaches, and ways of being at play. While this is potentially fraught with frustrations and difficulties, it was Āta that demanded my effort and energy and enabled me to move with respect and integrity through many times of uncertainty, and to trust that I would reach a point of clarity. For example, ways of being that are foundational to me as mokopuna

were encapsulated by the phrase *Āta-noho*; “to give quality time to be with people and their issues, with an open and respectful mind, heart and soul” (Pohatu, 2013, p.15)

As I recognised earlier, this journey has been strongly grounded in my curiosity in activism, leadership, and evaluation. Interestingly, but probably not unsurprisingly due to the ongoing debate about the centrality of advocacy within evaluation practice, evaluation literature is almost silent on leadership in evaluation. Lam (2015) noted that there is very little explicit recognition of leadership across many of the evaluation theorists. This “gap” about where leadership is actioned and made visible within evaluation theory and practice was an additional impetus for its exploration on my own journey. I therefore set off, within my Master’s thesis, to dive into the hearts and minds of those that have travelled throughout our communities of evaluation practice.

### ***From inclusive evaluation approaches to evaluative leadership***

Returning to our lived experience as whānau, and the realisation of whānau self-determination, our girl and our whānau led out processes, articulating our needs and aspirations. Although helpful, it was the extent to which contributors—practitioners, educators, supporters—would support, collaborate, and advocate for the things we needed and valued as fiercely as we did. This scenario led me to look and think deeply about how we as a community of evaluation practice move from articulating to actioning our support to address issues of inequity and social injustice. One example from our community came from Ryan et al. (1998) who presented their values and ideas about inclusive evaluation approaches and engaging fellow evaluation practitioners in the issues and challenges of collaborative practices. Three core practices articulated by Ryan et al. (1998) shone brightly, as tohu:

1. Clarity in purpose as an evaluator, and in the position of advocacy in your practice
2. See advocacy as a value commitment
3. Evaluators as critical change agents.

### **Clarity in purpose as an evaluator, and the position of advocacy in your practice**

Mathieson (Ryan et al., 1998) aptly points out that:

Evaluators tend to work on evaluations of programs/projects about which they have some substantive knowledge. They do so because they are interested in or value something about that area ... [and] as such, evaluators value doing good in a particular area (p.109).

This value position runs at the heart of kaupapa Māori and Indigenous evaluation, and for those that seek to recalibrate the impacts of colonialism and marginalisation, through empowerment, and transformative emancipatory evaluative practices. For me, I draw on my lived experience as mokopuna, wāhine Māori, and as whānau explicitly to determine if I can be of service to people, place, and kaupapa and, most of all, add value. My lived experience has served as a point of connection, while never taken for granted, can become the unique point of difference commissioners of evaluation see value in.

However, while having an understanding of, an interest in, or lived experience may be sought after, there is still a dissonance with this practice, particularly evident in the discourse surrounding the tension between advocacy and objectivity, as raised earlier. That is, you cannot be critical and objective if you in fact have a shared interest in the program, service, or policy. However, it could in fact be argued, that due to limited understanding and/or desire to unpack what advocacy is and what it is not, and how it intersects with the notions of neutrality, objectivity, and credibility, is clouding the discussion of power, values, and whose voices need to be heard to demonstrate value, merit, and worth.



### ***See advocacy as a value commitment***

House and Howe (1998) stated categorically that it's not advocacy to include groups in an evaluation who have, through documented history, been excluded despite being the recipients of the services being evaluated. Rather it is "balancing out the values and interests of the study" (p. 236). Kusters et al. (2011) also extends this dialogue by advocating for stakeholders to also declare their stakes openly. Therefore, taking time to understand what values are at stake, and for whom, and if in fact the intention or common interest is shared is critical. The influence of power and other agendas, and the impact of power sharing, should not be overlooked as they need to be vigorously tested in relation to determining the extent to which interests and intentions are shared. Greene (Ryan et al., 1998) advocates for evaluators "to get in close to the program and become actively engaged in, not distanced from, program concerns and controversies and the varied stakeholder interests involved" (p.109), but not to misinterpret or confuse closeness as program partiality. Exploring the realities of cultural safety, competency, and responsiveness, and effective service delivery, Goodwin et al. (2015) proposed that a continuum of cultural fit could be a more effective way to understand and articulate the positioning of evaluators, and initiatives alike. Emerging from their analysis, Goodwin et al. put forward that where there is congruence (of the same cultural background and positioning) and concordance (a state of harmony of core cultural values) between evaluators and evaluands there is potential for greater effectiveness,

providing services and evaluation to people from the basis of the same core cultural values and experiences (as an insider) contributed to enhanced and improved processes, practice, evaluation and outcomes for service users" (2015, p.41).

### ***Evaluators as critical change agents***

Lincoln (Ryan et al., 1998) states unequivocally that “Evaluators would do well to acquaint themselves with the literature on change, since they are critical change agents” (p.112). That is, evaluators have a role—through open, inclusive dialogue and ways of working with evaluation partners—to strategically identify changes they wish to make and create, points of leverage, people and resources that will be allies in creating change or shining a light on those who may hinder change, for example. While Mathison (Ryan et al., 1998) did not feel it was logically the evaluators’ responsibility to work towards constructive change, she clearly signals that evaluators must work towards making or leaving things better through the evaluation process or providing direction for future actions (Ryan et al., 1998, p.113).

Ryan et al. (1998) further highlight a critical dimension of the evaluator as a change agent which is the ideal; that there is more than one centre of power. Therefore, this sets a trajectory for evaluators to advocate for those less heard to be at the table, pointing out the reality of continuing unequal power relations. Therefore, it is not about equitable representation; it is centred on recalibrating political and power dynamics so that there is equity, and authentic and meaningful connections within and between stakeholders who share a collective intention or purpose. In this context, evaluators may act “as messenger and translator between and among stakeholder groups” (Ryan et al., 1998, p.118). Ryan et al. (1998) also raise that if evaluations are “not inclusive, they have the potential to be rejected or ignored” (p.106). Again, we cycle back to the positions and power stakeholders have—or not. There is a need for evaluators to navigate these spaces to ensure that the intended vision and outcomes, and those at the centre of the programme, project, or policy remain in focus. Being committed to addressing the dynamics of democratic

pluralism—more than one centre of power – is a tenuous space and one which evaluators must be conscious of.

In my experience, both as whānau and within evaluation, there is always a need to deeply know your contribution to change, but you must accept change is a constant. Whether that is leaving or making things better through evaluation as Mathison pointed out, or by design placing yourself in the role of change agent, as raised by Lincoln, or opting not to see change as part of the evaluation landscape, the key is to be explicit with yourself, and those you engage with. Ultimately, “we can only serve that to which we are profoundly connected” (Remen, 1999, in Symonette, 2015, p.114).

### ***Demonstrating servant leadership in evaluation***

In his deeply reflective and reflexive article “Exploring the leadership dimension of development evaluation: The evaluator as a servant-leader”, Lam advocates that:

developing a sound theoretical base about how leadership corresponds with evaluation is critical for informing evaluation practice. Generally, I also invite other evaluators to consider what valence the substantial body of literature on leadership might hold for evaluators, the practices of evaluation, and the difference we aspire to make in service of others (2015, p.76).

Of significance is what appears to be the explicit extrapolation of the resonance of servant leadership to all who practice the plethora of evaluation approaches, not just restricted to those who practice developmental evaluation and/or who engage in complex social contexts. Greenleaf (Greenleaf Centre of Servant Leadership, 2017) articulated the intention of this leadership philosophy as “[t]he servant-leader is servant first. It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve ... Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead” (p. 10).

Langlois et al. (2013) highlight that the practice of servant

leadership by developmental evaluators sensitises them subtly to their leadership role, “to always be in service to the group achieving its goals and living its principles” (p.46). Reinforcing the intersectionality of self and evaluator, Hazel Symonette (2004 and 2015) eloquently reflects through her passionate personal journey and lifework dimensions of being in service, “as resource for Helpful-Help” (2014, p.110) through evaluation. Noting the similarities of serving (as reflected by Remen, 1999 in Symonette, 2014) and servant leadership (as reflected by Greenleaf, 1979), Symonette echoes that:

We need to understand who we are as evaluators and how we know what we believe we know about others and ourselves. In this way, our evaluation practice becomes a resource for Helpful-Help, that is, help that moves beyond deficit-grounded presumptions of intrinsic brokenness and weakness toward conditional/situational reads of personal and social problems and limitations. When evaluators provide Helpful-Help, they serve as contextually responsive channels and reliable/valid instruments ... Providing Helpful-Help requires that evaluators remain open, empathically learning-centred, diversity-grounded, and responsive... (p.110)

The fact that evaluators must “live into this agenda” is recognised by Symonette, as she goes on to provide Helpful-Help in her article by sharing her insight so we as evaluators may calibrate, know and activate ourselves by “Cultivating Self-In-Context as Responsive Instrument” (p.114). Testing and adapting her earlier “praxis-grounded” integral researcher-self model, Symonette puts forward the integral evaluator quadrant model as a framework for “holistic systemic inquiry and reflective practice ... for crafting responsive programmatic interventions while simultaneously cultivating SELF-in context as responsive instrument” (p.117).

## ***A continuum of evaluative leadership***

By initially exploring the literature, what emerged for me was a continuum of evaluative leadership—a state of being that enables action to lead change. To solidify our understanding of evaluative leadership, we can visualise a continuum (Figure 1), appreciating a linear diagram artificially removes the context and complexity in which evaluative leadership may be demonstrated.

**Figure 1. Proposed evaluative leadership continuum**

At the beginning of the continuum, there were lots of conversations about evaluation use and influence, and as Fiona Cram encourages us, you could hear in the interstitial spaces—the spaces



in between—were conversations about advocacy, values-led practice, ethics, and ethical practice. The use of connected circles aims to reflect the interconnected nature of these elemental states, and that we can bind or weave diverse knowledge systems and practices together in our actioning of evaluative leadership. As with any continuum, we don't simply reach one state to progress to the next, and contexts will determine where and how we can move in and within. That said, the continuum explicitly raises the states of being, if we choose to progress through this continuum of evaluative leadership. Perhaps at the heart of evaluative leadership, wherever evaluators are on the continuum, is that leadership is exercised intentionally.

With this in mind, I explore how this intentional drive to lead and disrupt is motivated by aroha – by a love for place, people, and kaupapa – or, as our Hawaiian relations explain, by aloha.

### ***Conscious disruption: Actioning the capacity of aroha for change through evaluative leadership***

In 2014 Manulani Aluli Meyer began to articulate the three elements of the holographic trilogy that is reflected across a myriad of enduring knowledge systems, bringing together the physical, mental, and spiritual. By acknowledging the physical and mental we also acknowledge the spiritual, and the collective descriptions that have been amassed over the years, affirm that knowledge systems are inclusive and enduring if the trilogies are recognised (Meyer, 2014, p. 158). Expressions of the trilogy exist expansively in Māori and Indigenous knowledge systems: mōhioanga, mātauranga, māramatanga; tinana, hinengaro, wairua; arlathirnda, ngurkarnda, ityirnda; mana'oi'oi, mana'olana, aloha (Meyer, 2014).

Within the spiritual, it is here that Meyer (2014, 2019) is advocating where our true and foundational intelligence lies. In 2019 when Meyer presented at the inaugural Mā te Rae Māori Evaluation Association conference, she encouraged us to think about the stream of light in the holographic trilogy that holds the space of the spiritual. It is this domain where we see elements such as remembering, liberation, awareness, understanding, realising, māramatanga, and aroha. Meyer asks us “Why not begin to detail the ‘dwelling place of aroha’ as the space where reason resolves” (2014, p. 157).

And so, I pick up this provocation, and begin to explore what this means in the context of evaluation and specifically to enable evaluative leadership for change.

Arbon (2008) elevates the trilogy from the Aboriginal knowledge system, Arlathirnda ngurkarnda ityirnda, translated into English

without the depth of Indigenous meaning: being-knowing-doing. This trilogy resonates with the continuum that I have been exploring and the analogous element of action with doing. Therefore, I am affirming that action may reside in the spiritual. That is, in the space between what and how we may act and the notion of action as a spiritual pursuit, is a space where there is consciousness and resonance between the knowledge system that one may explore and what will manifest through these actions. As Arbon beautifully articulates:

The sun shone brightly. I was able to ‘see ... hear ... feel and smell (take it in)’—think. My approach shifted from a marking out of an Indigenous space within or being an addendum to western philosophies to understanding and therefore going from an embodiment and embodying within the ontologies and cultural knowledge of the Ularaka (2008, p. 26).

This reflection is important for all of us in our evaluation community of practice. While perhaps a more deeply felt reflection, what Arbon is encouraging is the deep personal work we ask ourselves as evaluation practitioners to do. Understanding our values and positioning, makes explicit what is important to us and what therefore informs our practice.

Values are at the heart of evaluation and of our practice as people and evaluators. Within our knowledge systems, within our cultural and social paradigms, we draw on a myriad of values and concepts to guide us in life and practice. While innumerable, I want to follow just one: Aroha.

### ***Aroha, Aloha***

Ka’ai-Mahuta (2010), in locating her doctoral methodology, drew on a model developed by the late John Rangihau, what was later called Rangihau’s conceptual model (Figure 2). Earlier visualised by Ka’ai and Higgins (2004), the model serves to help non-Māori understand

the Māori worldview more effectively, it elegantly amplifies the interconnectedness and wholeness of te ao Māori and how our knowledge systems are layered with beauty and purpose.

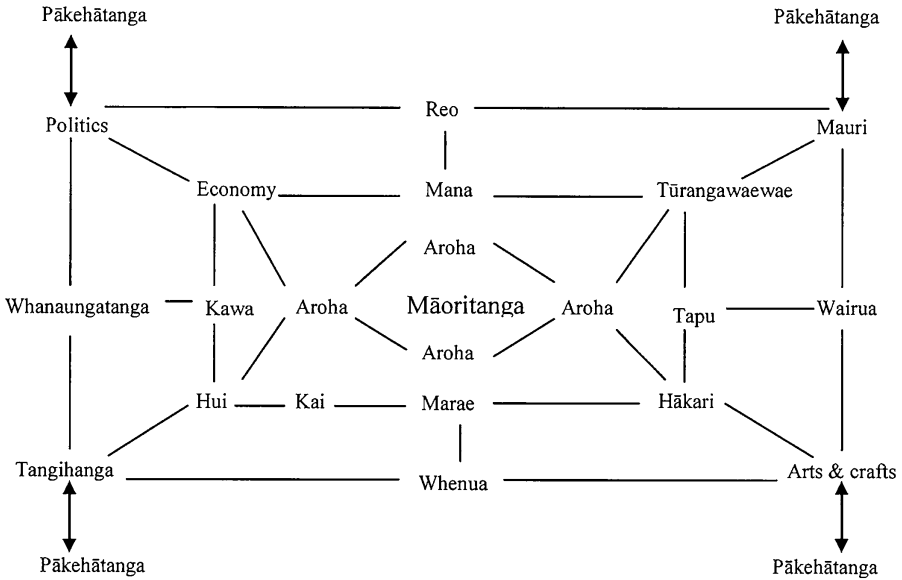


Figure 2. Rangihau’s conceptual model (Ka’ai and Higgins, 2004, p. 16)

Ka’ai-Mahuta elevates in her analysis of Rangihau’s conceptual model, that “an important feature of the model [is that] it does not propose that Māori be assimilated, integrated or subsumed by non-Māori into the dominant culture” (Ka’ai-Mahuta, 2010, p. 17). What is also clear in my reflection and interpretation, which Ka’ai-Mahuta, too, makes evident, is that the “Māori world-view is not isolated from the reality of interfacing with Pākehā society” (p.18). However, like vibrations, what is striking in the written and the visual, is that not only is the interface depicted on the periphery, but that aroha reverberates outward to these points of connection. In an unpublished



paper, Ka'ai speaks of aroha and that it is emphasising "the notion that whānau, hapū and Iwi are committed to the survival of their kinship group/s to ensure their identity as tāngata whenua for future generations" (Ka'ai-Mahuta, 2010, p. 18).

Here, at this waypoint, we are greeted by some of our evaluation brothers and sisters, Herb Lee, Paloma Lee, Peter Mataira, Paula Morelli, and Kathy Tibbetts who shared the gift of *Evaluation with Aloha*. During the 2020 Hawai'i-Pacific Evaluation Association online conference, they expanded my consciousness of the practice of aroha, aloha<sup>2</sup> in evaluation. Their closing address, "Aloha as a disruptive and humbling force on evaluators' journeys toward justice and equity", was like moving out from the shade and into the fullness of the sun. Introducing the conference delegation to evaluation with aloha as a humbling and disruptive practice, we walked a path together, first re-calling Indigenous wisdom and practices that "faithfully reflect the mana (spiritual energy and understanding), 'ie na'auao (wisdom), and place-based knowledge offered by our kūpuna (elders) to guide this work" (Lili'uokalani Trust & CREA, 2019, p.7). Articulated in the Aloha Framework (Lili'uokalani Trust & CREA, 2019), and resonated through the conference presentation:

by centring the practice of evaluation around the value of Aloha, evaluation can be transformed to: Respectfully and with humility honour 'ea', the sovereignty of and advance the perpetuation of Native Hawai'ian people, culture and ways of being and knowing fulfil evaluators' kuleana (responsibilities) to communities they serve alongside the expectation of high-quality, actionable evaluation to support decision making (p.18).

What remains with clarity, is that practising evaluation with aloha must see practitioners having the humility to disrupt that comes from a deep sense of commitment and connectedness in service to land and people. The language of disruption or the act of being disruptive holds

both a positive and negative connotation. Describing disturbance or disorder, which may be perceived as a deficit or negative, can also affirm the positive or strengths-based conceptions of radical change, innovation and breaking new ground. As Robin Peace reminds us, of that in the creation of our ecology, “disruption is just the worm emerging from the soil”. A naturally occurring process of disruption.

### ***Me aro koe ki te hā o Hine-ahu-one—Reflections from wāhine who are lighting the way through evaluation***

It is a privilege to share time and space with Kataraina Pipi, Jane Davidson, Robin Peace, Nan Wehipeihana, Kate McKegg, and Fiona Cram, all who are recognised for their grace and leadership in evaluation. Through their leadership resounding through their written word, their deep reasoning and actioning of evaluation as a tool for change shared through discussion and then later felt through waiata, all six wāhine have and continue to be at the heart and on the sharp edges of evaluation theory and practice.

It was not until I reached the waypoint where aloha, aroha sat explicitly as a humbling and disruptive process, that I saw what for me is so blinding: through the experiences and expressions of leadership demonstrated by these wonderful wāhine, they activate the capacity of aroha to consciously disrupt to create positive change. Awakened to this reality, I drew on pūrākau as a Māori knowledge system practice to share how each wāhine cast light on their aroha in action, with the following just a glimpse into their practice.



**Kataraina Pipi:** Making the implicit, explicit through trusted relationships

I think it is ... trusted relationships working alongside people and in really authentic ways, you know, where we're able to be open, honest, straight up, ... that's why I always think it's important to not assume we're all on the same page.



**Jane Davidson:** Making evaluation accessible

... find ways to make evaluation make sense in everyday language, "pulling down the curtain of big words", to break down barriers to accessibility and use.



**Ngahorihori Wehipeihana:** Evaluating lived experiences as an ethic of service

I just couldn't live in the household that I was brought up in, and not actually want to influence those who make decisions and change their thinking or be an advocate.



**Robin Peace:** Seek out even the smallest opportunities to question and influence

... evaluation has this huge potential to bring our attention to things that really matter ... to offer opportunities for those things to be changed by people who theoretically have the capacity to change them, but that there is still this mismatch between what's happening.



**Kate McKegg:** What it means to support allyship

... only by knowing ourselves can we begin unravelling the intersections between privilege, power, colonisation, and racism.

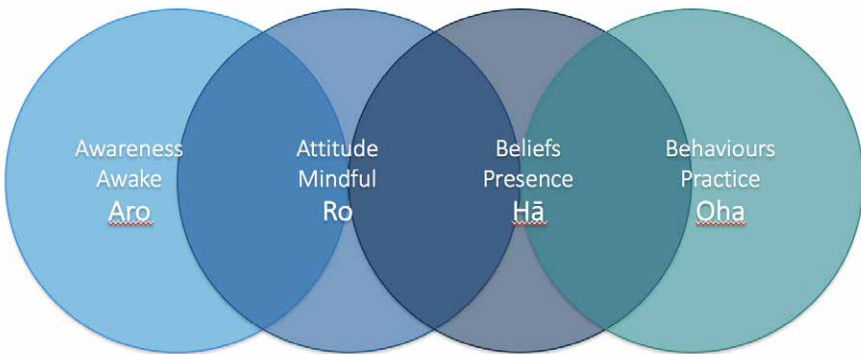


**Fiona Cram:** Aroha ki te tangata, Aloha is the key

[We are] actively avoiding talking about aroha ... And I actually think it comes down to that. It is about a love for the people and a love for the people and their mana motuhake.

... if there is a leadership role, it is just giving people permission to do their own stuff ... Leadership is about trying to push people in front and go—you know what you are doing and I am here to back you up.

**Figure 3. Manifesting the potential for conscious disruption**



Gravitating, like the pull of the moon, the essential and grounding force of aroha as one of the guiding values in wayfinding, emerges. Recognising the interconnected nature of wairuatanga and aroha, as did Meyer (2014 & 2019), that is, aroha is an expression of wairuatanga, and allied with aloha, Spiller et al. unfold its layered meaning, with the perspectives of Makuini Tai.

These words, she says, impart many layers of meaning, offering a profound message of love and connection. Aro refers to thought, life principle, to pay attention, to focus, to concentrate. Ro is inner,

within, introspection. Hā is life force, breath, energy. Oha is generosity, prosperity, abundance, wealth. When nui is added to aroha—as in arohanui—it denotes largeness, greatness, intensity, many, plentifulness, abundance, importance and openness. Thus, aroha is a practice that helps us and others on many levels (2015, p.82).

On reflection, the mind shift, or disruption, that is raising our awareness, ultimately intends, and can lead to, shifts in attitude, beliefs, and behaviours when we awaken to it (Figure 3). In the context of leadership, holding on to what we have learnt about the diversity of leadership such as “a combination of being and doing” (p. 8), “leaders lead change and shape the future”, “as resource for Helpful-Help” (Symonette, 2014, p. 110), I elevate the challenge and opportunity laid by Spiller et al. (2015) that the purpose of leadership is to “awaken to the potential of ourselves, others and situations and to then consciously manifest that potential” (p. 44).

### ***Prelude: Serving as an introduction to something important***

How might this be useful? The opportunity to wayfind and reach the place where our evaluative leadership can activate the capacity of aroha to consciously disrupt to create positive change, is the most beautiful waypoint. But it is just that – a waypoint that serves as an introduction to something important – perhaps revealing a constellation by which to navigate by? Now it is up to each of us to determine if, as proposed by Symonette (2014), that we live into an agenda where we lead through evaluation to contribute to positive change. I was reawakened by aroha, aloha as a humbling and disruptive practice, present in the ways of knowing, being, and doing that guide us, that resonate out of the advocacy and activism of many in our community of evaluation practice. So I encourage you to continue to wayfind and activate the capacity of aroha through your evaluative leadership to contribute to positive change.

## Notes

1. Wayfinding is an indigenous tradition of navigation. Spiller, Barclay-Kerr and Panoho (2015), drawing on this wisdom, articulate the principles and skills of wayfinding leadership to enable us all to practice throughout contemporary contexts.
2. Recognising the bond between indigenous knowledges, but respecting the mana each hold, aroha and aloha will be utilised from this point but are not necessarily interchangeable.

## Kupu Māori—glossary

Te reo Māori provides a diversity of interpretations and applications of some kupu or words. Those included in this glossary reflect how the word has been utilised in the context of this article. *Te Aka* online Māori dictionary was used extensively to support the creation of this glossary. For more information, please visit, <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/>

<b>Aotearoa</b>	land of the Long White Cloud, New Zealand
<b>aro</b>	take notice, pay attention to, turn towards
<b>aroha</b>	compassion, care, love, empathy, feel concern for
<b>aromatawai</b>	evaluation
<b>hinengaro</b>	mind, thought, intellect, consciousness
<b>hapū</b>	kinship group, subtribe
<b>hoa haere</b>	valued companionship (Pohatu and Pohatu, 2007), ally
<b>hoa rangatira</b>	spouse, partner
<b>hui</b>	gather, meet, meeting
<b>iwi</b>	extended kinship group, tribe, nation
<b>kaiaromatawai</b>	evaluator
<b>kaupapa</b>	topic, subject, programme, theme, issue, initiative
<b>kaupapa Māori</b>	Māori approach, Māori topic, Māori customary practice, Māori institution, Māori agenda, Māori principles, Māori ideology

<b>koha</b>	gift, offering, contribution
<b>māmā</b>	mother
<b>Māori</b>	indigenous peoples of Aotearoa
<b>manaaki</b>	to support, take care of, give hospitality to, protect, look out for – show respect, generosity, and care for others.
<b>māramatanga</b>	enlightenment, insight, meaning
<b>mata</b>	face, surface, edge, point
<b>mātauranga</b>	knowledge, wisdom, understanding
<b>me aro koe ki te hā o Hine-ahu-one</b>	a whakataukī or proverb – pay heed to the dignity and power of women
<b>mōhiotanga</b>	comprehension, awareness, perception
<b>mokopuna</b> grandchild	grandchild, grandchildren, descendant, to be a grandchild
<b>Pākehā</b>	New Zealander of European descent
<b>pūrākau</b>	traditional and contemporary narratives
<b>rangatahi</b>	young person / people
<b>tangata whenua</b>	people born of the land, indigenous people, local peoples of Aotearoa
<b>tinana</b>	body, the main part of anything
<b>tohu</b>	sign, signifier, symbol, cue, symptom, directions, distinguishing feature
<b>tamariki</b>	children
<b>wahine</b>	woman
<b>wāhine</b>	women
<b>wai</b>	who, whom, water, tears
<b>wairua</b>	spirit, soul
<b>whakaaro</b>	thought, opinion, understanding, conscience, ideas experiences)

**whānau** a collective of people linked by whakapapa, or kau-papa, or both. Sometimes *family* or *families* is used as a translation of whānau. Where this has occurred, particularly in literature, this will remain.

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## The Author

**Louise Moana Were** (Ngāti Rongowhakaata, Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Scotland) is a member of Hikitia, an evaluation collaborative, and Tuakana Teina Evaluation Collective, Aotearoa (New Zealand). Louise picked up the tools of evaluation as a young mother in the 90s navigating systems with her daughter who lived with significant

complexity. Having completed her Masters thesis exploring how we can action the capacity of aroha for positive change through evaluative leadership, Louise is now on a PhD pathway to collaboratively realise what an evaluation ecosystem can look like with, for and led by disabled people and whānau.

**ORCID:** 0000-0003-2954-8726

**Email:** louisewere@gmail.com