

Beauty, Blessings and Bistros

by Janet Maika'i Rudolph

The Hawaiian Huna approach to dealing with stress

One of my favorite trainings I have received on my spiritual pathway is with Aloha International. I was ordained as an Alaka'i (Hawaiian spiritual guide) in 2016, but I began studying Huna intensely in 1997. I love the Hawaiian way, as it is gentle, loving and teaches us to examine our beliefs, life practices and thought-patterns to heal our wounds and nurture our lives in many beautiful ways. Huna means secret but not as something we can't share, rather something that is hard to discover or grasp like the mists of the sea. Dr. King, however, makes it easy and I am happy to share some of his teachings here.

I have several medical people in my family. They study science and closely follow journals to find treatments and cures. I bless those efforts because their findings are wonderful tools when we, ourselves, are in need of medical treatment. The shamans, however, have a different approach to disease. Instead of looking to see what medications work, we like to explore why other methods work. Placebos, for example, are so powerful that scientists must go to extreme measures to avoid activating them with practices such as double-blind studies. What if, instead of working to eliminate the placebo effect, we work to strengthen it? What if our goal is to harness the power of our minds to explore how our expectations, beliefs and thoughts affect our health and well-being?

In Huna, the cause of dis-ease is always STRESS whether it be physical, emotional, mental or spiritual. Stress creates resistance that fuels a stress cycle. Stress creates resistance which creates more stress, and thus more resistance and so on. The question becomes how can we reduce stress and increase our chances of avoiding illness in general and the current corona virus specifically and if we do get sick, helping it to stay mild?

There are 3 ways I have learned that work wonders. They are my 3 B's: Beauty, Blessings and Bistros.

Beauty: When we expect something bad to happen our internal reaction works as if it is already happening. We tense up our muscles when contemplating the negative things coming our way. One way to counteract this thought pattern is to anticipate something wonderful happening. And for me it is even more powerful if something wonderful IS actually happening in the moment. This happens when we focus on beauty. The more we can focus on beauty, the more we can be in the present moment enjoying wonderments in our life in the here and now. I live near New York City, considered a hotspot for the virus. And yet, Mama Nature has gifted us with an early and lovely spring. The flowers and trees are blooming, and the birds are exhibiting mating behavior. Mother Nature is clearly of the opinion that life should go on. The earth is alive. The more I focus on this, the less tension I feel.

Blessings: Blessings are also another way to reduce stress and appreciate the good in our lives. The more we can find blessings, the more our body will relax and the less resistance we will have. And a lovely side effect is that we will also be happier while we are in a state of offering blessings. Here are some examples of the blessings I have found just this morning: I woke up in a warm, cozy bed. I woke to fresh air and did the cat stretch, lushly feeling all parts of my body. I ate a wonderful breakfast, blessing not only the bounty of the earth, but a special blessing for the laborers who work the supply chain so I can enjoy that breakfast.

Bistros: I am using the concept of bistros as a metaphor, especially in this time where restaurants are mostly closed. I miss them. A bistro is a sensory emporium with wonderful food aromas, the chatter of people, the clanking of dishes, the delicious tastes, the physical sensations of being close to people, the opportunity to look directly at good friends and loved ones over tea. All these sensory aspects help us to be more fully in the present moment. Each day I have learned to make it a practice to search out these sensory experiences in the challenging world I am living in today.

These are like muscles that need to be used and strengthened in order for them to be strong and work in the midst of crisis. To be sure, using these muscles for the first time during a pandemic is the advanced course. Still the more I practice beauty, blessings and bistros, the more they work, and the more powerful they are in my life, positively affecting me and those around me.

Please note, I am not advocating for ignoring what is going on in the world. As my Sufi friend tells me, “Trust Allah but tie up your camel.” I follow the 3 B’s while also following physical distancing as well as mask, glove and hand washing directions. Another friend of mine came up with a wonderful hand washing routine that I have adapted: She thanks the water for its cleansing ability. I have added the enjoyment of the sensory experience of water rushing over my skin, and then I remind myself of the beauty of water which is the essence of life. After all, our human bodies are over 50% water. And finally, as I finish up, I bless and thank the gifts and treasures that water brings into my life. Voila 20 Seconds!

This article is based on the teachings of Serge Kahili King in his book Urban Shaman. For more information visit [/huna.org/](http://huna.org/). (Special thanks to Didi Witchard for her hand washing ritual).