

# Just Remember - Relax Now!

By Pete Dalton

***Mālama i ka makawalu o ka hale  
(Take care of the inner courtyard of the house).***

Much has already been written on the topic of relaxation and its place as a central pillar of *Huna* healing and an essential component of self-care. Despite this I am going to write some more on the topic as I don't think we can have too many reminders to relax. Relaxation is so important and yet we can find that it is something that eludes us or we forget to do this very fundamental thing.

It's not uncommon in healing to overlook the obvious. We can be searching for an overcomplicated solution and avoid what I believe should be the starting point for all healing work – relaxation.

Relaxation is natural and hardwired into us. As babies we can be exquisite relaxers, demonstrating deep diaphragmatic breathing and restful sleep. As we grow older we encounter many more stressors and can find it more challenging to relax.

We can experience tension on physical, emotional, mental and spiritual levels. A certain level of tension and stress is part of normal living, however the problem occurs when we do not release tension. Here it builds and builds resulting in excessive tension or *'iha'iha*, in Hawaiian. This then leads to a range of potential health challenges.

As I have personally experienced recently, it is easy to let excessive tension or stress become an issue, we can become so absorbed in the 'doing' of life that we push ourselves too hard and forget to release tension. It is like the analogy of the frog which apparently will stay put and boil to death if placed in water which is slowly heated up (I have never tested this, nor do I intend to!). We can let a lot of little tensions build up gradually until we notice we are dealing with a *lot* of tension.

There are many ways to relax which have been well documented elsewhere so I don't intend to go into detail on techniques although I would like to emphasise that relaxation can (and should be) be simple and remembering that it only takes as few as three deep breaths (for example *Piko Piko*) to trigger parasympathetic functioning and relaxation means that it is something that we can easily do without any props and paraphernalia – providing we remember to do so.

One of my favourite principles of *Huna* is that of *Aloha* which is so wonderfully emphasised in this philosophy. I have heard it said that kindness rather than peace or calm is the opposite of stress. Stress produces stress hormones and kindness

produces kindness hormones. We can extend that further to consider that any act of *Aloha* is good for us (and others) as it induces relaxation and good feelings, so practicing *Huna* naturally encourages healing and relaxation. Whatever technique or techniques you choose – the key thing is to just remember to relax now!

As I was writing this article, I felt inspired to search for some quotes on relaxation (which in itself was a form of relaxation). I share some of them here for you to contemplate at your own relaxed leisurely pace.

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<p><b><i>Malu ka hāloa i ke kai o ka ‘āina</i></b>          (The breath of life is peaceful when the land and sea are calm          - Hawaiian</p>	<p><b><i>Tension is who you think you should be. Relaxation is who you are.</i></b>          - Chinese Proverb</p>
<p><b><i>The mind should be allowed some relaxation, that it may return to its work all the better for the rest.</i></b>          – Seneca</p>	<p><b><i>Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes, including you.</i></b>          - Anne Lamott</p>
<p><b><i>Take rest; a field that has rested gives a bountiful crop.</i></b>          - Ovid</p>	<p><b><i>Don't underestimate the value of doing nothing, of just going along, listening to all the things you can't hear, and not bothering.</i></b>          - A.A. Milne</p>
<p><b><i>Relax, and all good things will come to you.</i></b>          - Unknown</p>	<p><b><i>Your mind will answer most questions if you learn to relax and wait for the answer.</i></b>          - William S. Burroughs</p>

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