

## The Deeper Meaning of "Aloha"

(Alo = presence, front, face; hâ = breath)  
"The presence of (Divine) Breath"

Aloha is one of the most important words in the Hawaiian language. It means hello, goodbye, love and is used in a host of other descriptive ways.

Nowadays it is often used lightly, almost without thought. "ALOOOOOOHAAAAH!" is a cry often heard to draw tourists into a shop, to get an audience into a certain mood, etc.

But its real spirit, and its real use by those who have the spirit, has not been eclipsed.

The word Aloha holds within itself all one needs to know to interact rightfully in the natural world. These insights describe an attitude or way of life sometimes called "The Aloha Spirit" or "The Way of Aloha".

The spirit of Aloha was an important lesson taught to the children of the past because it was about the world of which they were a part. One early teaching goes like this:

*Aloha is being a part of all, and all being a part of me. When there is pain - it is my pain. When there is joy - it is also mine. I respect all that is as part of the Creator and part of me. I will not willfully harm anyone or anything. When food is needed I will take only my need and explain why it is being taken. The earth, the sky, the sea are mine to care for, to cherish and to protect. This is Hawaiian - this is Aloha!*

As the child grew, the need for a fundamental code of ethics was taught through the acronymic meanings of Aloha ...

**A**, ala, watchful, alertness

**L**, lokahi, working with unity

**O**, oia'i'o, truthful honesty

**H**, ha'aha'a, humility

**A**, ahonui, patient perseverance

The kahuna David Bray interprets this code as...

*"Come forward, be in unity and harmony with your real self, God, and mankind.  
Be honest, truthful, patient, kind to all life forms, and humble."*

He also stated that to the Hawaiian of old, Aloha meant "**God in us.**"

So far, within Aloha, we have found an explanation of our place in the world and a code of ethics to help us with our interactions in the world. The only thing we are missing is our "prime directive" while we are here, and that too can be found within the root words that make up Aloha.

*alo*, 1. sharing 2. in the present

*oha*, joyous affection, joy

*ha*, life energy, life, breath

Or, to summarize those meanings, "The joyful sharing of life energy in the present" or simply "Joyfully sharing life".

Below, in the words of Hawai'i's last reigning monarch, Queen Lili'uokalani (1891-93), is the true meaning of this magical word.

*"And wherever [the native Hawaiian] went he said 'Aloha' in meeting or in parting. 'Aloha' was a recognition of life in another. If there was life there was mana, goodness and wisdom, and if there was goodness and wisdom there was a god-quality. One had to recognize the 'god of life' in another before saying 'Aloha,' but this was easy. Life was everywhere - in the trees, the flowers, the ocean, the fish, the birds, the pili grass, the rainbow, the rock - in all the world was life--was god--was Aloha. Aloha in its gaiety, joy, happiness, abundance. Because of Aloha, one gave without thought of return; because of Aloha, one had mana. Aloha had its own mana. It never left the giver but flowed freely and continuously between giver and receiver. 'Aloha' could not be thoughtlessly or indiscriminately spoken, for it carried its own power. No Hawaiian could greet another with 'Aloha' unless he felt it in his own heart. If he felt anger or hate in his heart he had to cleanse himself before he said 'Aloha'."*

So, the next time you greet anyone with "Aloha," hold its meanings close to your heart and be conscious of how you hold the moment with that person and how you picture or hold them in your heart.

Aloha ia O'Koa Pa'ulo !

(When we meet in Love...We Shall Be Whole!)