

ATUATANGA

LEARN FROM NATURE



Written by Joseph Potangaroa, Rangitāne o Wairarapa

Design Mikis van Geffen, designunlimited.co.nz

Thanks Huge thanks to koro Jim Rimene who has patiently continued to explain tikanga over the last quarter of a century.

Thanks to Ihirangi Heke who brought a whole lot of different concepts together in one word.

ATUATANGA.

Photos Mikis van Geffen and Joseph Potangaroa unless acknowledged otherwise.

We should always think about how to keep safe, so big people might want to help young ones to learn about safety for different activities.

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You can also find this resource and more information at education.rangitane.iwi.nz and at Rangitāne o Wairarapa Education on Facebook.

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RANGITĀNE O WAIRARAPA INCORPORATED

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ATUATANGA

"Look deep into nature and then you will understand everything better"

Albert Einstein

It is said the further we move away from Papatūānuku the worse off we become. The lives of many people who have been disconnected from the land proves this to be correct.

This resource is designed to provide us with opportunities to become more grounded, to get closer to Papatūānuku.

As babies we start off with an amazing awareness of what is around us but over time our lifestyles, society and those that influence our thinking take our bodies, spirit and minds away from nature.

Atuatanga gives us a way of recapturing what is hardwired in each one of us but has been tucked, away sleeping.

Becoming grounded does not mean that we have to abandon anything else. It just creates balance and a realisation that we humans are not the centre of the world and in reality, we need the earth but she does not need us.

Māori culture emerged from interactions with the atua so this resource could be used as a foundation from which to branch off into learning te reo, history or many other subjects that are important to the culture.

Whatu Ngarongaro He Tangata,
Toitu te whenua

Man disappears but the land remains

RĀ THE SUN

If Rā the sun did not rise one morning we would not need to worry because we would already be dead and the earth would be no more.

All around the world people look up to Rā and thank him for the heat that he gives us to live. Everything in our world depends on the energy that Rā gives to us every day. This is why he is sometimes called the King of the Gods in other countries and why he is the atua that is literally above Ranginui, Papatūānuku and their children.

We have put Rā on the cover of the atuatanga manual because of his importance to us as the greatest energy source we have.

PAPATŪĀNUKU THE EARTH

My flesh, muscle, sinew, and cartilage are composed of rock, granite, dirt, mud, stone, sand, and all that is dense and solid.

My bones are fossilised trees, veins of granite, gold, silver, copper, and all precious metals, branching from my core, from the centre of my being.

My blood is molten lava, liquid rock, water, boiling mud, nourishing bone and flesh through a labyrinth of rigid veins.

My breath is sulphur, gas, air, and mist, seeping through countless layers of hardened skin, a skin of regenerating life. Life for my children, my grandchildren, and the countless offspring which derive from them. They are the forests, plants, seas, rivers and creatures which clothe me. They are my wondrous korowai which sustains us all.

<http://homebirth.org.nz/magazine/article/Papatūānuku/>

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Mikis van Geffen

THE BEST TEACHER IS NATURE

Our atua (environments and energy sources) are all around us. Rā the sun, marama the moon, Papatūānuku the earth mother, Ranginui the sky father, tangaroa the waterways and many more.

Atua have been around for a long time, far longer than any of us. They are our kaitiaki or guardians. We could even say they are like loving grandparents who care for us.

When the atua work together we get fresh water to drink and swim in, food to eat, hot summer days, trees that help us breath, plants to make clothes, trees for building and so many other useful things that we could spend all day talking about them.

The better we get to know the atua the more we learn about how they look after us and the more we think about how what we humans do can affect the atua in good or bad ways.

So whether you are big or small we encourage you to get outside to get to know the atua around your home. You don't need anyone to tell you what to do or how to do it but just in case you would like some ideas that is what this resource is about.

Just go out and use your senses and after a while you will remember what you are experiencing.

**WE HAVE PULLED TOGETHER
A RANGE OF INFORMATION AND IDEAS
TO HELP YOU**

WHAT IS RANGITĀNE O WAIRARAPA

Hundreds of years ago a man called Whatonga came to what we of today call Wairarapa and Wellington. He thought it would be a good place to live so his family made their home in these places. Whatonga had a grandson Rangitāne who married a lady called Mahue. Rangitāne and Mahue had children who had children and so on. Rangitāne had an uncle called Tara-ika who married a lady called Te Umuroimata. Tara-ika and Te Umuroimata had children who had children and so on too. It is 2016 now but people who can say Rangitāne or Tara-ika was my great, great, great, greatgreat grandfather are still living in the Wairarapa and call themselves people of the Rangitāne o Wairarapa iwi.

SLOW DOWN

TAKE YOUR TIME

DON'T RUSH

TAKE IN WHAT'S
HAPPENING AROUND YOU

look

listen

smell

touch



(except plants like ONGAONGA)

AND IF YOU ARE SURE THAT IT'S SAFE:

taste

GET TO KNOW THE ATUA

Do as many of these activities as you can. Getting to know the atua requires experiencing each of them in their environments.

Get out in the rain, jump in puddles, feel the power of the wind and so on... After activities discuss, write or create a piece of art or poetry based on them.

SLOW DOWN, TAKE YOUR TIME, USE YOUR SENSES

- Look at the stars in the north eastern sky half an hour before the sun rises
- Watch the sun rise or set
- Sit down and look at a clear sky late at night
- Climb a tree
- Walk the length of a fallen tree
- Lay down in a paddock on a hot day
- Climb a big hill, then Roll or slide down a big hill
- Go on a nature walk at night
- Plant it, grow it, eat it
- Go for a swim in a river
- Light a fire and cook food on it
- Listen to the sound of a river at night
- Visit Rangiwakaoma (Castlepoint)
- Roll or run down a sandhill
- Run around in the rain
- Visit Mt Holdsworth and walk to Donnelly Flats
- Camp out in the wild
- Have a flax stick throwing competition
- Fly a kite
- Go crawlie, eel or trout spotting
- Gather and eat (safe) wild berries
- Swing on a rope swing
- Explore a rock pool at the beach or a river
- Observe kereru, pukeko or tui
- Sit by shaded stream for twenty minutes
- Have an insect hunt

Have fun doing all the above but keep safe. Fishing and hunting doesn't always mean that you have to catch your prey. You should try to not disturb their home either.

**LEAVE NOTHING BUT
FOOTPRINTS**

**TAKE NOTHING BUT
PICTURES**

KILL NOTHING BUT TIME

**ADULTS: DON'T TEACH,
JOIN IN AND ADD**

FIVE STEPS TO START YOU OFF

1

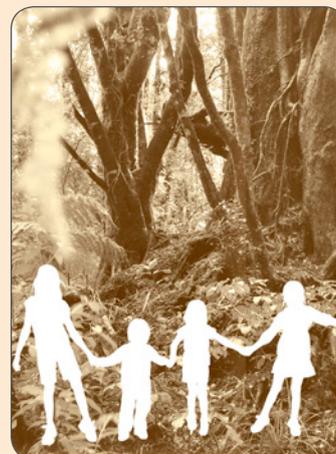
Visit your river and mountain

Lay on the ground, watch the sky, take in deep breaths, then close your eyes and just lay there.

Get to know your rohe

- Rivers, lakes, streams, the sea, wetlands (what lives in them, what do they connect to, what lives around them, how does new water get into them)
- Mountains
- Places
- Interesting landscapes
- How different winds effect your rohe
- Where does the sun rise, set throughout the year
- The moon cycle
- The main stars
- What more can you think of?

2



Learn how to name different

- Birds
- Insects
- Lizards
- Trees
- Plants
- Other species...

3

4

Take your knowledge to another level

by learning more about everything and keep building on it.

- Just sit down and watch something to learn about it
- There is a lot of information in books and on the internet so get stuck in but there is nothing better than watching, doing and experimenting.
- Another neat thing is to find a rangatira, an expert and hang out with them.
- You might find a special animal or atua that you want to learn more about so you concentrate on that even though you are storing up knowledge about a whole of lot of things.

5

Think and look at how different things effect each other

WHY IS THAT SO IMPORTANT?

WHY IS RĀ (SUN) IMPORTANT?

Because without him there is no light and without his light and heat there would be no earth.

Because without him nothing would grow.



WHY IS Papatūānuku (EARTH MOTHER) IMPORTANT?

Because without her we will have no where to live.

Because if she is not well she cannot give us food and the materials we need to make clothes, houses tools.

Without kohatu (stone) and paru (dirt) and wai (water Papatūānuku's blood) nothing grows.



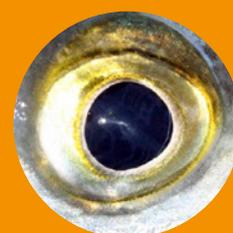
WHY IS TANGAROA (WATERWAYS) IMPORTANT?

Tangaroa makes sure that wai (water) is everywhere to keep Papatūānuku healthy.

Because without freshwater to drink we will die.

Because without freshwater to wash ourselves we will get sick.

Because without freshwater everything we need to live will die.



DID YOU KNOW?

In some stories Papatūānuku and Tangaroa were married first then Ranginui stole Papatūānuku from Tangaroa. It was because of this that Ranginui was forced to live far away from Papatūānuku. Even now we can see that Papatūānuku and Tangaroa are joined because the land does not end it just goes under sea water. Ranginui has to watch from way up above but can never be with Papatūānuku.