Aloha through Kindness

In the Hawaiian Islands, kindness is most often known as having the ALOHA spirit. Kindness describes people who are caring, generous, and considerate to other people. The ALOHA spirit brings many people together to learn about Hawaiian culture and traditions. This brings out emotions and connections to all participants by informing tourists and reminding locals to be thoughtful and respectful towards others. The ALOHA spirit makes you more appreciative. So now, how can you practice the ALOHA spirit? That's easy, I have practiced the ALOHA spirit multiple times by cleaning up our beaches and participating in beach clean-up projects, going to a taro patch, and learning how to plant Kalo. But what it comes down to is that ALOHA really stands for five different Hawaiian values. Those values are Akahai, Lōkahi, Olu‘olu, Ha‘aha‘a, and Ahonui. These values teach you how to care about yourself, others, and Hawaii's land.

The first Hawaiian value is Akahai, meaning kindness to be expressed with tenderness. Akahai reminds us to speak with care and thoughtfulness. In addition, this includes compassion, forgiveness, and acceptance towards others. Remembering Akahai in challenging times can turn the situation into a learning experience. Akahai reminds us that we must learn from ourselves, our family, and our friends. This is a good reminder because sometimes I focus too much on the current situation, forgetting that other people will always be there to help me and be by my side.

Another trait that helps make up ALOHA is Lōkahi, or the word unity, meaning united or being together. Lōkahi teaches you to keep yourself balanced and maintain harmony with others in our communities. With Lōkahi, we learn to help and support one
another in difficult times. Lōkahi can help us connect to different types of people in our community and work together. This was taught to me at a young age in elementary school when we learned to communicate with our classmates, teachers, and the community. I remember back in 3rd grade, we were introduced to this program called Aʻina. We were taught to work together in groups and give back to the land by building gardens and caring for the land. This program grew to my middle school and still influences how I live my life today. Lōkahi shows that families with a stronger sense of unity will be able to unite with each other and make their family unit stronger.

Another trait that helps make up ALOHA is Oluʻolu which means agreeable and pleasant. A reminder of Oluʻolu’ is that even if we are different, there are ways we can express our differences in encouraging and thoughtful practices. This means that people can accept one another even with their differences. When making friends and talking to others, I may not always agree with everything they say, but I try to accept what they are saying. An excellent example of this in my life is when my friends were arguing with me, I didn’t let myself get riled up from their argument. I stayed calm in that situation. When Oluʻolu is practiced in your life, you’ll be able to connect with your family and friends with love and appreciation for one another.

In addition, another trait that helps make up ALOHA is Haʻahaʻa which means humility. Humility is used to express a feeling of modesty and not judging others. Haʻahaʻa means to be open to learning, growing, and receiving new information. By being open to new ideas and growth, you will be able to learn more about yourself and different cultures and traditions. In elementary school, my parents taught me that my
actions speak louder than words. That meant letting my accomplishments show others what I can do, not bragging about my skills. I was also taught at a young age to be open to new ideas which helps me grow as a person and become the best version of myself. If you can be open to new ideas and knowledge, you can grow more as a person by exploring new experiences. Thus being open to new ideas will lead to new discoveries.

The final trait of ALOHA is Ahonui which means patience and tolerance. This means waiting for the right time to speak, act or think. We must think about patience in our daily lives to help us see the bigger picture. It means staying calm and relaxed and collected even in stressful situations. Patience helps us live ALOHA by helping us value and love ourselves more without getting frustrated or angry. It’s taking a deep breath before reacting. Patience is even more helpful with meditation or writing in a journal to reflect on yourself. Recently I have started journaling and this has helped me better connect with myself and think of my actions and thoughts that have taken place during the day. Overall journaling can be a small step towards learning patience and consistency.

Showing kindness or ALOHA is straightforward but can make a significant difference in everyone’s lives. Being kind enables you to connect with yourself and your community to find out who you truly are. Challenge yourself to show ALOHA in your life by making small changes in your behavior and attitude towards others. Sharing the ALOHA spirit should be practiced by all who live on the Hawaiian islands and everywhere in the world.