



Huna Article

Follow Your Heart

by Graeme Kapono Ulrich

I often hear people say, “*Follow your heart.*” But what is “*the heart?*” When I ask, there’s no clear or consistent definition offered—but it is their rule for living.

In Kupua tradition, “*the heart*” is a metaphor for the belief structures held by *Ku*—the function within the one self that remembers. It includes inspiration from “*Aumakua*” that we receive via *ku*.

Ku remembers everything. It holds patterns, habits, memories, and the emotional pathways we have walked. *Ku* is the body mind—fully alive, fully conscious, always paying attention, and always faithful to what it has been taught. We do what we have learned to do until we learn to do something different, hopefully something better.

When we say, “*Follow your heart,*” we must ask: what directions has the heart already memorized? *Ku* will usually guide us toward the familiar, whether or not it serves our growth. It does not judge—it simply remembers.

We often want change because we don’t like where we are but unless we give *Ku* clear information about what we do want, we will usually find ourselves in similar situations to the ones we are seeking to leave. The exception is when *Ku* has a strong role model to follow. This can be enhanced when we make conscious decisions to follow such a role model, learning new patterns to live by.

In the Kupua tradition, we learn this: **It is wise to tell your heart where you want to go before you follow it blindly.** We can give *Ku* new directions. We can teach it new habits and build new pathways. When we do this consciously, *Ku* will remember—and the heart will lead us well.

The heart is a powerful guide when it remembers the chosen path. When it seems to be leading us down an undesired path, we have the option to consciously decide to change and train *Ku*.

I had a clear experience of this many years ago when I was in the centre of Paris, needing to drive to Dunkirk to catch a ferry back to England. It was late at night, a blessing because the traffic was light, but I had no map. There was no GPS—it was before such technology was common. I had no outer directions, so I tuned in to my body and asked, “*Which way?*” In my training I had learned to trust that *Ku* knew and could show me.

By noticing whether my body tensed or relaxed, I was able to feel my way through the streets, turning based on how my body responded. I would ask, sense, and adjust. *Ku*—the body mind—was guiding me. Eventually, I found a sign for Dunkirk and joined the right highway. The way opened. “*Lono*” —the aspect of conscious decision-making—having set

the destination, paid attention to the information from *Ku*, and decided what to act on, what to follow and what to ignore.

This is what it means to follow your heart: not blindly, but by working with *Ku* as an inner compass, listening for the signs that *Ku* knows how to offer when we give it clear direction.

Speak to your heart with feeling, with pictures, and with certainty.

Tell *Ku* where you want to go. Teach it the way. Show it the patterns you wish to live by.

Then, when you follow your heart, you will find it knows the way

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