

Love and Influence: A Huna Perspective

By Pete Dalton



He 'ohu ke aloha; 'a'ohē kuahiwi kau 'ole.

Love is like mist; there is no mountaintop that it does not settle upon.

I am extremely grateful for many of the contacts and teachers and people who have inspired and influenced me throughout my life. Of course, I am ever grateful to Serge King for sharing with me his version of this wonderful Huna knowledge and for trusting me enough to share it with others.

In other areas of my life there have been other inspirational people too. One such person is Dr Robert Cialdini academic and psychologist and author of the best selling book Influence. I am grateful to be part of his Institute and to have learned a lot about human behavioural psychology as a result.

As Serge, himself astutely recognised in the alakai name he gave me *he kanaka 'imi 'ike 'ana* which translates to 'man seeking knowledge', I just love learning and one area of interest is finding out how, and why, people behave physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually as they do, and how they can do so for the benefit of themselves and the world more generally. For me this resonates with the goal of the Aloha Fellowship of making the world a better place.

I was recently reviewing some studies of human influence and, as I tend to take a Huna perspective on most things, including viewing the world through the lens of the seven principles, it wasn't long before I was making links to Huna knowledge.

One of the things that attracted me so much to Huna is the foundational underpinning ethic of Aloha which of course includes love and gratitude and more at

its core. Some fascinating areas of influence research also involves love and practices such as gratitude and compassion.

As we know there are many benefits to practicing Aloha in its many forms. The Little Pink Booklet of Aloha for example focuses on the practice of appreciation as an expression of Aloha. I have previously written about the benefits of practices related to Aloha such as [kindness](#) and [compassion](#).

Practicing Aloha in all its forms provides many benefits and positive side effects. Not only does the person doing these practices benefit but so do the recipients and in some cases the effects spread even more widely to more and more people - so not only a double whammy but a triple whammy too!

In the field of human influence there are interesting examples of research that demonstrate the influencing power of love and gratitude. For example: one study asked pedestrians to take a survey which asked them to think of either a meaningful piece of music or a meaningful example of love in their life. After they completed the survey the subjects were approached by someone with a map asking for directions. The study found that the people who had previously been thinking about an example of love were significantly more likely to spend more time helping the person requiring directions than those who had recollected a meaningful example of music.

In Huna we are aware of the use that can be made of various symbols. It is interesting to note that in the field of influence, studies have shown that symbols of love have an effect on influence. One example studied tipping in restaurants. Restaurant bills were presented to different customers under three different shaped plates: circular, square and heart shaped. This resulted in significantly higher tips being made when the bill was under the heart shaped plate. It was hypothesised that this was because when people are exposed to symbols representing love it activates feelings and behaviours associated with love which include helping and generosity hence the tendency to give bigger tips.

Similarly, studies have found that individuals are more likely to be influenced by persuasive messages delivered in a loving empathetic manner, compared to messages delivered in a hostile or critical fashion. In Huna we are very aware of the toxic nature of criticism and the negative effects it has.

Practicing Aloha boosts your ability to influence. It is great to see this borne out in the Huna knowledge as well as the world of behavioural science. So, there is a lot to be gained from these practices, perhaps even more than we have already understood and at the risk of stretching things, the power of love to influence is perhaps a fourth whammy and if we are influencing the world with the power of love that has got to be a good thing.

Pete is an Alakai of Huna International living in the UK. He uses Huna for coaching and empowerment and produces the Huna Adventurer's Newsletter and teaches a range of workshops based on Huna.. For more information and to sign up to the free newsletter visit: www.urbanhuna.org