

“I ola no ke kino i ka mā‘ona ka ‘ōpū.”

The body enjoys health when the stomach is well filled. –‘ōlelo no‘eau 1246

“I pa‘a ke kino o ke keiki i ka lā‘au.”

That the body of the child be solidly built by the medicines. –‘ōlelo no‘eau 1252

A mother ate herbs during pregnancy and nursing for the sake of the baby’s health. The herbs were given to the child up to the age of twenty so that he would be healthy and strong through maturity and old age.

Aloha kākou e nā kumu,

I hope these words bring a sense of understanding and peace to the present state of vigilance that we are all asked to take in response to COVID-19 (Corona Virus Disease, 2019). Local, county, state, and federal entities have disseminated precautionary steps and procedures that have been proven to work, over time, to prevent and contain the rapid spreading of COVID-19. As of March 4, 2020, there is/are no "vaccination(s)," according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention-treatment.html>).

I share this vital detail first to share the current situation concerning the "cure" for COVID-19.

I have had numerous discussions concerning the virus with health professionals from doctors, to traditional practitioners since it was classified as an epidemic last month, and now verging on the cusp of being pandemic. In these discussions, I have questioned my reactions to this ola-related phenomenon. I couldn't help to see its similarities in contrast to other viral infections that are a part of the everyday interactions we have in the world we live in. The ‘āina, with its various plants and holoholona that share that space with us, the kai with its teeming life, all interact DAILY with viruses and bacteria. Here is a list of the most common diseases caused by our interconnections with germs and bacteria.

1. Chickenpox: *varicella-zoster* virus (VZV)
2. Diphtheria: *Corynebacterium diphtheriae*
3. Influenza (flu): Type A & B virus
4. Hepatitis A virus
5. Hepatitis B virus
6. Hib: *Haemophilus influenzae* bacteria.
7. Human papillomavirus (HPV)
8. Measles: virus
9. Meningococcal disease: *Neisseria meningitis* bacteria
10. Mumps: virus
11. Pneumococcal disease: *Streptococcus pneumoniae* bacteria
12. Polio, or poliomyelitis: virus
13. Rotavirus
14. Rubella: virus
15. Shingles (Herpes Zoster): virus
16. Tetanus: *Clostridium tetani* bacteria
17. Whooping cough (Pertussis): *Bordetella pertussis* bacteria
18. Anthrax: *Bacillus anthracis* bacteria
19. Japanese encephalitis (JE) virus
20. Rabies: virus
21. Small Pox: variola virus
22. Tuberculosis: bacteria
23. Typhoid (*Salmonella* serotype Typhi)
24. Yellow Fever: virus
25. The Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS): virus
26. Severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS): virus

Do those viruses and bacteria, a.k.a "germs," sound familiar? As this list is hardly complete, it is imperative to reiterate that we are inherently linked to the world of "germs" as they exist inside the body as well as without it. Germs are categorized as viruses, bacteria, fungi, protozoans, and helminths. Our interaction with them is most especially true in our ‘āina based courses where we conduct a lot of hands-on teaching and learning. Whether we are working in the lo‘i, kanu ‘ana i nā mea kanu, or chewing plants in lā‘au lapa‘au we should always be practicing the basics of ho‘oma‘ema‘e. Ho‘oma‘ema‘e decreases the probability of infections by certain germs that can cause us to be ill. Ma‘alahi kēia. Kopa (soap), as a surfactant, combined with wai, helps with the washing away of many of these common bacteria or viruses. (Source: <https://pubs.acs.org/doi/abs/10.1021/es0114097>)

Mea ho‘oma‘i is the ‘ōlelo hawai‘i term for any virus. COVID-19 is a true mea ho‘oma‘i. It is a non-living clump of ōewe that cannot ho‘ohānau on their own, so it intrinsically seeks out a hunaola or healthy living cell to host it. After finding a host hunaola, the ōewe will hou kui itself into the healthy hunaola and seize control of its reproductive abilities and clone itself exponentially until that living, healthy hunaola dies. When the healthy hunaola eventually dies, the mea ho‘oma‘i are proliferated and can then hou kui a million other healthy hunaola in a person. This propagation occurs because the immune system doesn’t attack its’ own hunaola. The hide-and-seek behavior of a mea ho‘oma‘i, like COVID-19, makes it difficult sometimes for the body to swiftly deal with it.

Akā na‘e, he mea nui kēia wahi mana‘o: all healthy hunaola of our kino consume the nutrients that are provided by the kino to sustain and nurture them. The natural process after consuming and using the nutrients is to purge itself of waste. When an infected hunaola eliminates, or ki‘o, the օewe traces of the mea ho‘oma‘i are released too. This is when the immune system engages by sending cells called macrophages to take the pieces of օewe ho‘oma‘i to the T-helper cell or T-kāko‘o. Here's the kupanaha part where the T-helper cell memorizes and creates a library of information regarding the օewe of the mea ho‘oma‘i and creates a T-Killer cell (a warrior-cell) that will hou kui a specific lapa‘au into the infected hunaola that will ho‘omake the mea ho‘oma‘i.

Only your ‘onaehana pale ‘ea (immune system) can create the lapa‘au that you specifically need for your kino. The "cure" comes from within you.

The ‘onaehana pale ‘ea is a warrior system within each of us. It too needs the same nourishment as all of the other hunaola in your kino. The vigilance of that warrior is fully activated and heightened when we live the 7 Laws of Ola. These laws form the basis of our mo‘omeheu ola in lā‘au lapa‘au hawai‘i. Following these essential life-sustaining laws support and bolster the mental, physical, spiritual, and emotional health of a person.

1. ‘ai pono/inu pono (eat and hydrate pono)
2. moe (proper sleep)
3. ho‘oikaika kino (movement/exercise)
4. ho‘oma‘ema‘e (cleanliness within/without the body)
5. no‘ono‘o pono (meditate)
6. māna‘ona‘o (ponder)
7. pule (prayer)

Of the various laws, the first law of health, ‘ai pono, can have a significant impact on the health, and degree of vigilance that our ‘onaehana pale ‘ea can individually provide for us. The quality of foods that you eat can determine whether or not your ‘onaehana pale ‘ea will effectively work for you in the time that you need it. In our academic setting, we demand a lot of ourselves in our kuleana as educators and staff, and we equally expect the same from our haumāna that are engaged in it with us. However, we tend to succumb to the common flu (a viral infection) when we stress our body systems and focus more on the cognitive uptake of ‘ike and less on building the resilience of the mind, body, ‘uhane, and emotions. Knowing our tendencies toward our health makes it possibly better to endure the challenges of each semester to the end. Like the quote from above, "I pa‘a ke kino o ke keiki i ka lā‘au," [t]hat the body of the child be solidly built by the medicines." That same advice applies to us as adults. The need for nourishing our body is just as critical now as it was when we were keiki.

Determine for yourself whether these seven Kānāwai Ola have any relevance in the COVID-19 events that are unfolding in real-time before all of us by testing its efficacy in your own life. Improving in any area of the seven Kānāwai Ola will improve your overall health too. Finally, advice by allopathic doctors to get your daily dose of vitamins is also spot-on. These vitamins are conducive to a healthy ‘onaehana pale ‘ea too: Vitamin D mai ka lā mai, Vitamin C, Vitamin A, and Iodine (found in limu). If you love berries like ‘ōhelo, have fun and enjoy it with other berries too.

In conclusion, the kino is fantastic at doing what it does best. Trust it. Care for it. To me, following the disseminated precautionary measures is a good start; however, it isn't enough to curb the effects of a possible contact that may happen with COVID-19. We need to be more actively "proactive" in strengthening our whole-self now because it is only the ‘onaehana pale ‘ea that can "cure" and "protect" people from any harmful mea ho‘oma‘i. For me, I will mālama my kino and nourish the ‘onaehana pale ‘ea, the greatest warrior my body has, to fight against this mea ho‘oma‘i COVID-19. With ola to you, our kumu, to our haumāna and our lāhui.

Keoki Kīkaha Pai Baclayon
Kumu Lā‘au Lapa‘au

*Please forward to those who may benefit.