

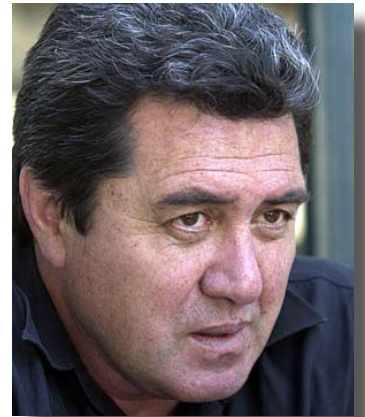
What Would Help Maori Most

There is a lot of talk, especially around election time, about what Maori need. The solutions offered are usually things like better access to education, better housing, more housing, better health care, better everything.

But none of these are the solutions. Literally billions of dollars have been injected for decades into 'the betterment' of Maori but nothing has solved "the Maori problem". Which is?

That on just about every measure of negative social indication, Maori get the gold medal - suicide, obesity, child poverty, child abuse, alcoholism, family violence, incarceration, violent crime, unemployment, welfare dependency, just to name a few.

New Zealand novelist and newspaper columnist Alan Duff (right), himself a Maori, wrote "*That something is badly wrong with the Maori people is a fact that no one now will argue with. The government statistics tell the sad tale. The eyes of any citizen of New Zealand can anyway see it: something is terribly wrong with the one people that is not nearly so wrong with the predominant other.*"¹ Alan is best known as the author of the novel *Once Were Warriors*.



So what is wrong?

What the solution?

What I am about to say does not just apply to Maori, but to all people in all cultures, right around the globe. But it particularly applies to Maori.

The solution has to do with the development of character. This word 'character' is hardly ever talked about today, but it's the ancient golden key to success in life, proven over time, tested, and trusted.

Unlike "personality", which is fixed from conception, "character" is developed. No one is born with great character. The opposite is true. All children are born with weak characters, so their characters must be developed. For example, children do not have to be taught to lie, fight, cheat, exhibit greed, covetousness and so on. They exhibit these behaviours naturally.

Character has to do with what's on the inside of a person. It's their locus of control.

Good character is not formed in a week or a month. It is **created** little by little, **day by day**. Protracted and patient effort is needed to develop good character.

— Heraclitus



Character training starts in life by teaching children, and their parents if they don't know, about the absolute connection between success in life, whatever path one chooses, and the development of character.

Life is tough, a lot of the time, and when things get tough, and you don't have character, it gets much much tougher.

Hence the birth of the so called 'disadvantaged'

¹ Alan Duff. *Maori. The Crisis And The Challenge*. Harper Collins. 1998. p1

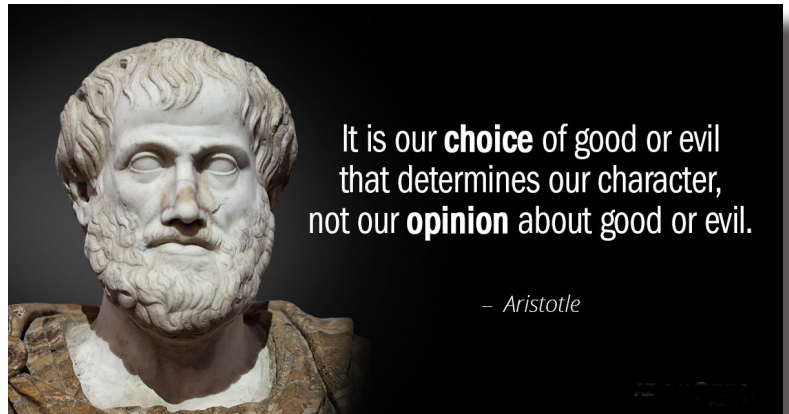
class. That is to say, when things get hard, really hard, and things start to go wrong, and you don't have character to pull you out of a nose dive, you sink to the bottom. You crash and burn, and sometimes never recover. Once at the bottom, you end up being labeled a 'disadvantaged person'.

But you are not really a disadvantaged person. Rather, you are someone who lacked character. The good news is that all is not lost for a person at the bottom. Sometimes people who hit rock bottom have an ember of character in them, and they blow on that ember, or friends / family rally around and blow on it for them, and it can burst into flame, and they can recover. But even the desire to blow on the ember, and fuel the fire, takes character.

So what is character?

“Character” can be defined as a cluster of internally driven skills, drivers, and attitudes such as:

- Someone who consistently displays integrity in their dealings with others
- Someone who consistently displays honesty in their dealings with others
- Someone who has the ability to persevere when things are tough,
- Someone who has the ability to solve problems,
- to handle criticism and success,
- to handle disappointment, and lots of it,
- to be self disciplined,
- the resolve to take personal responsibility for one's health and wellness,
- the resolve to read and take courses on this and that and improve themselves and their mind
- the ability to plan and set goals, and the skills to achieve them, particularly financial and health goals,
- the desire to work hard, and work long hours when it's necessary,
- the skills and commitment to look after a life partner and children and pour wisdom and support and encouragement into both,
- the discipline to look after property and possessions and maintain them,
- the ability to manage time and to prioritise,
- having the discipline to eliminate distractions like TV and other trivia,
- to focus on growing the inner man or woman, or girl or boy,
- to put family first,
- to be a generous / giving person.
- someone who has the wisdom to rest from work at the right time
- Someone who has learned to be altruistic.
- someone who has learned how to make friends and keep them, and to be loyal and caring and loving.
- And so on.



Here's the thing - character transcends culture. If you don't have character, no matter what cultural group you belong to, life will destroy you. It will push you to the bottom, fast.

People with character, deep character, obey the law, rise above their many problems, obey rules, respect authority, work hard, pay their taxes, love their families, contribute to society, and take responsibility. They exhibit most if not all the attitudes, drivers, and skills I have just listed, and more.

When big big problems come to them, they overcome, even the ultimate problem which is death. How so?

They die victoriously, leaving a legacy of people all around them who they coached and nurtured in the art of character development. Anyone who dies in this state, with this legacy, dies a worthy death.

In other words, people of character produce children or others around them who are the same as themselves. They become model citizens who contribute to the country much more than they take.

The police never visit them, and they rarely need hospital care. They make a priority of educating themselves to the highest level possible. They invest in their minds, and their health, and their families and friends, and thus their futures.

Imagine the outcomes for a country where everyone was like that?

A tiny police force, a tiny need for healthcare system, a court system with not much to do, and a big tax take. Any country like that would be a very very prosperous country and everyone around the world would want to live in such a country.

How does one achieve that?

By government implementing a deliberate and sustained character education initiative, starting at birth for children, and immediately for parents who don't know all this. Character acquisition is a life long pursuit. As I have said, no one "arrives" with character development. They never "have it all". Between birth and death, there is always room for growth.

Many parents have not had such education, so don't know what they don't know. Thus they can't pass onto their children the character skills their children will need to succeed in life.

Successive governments have, I think, unwittingly created the opposite - the characterless. How so?

They have created a welfare state monster which is now insatiable. They have created a group of people, Maori, who have come to think of themselves as *victims*, not as victors. They have created a group of people who think of themselves as entitled, rather than a people who take personal responsibility for the outcomes of their lives.

Essentially, governments have given a growing number of people a ticket to give up on life, sent them a message that it is ok to be characterless, to let life beat you down. Thus, when down and out, you receive your new name from the government - you are "A Disadvantaged Person."

The main concern of most governments, and most MPs, is re-election, or election, and not long term solutions. Votes are their gods. They lust for power.

Hence they offer voters money and incentives, lollies, rather than long term solutions. Voters are themselves too stupid to resist. So a dreadful vicious cycle is set in motion.

This cycle must eventually be broken if we want a prosperous and truly healthy country.

In this respect, most politicians are so utterly and shamefully shallow. They are self serving to the core.

Hence we have generations of deeply characterless people living in New Zealand who think that life is about



what is owed them, and what they can get, rather than what they can give and contribute to society.

In this respect, Maori, generally speaking, get the gold medal. In the Olympics of entitlement and victimhood, they stand highest on the dais.

The result? What we have now in New Zealand a cultural group with a heavy dependency on the state, and an ingrained entitlement and “I have been grievied” and “I demand compensation” attitude. All cultures can suffer from this.

Successive governments who offer empty hollow and unsustainable ‘solutions’ for the characterless, principally to win votes and buy themselves into power, who don’t address the root problems, and who don’t offer root solutions, are the problem.

Make no mistake. Character is the golden key to success in life. Guaranteed. It’s the golden key to a prosperous and radiant country. What’s true for an individual is true for a community, and a country, and a world.

We could say that the health and prosperity of a nation is in direct proportion to the sum total of the depth of character, or otherwise, of each of its people.

Yet, no political party in New Zealand has ever talked in these terms. Ever. Why is this? It could be that they don’t know about character.

Or they know about character but will not talk about it because it will not win votes. If the latter, then for sure, they think they possess character, but in reality they do not.

Why?

Because one of the great marks of a man or a woman of character is this - they do the right thing, and say the right thing, regardless of the consequences. Truly great leaders attribute place a premium on truth - speaking it, and modelling it.

It’s their character that drives them to think, speak, and act this way.

They know what is right, and what is wrong, and they tell people the difference, even if they lose popularity in doing so, it does not matter to them. They just go out and do what’s right, and say what’s right, irrespective of the consequences. That’s a real leader.

Plastic leaders, characterless leaders, fake leaders, on the other hand, focus on doing and saying what is popular. What will win them votes. They don’t care if what they say is right or wrong, or whether what they do is right or wrong, they just want power. Thus they show for all the world to see that they don’t have character.

Lack of character, at every level, has gotten this country into the mess it’s in now, and only character, at every level, will get us out.

Equality Vs Equal Outcomes.

I believe in equality of opportunity, but not in artificially creating equal outcomes. Sure, there ought to be a level playing field, where everyone has the same chance of succeeding. The rules should be the same for all. The goal posts should be the same for everyone. Democracy demands this.

But as for artificially creating equal outcomes? *No. Absolutely no.*

Why not?

If a man or a woman works hard to develop their character, and they achieve great outcomes in life (e.g. wealth, a great business, a great family, a posh car, great friendships, and other assets etc), this is a wonderful thing. They will have earned their success. All power to them. I applaud them. They deserve their great outcomes.

But what of the man or woman who is lazy, who displays the traits of the characterless, and ends up with poor outcomes? Who ends up being labeled 'disadvantaged'?

Should we artificially compensate the man or woman with poor outcomes, gifting them money and resources, which have been generated and earned by the man with character, so that these two men, the characterful and the characterless, have equal outcomes?

No. Absolutely not. Why?

If we did that we would be rewarding bad character. And what does that do? We teach that man that he can be rewarded for his bad character.

This is absolutely the worst thing to teach any person. It's inhumane. It's abuse.

Why? We teach him to live a lie. To believe a lie. What lie? That he or she can succeed in life without character.

What then?

He or she develops more bad character, and so we will push him or her into a downward spiral.

For example, take the woman who figures out that having more illegitimate children can earn her a lot of money from the government. That's right, by establishing a system where she can see having illegitimate children as a career choice, we absolutely cause her demise, her destruction.

She learns to rely on the state, rather than her character, for her success in life.

She will quickly become a disadvantaged person. She will then model for her children how they too can become disadvantaged people. Hence generations of dependent people are birthed. It's the same for a man who realises that not working and being on the dole is a wonderful thing. He has children and he teaches them the same, and they all become disadvantaged too.

What happens next? He or she starts costing a lot of money to keep. The hardworking people of character have to keep him or her. They have to pay to keep him or her alive and in comfort.

On the balance sheet, the characterless person becomes an ongoing loss, a liability. If a country is a ship, every characterless person is a leak. A leak on the financial health and prosperity of a country. And if there are too many leaks, the ship sinks.

And no man, no woman, no country can prosper and flourish when it's built on a lie. Why? Because when the storms of life come, and they will, that man, that woman, that country, will sink.

Outcomes for an individual or a country are in direct proportion to character. If a man or a woman has great

character, they will achieve great outcomes. If not, then poor outcomes. This is just how life works, and there is no point in arguing any other way.

It's a law of life, like gravity. This is the truth, nothing more, nothing less. And in the end, the truth always wins. If you break this law, it will break you. Nothing is more certain.

This, ultimately, is the solution for Maori i.e. they must take their focus off being:

- victims,
- and entitled,
- and dependent on hand outs and free stuff from the state
- cunning and manipulative tricksters, fraudulently manipulating the Treaty and engaging in spin about the same in order to gain money and assets for nothing

They must take their minds off the supreme importance of:

- their culture and their language,
- and how important they are,
- and how everyone must respect and honour them,
- and how everyone must bow down to them,
- and how everyone must get their permission for this and that and the other thing.
- and how everyone must walk on egg shells when they are around them.

All this is putting fuel on the fire of their existing characterlessness: proud and arrogant, self seeking, dishonest, greedy and ungrateful.

All this is moving Maori in entirely the wrong direction. This has been going on for decades and it must stop.

Billions of dollars have been given to Maori over this time, and absolutely nothing has changed for Maori except for one thing - their character has gotten worse and worse. Their status as the 'disadvantaged' people group has become entrenched.

And worst of all? Politicians of all parties have created this situation. They have created the demise of Maori.

So where to from here?

Maori must focus completely and entirely on the development of character in their people.

Their leaders must lead by example. Maori leaders are the problem, and Maori leaders are the solution.

Some Maori have already learned all this, about character, and they are flourishing. All power to them. They detest being treated differently to everyone else. They demand that they compete on a level playing field. We must honour these Maori for swimming against the tide, and succeeding.

But I have an exhortation for them as well. What exhortation? Lead your people out. Don't sit back and watch them wallowing in their characterless, pitiful state. Reach down and help them out. They are your people. Help them. Help them move into what I am writing about here regarding character.

Politicians would be very wise to follow suit, implementing character education starting at pre-school and continuing through to the end of university. And don't forget the same for parents so that parents and children are all in sync.

Plug the leaks on the ship called New Zealand, then watch her prosperity and good fortune soar. Watch apartheid, racism, and division melt like ice on a hot tin roof.

It will take great humility for Maori to make such a change. And here's the thing - even humility is a character trait, so the challenge for them will be great.

But if they do it, then and only then, will they break free, and as a people group begin to flourish and stand on their own two feet, like the rest of society.

No more victimhood.

No more entitlement attitudes.

No more of 'you own me'.

No more blaming anyone else.

No more manipulating and twisting the Treaty to get free cash and assets through fraud and spin.

Enough.

All this has caused their demise.

It's time for Maori to break free and become the grand and great people group that they were always meant to be.

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