



If you want to solve a problem, no matter what kind of problem, work on yourself.

—Ihaleakala Hew Len

100% Responsibility and the Promise of a Hot Fudge Sundae

An Interview with Ihaleakala Hew Len

By Cat Saunders

How do you thank someone who has helped to set you free? How do you thank a man whose gentle spirit and zinger statements have forever altered the course of your life? Ihaleakala Hew Len is such a man for me. Like a soul brother who shows up unexpectedly in an hour of need, Ihaleakala came into my life in March of 1985, during a time of massive change for me. I met him during a training called "Self I-Dentity Through Ho'oponopono," which he facilitated along with the late Mornnah Nalamaku Simeona, a native Hawaiian *kahuna* ("keeper of the secret").

For me, Ihaleakala and Mornnah are part of the rhythm of life. Though I love them both dearly, I don't really dwell on thoughts of them as people, yet their influence is always there for me, beating a steady pulse like African drums in the night. Recently, I had the honor of being asked to interview Ihaleakala by The Foundation of I, Inc. (Freedom of the Cosmos), an organization founded by Mornnah. It was an even greater honor to learn that he would be coming from his home in Hawaii to meet with me personally.

Dr. Ihaleakala S. Hew Len is the foundation's president and administrator. Together with Mornnah, Ihaleakala has worked with thousands of people over the years, including groups at the United Nations, UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), International Human Unity Conference on World Peace, World Peace Conference, Traditional Indian Medicine Conference, Healers for Peace in Europe, and the Hawaii State Teachers Association. He also has extensive experience working with developmentally disabled people and with the criminally mentally ill and their families. In all his work as an educator, the Ho'oponopono process supports and permeates every breath of his efforts.

Simply put, Ho'oponopono means, "to make right," or "to rectify an error." According to the ancient Hawaiians, error arises from thoughts that are tainted by painful memories from the past. Ho'oponopono offers a way to release the energy of these painful thoughts, or errors, which cause imbalance and disease.

Along with the updated Ho'oponopono process, Mornnah was guided to include the three parts of the self, which are the key to Self I-Dentity. These three parts — which exist in every molecule of reality — are called the Unihipili (child/subconscious), the Uhane (mother/conscious), and the Aumakua (father/superconscious). When this "inner family" is in alignment, a person is in rhythm with the Divinity. With this balance, life begins to flow. Thus, Ho'oponopono helps restore balance in the individual first, and then in all of creation.

By introducing me to this three-part system, along with the most powerful forgiveness process I know (Ho'oponopono), Ihaleakala and Mornnah taught me this: the best way to bring healing to every part of my life — and to the entire universe — is to take 100% responsibility and work on *myself*. In addition, they taught

the simple wisdom of total self-care. As Ihaleakala said in a thank-you note after our interview: "You take good care of yourself. If you do, all will be beneficiaries."

Once, Ihaleakala left for an entire afternoon in the middle of a training I was taking, because his Unihipili (child/subconscious) told him to go to his hotel and take a long nap. Of course, he was responsible about leaving, and Morrnah was there to teach. Even still, his exit made a lasting impression on me. For someone like me, raised in a family and culture that admonished me to put others first, Ihaleakala's actions astounded and delighted me. He got his nap, and I got an unforgettable lesson in self-care.

Cat: Ihaleakala, when I met you in 1985, I'd just started private practice after working as a counselor in agencies for four years. I remember you said, "All therapy is a form of manipulation." I thought, "Jeez! What am I supposed to do now?" I knew you were right, so I almost quit! Obviously, I didn't, but that statement completely changed the way I work with people.

Ihaleakala: Manipulation happens when I (as a therapist) come from the idea that you are ill and I am going to work on you. On the other hand, it's *not* manipulation if I realize that you are coming to me to give me a chance to look at what's going on in *me*. There's a big difference.

If therapy is about your belief that you're there to save the other person, heal the other person, or direct the other person, then the information you bring will come out of the intellect, the conscious mind. But the intellect has no real understanding of problems and how to approach them. The intellect is so picayunish in its way of solving problems! It doesn't realize that when a problem is solved by transmutation — by using Ho'oponopono or related processes — then the problem and *everything related to it* is solved, even at microscopic levels and back to the beginning of time.

So first of all, I think the most important question to ask is, "What is a problem?" If you ask people this, there's no clarity. Because there's no clarity, they make up some way of solving the problem...

Cat: ... as if the problem is "out there."

Ihaleakala: Yes. For example, the other day I got a call from the daughter of a woman who is 92. She said, "My mother's had these severe hip pains for several weeks." While she's talking to me, I'm asking this question of the Divinity, "What is going on in me that I have caused that woman's pain?" And then I ask, "How is it that I can rectify that problem within me?" The answers to these questions come, and I do whatever I'm told.

Maybe a week later the woman calls me and says, "My mother's feeling better now!" This doesn't mean the problem won't recur, because there are often multiple causes for what appears to be the same problem.

Cat: I have a lot of recurring illness and chronic pain. I work with it all the time, using Ho'oponopono and other clearing processes to make amends for all the pain I've caused since the beginning of time.

Ihaleakala: Yes. The idea being that people like us are in the healing professions because we have caused a lot of pain.

Cat: Big time!

Ihaleakala: How wonderful to know that, and to have people pay us for having caused them their problems!

I said this to a woman in New York, and she said, "God, if only they knew!" But you see, nobody knows. Psychologists, psychiatrists, they keep thinking that they're there to help heal the other person.

So if someone like you comes to me, I say to the Divinity, "Please, whatever is going on *in me* that I have caused this pain in Cat, tell me how I can rectify it." And I will apply whatever information I'm given indefinitely, until your pain is gone or until you ask me to stop. It's not so much the *effect* that is important as the getting to the problem. That's the key.

Cat: You don't focus on the outcome, because we're not in charge of that.

Ihaleakala: Right. We can only petition.

Cat: We also don't know when a particular pain or illness will shift.

Ihaleakala: Yes. Say a woman has been taking an herb that was suggested for her, and it's not working. Again, the question is "What's going on *in me* that this woman is experiencing this herb not working for her?" I would work on that. I would keep *cleaning*, keep my mouth closed, and allow the process of transmutation to take place. As soon as you engage the intellect, the process stops. The thing to remember when some kind of healing doesn't seem to be working is this: there may be multiple errors — multiple problems or painful memories that are causing the pain. We know nothing! Only the Divinity knows what's really going on.

I gave a presentation out in Dallas last month, and I spoke with this woman, a Reiki master. I said, "Let me ask you a question. When somebody comes to you with a problem, where is that problem?" She looked puzzled when I said, "You're the one who caused the problem, so your client is going to pay you to heal *your* problem!" Nobody gets that.

Cat: 100% responsibility.

Ihaleakala: 100% knowing that you're the cause of the problem. 100% knowing that you have the responsibility, then, to rectify the error. Can you imagine if we all knew we are 100% responsible?

I made a deal with myself ten years ago that I would treat myself to a hot fudge sundae — so huge it would make me sick — if I could get through the day without having some judgment of someone. I've never been able to do it! I notice I catch myself more often, but I never get through a day.

So how do I get that across to people — that we are each 100% responsible for problems? If you want to solve a problem, no matter what kind of problem, work on yourself. If the problem is with another person, for example, just ask yourself, "What's going on *in me* that's causing this person to bug me?" People only show up in your life to bug you! If you know that, you can elevate any situation, and you can release there. It's simple: "I'm sorry for whatever's going on. Please forgive me."

Cat: You don't have to actually say that out loud to them, and you don't even have to understand the problem.

Ihaleakala: That's the beauty of this. You don't have to understand. It's like the Internet. You don't understand all this! You just go to the Divinity and you say, "Can we download?" and the Divinity downloads, and then you get the necessary information. But because we don't know who we are, we never download direct from the Light. We go outside.

I remember Morrnah used to say, "It's an inside job." If you want to be successful, it's an inside job. Work on yourself!

Cat: I know that 100% responsibility is the only thing that works, but I used to struggle with this stuff, because I'm an overly responsible caretaker type. When I heard you talking about 100% responsibility not just for myself, but for every situation and problem, I thought, "Whoa! This is crazy! I don't need anybody telling me to be even more responsible!" Yet the more I thought about it, the more I realized that there's a big difference between overly responsible caretaking, versus totally responsible self-care. One is about being a good little girl, and the other is about getting free.

I remember you talking about the years when you were a staff psychologist at Hawaii State Hospital for the Criminally Insane. You said that when you started working there, the ward for criminals was full of violence, and when you left four years later, there was none.

Ihaleakala: Basically, I took 100% responsibility. I just worked on myself.

Cat: You said that when you worked with the inmates, they wouldn't even be there with you.

Ihaleakala: Right. I would only go into the building to check the results. If they still looked depressed, then I'd work on myself some more.

Cat: Would you tell a story about using Ho'oponopono for so-called inanimate objects?

Ihaleakala: I was in an auditorium once getting ready to do a lecture, and I was talking to the chairs. I asked, "Is there anybody I've missed? Does anyone have a problem that I need to take care of?" One of the chairs said, "You know, there was a guy sitting on me today during a previous seminar who had financial problems, and now I just feel dead!" So I *cleaned* with that problem, and I could just see the chair straightening up. Then I heard, "Okay! I'm ready to handle the next guy!"

What I actually try to do is teach the room. I say to the room and everything in it, "Do you want to learn how to do Ho'oponopono? After all, I'm going to leave soon. Wouldn't it be nice if you could do this work for yourselves? Some say yes, some say no, and some say, "I'm too tired!"

Then I ask the Divinity, "If they say they would like to learn, how can I help them learn?" Most of the time, I get this: "Leave the blue book (*Self I-Identity Through Ho'oponopono*) with them." So I just take the blue book out and leave it on one of the chairs or on a table while I'm talking. We don't give tables enough credit for being quiet and aware of what is going on!

Ho'oponopono is really very simple. For the ancient Hawaiians, all problems begin as thought. But having a thought is not the problem. So what's the problem? The problem is that all our thoughts are imbued with painful memories, memories of persons, places, or things.

The intellect working alone can't solve these problems, because the intellect only manages. Managing things is no way to solve problems. You want to let them go! When you do Ho'oponopono, what happens is that the Divinity takes the painful thought and neutralizes or purifies it. You don't purify the person, place, or thing. You neutralize the energy you associate with that person, place, or thing. So the first stage of Ho'oponopono is the purification of that energy.

Now something wonderful happens. Not only does that energy get neutralized; it also gets *released*, so there's a brand new slate. Buddhists call it the Void. The final step is that you allow the Divinity to come in and fill the void with light.

To do Ho'oponopono, you don't have to know what the problem or error is. All you have to do is notice any problem you are experiencing physically, mentally, emotionally, whatever. Once you notice, your responsibility is to immediately begin to *clean*, to say, "I'm sorry. Please forgive me."

Cat: So the true job of the intellect is not to solve problems, but to ask for forgiveness.

Ihaleakala: Yes. My job here on earth is twofold. My job is first of all to make amends. My second job is to awaken people who might be asleep. Almost everyone is asleep! *The only way I can awaken them is to work on myself.* Our interview is an example. For weeks before our appointment today, I've been doing the clearing work, so when you and I meet, it's like two pools of water coming together. They move through and they go. That's all.

Cat: In ten years of doing interviews, this is the only one I didn't prepare for. Every time I checked in, my Unihipili said that I should just come and be with you. My intellect went nuts trying to convince me that I should prepare, but I didn't.

Ihaleakala: Good for you! The Unihipili can be really fun. One day I was coming down the highway in Hawaii. When I started to head toward the usual off-ramp, I heard my Unihipili say in a singing voice, "I wouldn't go down there if I were you." I thought, "But I always go there." Then when we got closer, about fifty yards away, I heard, "Hello! I wouldn't go down there if I were you!" Second chance. "But we always go down there!"

Now I'm talking out loud and people in cars around me are looking at me like I'm crazy. About 25 yards away, I hear a loud, "*I wouldn't go down there if I were you!*" I went down there, and I sat for two and a half hours. There was a huge accident. Couldn't move back, couldn't move forward. Finally, I heard my Unihipili say, "Told you!" Then it wouldn't talk to me for weeks! I mean, why talk to me if I wasn't going to listen?

I remember one time when I was going to be on television to talk about Ho'oponopono. My children heard about it and they said, "Dad, we heard you are going to be on TV. Make sure your socks match!" They didn't care what I said. They just cared that my socks matched. See how children know the important things in life?

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For more information about Ho'oponopono or to contact Ihaleakala Hew Len, Ph.D., please visit <http://www.hooponopono.org>.

If you're wondering about the baseball cap, Ihaleakala wears it so he remembers not to be so intellectual. The background blue represents the Void, or Emptiness, and the red "P" represents Mother Earth, or the creative force, Pele.