

# ALOHA IS PEACE!

**A** is for 'Amo 'Amo is for the first "A" in ALOHA because it means to carry a burden on the shoulders. This word reminds us of the heavy weight of responsibility we have to "aloha kekahi i ke kekahi". This responsibility stems from a heart filled with compassion for all things but especially those who are poor and oppressed in life. The 'auamo is the pole used to rest on the shoulders that carries the burden tied to both ends. The burdens are balanced which reminds us that not only do we have the responsibility to "bear one another's burdens" but our kuleana includes malama and aloha 'aina, to care for the land, the 'aina, wai, and kai.

**L** is for Li'a Li'a is defined as a strong desire, or yearning as in the yearning for peace and justice. This yearning for peace and justice is what makes ALOHA more than just a sentimental warm feeling inside. It is the honest truth that needs to find expression in the actions and not just thoughts about ALOHA. ALOHA in its most perfect form is the reality of peace and justice. When there is peace and justice ALOHA becomes a yearning for peace and justice. This yearning is echoed in the timeless words of "Ua mau ke ea o ka 'aina i ka pono!"

**O** is a word made up of a single letter and it fittingly indicates that there is only one answer to the question of life and that answer is "yes". O means to remain true, to endure, to survive, to continue, to exist! To say o means to choose life. This life is not one to be lived in isolation, but in a community, or in 'ohana with others. To understand ALOHA, one must understand what it means to declare O in the face of adversity, discouragement, and even death. The O of ALOHA erases any doubt that Aloha Ke Akua.

**H** for Hili means to braid, plait, or to string as flowers for a lei, so that we must imagine the many diverse peoples in our communities, and in the world being woven together into a beautiful rainbow quilt; or strung side by side in a wonderful, colorful, and fragrant lei of life. ALOHA is understanding and living this reality that we are all connected to one another, our lives are intertwined even as our roots go deep into the ahupua'a of this honua. Hili is the unifying imperative of ALOHA.

**A** for Alu begins with the understanding that there are things in this world that separate, divide, discriminate, and destroy. Alu is the response to divisive and destructive natures and energies. It is the antithesis to division. It seeks to bring together, to foster cooperation, to combine, to consolidate. It reminds us that the very nature of Ke Akua is to reconcile, restore, and redress. The alu of ALOHA seeks to address the brokenness in the world around us, in our families and in our communities, to bring together the things that have been separated, to tear down the walls that separate, to oki to set free those who are held captive. This is ALOHA!

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