Listening is a Martial Art:
New Strategies for Transformation in the Face of Structural Injustice
Tungia te ururua, kia tupu whakaritorito te tupu o te harakeke

Set fire to the scrub that the flax plants may shoot forth young evergreen shoots
Importance of listening

“There's really no such thing as the 'voiceless'. There are only the deliberately silenced, or the preferably unheard.”

– Arundhati Roy
The role of listening in structural injustice

Structural injustice: “rather than the result of a few people’s choices or policies, its causes are embedded in unquestioned norms, habits, and symbols, in the assumptions underlying institutional rules and the collective consequences of following those rules” - Iris Marion Young, Responsibility for Justice

“The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.” – Edmund Burke

“I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro’s great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen’s Counciler or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate, …who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice” – Martin Luther King Jr.
Broadcasters reveal how just saying Māori words correctly can be controversial

Duncan Garner: "I got emails that would be the most abusive I've received all year from New Zealanders."

Wellington College boys now threatening violence against planned 'rape culture' protest

Local students are planning to protest outside Wellington College.
Waharoa: ‘Gather your people’

- Western philosophical tradition of unmarkedness as ontology and ideal
- History of settler-colonial dominance
‘Epistemic vices’ of privilege

• **Epistemic arrogance** (presuming we’re smarter/right)

• **Epistemic laziness** (uncurious about other perspectives)

• **Close-mindedness** (resistant to learning)

  (José Medina, *Epistemologies of Resistance*)

---

**The Missing Women**

Study finds that men speak twice as often as women do at colloquiums, a difference that can’t be explained away by rank, speaker pool composition or women’s interest in giving talks.

---

**A consistent pattern**

Numerous studies have examined this phenomenon, and they’ve all reached the same conclusion: Men consistently interrupt women.
Waharoa: ‘Gather your people’

- Western philosophical tradition of **unmarkedness** as ontology and ideal
- History of settler-colonial **dominance**
- Collective **amnesia** of this history
Living “without history”

“People who imagine that history flatters them (as it does, indeed, since they wrote it) are impaled on their history like a butterfly on a pin and become incapable of seeing or changing themselves, or the world. This is the place in which it seems to me, most white Americans find themselves. Impaled. They are dimly, or vividly, aware that the history they have fed themselves is mainly a lie, but they do not know how to release themselves from it, and they suffer enormously from the personal incoherence.”

- James Baldwin, “The White Man’s Guilt”
Obstacles to listening by advantaged groups

Social advantage comes with:

- Numbness (difficulties seeing)
- Epistemic vices (difficulties learning)
- Oversensitivity (difficulties reacting)
Structures of feeling

• “inexact but powerful constellations of affective account and evaluation running through the mill of everyday practice...shorthand for orientation to the world” (Ash Amin and Nigel Thrift, Arts of the Political)

• “our experience of habitual perceptions is so attenuated as to skip the stage of conscious interpretation and intent. Indeed, interpretation is the wrong word here: we are simply perceiving” (Linda Alcoff, “Epistemologies of Ignorance: Three Types”)

• “strategies of responses to ‘disequilibrium’ are not based on conscious intentionality but rather stem from unconscious dispositions towards practice, and depend on the power position the agent occupies in the social structure” (DiAngelo, “White Fragility”)
“Straight White Male” has become this century’s N-Word. It’s used to offend and diminish the recipient based on assumption and bias. No difference in the usage.

Walkout on Māori greeting portrays prejudice, and ignorance in New Zealand culture

Kiwis saying 'this is not us' in wake of Christchurch attacks is 'letting yourself off the hook', academic says

Anzac backlash: Veterans angry at Muslim prayer plan

Hate crime laws are an extension of identity politics. They pit groups against one another by declaring that certain people are more deserving of legal protection than others.

Identity politics denies our common humanity. It says that if you’re part of a group I don’t like, then I don’t have to acknowledge your inherent value and inalienable rights as an individual. It dehumanises people and makes them mere members of a group.

There’s been a disturbing increase in identity politics since the Christchurch attacks. Those who rightly point out that it’s wrong to say all Muslims are somehow complicit in Islamic terrorism seem comfortable blaming all white people for one terrorist.
“recognition of responsibility can be shattering”

(José Medina, *Epistemologies of Resistance*)

This is not us
Oversensitivity

“fragility and privilege result in responses that function to restore equilibrium and return the resources ‘lost’ via the challenge - resistance towards the trigger, shutting down and/or tuning out, indulgence in emotional incapacitation such as guilt or ‘hurt feelings’, exiting, or a combination of these responses”

(Robin DiAngelo, “White Fragility”)
Disruptive politics

“Their aim is less to convince those who are systematically advantaged by structural injustice that they ought to ‘do the right thing’ than to make it all but impossible for the privileged to not hear the voices of, to not know the political claims of, the oppressed.”

— Clarrisa Hayward, “Responsibility and Ignorance”
A ‘poetics of transformation’

(1) Refusal to seek immediate change
   • Absence of predetermined outcome
   • Absence of clear message
   • Do not perform expertise
   • Prioritise relationship over agenda

(2) Slow
(3) Oblique

“once we get that human connection, things just seem to internally shift...we’re more open to hear [others] when we ourselves are heard.” – Deb Hipperson, Transformative mediator

“I’m listening to them so they can listen to themselves.” – Bev Hosking, Psychodramatist
Listening is a martial art

“we never shut anything down, ever. It doesn’t matter what it is. Māori eating the Morioris...having slaves, flinging the moa...not only do you accept it...you can actually use it powerfully in a way to...highlight something else... But also because...on a spiritual level, that question has come about for a reason. And so shutting it down is actually shutting down the energy that it has brought for the purposes of transformation.”

– Veronica Tawhai, Tiriti educator

“[it’s like] that martial art Jiu Jitsu...where they use [another’s] energy against them”

– John James Carberry, Tiriti educator

if you’re going to build a show talking about social conscience, you have to allow for counter points. And you have to anticipate them and you have to have responses because you have to maintain control of the room...In the moment, it’s like martial arts. You take what they throw at you, you absorb it and you reflect it back to them...”

– James Nokise, comedian
TAUIWI TAUTOKO
HOW TO CHANGE HEARTS AND MINDS
ONE CONVERSATION AT A TIME...

FOR MORE INFORMATION: AS.ORG.NZ/TAUWIW

ActionStation
Do you...
1. Show you’re **considering where the comment is coming from**?
2. Demonstrate **curiosity vs judgment**?
3. **Frame your own claims in terms of personal perspective**? (vs universal/absolute truth)
4. Identify (progressive/intrinsic) **values and vision**?
5. Name specific **barrier** to that vision, and unite people through **call to action**?
“I just never see anyone sitting in front of us as an individual. I don’t mean in terms of the living, I mean in terms of the dead. When they walk in, whatever racist thing comes out of their mouth I’m thinking,... ‘I can see you and your parents and their parents’ parents,’ and to come back you know with this long line of everything that has happened in their lives and everything that’s happened in society currently in your life for you to be saying that comment right at this moment. It doesn’t mean I’m not annoyed at it, but it does mean that I can see it more powerfully in terms of the context that it arises out of...”

— Veronica Tawhai (Te Ata Kura Tiriti educator)
Britain expresses regret over deaths during Captain Cook’s landing

**Terri Harper** OMG. Get over it people!

**Mark Gray** Terri Harper well said

**Kelly Dorgan** Terri Harper the view of letting bygones be bygones is a common one and is a pretty understandable perspective for those not affected by the deed. I wonder however, how possible that is for those whose lives have been impacted so significantly both by this event and by the ongoing effects of colonisation. My own experience as a pākehā who has explored my racial impact and who wants to take responsibility for it, is that acknowledgements such as these help me to feel slightly less ashamed in my interactions with Māori and this offers me a path towards biculturalism that feels a little bit more hopeful.

**Richard Silver** are all you woman ready to where higab and full beker this is what's coming for you because of this woman...

**Adrienne Thompson** Hi Richard, You seem very angry and fearful about a Muslim takeover and I wonder if you've had personal experience of having an alien faith and way of life imposed on you? I am a Pākehā New Zealander, I lived in a Muslim country for 20 years of my life. Muslim people there were curious about me and my family and our beliefs and practices. They understood that we didn't share the Muslim faith and they respected that. Of course the culture there was not the same as in New Zealand and I respected that too and tried not to give offence. From my observation that's how Muslim immigrants live in New Zealand too. We can be interested in them and ask them about their faith and practice. We can expect that they will respect the law and customs of New Zealand. I've received so much kindness and welcome from Muslim families in the country where I lived. I want to offer the same kindness and welcome to them here.

**Love** Reply 7w
Nomes Lorimer

Trish Battersby I was genuinely interested in what you had shared, and was reading it to find out more - I don't know much about Bruce Moon (he seems to be the main writer?) although it looks like he's done a lot of maths and physics, I am curious about his experience in NZ history. I am not sure what you mean about my one not having any references, I didn't post any other articles! I guess my question about the support for the content was more because it seemed quite different to a lot of the stuff that I have read in both books and articles - such as a couple of books I've read by James Balich and the stuff that is on the Ara Encyclopaedia - along with a lot of the articles that have been written over the last few months about land claims in Aotearoa.

Like · Reply · 8w

Trish Battersby

Nomes Lorimer sorry I get defensive. It was someone else who posted an article. I'm used to being abused on these sites whenever I put up anything that goes against the narrative of white men is bad, Maori is victim and requires much money. Some land claims have validity but some don't. Tribal representatives go to TOW and tell their stories unchallenged. It has become an unfair and unlawful process. PartMaori now have claims in for almost all the coastline of NZ. The claim at Ihumātao is for land owned privately. That in the past had been exempt. It will open up a Pandora's box we can't shut.

Like · Reply · 8w

Trish Battersby

Peace Duncan what you're saying is interesting to me. When you say you don't think we'll go forward until we all see ourselves as NZers, I wonder what that looks like in your eyes? Clearly we're currently divided as a country, so what does being a NZer mean to you?

Part of the reason this interests me is because I've got quite pale skin so most people I meet don't realise that I'm of Maori descent. I've found that quite a few people over my lifetime have felt free to say openly racist things against Maori around me or to me, because when they say something that is racist I don't think they think they're being racist.

Like · Reply · 8w

Trish Battersby

Nomes Lorimer perhaps there is an element of that and it's worth visiting. I also think we're facing a real challenge there. Not only is the health stuff frustrating, but there are some issues around the lack of support for the community and the need for more resources.

Like · Reply · 8w

Nomes Lorimer

Trish Battersby I also see you talking about the idea of a gravy train, and hear you feeling like this is all a bit unfair. I hate unfairness too!

When I first looked at the amounts of money that were being given to iwi as part of the settlements, it made me pretty upset as well - billions! When the health system and schools are suffering! But then, I started to read more things around the economy, and realised that in terms of the overall amount of money being spent by government, the amount that has been given to iwi in settlements is seriously peanuts!

https://infoagram.com/tp0y1lppgygprae7kloqy0n6kbnp2d9vdn-

And that made me wonder about some other things... like how much money is spent once iwi get it and things, and I found out about some seriously cool systems that a number of iwi have in place to help their young people into education, jobs and so forth... and I feel like that's actually a really good thing.

After all - we hear all the time about the negative statistics for Maori, so giving a relatively tiny amount of money to iwi to compensate them for the wrongs done by people in the past, for them to invest in the future of their young people, seems like a really positive thing, don't you think?

Like · Reply · 8w

Nomes Lorimer

Trish Battersby so right about everyone wanting to be treated with care and respect! It's so easy to get caught up in the blame game or narratives around groups of people being bad or good.

I wonder whether that attitude that you mention about feeling like the system is because of bad experiences? Sometimes, if you have a bad experience with someone or something, it can be hard to trust it again. My daughter gets really anxious about school because of the way one teacher treated her at intermediate, four years ago. Despite having other teachers that were great and after that, she still worries and talks about hating school because of things that teacher did and said.

Maybe it's the same for Maori around health and education, bad experiences in the past mean that it doesn't feel entirely safe there anymore... Wouldn't it be great if we had a schooling and health system that was welcoming and inspiring for everyone?

Like · Reply · 8w

Peace Duncan

Mana whenua reach decision on Ihumātao land

Māori King Tūheitia says mana whenua have finally reached...
Angela Toomey: They are so poorly informed! He circumnavigated our land making our great maps while Māori were cannibalising their own people!! How's their history records???

Zoe Elizabeth: Hi Angela Toomey it sounds like you had some of the same history classes I did! I remember learning a lot about Captain Cook in school (and Joseph Banks... I grew up on Banks Peninsula) but we never got taught about the amazing Māori navigators like Kupe or Tamatea Pokai-Whenua Pokai-Moana (His name means "Tamatea who travelled over land and sea" - he's supposedly the first person to circumnavigate New Zealand!)

I think it's really cool that kids are now being taught more of our country's history than we were 😊

Angela Toomey: Zoe Elizabeth I was taught all about Kupe. I also did a full nativity in Māori for Christmas - everything and we made our tops and flax skirts from scratch in traditional Māori when I was STD 6 - it was a great little primary school run by nuns. We learnt about the Māori wars, Wanganui and Jerusalem and the massacres. It wasn't all just about cook

So long as its balanced that's the improvement needed. Saying cook was a barbarian was quite incorrect and he was revered by his crew because he cared for them his mission was to discover lands for his Queen

The Māori were not all sweetness and light and were raiders in their own right. I'm all for history just make sure it's factual.

Zoe Elizabeth: Angela Toomey I totally agree - teaching a full and balanced history of our country is really important! Your primary school sounds pretty cool. I guess where my comment was coming from was the idea that often "history is written by the victors" - ie. I was taught mostly the European history of our country, and Māori history was a bit of a side note. Like - I never got taught about the Declaration of Independence, or about Māori inventing trench warfare in the Waikato wars, or about Māori astronomy or navigation... there are so many amazing Māori achievements that I never learnt about in school... just makes me a bit sad that a lot of kids miss out on learning so much of our country's history and culture. But it sounds like you got more exposure at your school - so just talking from my own experience I guess!

Angela Toomey: Zoe Elizabeth wow I took all ours foregranted I learnt all that back in the 60s and 70s so from your remarks it wasn't in every school.

Then I was lucky I had such progressive teachers and we had Indian and Damian and Tongan and Dutch families as well as Māori and European NZrs so Diversity didn't need to be a buzz word or inclusion.
Scarlett Parkes: Jim N Margaret Pohe, you're right, everyone wants a career that's safe for them. For me, I feel like it's unjust that Golriz isn't safe doing her job while other MPs are. I believe that everyone's jobs should be safe and that everyone should be able to engage in politics.

Jim N Margaret Pohe: Laura O'Connell Rapira, I guess we're all had jobs that were problematic at times, but we don't get the same luxury to voice it as do politicians. Jim P

Laura O'Connell Rapira: Jim N Margaret Pohe, she doesn't have to but if you have to work in an environment where you consider unsafe why be there? Jim P

Zoe Jacqueline: Jim N Margaret Pohe, it would be great if all work places were safer. 27 years working in the prison service shows you've got a lot of commitment. What's impressive is Golriz is still trying to pursue politics even though she's receiving a level of hate above that of any of the other MPs. She's obviously very committed, I hope she lasts 27 years in politics!

Jim N Margaret Pohe: Laura O'Connell Rapira, hey! I wish her well certainly not harm hates not in my vocabulary, I guess if she's committed she'll make it through this unsettled period.
'Gives me goosebumps': Rugby fans praise All Blacks after incredible haka in South Africa game
“If it is not led by people of color and immigrants, if it doesn’t have fighting racism and xenophobia at its core, and if it is not mobilizing white people to lead other whites to choose multiracial solidarity over fear and hate—then it’s not a revolution.”

— Becky Bond, *Rules for Revolutionaries: How Big Organizing Can Change Everything*