‘Va Tapuia’ – Intercessor in Smoothing the Waters

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Tulou, Tulou, Tulouna

• Feiloa’iga
• We have come a long way in the last five or six decades and still we are traversing the vast oceans under the guidance of our wonderful star ‘Tapuitea’
• O tala a le atunu’u, “E afua mai mauga le manuia o se nu’u.”
Issues in Education

• What issues are there?
• Political issues?
• Ministerial issues?
• Home/School issues?
• Principal/Teacher issues?
• Issues between colleagues?
• Classroom issues?
• Teacher / Student issues?
• Pedagogical issues?
• Or are they Relationships with all the above issues?
I’ve been thinking ...

• Wayfinders: Discovering New Horizons

Aren’t we already in a horizon? Why do we need to discover new ones? What kind of horizon do we look for?

- **Leading the way** - have we been traversing the oceans of education unguided and without direction? How do we do this? Do we have a compass? Are leaders good navigators and swimmers?

- **Smoothing the waters** – what caused the rough waters? How rough is it? How do we calm it?

- **Pushing the boundaries** – Why the need to push boundaries? What sort of boundaries do we already have? Will they be easily pushed? How far is too far?
As a man thinketh ...

• *You are not what you think you are, but what you think, you are!*

We need to change the way we think about our roles in relation to the issues we face whether in schools, in families, in work places, in policy and policy development and more importantly about ourselves.

Because **WE CANNOT CHANGE OUR LIVES [AND THE LIVES OF THOSE WE INTEND TO IMPACT] UNLESS WE CHANGE OUR THOUGHTS**
‘Va-Tapuia’ The Ultimate Respect in relationships

- We hear so much about the ‘Va’ in its literal sense in words used in everyday conversations e.g.
  - Va(separated by things) as in Va/i/moana (separated by oceans); Va/i/mauga (separated by mountains) Va/i/vao (separated by forest)
  - Va(space between people) as in Vafealoaloa’i (comforting and respecting each other space); Valasi (everlasting space between)
  - Va (hostile space) as in Fa’atautava (competing space), Tauileva (warring space)
  - Va(space/gap in general) as in Va apiapi (narrow gap)
Start with thoughts about RESPECT

Activity (5 mins)

• In groups of 3 or 4 discuss what Respect is to you
• Then note 2 or 3 examples of Respect that you know of from:
  - Home
  - School
  - Teacher and Student
  - Colleagues
Va-Tapuia historically

• Va (space) Tapuia (made sacred)

• Ancient Samoan concept of ‘sacred space’ in the ‘feagaiga’ (covenant relationship) between brother and sister.
  
  e.g. “O le loi mata ole tuagane o le tuafafine”

• Considered the ‘core’ of all relationships founded and grounded on ‘fa’aaloalo’ (respect) given to the sister by the brother.

• Sister returns the respect by blessing the brother.

• Violation could spell cursing on or blessing for the brother by the sister.
Pragmatics of Va-Tapuia

- Fa’aaloalo – Respect
- Fa’amaualalo – Humility
- Alofa – Love
- Agalelei - Kindness
- Onosa’i – Patience
- Filemu – Peace
- Fa’amaoni - Faithfulness
- Self-control – Loto pulea
Application of Va-Tapuia

• A covenant partner
• Different mindset
• Advocacy
• Empowerment of others
• Disempowerment of yourself
• Instigate understanding and mediation
• Create opportunities for acceptance of others and who they are
• Negotiate support peacefully
• Tu, savali, tautala (the way one stands, walks, and talks)
Va-Tapuia in Education contexts

- The Principal
- Colleagues
- Parents
- Teachers
- Students
Summary

• “Ieova i lo tatou va” – a story
• Va-Tapuia is intercessor
• Va-Tapuia is advocate
• Va-Tapuia is mediator
• Va-Tapuia is instigator
• Va-Tapuia is negotiator
References


• Jeremiah, D. (2017). You are not what you think you are, but what you think, you are. Turning Point Series. [Https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCGoY](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCGoY)