

# NAVIGATE

The Courage, Wisdom, and Aloha  
We Need in the Timeplace of Collapse

## Who We Are Becoming Matters



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A RESOURCE IN SUPPORT OF  
"WHO WE ARE BECOMING MATTERS"  
BY NORMA WONG

Who We Are Becoming Matters provides components of the Human Quotient in bite-sized nuggets to chew on, savor, understand, inspire and instill. It uplifts the necessity of embodied practice of our principles and values: "...anything done with discipline is practice." It shines light on the need for reflection, awareness and action which are required for wholeness in ourselves and our world.

Practice in this way is not for the faint of heart AND practice might be found in the everyday if accompanied with discipline. Aloha is beyond a simple greeting. It is a complex embodiment with full awareness of ALL across time and space.

A handful of Collective Acceleration community members offer this guide to support fellow practitioners and curious community members on their own practice paths. We recognize folk come to this from different perspectives and vantage points. Take a breath and take what is useful. Gather in circle, lay down what is not needed and have conversation.

Having come this far means you are curious and open to learning/embodying a different way.

Take a breath.

Feel your feet on the ground.

Take a breath – slow and low in your body.

Relax what is not needed in the moment.

Take a breath – slow and low in your body.

Look forward to the horizon.

Take a breath – slow and low in your body.

Smile.

(Repeat)



# General Thoughts and Discussion Questions

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- The imperative is Aloha, the last and first word.
- This book details the Human Quotient — what it is that is needed if humanity is to thrive.
- Beyond ideas, policy, desires, and actions, human choices and behaviors depend on who we are and who we are determined to become.
- Breathe and Move.
- Who are the human and not-human ancestors and descendants that you acknowledge?
- What frame of mind may help you take in this offering? If not a teacup sitting down, what ways help you bring your own “water” to the “concentrate” of this book?
- In this timeplace of expanding turmoil, what do you make of the call towards “disciplined work” needed, now?

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## Resource — Breathing Exercises

### Mountains, Clouds and Waterfall (guided introduction)



### Mountains, Clouds and Waterfalls



# 1 An Opening

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*“Some thing calls. Some thing stirs.” (pg 6)*

## Key Takeaways

- It is useful to sigh, and if you do, make it count!
- A time to examine what it means, this thing, being human.
- Some feel the tide is rising. Some know the land is sinking. Both are so. The results are the same.

## Discussion Questions

- Clasp your hands—are you surprised by your ‘hand clasping way of knowing or feeling’ and the insight offered about how you move about the world and your work?
- What do you remember feeling in your very bones?
- What might “The end of what?!” be referring to this early in the book?
- What resonates from the opening poem?
- Take a few moments to think about or even write about your reflections to the prompts that Norma shares in this chapter. How are you feeling about being a human? How do you think about being a human?
- Does a critical juncture or paradox need to become evident before we can move beyond known constraints or even ways of imagining?



## 2 Don't Settle for What You Know

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*“Wholeness does not mean sameness or symmetry.” (pg 10)*

### Key Takeaways

- We are deeply patterned. And then, when patterns are interrupted, there is choice.
- The malaise of the nether — a place of pause or interruption where there might be a noticeable dampening of energy or sense of fatigue with everyday life.
- Our minds, quick to accept rules and comfortable with their specificity, can be trapped in the place of believing that all we need are better rules. No, no, no.
- We need more than the rule maker, the rule keeper, and the rule breaker to show up these days!
- We need the more expansive human to show up these days.
- We must face the generational imperative to break free and not settle for what we know.

### Discussion Questions

- What are the ways that we tend to settle for what we know and who we are?
- How do you make sense of the ‘malaise of the nether’ right now?
- What do you make of the call to recognize patterns; defaults; and well worn muscles?
- What comes to mind as you consider rules, and the ways they shape us? What are the rules that currently govern the way you move about the world personally? Professionally?
- Considering this moment— what choices do you feel like you/we have about who it is that you/we are?

### 3 The Human Quotient (H<sub>u</sub>)

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*“Without courage, no leaps can be made...  
Courage comes in many packages.” (pg 16)*

#### Key Takeaways

- Beingness is genuine and true. And beingness is a significant part of the human quotient.
- Leaning into and being willing to cultivate shared humanity does not require perfection. It does require evolution and recognition of our own agency to value connection and kuleana (mutual responsibility) to and with and for other human beings.
- Aloha is the manifestation of wise compassion — not just pulling struggling folx out of the fast-moving stream while also understanding and solving for what keeps folx from falling in to begin with — to hear what is not said, to see what cannot be seen and know the unknowable.
- Wisdom is a different state of being than just knowing all the things — it includes good judgment that does not judge, good choices, understanding the gravity of choices, and good humility to accompany the kuleana of being a person who is counted on to be wise.

#### Discussion Questions

- How do the elements with the Human Quotient (Hu) — sit with you? Which, if any, resonate?
- What is the significance of aloha and how is it expressed? How might it be related to Lili’uokalani’s understanding of aloha, “Aloha means to hear what is not said, to see what cannot be seen and to know the unknowable”?
- What do you think it looks like and sounds like to be wise, in these times? What kinds of practices or people help you and others activate wisdom?



## 4 Will We Choose Humanity?

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*“...the times call for letting go of our justified and righteous notions of how others are responsible for the less than desirable conditions of this timeplace...” (pg 25)*

### Key Takeaways

- Othering is an equal ideological partner — occurring on the “left” and the “right” and everywhere in between.
- We can narrate, sometimes with justification, the ways othering has played out using the fault lines of race, hues, class, gender, and ability.
- To choose ways of being that are beyond othering requires choosing to reconnect the parts of us that were once whole, more open, and less discriminating.
- “Speaking to the choir” is a mirror twin of othering — a strategy that reinforces a core base of like-minded people.
- It is very difficult to construct an enduring, successful, large-scale strategy for any set of ideas based on othering, splintering, and the denial of humanity of those we are othering.
- Now is the time to extract ourselves from this extraordinarily difficult predicament by taking responsibility to generate the most expansive notion of “we” and “our” as we can muster.

### Discussion Questions

- Quite a knot can be present (inside ourselves or the group you are studying with) when othering gets addressed in this way. What are ways you’ve been able to “loosen the knot” to see the impacts of othering (splintering too) even as you tend to the impacts of being othered?
- What are you ready to grapple with when it comes to limits of othering and splintering and speaking to the choir? What seems more tender or challenging, even if it is harder to face?
- What are some facets of the “extraordinary effort” you can take in letting go of our justified notions of how we got to here while stepping into the responsibility for how we collectively focus and choose into humanity moving forward?

## 5 We Are the Ancestors of Descendants Yet to Come

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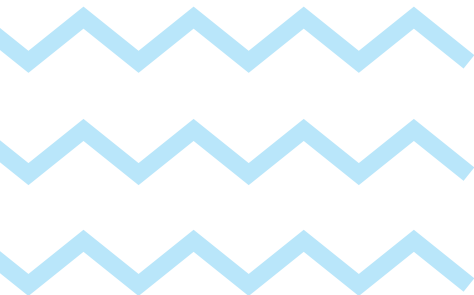
*“Being ancestors of descendants yet to come calls us towards seeing and living into generational responsibility.” — Norma Wong*

### Key Takeaways

- An aliveness and connection comes when we remember at every cell we are connected to the vastness of the universe and across time and space.
- “We ran and ran until we could not run... ” speaks to the limits of a world organized around coveting, discarding, valuing the loudest opinions and things.
- And then, we paused long enough...

### Discussion Questions

- What are the words or phrases or sections of this poem that evoke in you a sense of recognition? Or power? Of unsettling?
- What lives in the poem that gives you the most grounded hope?
- When do you experience the most connection (not separation) to other beings and the universe, across time and space?
- What would it look like to not be glued to screens and screeds?
- What possibilities do you see in the profound darkness?
- Who is it we are becoming? Who is it we can become?





## 6 The Opposite of War is Creation

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*“The cessation of violence does not mean there is or will be peace.” (pg 37)*

### Key Takeaways

- In war, whether carried out through military means or not, there will be violence.
- Peace, if held as a null state (an absence of conflict only), is a void that can easily collapse on itself.
- We are born as curious beings, peering into the world with wonder.
- Modernity and the devices of modernity can also fill every moment of every day with addictive buzz and yada yada, memes, YouTubes, influencer endorsements, and ads about ads.
- Being entertained (or distracted) can satiate our imagination but rarely creates the conditions for our own creation.
- Spaciousness is actual space! And imagination and creation require spaciousness. Spaciousness is a useful empty cup.
- Creation is an imperative.
- In order for there to be the kind of durable peace that honestly and bravely meets the timespace when no thing works, evolution is the directionality of our creation. Said differently, if we are to embrace our generational kuleana of these times, the conscious evolution of the human race is ours to create.

## Discussion Questions

- What rings true to you in this chapter?
- What connections do you see in this chapter to the prior ones?
- Why might curiosity, spaciousness, and creativity be imperatives at this time?
- Take a moment to jot down a list on a piece of paper: what are the moments of spaciousness that you've had in the past day? The past week? Or the past month? Reflect with the group what you wrote.
- Where do you see communities moving with energy and actively creating?
- What do you think it looks like and sounds like to embrace sacred and mutual responsibility to create a conscious evolution of the human race at this time on the clock of the world?



## 7 Big Leaps = Strategy Human Quotient

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*“Any strategy that doesn’t take the people part of it with due seriousness will underperform, if not fail.” (pg 43)*

### Key Takeaways

- Big leaps are required.
- Strategy is a key component. And a strategy is only as good as the core characteristics, behaviors, and fealty to humanity of the people who are creating, holding, implementing, and leaning into the strategy.
- If you don’t pay attention to the Human Quotient, then your strategy, no matter how clever, will have no exponent greater than the power of 1. (It’s math.)
- Individual leadership is insufficient for the challenges of these times. Our dependence and reliance on individual leadership is a human infrastructure fault line.
- It took nearly twenty-five years of effort and data to accumulate to fully appreciate the cul-de-sac of systems-change.
- “Why?” is an extremely important question. How we go about answering it says a great deal about whether the leap we take will be big or not and what its success will be in the scheme of things. Without answering why, our actions are rudderless. Questions of why are always central to the Human Quotient.
- Strategies are not interchangeable between peoples, places, circumstances, and the interlaced relationships between peoples, places, circumstances.
- Preparation and practice are required for any big leap. Many leaders (at least 3 or more) cultivating the collective human potential with aloha make bigger leaps. Each has to be committed to more than one’s own success.

## Discussion Questions

- Why are “leaderly constructs” and individual leadership insufficient in these times? What do you think is meant by individual leadership being a human infrastructure fault line?
- What does the formula, the title of the chapter, and the exponential nature of the Human Quotient mean for the ways you move in the world?
- Why are you here?
- Norma describes her own 25-year evolution and confrontation with what she calls the “cul-de-sac of systems change”. And then she offers a call-to-action — that we bring our full attention to sparking meaningful human evolution and avoid being “the last of the descendants fighting over the structures at the end of the cul-de-sac.” What resonates with you? What is challenging? What do you think/feel it looks like to step into this responsibility?



## 8 Wholeness Is Not Accommodation

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*“Wholeness  
Just  
Is” (pg 49)*

### Key Takeaways

- Intactness is wholeness, worthy of endeavor.
- Facing grief and the holes we see and know.
- Only the equity of sweat and hard work will bring us safely to the other side, beyond turmoil, separation, and erasure.
- Sanctity but not righteous purity.
- Adopt Chuang Tzu’s advice:

“Don’t listen with your ears, listen with your mind. No, don’t listen with your mind, but listen with your spirit. Listening stops with the ears. The mind stops with recognition, but spirit is empty and waits on all things. The Way gathers in emptiness alone. Emptiness is the fasting of the mind.”
- Remember and spend your energy towards figuring out what makes the whole whole.

### Discussion Questions

- What invites wholeness and being “one with” when it lives in the depth of what is described in the poem?
- Who is holding the sacred kuleana of mutual responsibility and wholeness in your family, community, village?
- The chapter poem offers lots of provocation — wholeness is **not** accommodation, false inclusion, pretense and performativity, feeding only the loudest of voices, division, subtraction, a stale pond, politeness, 144 characters, etc . . . how can we cultivate wholeness in its fullness and depth?

## 9 Evolution

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*“Without evolution, revolution is a leap without strategy.” (pg 55)*

### Key Takeaways

- Evolution takes place even in small ecosystems.
- Revolutions and rebellions are societal-scale disrupters.
- We should be worried about the number of righteously well-meaning uprisings. Perhaps we haven't evolved sufficiently to escape a trap of uprising begetting uprising.
- Sticking the landing is critical to whether the disruption will bring about the betterment of the lives tossed at the sacrifice of the lost.
- Choosing humanity and interdependent thriving over other reasons — such as power, wealth, righteousness, control, divinity — may indeed require revolution. But if taken as one set of ideals to merely replace another set of ideals, this revolution is more likely to fail or falter or fail the test of humanity to choose ways of being that are beyond othering.
- The human effort to be in harmony with evolution takes a conscious effort.
- What if the non-human world is counting on humans shedding our wanton habits and paying attention to being in an intricate and harmonious dance with each other, as well as other beings, in relationship to the Earth and the Universe?

### Discussion Questions

- Where is it you observe, puzzle, and delight over phenomenons of interdependent thriving and harmonious evolution? What are you noticing, learning, or surprised by?
- What if the non-human world is counting on humans!?!? What evolutionary leaps are possible if we are more ambitious? More conscious?
- What does it look like to “stick the landing” and follow through towards wholeness?

# 10 Eyes Wide Open

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*“... (those) Interwoven relationships, they mutually aimed toward holding the whole when others may not ... ” (pg 67)*

## Key Takeaways

- We are currently in an eyes wide open moment.
- Head-spinning human events change everything in short periods of time.
- We are the humans living in the swiftly moving current. This phenomena is short-handedly called collective acceleration.
- Don't sleep on the job. Instead, e maka'ala mai i ka hana! Tend to the job! Be alert, vigilant, watchful, wide awake.
- Patient, persistent, problem-solving initiative while holding the whole is part is the inner workings of tending to the job of eyes wide open.

## Discussion Questions

- In what ways are you — in your work or in your living — in a state of maka'ala? What ways might you become so?
- What current events are top of mind for you as you consider the collective acceleration of this time?
- What are we feeling, right now, in our guts, our na'au?
- What kind of vision is required to “see beyond what is directly in front of us, while simultaneously knowing what is right in front of us?” What might that require from us? How can we get there?



# 11 Discipline, Discipline, Discipline

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*“Practice without discipline is not practice at all. And with discipline, anything you do is practice.” (pg 76)*

## Key Takeaways

- Good morning. It is a simple thing. The discipline of greeting each day.
- The time of one’s arising is one of the most precious times in daily existence.
- Reflection is a thing that happens when you can see the light of the moon shimmering on the quiet surface of a pond. Reflection isn’t talking talking about the light of the moon shimmering on the quiet surface of a pond. Being the quiet surface — and depth — of a pond for just a bit will expand you and ground you.
- Breathe. Breath low and slow. In and o-u-t.
- Conscious hydration is important.
- Stretching is part of the work to reconnect body, mind and spirit.
- A life of discipline does not mean one doesn’t have a portfolio of habits.
- Habits live in the stew of unconsciousness, reinforcing our isolation from what is right in front of us and increasing the difficulty of seeing around the bend.
- If we are to evolve, we need to lean into whatever it is we need to interrupt and whatever it is we need to create, with eagerness.
- Small daily disciplines are important, as everything in one’s life can be practiced and honed.
- Readyng a place of rest is as essential as readyng a place of action.



## Discussion Questions

- What is the first thing you do when you wake up each morning, right now?
- When it comes to how you move through the day, did anything in this chapter spark habits you want to interrupt or new practices you want to cultivate?
- What is the point of discipline when it comes to who we are becoming?
- What are the practice ways you most want to bring into focus, with what intention, to hone and accelerate?
- What connections might you be making between this chapter and what has come before it?



## 12 Cultivation of the Human Spirit

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*“Spirit is clarifying. It shows us the path forward... if we are listening.” (pg 81)*

### Key Takeaways.

- A felt sense of possibility — not a rational notion of possibility — generates action in the direction of the possibility.
- The part of us that perceives and feels, the part of that is sentient, is both spirit generator and spirit itself. **Our spirit perceives and feels. It is both right thumb over left thumb AND left thumb over right thumb.**
- Just because there is lightness in spirit doesn't mean it is ever useful for us to float away like a helium-filled balloon.
- Balls of our feet on the ground, wriggling toes knowing the contours of Mother Earth, life-giving breath low in our bodies and slow on the exhale, head up so we may see the horizon and therefore where it is we are going and why... This is the useful and well-maintained vessel for spirit-led existence.
- We can and should cultivate spirit.
- The absence of spirit is the field in which violence grows, a burrowing of humanity before its implosive end.
- Without hope, we become prey to baser instincts. Our feelings and logic lose their mooring. When low spirits dip into the red line of our spiritual meter and approach nadir, the air leaves us. “Deflated”, we sigh. Darkness hovers, even at midday. At a certain point, we will grasp and chase anything. Our energy shifts from the pre-frontal cortex to the amygdala and we are drawn to the magnetic pull of energetic external influences.

- The present and future of humanity depends on the flourishing of our collective spirit.
- Our spirits lift when we are doing the hard work together, side-by-side, each in accordance with their own ability and yet stretching beyond into that in-between space that makes us all much more than our individual parts, our individual contributions.
- Spirit is whole, spirit makes us whole.
- Low spirits can be refreshed with cultivation.
- Interdependent wholeness begins with us.

### **Discussion Questions**

- How would you describe your relationship to spirit?
- What are ways we can cultivate spirit? What are ways we can prioritize spirit cultivation?
- What does it look like and sound like to relearn how to be with each other and with other beings?
- What comes with pausing to acknowledge spirit, ourselves and each other?



## 13 Forget Presence, Be Conscious

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*“True awakesness requires unconfused activation.” (pg 88)*

### Key Takeaways

- In the tournament of life, one must be present to win. And it isn't enough! Not in a timespace on the precipice of devolution.
- The present is the most fleeting of all times. To be conscious, we face forward, while knowing that which preceded us.
- Consciousness is bigger, elastic, encompassing that which has been, that which is, and that which will be. It is dynamic. We move in the direction of the current we feel-see-hear-know, embracing both awesome strength and awesome kuleana, the mutual responsibility we hold because we have the agency of consciousness.
- Our inner life will make a difference if it emanates outward.

### Discussion Questions

- Why do you think it “isn't enough” to just be present — even if presence is a great thing?
- What does it mean to be conscious?
- How are you making sense of the connection between maka'ala (eyes wide open, tending to the job at hand) and being conscious?
- What does the bigness of consciousness (the knowing what has preceded us + timespace-bound present + facing forward towards what will and can be) offer?



## 14 A Reflection

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*“Here  
We take our stand  
Joyfully.” (pg 94)*

### Key Takeaways

- Who we are matters, don't stop believing in who you are!
- What matters is whether we will see a human when we look in the mirror and the many humans we might see all around us.
- Fundamental change may still be possible.
- Interdependence is the jeweled core of who we are and can be.
- Setting aside that which is no longer useful.

### Discussion Questions

- What possibilities stir as you reflect on this poem as it brings the book to a close?
- What lines and images and practices are most resonant, most potent?
- Breathing deep (low and slow), what is calling? What does the child within see? What does the elder within see?
- Why is interdependence (thriving) the jeweled core?
- What does it look like and sound like to take a stand with humanity for humanity, joyfully?
- What additional realizations, if any, are you left with?

## Glossary

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**Governance** — the ways and means by which the common good is determined, implemented, stewarded, and accounted for

**Habits** — unconscious repetitive acts; because they are unconscious, habits will silently undermine, or unconsciously not serve you

**Horizon(s)** — a what, a place, and a time in which the embodiment of everything we hope our descendants will live into; the narrative description of the thriving futureplace

**Human Quotient** — the bundle of human beingness and characteristics that define “what it takes”

**Interdependent Thriving** — the states of thriving in which the well-being of one person or people are not at the expense of another person or other people or the Earth and its beings

**Kuleana** — sacred responsibility with and to the people, place, Earth, and all of its beings

**Long arc strategy and stewardship** — brings together the principles of offensive strategy, links horizons and purpose, and cultivates governance ways across generations

**Mutual stewardship** — people in relationship with each other and to the place, recognizing the interwoven needs while focusing on what may be possible together to mutually thrive, intergenerationally and non-transactionally; a form of governance

**Pilina** — deep interwoven relationship of care and respect

**Pivot** — intentional and decisive moves you make to get to the horizon

**Practices** — conscious repetitive acts; because they are conscious, practices will support, enhance and improve actions and beingness over time

**Purpose** — answers why you are working on this, what part of the horizon you are taking on (focal points), and provides a useful generational stance.

**Slipstream** — when more things happen in a human-made measurable period of time, that feels like everything is speeding up and time itself is moving faster; the energy stream created by the phenomena of many more things happening in a shorter and shorter time period

**Tipping points** — the description of the futureplace's thriving condition(s) in which the generational work has paid off and it is evident the Horizon we hope for will come to pass; the timeplace of the thriving description

**Worldview** — a person's or group's way of understanding, experiencing, and responding to the world, encompassing their beliefs, values, and assumptions about reality



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