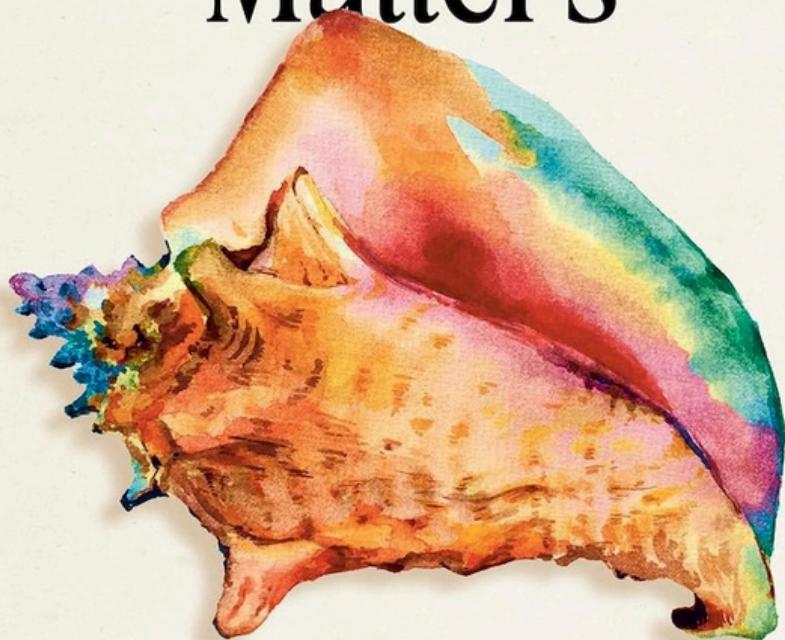


# HE KUHIKUHI TALK STORY GUIDE

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

## Who We Are Becoming Matters



**Norma Kawelokū Wong**

*Author of When No Thing Works*

**NORMAWONG.COM**

*Who We Are Becoming Matters* by Norma Kawelokū Wong

# HE KUHIKUHI TALK STORY GUIDE

A resource in support of When No Thing Works and Who We Are Becoming Matters by Norma Kawelokū Wong, especially for Hawai'i readers

He kuhikuhi kēia no nā puke When No Thing Works a me Who We Are Becoming Matters na Norma Kawelokū Wong, keu ho'i no nā kanaka o Hawai'i e heluhelu ana

Aloha! Hui! Many thanks for picking up these two small books to read or perhaps listen to as an audio book.

As disruptive change happens more quickly here in the islands and in places far away that profoundly impact our place and peoples, how should we think about it? What should we do? What is our kuleana to ancestors and descendants not yet born? What do we have to offer to not only this place and the people who live here, but also to far away places and peoples?

Norma describes these two small books as being like Malolo syrup. They are concentrated, and are much more enjoyable if you add yourself, like water transforming the syrup into a familiar drink.

This guide offers questions and practices for you, or perhaps along with a group of friends you feel or think will be interested in the provocations and insights as they apply to these islands, to our home. Share food, of course, and talk story. Perhaps you read chapters in advance, or read aloud to each other, stopping and moving along at the pace of curiosity and understanding.

Don't try to get through all of it in one sitting! Like all big meals, take your time to digest.

Mahalo nui.

Aloha! Hui! Mahalo ke kū'ai 'ana i kēia mau puke 'u'uku a no ka heluhelu 'ana a ho'olohe paha i ka puke 'aukiō.

'Oiai kupu koke mai ka loli a pā nui kākou, ka pae'āina a me nā kānaka, i nā pilikia a loli o nā wahi 'ē a'e, pehea ko kākou no'ono'o 'ana no ia 'ano loli? He aha kā kākou mea e hana ai? He aha ko kākou kuleana i nā kūpuna i hala aku nei a me nā mo'opuna e hiki mai ana? He aha kā kākou mea e hana ai no kēia wahi, ka po'e e noho nei, a me nā wahi a kānaka o kahi 'ē?

Wahi a Norma, kohu kai Malolo kēia mau puke. Ua pa'apūhia nō, a 'oi aku ka 'ono inā ho'ohuihui 'ia me ka wai, e like me ka ho'ohui 'ana i ka wai me ke kai Malolo, i hiki ke inu 'ia.

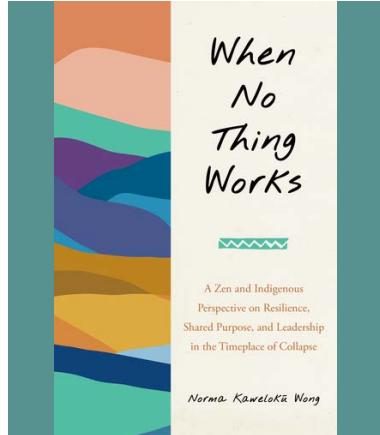
He mau nīnau a hana ho'oma'ama'a e hana ai 'oe a me kou mau hoa i hoihoi i nā mana'o i pili i kēia pae 'āina, ko kākou kulāwi. E pū paka'ai nō ho'i a e kūkākūkā. Mali'a e heluhelu 'ē 'oe i kekahi mau mokuna, a i 'ole e heluhelu waha 'oukou, e kū, e nalu, a e holomua e like me kou makemake a me kou kālailai a 'apo 'ana i ka 'ike.

Mai 'oe ho'ā'o e heluhelu a pau loa ma ka ho'okahi wale nō heluhelu 'ana. E like ho'i me ka 'aha'aina, e mālama 'ia he wā e wali ai ka 'ai.

Mahalo nui.

# I 'IKE 'OE...

## SOME THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT...



### When No Thing Works

*When No Thing Works* is the first book, and was released on Election Day in 2024. In the book, Chapter 12 talks about the Human Quotient. This is the subject of the second book, *Who We Are Becoming Matters*, which was released in February 2026.

*When No Thing Works* describes what is happening in this historically chaotic moment, and shares story, strategy, and spirit of what is required of us in order for future generations to not only survive but also have a better, less polarized world. *Who We Are Becoming Matters* examines who we all need to become, restore wholeness, and lean into a discerning aloha to imagine into and create a more thriving world.

Norma is a life-long resident of Hawai'i, born in Kalihi Valley, raised in Kalihi Valley and Waimānalo, and has been back in the valley for over thirty years. She attended Kalihi Elementary School and Kamehameha Schools (Class of 1974). Norma is of Hakka Chinese and Native Hawaiian ancestry. She was a policy advisor and strategist to former Governor John Waihe'e, with work including Kaho'olawe, public trust lands, Hawaiian Home Lands, and federal issues. She briefly represented Waimānalo, Keolu Hills and Lanikai in the State Legislature. Her formal name is Norma Ryūkō Kawelokū Wong Roshi. The term "Roshi" recognizes her responsibilities as an 86th generation Zen Master of the Rinzai Zen line. Her home temple is Daihonzan Chozen-ji, and her primary teacher was Tanouye Tenshin Rotaishi. Norma has spent many years in the applied space – the direct application of Indigenous and Zen ways, values and practices to living and transformational change critical to our times.

'O When No Thing Works ka puke mua, a ua ho'opuka 'ia ma ka lā koho pāloka o ka makahiki 2024. Ma ia puke, ma ka Mokuna 12, wala'au 'ia no ia mea i kapa 'ia he Human Quotient. 'O ia mea nō ke kumu hana o ka puke 'elua, Who We Are Becoming Matters, i ho'opuka 'ia ma Pepeluali o ka makahiki 2026.

Ma When No Thing Works wehewehe 'ia kēia wā huikau nui, ma o ka ha'i mo'olelo, wala'au ka'akālai, me ke kūkā no ka a'oa'o pili 'uhane e pono ai kākou i ola a māhuahua a'e ai nā haunauna e hiki mai ana ma ke au i emi mai ai ka hukihuki 'ana. Ma Who We Are Becoming Matters kālailai 'ia nā hi'ohi'ona o ke 'ano kanaka e lilo ai kākou i hiki ke ho'okumu a piha poepoe hou mai ka honua. He 'ano kanaka ho'i e kālele ana ma ke aloha i māhuahua hou a'e ai ke ao holo'oko'a.

He kupa 'o Norma o Hawai'i i hānau 'ia ma ke awāwa 'o Kalihi a hānai 'ia ma laila a ma Waimānalo pū kekahi. Ua ho'i hou nō i ia awāwa no nā makahiki he kanakolu i hala iho nei. Ua hele kula 'o ia ma ke Kula Ha'aha'a 'o Kalihi a me ke kula 'o Kamehameha (puka ma ka makahiki 1974). He hapa Pākē Hakka a hapa Hawai'i kona mo'okū'auhau. He a'oa'o kulekele a ka'akālai politika 'o ia no ke Kia'āina John Waihe'e, i hana pū ma nā papahana Kaho'olawe, 'āina leialī'i, 'āina ho'opulapula Hawai'i, me nā 'ano nīnūnē pekelala like 'ole. No kekahi wā pōkole ua noho lunamaka'āinana 'o ia no Waimānalo, Keolu Hills, me Lanikai ma ka 'Aha'ōlelo Moku'āina. 'O Norma Ryūkō Kawelokū Wong Roshi kona inoa piha. 'O ka inoa 'o "Roshi" he hō'ike ia no kona kuleana ma ka hanauna 86 o nā kahu Zen o ka mo'okū'auhau Rinzai Zen. Ma Daihonzan Chozen-ji 'o ia i a'o ai mai kona kumu 'o Tanouye Tenshin Rotaishi. Nui nā makahiki 'o ko Norma hana 'ana ma nā wahi e ho'ohana maoli 'ia ka 'ike - ka 'ike 'ōiwi a me ka 'ike Zen, nā loinā a me nā hana e ho'okā'oi ai i ke au e holo nei.

# NĀ MO'OLELO O KINOHI I 'IKE MAOPOPO KĀKOU NO KĒIA AO

## ORIGIN STORIES AS PART OF OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

In both books, Norma talks about how her origins inform her and how her life experiences become the origins of understanding the greater world beyond Hawai'i.

Who are your ancestors? Where did they come from, and therefore where did you come from? If they came from different cultures and by way of different reasons, how has the weaving of these ways and purposes influenced you and your generation of folx? What parts of their experiences and the way they looked at the world influence you?

If you do not know, gently exercise your curiosity to find out what you can. The “gently” advice comes from understanding that stories from the past can twist and turn, be wonderful and shocking, be vague and specific, be someone’s secrets to be held with care.

Norma encourages us to think of ancestors broadly, as “the people and beings who came before us”, not only the specific blood relatives. Why? Because no one lives a singular life. If our ancestor, whose name we do not know, came to Hawai'i around a particular time but we aren't sure, from a region of the world, but specific country we aren't sure, this still gives us a general sense of things because folx who came from that region during that particular time were mostly coming for particular reasons, and when they arrived mostly settled in particular places, and mostly took up certain kinds of work. They would have lived in a particular kind of world during their passage and while in the islands. It may have been a time of relative prosperity, or economic worry, or impending conflict, or cultural Renaissance, and that would impact them and influence their decisions and views.

Knowing what you have discovered about the times your ancestors lived in, what do you think was important for them? How did their choices shape what Hawai'i is like today?

Origin stories and experiences form our lens... how we look at and experience the world. How would you describe your lens? (Chapter 2 from WNTW)

Ma nā puke 'elua, kākau ihola 'o Norma no kona mo'okū'auhau me kona hānai 'ia 'ana –o ia ho'i nā mea i kumu mai ai kona 'ike no ke ao ma 'ō aku o Hawai'i.

'O wai kou mau kūpuna? No hea mai lākou a no hea ho'i 'oe? Inā ua hō'ea mai nei me nā mo'omeheu 'oko'a a a me nā pahuhopu 'oko'a, pehea i pā ai kou hanauna me kou mau po'e i ka 'āwili 'ia o ko lākou mau mo'omeheu a pahuhopu 'oko'a? Pehea i pā ai 'oe i ko lākou nohona me ko lākou kuana'ike?

Inā 'a'ole paha 'oe maopopo, e 'imi a e nalu iki 'oe a loa'a mai kekahi huna 'ike. 'O kekahi mau mo'olelo o ke au i hala ua hiki ke holo i 'ō a i 'ane'i, he pāha'oha'o a māna'ona'o, he pōwehiwehi a kikoī – kekahi he 'ike pilikino e mālama pono 'ia.

Paipai mai 'o Norma iā kākou e no'ono'o ākea 'ia ke kupuna, 'o ia ho'i nā kānaka a me nā mea ola o mua mai, 'a'ole 'o ko kākou mau pili koko wale nō. No ke aha? No ka mea, 'a'ohē kanaka i pā 'ole i ke ao apuni ona. Mali'a 'a'ole kākou 'ike i ka inoa o ke kupuna i hō'ea mai i Hawai'i, 'a'ole paha 'ike kikoī no ka makahiki i hō'ea mai ai, 'a'ole paha 'ike i ka 'āina kikoī o kona hō'ea 'ana mai. Eia na'e, 'ike ākea nō kākou no ka po'e i huaka'i mai ia 'āina mai, ma ia wā like, no kekahi kumu kikoī. I ko lākou hō'ea 'ana ua noho ma kekahi mau wahi kikoī, a ua hana ma kekahi mau 'oihana kikoī. Kūikawā ko lākou nohona ma ka huaka'i 'ana mai a noho maila ma kēia 'āina. He wā waiwai nō paha, a wā i hopohopo paha ai i ke kālā. He wā hukihuki paha, a he wā i ho'āla hou 'ia ka mo'omeheu. Ua pā lākou i kēia mau mea a ua pā nā koho a lākou i ho'oholo ai a me ko lākou kuana'ike.

Ke no'ono'o i ka wā i ola ai kou mau kūpuna, he aha nā mea i ko'iko'i iā lākou? Pehea i pā ai ka 'āina 'o Hawai'i i kēia au i nā mea a lākou i ho'oholo ai ma ia au i newa akula?

'O nā mo'olelo o kinohi a me ko kākou hānai 'ia 'ana nā mea nui e kumu mai ai ke kuana'ike... ko kākou nānā, kālailai, a 'ike 'ana i ke ao holo'oko'a. Pehea 'oe e wehewehe ai i kou kuana'ike? (Mokuna 2 ma WNTW)

# KE NE'E 'ĀWĪWĪ NEI NĀ MEA A PAU

(MOKUNA 3 WNTW; MOKUNA 2 A 9 WWABM)

## EVERYTHING IS MOVING FASTER

(CHAPTER 3 WNTW; CHAPTER 2 AND 9 WWABM)

Both books describe the phenomena of everything moving faster and the consequences of that on what happens, what decisions and choices we make, and how we feel about things. Two terms are used: collective acceleration and slipstream. A slipstream is when things happen in a human-made measurable period of time, that feels like everything is speeding up and time itself is moving faster. These actions create an energy stream, a slipstream. Collective acceleration is about everything moving faster and people collectively being impacted by it, whether we realize it or not.

What examples and stories do you have about how everything seems to be moving faster here in Hawai'i? How do you feel about it?

Are there examples and stories of things that are moving faster in places other than Hawai'i? How do these examples and stories impact us? How do you feel about it?

What was it like before it moved faster? What is it like now? We use the word “everything”, but is it everything, but are there things that move slower even while other things move faster? What tension is created as a result? What do you wish would move slower? Why? And how would you – along with other folk – would keep moving slower with these practices, ways, and things?

Wehewehe nā puke 'elua no kēia pi'i 'ana o ka 'āwīwī o ka holo 'ana o nā mea a pau a me ka hopena o ia 'āwīwī 'ana a'e. Pā nā koho, ko kākou ho'oholo 'ana, a me ko kākou na'au i kēia 'āwīwī 'ana a'e. Palapala pinepine 'ia he 'elua mau māmala'ōlelo: 'o "collective acceleration" a 'o "slipstream". 'O ka slipstream ka holo 'ana o kekahi hana ma kekahi wā kikoī a kohu mea ke wikiwiki a'e nei a ne'e koke nei nā minuke. Mai kēia 'ano holo wikiwiki 'ana o ka hana e 'ano kahe ai ka ikehu, he slipstream nō ho'i ia. 'O ka collective acceleration, pili i ka ne'e wikiwiki 'ana o nā mea a pau a pā ka po'e a pau ma ke 'ano nui, i loko nō o ko kākou 'ike a 'ike 'ole.

He aha nā mo'olelo e hō'ike ana i ka wikiwiki a'e o ka ne'e 'ana o nā mea ma Hawai'i? Pehea kou mana'o no ia mea?

He la'ana paha o ka ne'e koke 'ana o nā mea ma waho aku o Hawai'i? Pā kākou i kēia mau la'ana a mo'olelo? Pehea kou mana'o no kēia?

Pehea ka nohona ma mua o kēia ne'e wikiwiki 'ana? Pehea ka nohona i kēia manawa? Ne'e wikiwiki nā mea a pau o kēia au, akā loa'a anei kekahi mau mea e ne'e loli ana i loko nō o ka ne'e 'āwīwī 'ana o nā mea 'ē a'e? He 'ā'ume'ume e kupu mai ana ma waena o kēia mau 'ēko'a? He aha kāu e makemake ana e mālie mai? No ke aha? Pehea 'oe, a me ka po'e 'ē a'e, e ne'e akahele ai me kēia mau loina, hana, a mea āu e a'o nei?

# HE AHA KĀ KĀKOU E HO'OLU A KAHUKAHU ANA NO KA HANAUNA E HIKI MAI ANA?

(MOKUNA 5 WWABM; MOKUNA 5 A 6 WNTW)

## WHAT DO WE WANT TO CULTIVATE AND GROW FOR DESCENDANTS YET TO COME? (CHAPTER 5 WWABM; CHAPTER 5 AND 6 WNTW)

Norma talks about the Horizon, the place and time a long time from now, about seven generations or about 140-150 years from now. She urges us to actively imagine into what that time and place will be like if we are determined to move toward thriving in which no person's success is at the expense of another, and our work and well-being is not at the expense of 'aina, wai, or the environment generally. These are values we hold today. If we are to make it more of a reality in the future, what would be possible? People sustained themselves in Hawai'i for more than 1000 years. We have made good choices and bad choices in the last 200 years. What would a different Horizon look like? What decisions can we, as ancestors, make for the benefit of future descendants?

She urges us to do this imagining with other people we want to do the work with to make the Horizon a reality. Norma urges us not to get bogged down in thinking about all of the hurdles, and to be maka'ala, especially attentive to how we think about what we want and rather than what can happen if all of the people acted as mutual stewards of all people in relationship to each other and to this place. Mutual stewardship is when people in relationship with each other and to this place recognize our interwoven needs, and focus on what may be possible together for us to mutually thrive, intergenerationally and non-transactionally.

Wala'au 'o Norma no ka 'Alihilani, he wahi a wā ma 'ō loa aku. He 7 hanauna a i 'ole 140-150 makahiki mai kēia wā 'ānō. Koikoi 'o ia iā kākou e ho'omoeā i ia wā a wahi inā 'o ko kākou mana'o e ne'e aku i ia 'āina la'ela'e – kahi e pilikia 'ole ai kekahi ke lanakila 'o ha'i, kahi e pilikia 'ole ai ka 'āina, ka wai, a me ke ao kūlohelohelo i kā kākou mau hana a ko kākou nohona. 'O ia mau mea nā mana'o a kākou e pūlama ana i kēia manawa 'ānō. Inā e ho'okino maoli 'ia kēia mau mana'o i ka wā e hiki mai ana, pehea lā kēlā nohona? Ua ola a lupalupa nā kānaka ma Hawai'i no 1000 a 'oi makahiki. 'O ko kākou mau koho i loko o nā makahiki 200 i hala iho nei, he maika'i a he maika'i 'ole pū. Pehea ka nānā 'ana o ka 'Alihilani? He aha nā koho a kākou, nā kūpuna ho'i o kēia mua aku, e ho'oholo ai i pōmaika'i ka hanauna e hiki mai ana?

Paipai 'o ia i kou ho'omoeā 'ana me ka po'e 'ē a'e e alu like pū ana i kēia 'Alihilani hou. Koi ana 'o Norma i ko kākou no'ono'o 'ole 'ana no nā alaina a e maka'ala i ko kākou no'ono'o 'ana – 'a'ole e no'ono'o wale no nā mea a kākou e makemake ana akā e no'ono'o i ka hopena o ka hana pū 'ana o ka po'e me ka hāpai 'ana i ka pono nui o kākou a o kēia wahi. 'O ka no'ono'o 'ana i ka pono nui, 'o ia ka 'ike maopopo 'ana i ko kākou kauka'i 'ana kekahi i kekahi - nā kānaka me kēia wahi. E kālele ma luna o nā mea a kākou e ho'okō like ana i hiki ke ulu a māhuahua ma o nā hanauna me ka no'onoo'o 'ole i ka uku wale nō.

# HE MAU MANA'O NA NORMA

## A MESSAGE FROM NORMA



These two books and the Talk Story guide are intended to seed and water conversations you have with your ohana, friends, and community. Indeed, we must begin to create the future Hawai'i we hope for right now as a counter ballast to the collapse happening elsewhere. I believe Hawai'i has many of the elements needed, including our understanding of what it means to be in close relationship to each other and to this place. We have a strong value and desire to be the good ancestors for descendants yet to come.

I am humbled and grateful to be doing this work. As Puanani Burgess and I often mused, this is work that we can do only because we are of this place, of Hawai'i, of the many peoples, of this land and waters, of our shared history, interwoven and distinct cultures, and of the promises we make to each other. That we share this responsibly is critical. That we share at all is about the urgent conditions all around us. Mahalo nui.

'O kēia mau puke 'elua a me kēia kuhikuhi nei, he mea e paipai ana i ke kūkā kama'ilio 'ana me kou 'ohana, hoaaloha a kaiaulu. Ko'iko'i ko kākou ho'omaka 'ana e waele i ke ala kūpono no Hawai'i i mea e ho'oka'awale ai i nā 'ano pilikia o waho. Aia nō ma Hawai'i nā mea a pau a he ko'iko'i ko kākou 'ike maopopo no ka pilina ma waena o kākou a me kēia wahi. Mea nui ko kākou kālele a 'i'ini e lilo kākou he mau kūpuna maika'i no nā hanauna e hiki mai ana.

Nui ko'u mahalo i ka hiki ke hana i kēia 'ano hana. E like me kā māua 'o Puanani Burgess e kūkā mau ana, ua hiki ke hana 'ia kēia 'ano hana 'oiai no kēia wahi, no Hawai'i, mai kākou – he wahi me ka nui lāhui, ka 'āina me ka wai ha'oha'o, ka mō'aukala i 'āwili 'ia, ka mo'omeheu i 'āwili 'ia, a he wahi e kāko'o ai kākou kekahi i kekahi. He mea nui ko kākou ka'ana 'ana i kēia me ka no'ono'o i ko kākou kuleana. E ka'ana kākou 'oiai ua pono nō kēia 'ike ma kēia au e holo nei. Mahalo nui.