

Thriving Pacific: Thriving Cultures What are the qualities of a successful Pacific Navigator

Comment # Name Comment

Dustin Langidrik Strong connection to nature, strong connection to environment, to be bold to make hard decisions, to know place, language, heritage and history of the place. Finds immediate solutions to problems.

Sesario Sewralur Our identity is of the Pacific, the largest place in the world. As voyagers, we need to deliver a message to show how much we care and love.

Larry Raigetel Some of the things I have learned from those before is humility. Because you have to accept that when you are in that role out on the canoe, you are an individual reliant on and at the hands of nature. Responsibility is also key in our culture. We have a custom amongst my people called, “shaoal yamw mas” this is where our sisters give their sons to us (shaoal yamw mas - lit., to die with you). [Larry says that his language is not a written language, so this spelling of this term is for the purposes of documentation]. So, you have this responsibility, your family’s lives are in your hands. It is my responsibility not only to take care of myself, keep myself alive out there on the canoe, but I have the responsibility to take care of my family, my nephews too. Our ancestors never thought about just themselves. It is always about others and those who come after you.]***

To be amongst navigators in my culture you have to cover yourself and protect yourself from others because they may try to trick you. You are competing for natural resources, there is competition, so you must be able to protect yourself from your competition (other navigators). [Speaks of this opportunity as being life-changing, changing his cultural associations of what it means to be a navigator in his culture—taking care of him and his own—versus this idea and new life understanding of what it means to be a voyager as one that has him thinking about working in harmony and unison with others to successfully navigate this voyage.]*** This is such a different evolvment in my life because this is a voyage of unity and coming and working together.

*** Text in brackets is a summary by note taker

Max Yarawamai [Third person paraphrasing of Max’s story]: Thinking a long time, he feels fortunate to have been with the best. Remembers Pinky, what he learned from him. In Rapa Nui, he came in and treated them all like his sons. Laura (Nainoa’s mother) was there, too, at a restaurant. Pinky asked Max if he could sail back to Tahiti.

He was fortunate to be with Mau. Max picked things up from each individual. That's what he got from each person. The whole pie is there, but he got a piece from each person. Max wouldn't have a title on Hōkūle'a, but his job was to look for the signs on Hōkūle'a. It was the roughest sail he'd ever done (five storms). Seeing [the thought of] the old man on board running around gave him strength -- his name Mau, means "strength." Max couldn't sleep because he thought he was going to die, and he could see his daughters and his wife, but Mau gave him strength.

Archie brought him strength in South Africa, they are like brothers, sharing with each other. Max's daughter did the trip from Hilo to Tahiti, she couldn't sleep on the canoe because of the noise. He and Archie were listening to every movement, every squeaking, every flying fish on board, every smell.

Hector talking about the ancestors, that's what he believes. The more it gets harder out there, the stronger he gets, that's what Hector brought; he brought the ancestors. His land way out there in Kaitaia is way out in the country. But there was a special presence out there. When we are out on the marae with them, sleeping in a huge hall, hear the wailing of Māori -- powerful.

Max told Nainoa it is amazing how he is pulled in lots of directions but nobody is higher or lower. With Bruce, Max sailed from Marquesas to Hilo, it was so quiet on that canoe, not much was said but everyone knew what to do. When they found land, it was amazing. Archie, Max and Bruce: 2 to 6 am, Max and Archie on each side, Bruce in the middle. What Max learned was that there was so much he could offer even though he was the smallest guy on the canoe.

Max just met Bob in South Africa, they hit it off and feel like they've know each other for years. New students need to believe and have courage. The new students who navigated from Galapagos to Rapa Nui, they are taking it to the next level.

Max's father threw him out, and told the Hawaiians thanks for bringing back the driftwood (Max). "We have all the ingredients now; you don't have to go to Harvard or Stanford, we the people have the knowledge."

How does your crew prepare for voyaging conditions?

Dustin Mother's Story: all parts of the canoe are parts of a mother. When sailing, all protocols are treated in the highest respect as you are treating your own mother.

What makes a culture thrive? What role does voyaging play in a thriving culture?

Dustin What makes a culture strong is connection to heritage and to pass on the knowledge and stories to the next generation.

Rationing, sustainable harvesting, conservation and sustainability. This is the idea we can give to the community.

Larry I've been having these visions of these canoes going away, I was raised that way, but in that process I learned that there is a lot to offer from where I come from. [Speaks about his life and his living abroad all around the world.]*** I've been there and it is not an easy life. I tell my people who say we need to go away to see other things, it is very different. [Speaks about how exposure to the larger world changes your mindset and thinking to think more connectively]*** when we voyaged at home it was me as a navigator and my nephews. Today, it is about others and is inclusive because we are no longer just going to Turtle Island.

What role does language play in the Wa'a?

Dustin Language is the mat where everyone sits to collaborate. Language is a bridge to link other cultures and places.

What is the word for navigator in your own language?

Marshallese: ri-meto (navigator); rikatu (captain).

What do you think about the condition – the health – of our Pacific environment?

Dustin It is ever-changing rapidly. The ocean is our liberation or doom. She (the ocean) will give or take. She is mad.

What role does the Pacific voyaging movement play in the care and restoration of Pacific marine and island eco-systems?

Dustin We are here to protect the ocean—to revive and sustain.

When you reflect back on your elders and ancestors, in our short time together, who comes to mind and why?

Dustin Ancestors (Mother, Grandmother) our ancestors passed it on. Grandfather taught how to build canoes, sail, fish.

Larry My grandfather and father. My father stood up for me and supported me when I wanted to go at the age of 14. My father who never worked (employed) went to work just to get me my ticket to go. I thank him for supporting me to go even when he thought I was going a different direction from him. My grandfather, gave me my name, Raigetel, they are two small sharks. And it was my mission to find these sharks, but I think he did it on purpose knowing that I would go look for them. I have not found them, but instead I found Nainoa folks. I will still continue to look for those two sharks.

Emma Touching on Max's place, the problem there is that the youth are leaving. Saipan (where I'm from) is a beautiful island but the forest is dying, because vines are growing and killing everything. If you don't know what the forest looks like, you don't know. Don't know quite how to engage the children, they are being pushed to go to college but a lot don't come back. Want to get the kids on the water. One little girl asked the canoe to go slower because she didn't want it to end. But don't know how to get the ocean to touch everyone.

Max There's 70 people at my place. It's funny, that might be an easier place to make change, on my island. We (he and Nainoa) were standing on this place. We thought to rebuild the clinic typhoon-proof so when a typhoon hits, if someone gets hurt they could take them up the ramp, raise it 4 feet above water; we thought about all this stuff. Kids moving away, that's something we cannot stop. There's kids gonna go, but there are kids that are going to be there forever. If we could try and keep those people that want to move away, we need to keep the culture.

Max [Third person paraphrasing of Max's comments]: One reef, one people. Scientists from California come in the summer and help them to take care of the reef. But one way to get the youth to take care of it is we do what we used to do where we kapu (protect/restrict the taking of resources for a given time) the area, but in a modern sense, and we put a kid in charge. Everyone fishing, they are counting and saying if they caught a male or female (Nicole Crane is heading it). Chuuk, Satawal, they can say what is happening on their atoll. "Why are they doing this? Because the reef is their refrigerator."

The younger generation is coming home. Max's kuleana is the ocean; he's not the paramount chief, the kids are the ones telling them about conserving certain resources. Computers can allow them to do their studies. There are ways to connect the more high-tech kids with the kids who are checking the reef.

It is a fragile time right now. He's not a US citizen (Micronesia Free Association). He wants to do a summit like this and have all the chiefs to participate and share what he's learned to save the precious culture and not sellout to China. China is everywhere with cash; how can his people

compete? Chinese are in Saipan too. "How can we compete without cash?" He needs the world to know. One of the chiefs sold out for \$10,000 so the Chinese came to fish for one week; an elder's signature was forged.

Max could just live here in Hawai'i. But he had buried his dad right in the middle of their island and his dad is telling them right now "What are you going to do son?" He thought he was being sent to school as punishment, he went to Hawai'i Prep Academy. But actually, his dad was way ahead of him, telling him what the future was going to be.

What do you think Hawai'i and the greater Pacific have to offer the world?

Dustin Hawaiian people have experience in merging with Western culture and it has pros and cons. Pacific nations can learn from each other.

Sesario Respect every culture

Larry [***Larry speaks about when he was in big cities. At night, he would stare in awe at all the lights and busyness of city life. He felt disconnected and lost because he could not see the stars in the sky, he did not know how to interpret his surroundings, and he did not have access to and could not read his environment. Observing also led him to recognize how dependent humans in environments like the big city are on electricity. The modernized world would die without electricity in days because they are so disconnected to the environment and natural survival. They would be unable to feed themselves.]

Larry [Asks if he could add on to Keala's mo'olelo about his daughter anchoring point of view, cultural perspective and sense of place*** -- Third person paraphrasing of Larry's story]: An elder, the first president of his country, was negotiating the terms of Free Association with the United States [The Compact of Free Association (COFA) is an international agreement establishing and governing the relationships of free association between the United States and the three Pacific Island nations of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, and Palau.]***, he told the U.S. delegates that his boundary of what was considered his place was until as far as he could see; the extent of his eye sight. So the Americans were very happy, they were thinking that it was good because they were negotiating only miles of land. But then he said, "Yes, but when I get on my canoe (and sail), and San Francisco is in my eyesight, then San Francisco is my boundary and therefore my land." Our oceans connect us, we have that commonality and it is a strength, but we must also remain vigilant of caring for and respecting and appreciating what makes us unique and special as indigenous peoples.

If we could reconceive the map of the Pacific and honor our native/indigenous perspectives of oceanic movement and settlement past and present, what might that map look like? What might change? What would your own cultural map look like?

Dustin Too many boundaries, include migration stories, the story of One People. If we are bigger, we are stronger. We look for directions in maps. Cultivated with culture and stories.

Sesario We have our traditional names for places that others have tried to take away or supersede.

Max I don't even think there is a map. The Westerners made the map. I focus on the cultural side of it. We all have different cultures and what's going to weave it together is who we are right now... we are navigators. We need to know that you are a little different than me and we need to listen to others' points of view. It's not about Polynesia, Micronesia. In Hawai'i it's not just the Micronesians. People ask me what's wrong with Micronesians; I tell them you need to first understand them. We need to break it down to the next level and the next level, Yap, Satawal... We are from India too and we have a caste system. There are the details that we don't look at. Let's forget about this map -- we are already sailing... let's go. We all need each other and we have to come together because we are all good in our areas. I am already thinking about what I'm going to do -- I'm going to bring together the people of Yap and feel everyone out. I'm on fire right now and we have to do something or else we will forget about these things. I want to do a summit and bring together all of the chiefs and they aren't going to like what I say but I want to bring that information back. We all know who we are and we are all proud and we are all on this journey together. I really want to thank Hawai'i because you paid the price and you are the front runners. We are 200 years behind and now we are going to go through what you already went through. From 1974 to where we are right now is so different. There will be a time that we will be like this together. We need to bring back our language and get our own schools and own hospitals -- Hawai'i paid the price. They want to have the meetings here and you can see what has happened here. Hawai'i did all this hard work and now we can learn from the good and the bad. I want to thank Randie and he's always there. I get chicken skin when I think about it and Hawai'i has sacrificed. There is everything we need in Hawai'i to get through this time. I tell Thomas that we need to look at what our people are contributing. We have lawyers and doctors within our little community in Yap. We need to speak of the good that's happening all around us.

Tommy I was lucky to have a face-to-face talk with Mau and as we were sitting on the beach in

the evening and watching the sunset we were talking and this discussion came up. I asked him where we go from here. He said “Why are you asking me, you should be asking yourself where you go from here... it's your turn to expand the world.” At one time we were just one people. I don't know who decided to divide us and at one time we were all one people of the ocean. In college I challenged one of my professors at UH Hilo, “Did you know that there are Polynesian people in Micronesia?” I wanted to let the class know that there were Polynesian people in Micronesia. I would draw the map as one people in one ocean. The importance of the sea route is that tactic that you use when you navigate north to south and you place the imaginary line. There are other sea lanes mapped the same way and you can figure out the other sea lanes once you master it. There is a name for each sea lane that has a relation to the ocean or astronomy or legends.

Emma I found this map in a book while I was doing research and there were all these lines. I asked the children if they knew what the lines were and I told them they are sea routes. If we are going to do another map then we should add sea routes. The map is like a road map for canoes. It would be nice to see this version of the map. [IMAGE: A map of Carolinian Islands with the sea route Metawal-Wol/Metawal-uol named]

****How should we move forward so that we can impact the future?**

Dustin Best practices from our traditional knowledge of sustainability, connection to environment and place. Collective impact for governance. Sea transport-most consumption of fossil fuels are from sea transport.

Dustin Lolelaplap=Term for Vast Ocean