

## The time is here for 'aroha'

Written by Elizabeth Barrett  
Thursday, 17 June 2010 21:18 -

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We spread the ashes of a friend the other day.

Water lapped gently against the side of the boat as we remembered and prayed her into the next world.

No iPods, cell phones, television or other distractions.

We were in the here and now. In relationship with one another.

During a visit with friends the next day, relationship surfaced again.

Jack lamented how neighbors don't talk to neighbors anymore.

Often families don't even talk to families anymore.

We isolate ourselves in our air-conditioned homes to watch television, play video games, listen to music, text our friends.

When we leave our air-conditioned homes and get into our air-conditioned cars, we often bounce from one activity to another.

The things that keep us away from relationship go on and on.

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I am old enough to remember the days before air conditioning. When a hot house drove you and your family outside in the evening to sit on the steps and watch June bugs or visit with a neighbor across the hedge.

In those days, television was not a priority. Ours sat in the basement rarely watched, especially during those magical nights when the moon was in full bloom and games like kick-the-can permeated our neighborhood.

It was a kind of "aroha"—a Maori word that translates into having unconditional love and respect for fellow human beings and practiced by the indigenous people of New Zealand.

To live aroha, says author Anne Wilson Schaef, is to have the courage to develop relationships filled with aroha and express it to all people at all times.

Schaef says aroha is not possible unless we truly know in our hearts that we are all interconnected.

Developing intimate relationship takes time and energy.

Yet for me, it's one of the greatest feelings in the world when I spend my time and energy connecting to a human being face to face instead of rushing around and trying to fill my life with something artificial.

"The quality of your life is the quality of your relationships."—Anthony Robbins