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## Walk in your Rangatiratanga

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### Poem

Walk in your Rangatiratanga  
Walk in your sovereignty  
Every moment of your life,  
Remember you are a magnificent creation  
Mai ngā Ātua, mai ngā Tūpuna  
From the spiritual realm of our Gods,  
Of the ancient ones  
Remember you come from the aroha of  
generations  
You are the embodied love of generations  
Without limits, Transcending time and space  
Remember you are meant to be here,  
They have a purpose for your life  
Keep your moemoeā alive and hold fast to them  
Keep your dreams alive for therein lives hope  
Never apologise for being Māori, for being you  
Lift your head up and know that you  
Are not an apology for the colonizers  
Refuse to wear the colonizers' lies  
The burden of your suffering is not yours alone  
to carry  
Never hang your head when profanity is ushered  
forth  
From those who live in ignorance of your  
magnificence  
Wear your Pūkauae, a sacred mark of your culture  
Your entitlement as a Māori woman, with the full  
joy

That your identity and whakapapa bestow upon  
you  
Never let anyone tell you, that you are not enough  
Dream, love, live the life your ancestors dreamed  
for you  
Own the fullness, the magnificence of everything  
that you are  
Own your stories, own your wisdom,  
Take ownership of all that you are and all you  
have yet to become  
In times of sadness, ask what would my  
ancestors' tell me to do?  
When faced with the scourges and hatred of  
colonisation,  
The mamae biting at your ancestor's souls,  
Taking aim at their spirits,  
Starving them into submission, subjection  
They never let go of their mana, their dreams for  
you  
They stood, they lived, they recreated themselves  
through whakapapa  
Through generations, with the vision of you  
before them,  
Always with them and they with you  
They stood in life beyond the colonisers attempts  
to destroy  
Remember these things from the realm of the  
ancient ones  
And walk forever and always in your Sovereignty  
And as you walk in your magnificence,  
In your whakapapa  
You are walking hand in hand into the future with  
them at your side  
And they are smiling....

Nā,  
Whāea Keri Lawson-Te Aho

**About the author:**

**Dr Keri Lawson-Te Aho**

Dr Keri Lawson-Te Aho has a PhD in Science (Psychology) and more than 30 years' experience in Māori Public Health policy development, intervention design, evaluation and teaching. Dr Lawson-Te Aho was a Research Fellow with the East West Center in Hawai'i in 1995. Her research interests include Indigenous selfdetermination and development, historical trauma, healing and Māori suicide prevention. Dr Lawson-Te Aho is a member of the International World Dignity University Initiative (Nobel Peace Prize group nominee); International Taskforce of Indigenous Psychologists and Te Ohu Rata o Aotearoa and Doctors without Borders. Dr Lawson-Te Aho is well published in the area of Māori and Indigenous suicide prevention.  
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