

July 30, 2009

Coach Bullock,

The past two years have been nothing but a sweet ride. I am forever grateful for the opportunity in finding what I am truly passionate about. Growing up in Hawaii, I learned in order to be a great leader one must influence themselves as well as others and that the main elements of a great leader were *pono*, *koa*, *kupa'a*, *makaikau*, and *aloha* (character, courage, commitment, competence, and being compatible). All traits I feel you portray.

We've always joked about what it means to be Hawaiian and all those interesting conversations we had in our cubby-hole of an office. There is one part I would like to share with you about what was passed down to me about being a warrior according to the Hawaiian culture. Part of the Hawaiian warrior culture one of the main emphasis lies on developing strength physically and spiritually. We learn to call onto something whether it be a supreme being, a particular person, or something that can't be explained, but when whatever you call upon arrives it's like a trigger goes off. We had those types of moments every time we worked out. In all seriousness there truly was a sense of "mana" around us. I think that's why people have been hesitant to workout with us. Mana is one of the most important aspect to a Hawaiian warrior.

We've talked about "mana" before, but I didn't have a chance to go in depth to what it really means to me. Mana is all around us, everyone has mana. What you do in life and how you live it shows how much mana you have. For instance when a person walks into a room and their presence alone grabs the attention of all, that person has mana. When a person speaks and everyone hangs on to each word spoken, that person has mana. When a person holds themselves to the highest standards, that person has mana. From the first time I worked with you, even before I became your graduate assistant, there was a strong feeling of your mana that projected out from you.

I could go on for hours about all the times we had; from stressing over summer manuals, doing crazy workouts with Big Will, venting to each other about athletes, jamming to music on our computers, waking up before the sun, to our great/interesting conversations with Coop. So I'm not going to do that.

Instead, the meaning behind the gift will hopefully say more than I could voice. It is called a Pahoia, an ancient Hawaiian dagger. This particular Pahoia, I personally made for you. The dagger is made from a blue marlin bill my family caught fishing off the coast of Molokai. Under the rope handle is a stain of my blood, which means I've put the mana I have into this particular weapon and that a part of me is flowing through it. Attached to it is a koa wood fishhook. The fishhook is of course a sign of a fisherman, but also symbolizes that you can cast out negativity and things you don't want around you and at the same time you can pull in the people you love and want around as well as bring in strength.

Again, thank you so much for everything you have taught in the two years working with you and I'm sure the friendship we have will continue and grow along with the years and experiences that lie ahead of us.

Aloha,

Daniel M.M Aipa