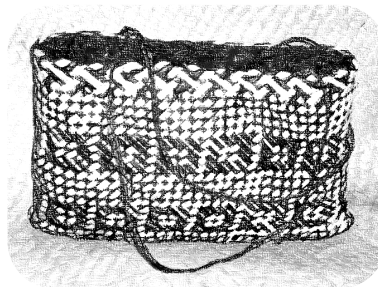


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What's in my kete?

An exploration of women and leadership in not-for-profit organisations in Aotearoa/New Zealand



A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
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Abstract:

This thesis listens to, and learns from, the perspectives of five women in leadership roles of not-for-profit organisations in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The key objective of this research was to examine the essence of leadership for these women. This qualitative study adopted an integrated research approach, which wove together Māori and Pākehā understandings of research, knowledge, and symbols. It privileged indigenous ways of knowing by centring the research on the concepts of the *kete* – as a material metaphor and a way of communicating Māori ways of knowing – and *kōrero*, which is meaningful conversation together with others, from which to gather data. The key question asked was “What is in your kete?” which asked what they brought with them to their understanding and role of leadership, and what continued to shape and sustain them as leaders. Participants were invited to reflect on the research question, over the period of a month, collecting material symbolic items in a kete if they desired, and then the five participants gathered for *kōrero* or focused group conversations – two participants in one *kōrero* and three participants in another, with myself as a facilitator.

From this dual method qualitative research approach, three key themes emerged. The first theme was that the participants have a whole personal community in their kete, which has not only influenced the leader in the past, but continues to have an ongoing significance in shaping the heart of leadership for these women. The second theme, determined that there is a clear sense of purpose that is foundational to their work in the not-for-profit sector and that there are a whole web of beliefs that underpin the way these women understand their leadership. The final theme that emerged is the realisation that there is power in their kete.

Dedication

To my whānau whānui – family and friends, who shape, encourage, and sustain me
in leadership and life.

To God – the ultimate servant leader.

Acknowledgements

This study would not have been possible without the enthusiasm, grace, courage, honesty, insight, and generosity of the women participants. I felt privileged that they joined me on this adventure of discovery, and they will forever be in my kete.

I would like to thank my thesis supervisors, Dr marg Gilling and Gloria Slater, whose patience, optimism, faith that I could complete, timely insights and listening ears have made this thesis possible. Thanks also go to Dr Janet Webster for her valued input given as the need arose late in the process. Their encouragement has enriched this thesis immeasurably.

I would like to thank those who provided practical encouragement and support, especially to help this thesis through the final crazy days – particularly Peggy, Peta-Maria and Jenni.

I would like to thank my work community, Tertiary Students Christian Fellowship (NZ), for their support to undertake this research project as part of my ongoing leadership development and sometimes at significant cost to the organisation. Their willingness to incorporate much of this learning, and to ask many of the questions that are at the conclusion of this thesis, is testimony to the organisation's openness to do leadership differently and courageously in the not-for-profit context.

I wish to thank all those who work – in both a paid and volunteer capacity - in the not-for-profit sector. Your courage and care, to give of yourselves for the benefit of others, often in significantly testing conditions, is an inspiration to me and to many, and a taonga in our society.

He mihi

Ko Tapuae o Uenuku te maunga

Ko Wairau te awa

Ko Kurahaupo te waka

Ko Rangitane o Wairau te iwi

Ko Huataki te tangata

Ko Omaka te marae

Ko Howard raua ko Jill oku matua

Ko Valerie Animoa Goold toku ingoa

Tena koutou, tena koutou, tena koutou katoa.

I am a woman

I am a leader in a not-for-profit organisation.

I greet you, the reader, and invite you to listen to the perspective and the wisdom of the women in this study and to learn from them, just as I have.



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