

‘ŌLELO NO‘EAU THROUGH THE WA‘A

1. Movement — The Canoe Lives Through Motion

“Au i ke kai me he manu ala.”

(‘Ōlelo No‘eau #237)

Literal:

Travel in the sea like a bird.

What you teach:

The canoe does not push through the ocean—it **moves with it**.

Break it down for students:

- A bird doesn’t fight the wind
- It uses lift, timing, and angle
- The wa‘a does the same with swell

On-canoe teaching line:

“If you feel like you’re fighting the ocean—you’re doing it wrong.”

2. Awareness — Reading What Cannot Be Seen

“Ike i ke au nui me ke au iki.”

(‘Ōlelo No‘eau #1209)

Literal:

Know the big currents and the small currents.

What you teach:

Anyone can see the big wave.

A canoe person reads what most people miss.

Break it down:

- big current = obvious forces
- small current = subtle shifts
- both affect the canoe

This is critical to your system:

This is where **experience becomes ‘ike.**

On-canoe teaching line:

“What you don’t see is what will affect you the most.”

3 Decision — When to Go, When to Wait

“Lele ka ‘iwa, mālie kai ko‘o.”

(‘Ōlelo No‘eau #1979)

Meaning:

When the ‘iwa bird flies, the sea is calm.

What you teach:

You don’t decide based on opinion—you decide based on **signs.**

Break it down:

- environment speaks first
- people respond second

Canoe truth:

Launching at the wrong time is failure before you start.

On-canoe teaching line:

“The ocean tells you when you can go—you don’t tell the ocean.”

4 State of Balance — When Everything Is Right

“La‘i lua ke kai.”

Meaning:

The sea is calm, deep, and undisturbed.

What you teach:

This is not just weather—this is a **state of alignment.**

Break it down:

- canoe balanced
- crew synchronized
- ocean cooperative

Connection to your core idea:

This is **pono in motion**.

On-canoe teaching line:

“When the canoe feels easy—that’s not luck. That’s alignment.”