



The Magic of Mālama

Kahu Billy shares the island's spiritual side and why so many people have found the source of life at Hualalai.

To hear Kahu Billy Mitchell speak is to realize that the Hawaiians have had it right for centuries. Love—for oneself, for one another, for one's environment—is the source of life. "Now that the whole world is starting to think globally, they're finding out, 'Hey, remember those Hawaiians with the grass skirts? They were trying to tell us this all the time,'" Billy says with a smile.

As a Hawaiian *kahu*, or "shepherd," Billy's role as Hualalai's spiritual leader is not to preach, but to guide. "You want to help people find in themselves, first, that source that allows them to find their inner peace, to find that balance where their understanding of their own lives brings them joy." This balance, or *pono*, is key to the culture of Hualalai.

"Everybody talks about the *aloha* spirit. And I believe Hualalai provides a wonderful environment for it to be practiced. The land, the ocean, the people who work here...the people who visit Hualalai are looking for that. It's real. That's what *mālama* is. *Mālama*, literally, is 'to take care of.' We try to teach these values in *mālama* that help you carry the things you must, but not carry the burden." The teaching of *mālama* extends to the Hualalai staff as well, so they can share in the creation of this healing community.

"Our Residents are being drawn to something good, especially those who have come to live here. It's the human spirit looking for this well, this *puna wai*. It's giving off life." Billy's purpose is to lead people to the well and empower them to taste it, to share it, to live it.

"People tell me, 'Kahu, you were put there to teach them.' This was the education for me. I've met some great human beings, with such incredible love and caring in them, who are able to avail it here. This is what they want to do anywhere, but Hualalai gives them the perfect excuse. They saw an environment where they said, 'I can be that; that's in me.' That's the real magic." ■