

**Intended for Grades:** 6-12

**Date:** January 28, 2025

**Estimated Time:** Introduction and final debrief 5-10 min.; 3-5 minutes per person (est. 1+ min. per person per question) *Note:* Adequate time for all to share is important; break lesson into three sessions if needed.

**Lesson Title: GUTS ON THE TABLE**

**Lesson Purpose: Students will:**

- \* Deepen understanding of self and relationships with others
- \* Build bonds between the participants through heartfelt sharing in a safe place

**Materials & Preparation:**

- \* Three questions - projected or as a handout (See below)
- \* A watch or small clock to keep time
- \* *Prepare the space and secure the time:* -Put chairs in a circle or sit on the floor in a circle (no tables as they tend to separate) -Try to keep interruptions minimal (i.e.: place sign on door) (*Option: Take the group to a shady, private place outside*)

**Background Information:**

This activity was developed by Auntie Puanani Burgess, a respected Native Hawaiian facilitator who supports community development in her home district on the Leeward O'ahu coast and beyond. Her focus is to help develop beloved communities.

One activity Auntie Puanani does with people is called "Guts on the Table". Its purpose is to help participants think from below their *piko* (belly button) in their gut or *na'au*. "Your gut is the deepest place from which you think. It's the place where your mind, heart, intuition and experience come together. It is the place where mana, your spiritual core lives", teaches Auntie Puanani.

She explains this activity further: "The Hawaiian word for thought is mana'o. This is a formal process, a ritual. The methodology is simple: create a safe space and help people to find their stories and to tell them. This exercise was designed to help people get deeper, faster."

Each participant is asked to share about themselves as well as their community. Because of the personal nature of this sharing, this experience needs active, positive facilitation. The intention is to build connections to enhance relationships. If someone is not willing to share, make it comfortable for him or her to pass until ready. Encourage respectful participation by reviewing and maintaining appropriate protocols.

Teachers need to be the first to share so they can model "going deep", talking about something they feel strongly about, so students will be comfortable sharing from their heart. The late, great Storyteller and Falsetto Master Clyde Kindy Sproat called this kind of communication "straining it through your heart".

**Steps:**

1. Share protocols for this exercise. Consider the following:
  - a. 3-5 minute time limit per person (for all three questions; est. 1+ min. per question) (*Note: Strategy to manage time: Person to right of speaker holds a watch or clock and passes it to the speaker when they have 10-15 seconds left to share*).
  - b. Talk about what is comfortable to share publicly.
  - c. Keep what is talked about "in the circle" (confidential).

- d. No responses, questions, or comments; quiet respectful listening by all.
- e. Everyone in the room participates in the circle; you can pass till ready to share.
- f. Complete sharing by everyone in the circle once you start.

2. Ask each person in the group to answer the following questions. Begin the sharing yourself. If there is adequate time (3-5 minutes per person), participants can respond to all three topics during their turn. For short periods and bigger groups, ask one question per class:

**A. What is the story of your names? (all your names)**

This story contains information about where the person comes from and what their family dreamed for them. It tells, "Who am I?" Students can share:

- \* How they were named or who named them
- \* Why they received their names
- \* What their names mean
- \* Who else has their name
- \* How they feel about their names, etc.

**B. What is the story of your community?**

Community can be described in any way; risk the temptation to define the term. This tells the story, *Who is my "We"?*

**C. What is the story of your gift(s)?**

The focus is on gifts, not skills. This can be the hardest story to tell, as many in Hawai'i were raised that talking about self is bragging. Encourage deep reflection and an understanding that balance is found through having *both* *Ha'aha'a* (humbleness) and *Ha'aheo* (pride). Help model the difference between a skill and a gift.

*Examples of the difference between skills and gifts:*

"Auntie Lani was a great cook who was skilled in the kitchen. Her gift was her big heart and generosity, because she always fed anyone who visited and always cooked for special events."

"Keoki was a good worker on the crew, showing strong work ethic and skills. He knew how to carry big loads and use tools. His gift was his awareness. He always saw what needed to be done and he moved to help out before being asked."

"Jesse was a skilled musician. She could play almost any instrument. Her gift was her ability to write beautiful and meaningful songs that help people remember special individuals and events."

**Reflection Questions:**

*What is something important that you've learned about yourself?*

*What is something important that you learned about your community of learners?*

**Resources:** Information about Pua Burgess

<http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/sustainable-happiness/blessings-revealed>  
<http://apiwomenfaithaction.blogspot.com/2010/10/puanani-burgess.html>

## “GUTS ON THE TABLE”

Thinking from the Na‘au  
(*Na'au Maui – The Spirit Within*)



1. What is the story of your names? (All your names)
2. What is the story of your community?
3. What is the story of your gift(s)?