Someone I Could Look Up To

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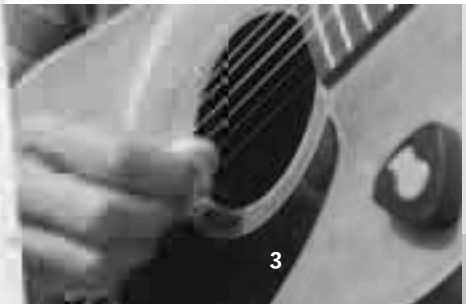
Learning Media
Wellington

TAKE
TIME

Someone I Could Look Up To

Api Taylor talks to Janice Marriott about two of his role models.

Apirana Taylor is a successful writer and performer. He tours New Zealand and overseas. He tells stories, sings, and performs haka. He lives near the sea, north of Wellington, with his wife and family. His mother was from Ngāti Porou and Te Whānau-ā-Apanui. His father was Pākehā.



I'm happy with my work. It keeps changing and going in new directions. I never get bored. I am always exploring different ways of doing things. I've just come back from a tour of Italy. On the tour, I told stories, sang, showed my paintings, and had a great time. When I got back, I went to Rotorua for a performance. A choir had set one of my poems to music. It was a buzz.

My father was a journalist. Writing is in my blood. But making a career for myself has been hard work. At school, I got teased about my name, Apirana. It's a Māori name, and I was in a school with mainly Pākehā children. So my name was different. *I* was different.

But it didn't worry me. I knew my name was a big, powerful name. I was named after Sir Apirana Ngata. He was a writer, a musician, and a leader of his people. He was the deputy leader of his party in Parliament, and he did great things for Māori. He was someone I could look up to.

Sir Apirana Ngata
Ngāti Porou
1874–1950

- Sir Apirana Ngata was the first Māori to get a degree at a New Zealand university. He trained as a lawyer.
- He was a **Member of Parliament** from 1905 to 1943 and was **Minister for Native Affairs** from 1928 to 1934.
- He was a skilled **orator** and musician.
- He worked to **promote** Māori culture. He helped **preserve** many waiata and promoted arts such as carving and haka.
- His face is on New Zealand's $50 banknote.

Another person I have always looked up to is Vera Morgan. She's a friend of our family. My mother died when I was eleven. It was a very hard time, and Vera helped us out. She's ninety-three now, but she's still always out there, doing good things. Vera's been president of the local branch of the Māori Women's Welfare League. Last year, at ninety-two, she led her kapa haka group at Te Papa's Matariki celebrations! She's incredible.

These role models didn't make me a writer. I found my own way to that. But both of these people helped me. They showed me that hard work and believing in yourself can get you places.

Glossary

Member of Parliament	(MP) someone who wins a seat in parliament
Minister	a Member of Parliament who is the head of a government department
Minister for Native Affairs	the old name for the Minister of Māori Affairs
orator	someone who is good at public speaking
preserve	to keep something alive or in good condition
promote	to support and encourage

Our Sunday Lunch

by Florence Aiono and Adrienne Jansen

It's 5 a.m. My in-laws' home is all lit up. Ivone, my mother-in-law, is cooking our **toʻonaʻi**. She's making **sapasui**, raw fish, roast chicken, roast pork, roast beef, rice, corned beef with silverbeet, and sweet-and-sour meatballs. Aiono, my father-in-law, is helping. He's peeling the taro. Everyone will bring some food, but not these dishes. We could never make them as well as Ivone!

By 9 a.m., everything's cooking nicely, and you can smell it right through the house. It's time to go to church.

After church, everyone arrives. Matthew and Raine come with their three children, some curried chicken, and a chocolate cake. Denz and I bring our three children, a friend's child, and a large package of fresh fish. Joe and Malia bring chow mein from Joe's takeaways. Anthony and Tricia are brilliant bakers. They bring a carrot cake, a chocolate cake, and a coffee cake – yum! The cousins arrive with salad, **pani popo**, and French bread from the supermarket.

There are kisses all around. "Where's my pot?" Ivone asks me. (I took one of her pots away last Sunday.)

"Didn't Denz drop it off to you this week?" I ask. She laughs. She knows I'm trying to blame my husband.

Everyone does what they always do at our toʻonaʻi. The teenagers take off into a bedroom. The men go into the lounge, turn on the TV for the sports channels, and read the weekend papers. That's their Sunday tradition. Pa Aiono loves buying hot chips and savouries for his grandchildren. We women all go into the kitchen, and guess what? We do all the work!

There are three sittings at the dining room table. The youngest kids go first. They have lunch with their Pa Aiono. How special. He sits at the head of the table and asks the kids to sing grace. "**Malie pule, le Tamā e** ..." Our kids sing so beautifully, just like the choir at church.

When the kids have finished, they all say, "**Fa'afetai fai mea'ai**, **Nana**." When Pa Aiono has finished his meal, Martha brings a towel and a bowl of lukewarm, soapy water. He washes his hands before he leaves the table. "**Ia**, **fa'afetai**," he says.

The men are still reading their papers in the lounge. We women clear the table and reset it. In minutes, all the men are at the table!

When the men have finished, it's the women's turn. We get to eat with Ivone. "OK, girls, we all just take our time," Ivone says. We sit at the table and talk about the week, netball, work, and the kids. We all have a wonderful time.

"Right, boys, the dishes are ready," Raine says. Sounds of coughing and snoring come from the lounge. "Just because your mother's here, doesn't mean you don't have to do the dishes!" There's more snoring – and laughing. We start to clean up.

Ivone doesn't stop. She starts pulling clean dishes out of the cupboards and makes plates of food for each family to take away.

As we leave, Pa Aiono gives each of the children a few dollars.

"This is for your lunch at school tomorrow," he says. "Yay!" the kids shout.

Ivone gives us our takeaway dishes – a pot of chop suey, a large plate with roasted chicken and slices of pork, a container of sweet-and-sour meatballs, a small container of raw fish, and some chocolate cake.

"Thank you, everyone," she says. As we leave, she calls out, "Don't forget to bring back my pots and plates – and the one from last week as well!"

illustrations by Vaitoa Baker

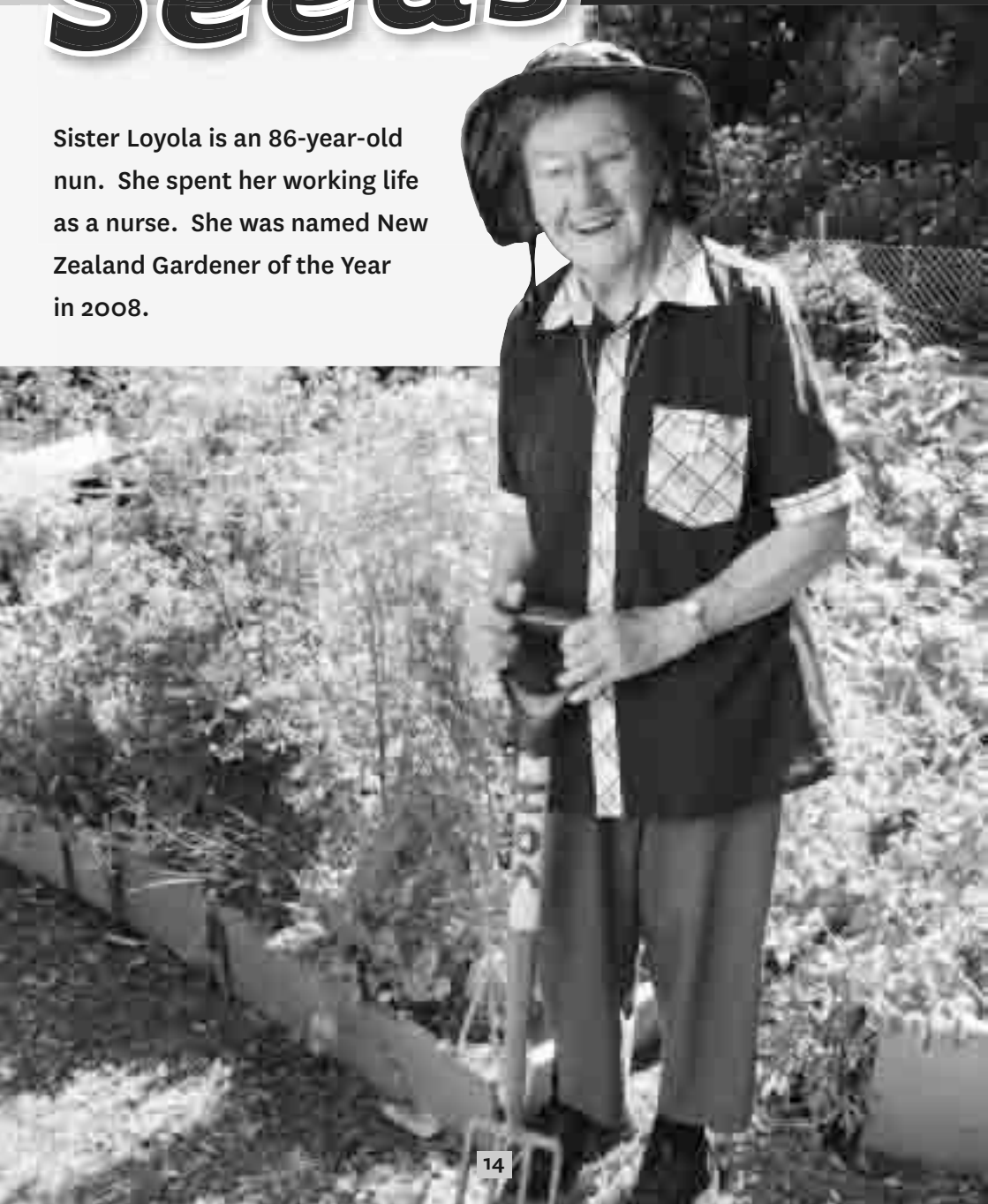
Glossary

Faʻafetai fai meaʻai, Nana.	Thanks for preparing the food, Nana.
Ia, faʻafetai.	Yes/That's it. Thank you.
Malie pule, le Tamā e ...	Gracious Father ...
pani popo	coconut cream buns
sapasui	chop suey
toʻonaʻi	Sunday lunch

Sowing Seeds

Sister Loyola talks to Janice Marriott about her work.

Sister Loyola is an 86-year-old nun. She spent her working life as a nurse. She was named New Zealand Gardener of the Year in 2008.



When I was sixty, I was told I was too old to be in charge of a hospital any more, so I became a **chaplain** in the hospital. I did that for fifteen years. Then I was asked, "What would you like to do now?"

I said, "I want to garden." So I took over the grounds of the Home of Compassion here in Island Bay, Wellington – all 10 acres of them.

My father had a great garden when I was a child. I've always loved growing things. See all those marigolds over there? I plant them to keep unhelpful bugs away, and they look nice and bright.

Here, on top of this hill, the soil is poor and the winds are strong, but it doesn't worry me. For our first vegetable plot, we covered the ground with cardboard, put seaweed on top, then horse manure, and then a layer of soil. We watered it and waited for it to settle down. Then we planted potatoes.

We still **enrich** the soil with **compost**. Shops give us their waste vegetables. We mix this **green matter** with layers of wet cardboard and seaweed and cover the whole pile with wet carpet. We put a plastic pipe in the middle. The pipe brings air into the heap. In ten weeks, it is compost.

Four years ago, we started our community garden, Common Ground. In this garden, anyone can have a plot to grow their own food. First, they have to learn about gardening. So they work in the shared garden for a while.

I sometimes work with prisoners. They are sent here by the Corrections Department. Gardening and being part of the community can help them to prepare for life after prison.

We have a preschool here too, with a fenced playground. The children grow sunflowers and sweet peas up this fence. They also grow tomatoes and silverbeet and put them in their sandwiches. I like to **sow** seeds in the soil – and also in the minds of young gardeners.

photographs by Mark Coote

How to grow potatoes in a bucket

- Make holes in the bottom of an old plastic bucket.
- Half fill the bucket with soil.
- Put in a potato.
- Cover the potato with soil.
- Water the soil.
- When you see leaves and a stem, add more soil up to the bottom of the leaves.
- As the plant grows, add soil until the bucket is full of soil.
- After about three months, when the tops flop over, empty the bucket and count the potatoes you have grown.

Glossary

chaplain	a person looking after people's religious needs, for example, in a hospital or a prison
compost	rotten organic material (for example, food and plants) that is used to help plants grow
enrich	to make something richer – in this case, by putting more nutrients into the soil to help plants grow well
green matter	organic material, for example, fresh vegetable waste
sow	to plant seeds

Volunteer WORK

by Iona McNaughton

Ever since Melanie left school, she had been taking care of her little girl, Skyla. When Skyla started day care, Melanie was keen to find a job. But she had no idea what she wanted to do. "I feel like I haven't had time to think about it," she said.

Her aunty suggested volunteering. She said volunteer work might give Melanie confidence and help her find out what she was interested in. So Melanie went to Volunteer Wellington.

A shop called Trade Aid was looking for volunteers. The interviewer at Volunteer Wellington said the job involved serving customers, answering the telephone, taking messages, putting out stock, and tidying up. Melanie said she would like to try it.

The next day, Melanie took Skyla to day care and then caught the bus into the city. She stopped outside the shop window and looked at the colourful rugs and cushions on display. Her heart was beating fast. She took a big breath and stepped into Trade Aid.

A woman was folding some rugs and putting them in a neat pile. “Can I help you?” she asked.

Melanie said she had come for an interview with the volunteer manager. The woman laughed and said, “That’s me. My name is Celine. You must be Melanie.”

Celine gave Melanie an application form and a pen. Melanie looked worried. For a minute, she just wanted to leave. “Would you like me to help you?” Celine asked. Melanie was relieved. She told Celine that she wasn’t very good at reading and writing.

“Don’t worry, we can help you,” Celine said. “All our volunteers are very friendly and helpful.”

And so Melanie started to volunteer at Trade Aid one day a week. Celine showed her what to do for the first three weeks. At first, Melanie was always scared she would do something wrong.

“What neat writing!” said Celine when Melanie wrote on the street noticeboard. But there were some spelling mistakes. Celine asked Melanie to write a rough copy first and check the spelling with her or another volunteer. She also showed her how to look for words in a dictionary.

After a few weeks, Melanie felt more confident. One day, she asked Celine if she could do a new display for the shop window. When Celine came outside to see the display, she looked a bit surprised. For a horrible moment, Melanie wondered if she had done something wrong. "That looks fantastic," said Celine. "You have a real talent and a wonderful sense of colour."

Melanie almost burst with pride. “I really loved doing it. I didn’t know work could be so much fun.”

Celine told her there was a free interior design course, starting in two weeks’ time. She offered to help Melanie enrol in the course.

“That would be awesome,” Melanie said. She hesitated. “And maybe I could find a course to improve my reading and writing.”

Trade Aid

Trade Aid is a New Zealand fair trade organisation. It works with producers in twenty-seven countries. It aims to improve the lives of poor people by paying a fair price for the rugs, cushions, bags, and other goods it buys from them. There are more than thirty Trade Aid shops in New Zealand. Each store has volunteers and paid staff.

Volunteer Wellington

There are many different kinds of volunteer work available at Volunteer Wellington, including office work, graphic design, working with computers, retail, and accounting. It is a not-for-profit organisation. It helps people find volunteer work that suits their interests and their goals.

photographs by Mark Coote

Acknowledgments

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