

There were many years in which I truly believed that Hawai'i was probably one of the last places I wanted to visit. Commercialized. A tourist mecca. Haven for newlyweds and the like. Las Vegas of the Pacific -ok, well maybe not quite that bad (and certainly with a whole lot less polyester) ...

Then I made that fateful trip to the Big Island in 2002 - and my life changed forever.

I can look back on it now and chuckle a bit. I went purely for non-metaphysical reasons - to experience the Ironman World Championship (and as a coach no less). It was a short trip, and the intent was, admittedly, far from "self-discovery". But all it took was walking off the plane, onto the tarmac at the airport in Kona - and I knew it was a special place. There is a purity, a vibe, a power that emanates and pervades all existence on the Big Island. It is something that words can't truly describe. It's a bit mystical and other-worldly, but it was definitely something I noticed immediately upon arrival.

On the Big Island, I discovered the true meaning of serenity ... and the beauty of zen and being one with your world. I discovered the lyrical strains and mysticism of the Hawai'ian language ... and the powers of Madame Pele.

And to this end, I bring a powerful word to you - pono.

Directly translated, it means ... "goodness; uprightness; to be just". These are but a few qualities stirring deep within me - that found meaning on the Big Island.

It is with this in mind that I go forward into 2007, a vibrant new year ahead of me. Living with pono, as only the Hawai'ian culture can exhibit and display so perfectly ...