

CREATING MAUITOPIA

Making Maui a *Real* Paradise

By Orion “Ori” Kopelman, v8.4, September 24, 2017

Candidate for Mayor

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1. An Unreasonable Proposal?

For thousands of years people have envisioned the creation of an idyllic society. Some called it utopia. The dictionary officially defines utopia as “an ideally perfect place, especially in its moral, political, and social aspects.” Originally coined by Thomas More in the 1500s it referred to no place on Earth. Up to now the closest realization of this may have been the 268 communities called a “Kibbutz” in modern day Israel. These typically have a few hundred people who volunteer to live based on Zionist and egalitarian principles. They live as a collective community responsible for all the needs of its members. Could it be that our island of Maui with a population of 165,386 residents will serve as humankind’s first complete society where we try to put in place utopia? Might those of us here now participate in forming Mauitopia?

Sounds like idealistic, wishful thinking doesn’t it? Mauitopia must have energy independence, no crime, everyone doing what they love, always acting in a responsible way for making our society better by recycling, doing random acts of kindness on a daily basis, and living life in a sustainable fashion. Doesn’t

our ohana deserve this? Wouldn't it be nice if we could all leave our homes without locking the doors, our cars without locking up at the shopping center, and nothing would happen? Wouldn't it be nice to feel safe picking up hitchhikers? This is what most of us want.

I remember the first time a few years ago when I took a walk down the beach, chose to walk barefoot, and left my slippers where I had started walking in the sand. I expected to find them there when I returned less than an hour later. They weren't! I became enraged. After all I had moved from the mainland where someone stealing my shoes wouldn't surprise me. But here in paradise I couldn't comprehend how a fellow islander, or even a visiting tourist, had helped him or herself to my inexpensive footwear. On *Maui*. Disillusioned and disappointed, I shuffled back to my car in the parking lot, crossing the hot asphalt road and burning my feet.

A few years later my feet had toughened up enough to not get burned. My heartache however has lasted to this day. Although I replaced the slippers for under \$5, and still walk barefoot on the beach, since then I always carry my slippers with me and dream of a better world. Shouldn't we all be able to trust that our neighbors will respect our property?

Could it be that the time for a society where we all can relax and feel that our bodies and possessions will be

treated reverently by others has come? As the founder of the Zionist movement in the 1800s Theodor Herzl said, "If you will it, it is no dream." Israel recently celebrated its 60th birthday after 2000 years of Jews living in exile while yearning for *their* dream to come true. Perhaps those of us already living in paradise can take inspiration and establish a first-of-its-kind utopian society that makes *our* dream come true as we make Maui truly No Ka Oi!

Why now? What makes it possible at this time in history? After all, people have dreamt of Utopia and idealists even tried to realize such a society. Examples include the Shaker community in the United States and 15 villages in Finland. Our technological progress has freed us from the burdens of everyday life. Only two hundred years ago 95% of the people spent their time on basic survival needs like food, clothing, and shelter. Today it takes under 15% of the population¹!

Simultaneously technological change has produced "future shock". Most of us do the best we can to just keep up with the tools required now. Most of these didn't even exist one or two generations ago: airplanes, the internet, cell phones, voice mail, etc. Many of us feel overwhelmed and in a constant struggle with time as we try to fit everything in while still maintaining a balanced and meaningful life.

As an example, I've personally struggled for almost 20 years while using these technological tools. As a super high type A personality while using them I'd feel impatient, extremely anxious, and like I should always be more productive and accomplishing more.

Our technological tools do however allow us individually and collectively to accomplish more. Mobility, crunching of reams of information, and global connectivity has liberated many of us and opened up new ways to work. We can now communicate inexpensively with most people on our planet while living anywhere we want to. Entrepreneurs can send emails from their laptops on the beach in Maui to do business worldwide; they can buy and sell stocks, and communicate with their family and friends around the globe.

All this communication happens relatively inexpensively. When I grew up my parents treated us a few times a year to a phone call to my aunt and uncle in Europe as it used to cost a dollar a minute. Today, less than 40 years later, vendors compete to allow you to make calls for pennies a minute.

In trying to create utopias people have tried implementing Marxist and socialist societies without money. In the Kibbutz in Israel for example its members all earn equally. Maybe we can have that someday. For now, Mauitopia will be based on a form of regulated capitalism and the power of free-market

economics. Politically it will resemble the representative democratic government of the United States. It might not be the best form of government but as Winston Churchill said it's the worst system except for all the others in the world. Not perfect as a system, but the power and wealth of the United States demonstrates its success. People from all over the world want to emigrate to the U.S. and fall in love with Maui once they visit it.

Many people will view Mauitopia as an unthinkable or even an unreasonable proposal. After all, skeptics will point out we are all human beings each doing the best we can to survive in a selfish world. The scientist Charles Darwin wrote his theories of evolution and survival-of-the-fittest a little over 100 years ago describing animal species. For them basic survival dominates most of their lives. As human beings in the developed world now less than 15% of our society spends its time ensuring society's basic needs. Why can't we create a utopian society that works well for everyone with the rest of our time?

In the last several decades authors have written about "Modern Utopia" to outline an attainable not a "pie-in-the-sky" society. What better place in the world to attempt to put such a utopian society into practice than here in this island paradise.

While the concept has been thought of previously, technological progress and changes have occurred

relatively recently to make Mauitopia a reasonable proposal. That doesn't mean it'll be easy to achieve. Many dreams like flying or going to the moon have required an incredible amount of imagination and effort. They also required overcoming seemingly insurmountable obstacles in their day. When President Kennedy announced in 1961 that we would land a man on the moon by the end of the decade his chief science advisor said that we don't have the electronics, metals, or fuels. As we all know we did land a man on the moon in 1969. Similarly we know what we need to do to create Mauitopia.

Won't you please continue reading and consider the proposal in this booklet? Napoleon Bonaparte reminds us that "impossible is a word to be found only in the dictionary of fools." As Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe, the 19th century author of *Faust* said, "Whatever you can do or dream you can do, do it now. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it." Together we can realize this proposal and give future generations the gift of viewing the creation of Mauitopia as having been a reasonable proposal.

Mauitopia will be an ideal, utopian society of the future. A first-of-its-kind place on this scale where thanks to technology all of us have our survival needs met, food, clothing, and shelter, while pursuing self-actualization. A place where we'd find true happiness by each contributing our unique gifts to the community. A place where we can all co-exist in peace and harmony, with no crime, and where we can all help each other grow and succeed. Its free market economics will be based on regulated capitalism and make a *real*, true paradise, Maui NoKaOi.

2. Why People Consider Maui Paradise Now

People from all over the planet take a stroll down one of our tropical beaches on Maui and all the worries in the world quickly fade. Palm trees sway in the light breeze and after a 5-minute shower a rainbow appears, the sun continues to bake them, and they think they've died and gone to heaven. And then, from November through April, a humpback whale breaches and their mind wonders: is this paradise?

Voted for almost 10 years in a row the number one island tourist destination in the world by Conde Naste traveler magazine Hawaii shines its splendor on people. Our brown-skinned locals known as the "children of the rainbow" bask in the Aloha spirit and greet visitors with smiles and laughs of joy.

Meanwhile our visitors find themselves surrounded by a glorious and diverse natural beauty. On an island about half the size of the smallest state in the United States, Rhode Island, they find 14 of the world's 16 climates. That includes everything from rainforests to deserts—thankfully lacking only the Arctic and Antarctic climates. Maui's topography resembles a

head and bust of a woman with its 10,000 foot Mount Haleakala on the east side and the 6,000 foot West Maui mountains on the west side. Only a few miles from the hot, world-famous Kaanapali beach they find the second rainiest spot on earth atop these mountain peaks. At the same time Hawaii is the single most isolated spot on earth as over 2000 miles separate it from the nearest continental land mass. Exclusive and remotely located the Hawaiian island chain lends itself nicely to being called paradise.

Currently home to about 165,386 residents and with an average of about 25,000 tourists each day life seems ideal. Our microcosm island houses many cultures, races, and creeds that co-exist here in seeming peace and harmony including Hawaiians, Japanese, Filipinos, Chinese, Portuguese, Mexicans, Koreans, and more. Dolphins and children play in our waters.

Our minds conclude that we found utopia: Maui is paradise!

3. The Reality of Why Maui's Not Paradise Now

Looks can deceive however. Many of our residents have to work two and three jobs to make ends meet. Crime has increased in the last few decades led by an “ice” epidemic (the drug crystal methamphetamine).

Allow me to share three examples of crime I've been a victim of in Maui which many islanders may have fallen prey to as well. In the first 15 years I've lived here (of 25 total) my house in Kula has been burglarized--my insurance company reimbursed me \$15,000 for the incident and then canceled my policy the following year. Subsequently I had a home alarm system installed which notifies police right away. The car I used to drive, a two-year old Subaru Forester, was stolen and torched in a cane field. Happily, the police found the 17-year old who did it. When the detective interrogated him as to why he burned it he claimed that because he had never seen a car go up in flames before in his life. I attended his sentencing hearing. Another woman had had her vehicle stolen by him the same week as mine. His lawyer blamed a brief “ice” period he had in his life and the judge ordered him to stay in prison for a year and be on probation for five years. A friend of mine who knew of him said that his father's been in jail for quite some

time and that “beer runs through his blood stream”. On our small island about two cars per week get stolen. Over half of those get recovered by the police pretty quickly as often teenagers just take them for “joy rides” and then abandon them. And as a final personal example, at a public beach restroom in Kihei while changing in broad daylight I was fondled by a stranger. Fortunately, though the event scared me it only lasted a minute and resulted in no injury. My personal karma doesn’t warrant these three personal stories of crimes I’ve experienced in “paradise”.

Our health care lags behind most states in the nation and our teenagers unfortunately lead in obesity. The island’s growth has outpaced its infrastructure creating problems of a lack of water availability, traffic on our roads (still nothing compared to San Francisco or Los Angeles), and a shortage of critical professions like nurses, doctors, teachers, and policeman. While we boast the lowest unemployment rate in the United States we also have the highest price for a gallon of gas for our automobiles. Furthermore, while jobs abound making \$10 an hour skilled work paying say \$50,000 per year is hard to find.

We also have one of the highest home prices in the nation and rents rivaling major cities like San Francisco or New York. Add food prices about 25% above the mainland and utilities 100% above. Making a living on Maui is challenging. Especially with a scarcity of good-paying jobs. “For Most working class

people on Maui, especially those with families, it takes several jobs of very long hours to break even.”²

Finally, our children suffer from an education system that not only lags behind most of the states in the United States but fails to prepare them for the few good paying jobs. Consistently ranked in the 10 lowest states for public schools we spend the 16th highest amount (\$9,876 per pupil).³ When kids turn 18 years old many of them leave to the mainland in search of an easier life.

Doesn't sound like a paradise after all, does it?

4. What Paradise Would Look Like

What would a real paradise look like? It will be a place where all of us have our survival needs met (food, clothing, shelter) and where we can each pursue life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. To find true happiness we'd want to self-actualize, or to contribute our unique gifts to the community. And finally it will be a place where we can all co-exist in peace and harmony and where we can all help each other to grow and succeed.

Not long ago, 25,000 participants at a World Game Workshop composed a vision for the year 2009 of "What the World Wants."⁴ They concurred that 100% of humanity would have to have the following items on a sustainable or ongoing basis:

1. Abundant supplies of nutritious and culturally appropriate food
2. Abundant supplies of clean water
3. Adequate housing
4. Local comprehensive health service
5. Healthful sanitation facilities
6. Abundant, clean, safe and affordable supplies of energy

7. Employment opportunities, and fulfilling work
8. Vocational alternatives, and on-the-job training
9. Literacy, and access to advanced educational opportunities
10. Access to communication facilities so that anyone can communicate with anyone else on Earth who wants to be communicated with
11. Access to transportation facilities, enabling anyone to go anywhere
12. Access to decision-making processes that affect their lives
13. A peaceful, secure, nuclear/chemical/biological weapon-free world
14. A crime- and drug-free world
15. A clean, self-regenerating environment, free of GMO (until proven safe), toxic wastes, pollution of all kinds, soil erosion, and damaging practices that don't sustain the biosphere
16. Easy and equitable access to the materials and information needed to produce the above
17. Freedom of speech, press, and religion
18. Absence of all forms of prejudice—race, religion, gender, age, sexual preference
19. Respect and celebration of the diversity of all cultures and nations
20. Strong social supports for individuals, families, and communities
21. Strong social incentives that foster initiative, trust, cooperation, respect, and love
22. Absence of all forms of torture, or degrading treatment or punishment

23. Access to full equality before an independent and impartial tribunal
24. Access to the right to nationality
25. Access to the right to perform public service in one's own country
26. Access to rest and leisure
27. Access by mothers and children to special care and assistance
28. Access by children to special protection
29. Access to spiritual growth and fulfillment

This list of 29 items sounds very close to what we'd like to have in Mautopia to call it a real paradise.

5. The Mental Shifts We Have to Make to Get There

To realize this dream we need to each:

1. Move beyond a struggling for survival mindset to one of playing and learning. Thanks to the abundance technology has afforded us, trust that we'll survive and even thrive. We don't need to be afraid anymore.
2. Adopt a tribal mindset versus having a plantation mentality. While it's true that we're all in it together it's time to divorce ourselves of the "me versus them" attitude. In the plantations you worked and surrendered your freedom to the bosses in exchange for being taken care of. In the Hawaiian Islands people have long ago known the concept of the Aloha spirit. Make the shift from dependence to interdependence where we all count on each other.
3. See work as a mission in which you serve your community by doing what you love to do for 40 hours per week including serving your community for a half a day per week. The psychologist Dr.

Joseph Campbell postulated that people reach the greatest satisfaction in life by “following their bliss”. By each person doing an excellent job at what they love to do they will best serve our community and be happy. In addition, volunteer for miscellaneous jobs like government or school boards, road clean up, etc. for half a day per week. In Mauitopia we all care about each other and want to make things better. We do everything with a spirit of excellence.

4. If you haven't already done so shift your outlook to one of total responsibility for your health instead of relying on healthcare. If you have any issues use spiritual supplication; psychosomatic healing techniques; and/or make changes in your lifestyle including people you choose to associate with, exercise, eating, smoking, drinking of alcohol, and drug habits.
5. Accept all events in your life as happening for a reason rather than being a victim. See accidents as meaningful coincidences. What can you learn from the unpleasant pain the event inflicted upon you? How can you keep a positive attitude and move forward enthusiastically?

Mauitopia needs people acting consciously who've made these shifts in what they believe, think, and do.

6. How We Get There Together

To bring about Mauitopia each of us and our society collectively will have to do their part. Only with initiative and action will this first-of-its kind society come into being. Below are some actions you can take to help make this happen:

1. Take full advantage of the Aloha spirit here. Have a smile on your face, laugh a lot, and treat everyone in a nice way. “Live Aloha!”
2. Get serious about becoming a healthy person. Do what it takes. Healthy people can contribute a lot, each in their own way, rather than burden our society. Alternatively accept your disease or handicap and contribute what you can.
3. Embrace and make use of the ever changing and improving technology. This will require spending some time to learn how to use it and to keep current on new versions of software for your computer.
4. Move to a job you love to do. If you can't find one then find one that gets you on the right track towards one. This can include apprenticing and waiting your time for a more ideal job to become available.

5. Do at least one Random Act of Kindness (RAK) on a daily basis. Examples might include picking up a piece of trash—yours or not—and throwing it away; adding coins into a strangers' about-to-expire parking meter; and helping lost pets, like a dog or cat, find their way home. The recipients of these good deeds will really appreciate it.
6. Do what you can to conserve energy and materials. If you haven't done so already start recycling immediately. Buy a hybrid vehicle. Bike places instead of driving. Carpool. Buy a solar water heater to save electricity generated by fossil fuels.
7. View learning as a lifelong process. We only have to look at the changes that have occurred in our own lifetime to see why. Who knows what the years ahead of us will bring. How exciting! While it could be overwhelming at times why not keep up. Use books, newspapers, TV, the internet, movies, whatever, to learn continuously.
8. Assure an exclusive environment that the rest of the world envies and wants to emulate. We'd have to secure the island from bad behavior that tourists and transients may inflict. First, why not give visitors at the airport or better yet on their flights before they arrive, a Mautopia code of conduct of one or two pages. This brochure would outline our vision and what we're trying to achieve coupled with expectations for their

behavior while they're here. Second, explain the consequences for violating this code. Consequences could include fines, community service, and being thrown out of Maui County for varying lengths of time depending on their offenses.

Removing people for the sake of safety and protection is not such an outrageous idea. Currently the law prohibits sex offenders for example from entering a zone or precinct. It also provides restraining orders to keep ex-lovers or others a safe distance away from each other. Due to overcrowding of our prison system in Hawaii the state has even sent convicts to jails in Arizona. Our court system would decide what measures would assure a society in which people feel safe and can flourish. Unlike in fascist societies the democratic rule of law would reign.

9. Show extreme concern and care for our environment. Recall the state's motto: "The life of the land is perpetuated in righteousness." Our 'Aina, ocean, pristine air, trees, plants, wildlife and the natural beauty they afford give us a sense of pride in this most beautiful place on Earth. For example, an aesthetic appreciation may cause us to adopt laws that bury wires below the ground rather than have ugly eye sores strung overhead. Let's keep our environment the prettiest place on earth or make it even better.

Mahalo for doing your part in creating this historic endeavor. The Hawaiians long ago believed that Maui was indeed the best and therefore named it “Maui NoKaOi.” Thanks to our efforts our children and grandchildren will someday say that we did it. We will have created a real, true paradise, Maui really NoKaOi. Some residents remember a time a few decades ago when many of the elements we’ve discussed in *Mauitopia* existed such as having a safe community, having a mutual respect for one another, and recognizing the vital role every member of the society performs. In some ways we need to go back to that while utilizing modern technology.

Taking advantage of the power of positive suggestion and modifying Herzl’s prompting of over a century ago we will recognize that through our collective power “We willed creating *Mauitopia*, and it is no dream.”

“We willed
creating *Mauitopia*,
and it is no dream.”

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8. Author's Biography

Orion "Ori" Kopelman has spent the 35 years of his career helping companies and individuals develop and use technology in a conscious way. In 1999 he permanently moved to Maui.

Ori is the author of 5 books, the most recent called "Successful Personal Decision Making". He founded a management consulting firm in 1992 in Silicon Valley, which helped companies slash schedules for their projects and product development. Clients included NASA's space station and a small audio equipment manufacturer. He taught at Stanford University's Continuing Studies Program and at the University of California Berkeley Extension for fifteen years. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical and Computer Engineering with distinction from Stanford University.

Ori grew up in Ann Arbor, MI and in Israel. He speaks Hebrew, German, and French. Community activities include Rotary Club of Maui and chairing the polling station in Kula for several elections. He has engaged in intense personal growth since 1990 including meditation and believes in transformation through heightened awareness. He attends Grace and Unity Churches and lives with his cats Eva and Calvin in Kahului, Maui, Hawaii.