

"The Principals": Weaving Wisdom – Indigenous Storytelling for Educational Leadership in Aotearoa

"The Principals" podcast is created for new and aspiring tumuaki across Aotearoa. At its core, it is a contemporary expression of Indigenous oral traditions; passing on wisdom, strengthening identity, and building whanaungatanga across generations. Its relaxed, conversational format mirrors the immediacy of oral storytelling, creating space for authentic kōrero and deep reflection.

The voices of Māori educational leaders sit at the heart of the series. Guests speak of moving beyond tick-box Treaty compliance to truly living Te Tiriti o Waitangi; embedding te ao Māori into everyday practice, advocating unapologetically for ākongā Māori, and leading with visible tohu such as moko kauae as symbols of resilience and reclamation. In doing so, they show how leadership grounded in mātauranga Māori benefits not only Māori but all learners, embodying the principle that what is good for Māori is good for everyone.

The podcast also highlights the power of collective support networks such as Te Akatea, Tautai o le Moana and MAC as lifelines, echoing oral traditions where knowledge is sustained through relationships and community. Leaders share intergenerational stories honouring the shoulders they stand on, while inspiring those yet to come.

For attendees, this session offers more than a showcase of voices. It provides practical insight into storytelling as a leadership tool; how tumuaki and educators can weave story to strengthen equity, wellbeing, and belonging in their own kura. Whether presentation or workshop format, participants will leave with strategies, inspiration, and a reminder that leadership can be carried with both aroha and ahi (fire).