

Arthur & Tia's story



This story is told by Latu To'omaga. It is a true story of a mighty Pasifika couple, Arthur and Tia, Tia's journey with cancer, and how Latu and their paths crossed.

A true story from a 'Pasifika perspective'.

I decided to go to get a haircut from the local barber and that is where I met Arthur. We greeted one another and to my surprise I looked at the barber seat and noticed his wife seated and getting her hair shaved off.

Pasifika people have the ability to connect deeply in a short amount of time, so it was not long before Arthur shared the situation.

Arthur shared deeply. It affected me so much that I felt emotional and tearful as he was unravelling his story. Arthur talked about getting home the previous night. Things were normal until his wife Tia had a shower and noticed her hair falling out.

As I was trying to piece this together I thought to myself, "Does she have cancer?". Arthur continued to share that Tia was having chemo as she had been diagnosed with cancer two years earlier.

My heart sank as I sat listening and every now and then glancing over at Tia on the barber's chair. Gripped by Arthur's narrative I was totally engrossed in every word he spoke from that point on. Arthur continued to share that Tia had made a snap decision the previous night that was huge!

Tia decided right there and then that she wanted her family to gather that very night. She wanted to have a hair-cutting ceremony and have the family share it with her. Immediately Arthur was on the phone and letting everyone know. Arthur also rang his amazing sister who has a food catering business, and asked her to prepare some food.

Once the message got out, within the hour everyone in the immediate family dropped everything and made their way to Tia and Arthur's back deck where the ceremony was to take place. This was put on Facebook and music was playing while the ceremony took place. I was so into his narrative that I couldn't wait to get home and view the Facebook post.

Tia finished with the barber and came and sat next to me. I immediately hugged her and, as Pasifika, my mind was thinking about links and connections we had that drew me closer to her. We are actually connected by way of being from the same area in Samoa. Tia's matai name is my surname and therefore we are related through chiefly titles.

This brought me closer to her and her story. Tia and I hugged. I felt emotional and inspired at the same time with what Arthur had shared. I told Tia that Arthur had shared what happened the previous night, and she was totally fine with it. Tia told me how overwhelmed she was with everything going on and how she just wanted her family and close friends around her. Tia's mother had passed away from cancer five years earlier, so this was very important to her at this time.

I managed to get my hair cut, which was the reason I was there, but when I got home that evening I went to the Facebook post. Well... to be honest I was a total mess during and after watching that post. I will never forget this precious moment of sharing.

