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This version is told with the maori names, and with suggestions for using more te reo words/phrases as first suggestions.

## Life Lessons

Once upon a time, there was a mother with six daughters. Matariki was her name. She wanted nothing more than for her daughters to grow up wise and good. Each year she took them on the long journey to visit Papatūānuku (earth mother). "Come along," she would command, "this is the time of year when our whānau needs lots of help."

To begin with, the daughters were reluctant. "must we make the same journey every year?" complained one. "Same place, same time, same things to do..." agreed another. But their mother would pull them along. "There are too many of you, I can't teach you everything in life. Papatūānuku taught me, and now she teaches you. Every year you learn new things that will help you to look after yourself, and each other, and our precious place where we live.

During the time they spend with Papatūānuku each is taught a different but equally important lesson.

One learns to plant and grow. Tupu-ā-nuku was her name. Soon, she can grow food (kai), and knows which plants make medicine (rongoā). Her wisdom is to make sure there is enough for everyone. This is the lesson she gifts forward to others.

Another learns to sing. Tupu-ā-rangi was her name. Her voice becomes sweet and melodious. She sings to the great forests (te wao nui), the birds



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(manu) and lizards (mokomoko). Her wisdom is to fill the world with the joy of song. This is the lesson she gifts forward to others.

A third daughter is taken to the waters (te awa) of the sea, and rivers, and lakes. Waipunarangi is her name. Papatūānuku teaches her to watch carefully as the water falls from the sky, flows and freshens the land, quenches their thirst, and returns to the sky. Her wisdom is that in the same way if she shares kindness it too will be returned to her. This is the lesson she gifts forward to others.

Two more daughters are twins. Waitī and Waitā are their names. They learn that even our smallest creatures work together. They see how bees pollinate the flowers so that plants can grow. Their wisdom is to support each other and to work together. This is the lesson she gifts forward to others.

The last daughter is always rushing around and excited. How is Papatūānuku to teach this one? She rushes to be first for supper and then first to sit on her grandmother's lap! But, in this warm embrace (awhi), Papatūānuku tells her a story, a life lessons story, so that she too has the wisdom of her sisters. These are the stories she gifts forward to others.

The daughters return home with their mother, taking with them the life lessons. "Will we return again next year," they ask. "For sure," replies their mother.

By the coming of the next winter (takurua), there were two new sisters. Papatūānuku's life had been long and bright but she could not live forever. And so she taught these two new daughters her last life lessons. To one she explained death, and how to remember her. To the other, she taught how to wish upon the stars, that all their dreams and desires may come true.

This is the wisdom and these are the lessons the sisters' gift forward to us.