



UU Congregation of Phoenix

December 2018

Peace



Peace, Trust and Letting Go

A December reflection by Rev. Margret A. O'Neill

Many years ago, I became a meditator. I did not plan to become a meditator, or even really want to – I was one of those intense rational types who believe that if something is worth doing, it worth doing with a lot of hard work and stress involved. That pattern probably started in my childhood; I know it was part of my adolescence and college years, and by my 30s it was not only deeply ingrained, but also making me pretty sick. Something had to change, and a doctor told me firmly that I needed to work with a teacher and learn to meditate.

And it was hard. I describe my first effort at Transcendental Meditation, just sitting quietly for ten minutes, as feeling like there were scratchy creatures trying to get out of my head – if I had not been under doctor's orders, I probably would have given up then and there. But I persisted, and gradually, change happened. People around me noticed I was not as reactive, and I began to regain some of the resilience that I needed to live my life in a healthier way.

To meditate, to let go of the planning and problem-solving brain even for a few minutes, takes a deep level of trust Trust that nothing will hurt me if I drop my vigilance, trust that the world will keep turning if I don't push it, trust that there really is enough time for everything to get done even with a half hour shaved off at either end of the day.

Many of us live in times and circumstances for which our bodies were simply not designed. Our spaces are lighted and open for business in hours when earlier generations would have been resting or sleeping; much of life is set up with unreasonable deadlines and multi-taking shifts in focus that put us constantly on alert, generating a deep level of internalized stress that we have come to accept as normal.

In this holiday season, our busy world actually speeds up, with social engagements, year-end deadlines, and an intensity of expectation calling us to ever more frenetic activity. This is a time when darkness beckons us to slow down, to rest and dream; to become more internal in our focus. And so, in this season when we light candles in the dark, I remind and invite us all to trust that the world will keep turning without our pushing, to take some time to find our internal balance point, to let go and know that we are enough, just as we are, as we open our hearts the true peace of the season. May blessings abound – see you at UUCP!

What peace means to me...

an essay by Aashima Khosla, a student at
St Mark's Senior Secondary Public School, New Delhi, India

In a country, Peace is a term that most commonly refers to an absence of aggression, violence or hostility. Peace isn't the absence of violence but rather the presence of justice. In a society, peace happens when different desires are in one agreement. Peace is based on many things, culture, education, family values, experience, & history (to name a few) but the basis is the same----to co-exist without war, killing, & overpowering a fellow being.

According to me, Peace is the feeling that all's right with the world. When everyone around me in my family, my friend circle and my neighbourhood is happy, eager to love, accept and relate... I feel at peace. Also, to me it means following what my heart says and sharing mutual trust and respect for people around me.

However, in today's world, peace and harmony face various threats. Terrorism, regional imbalance, economic disparity, and social inequality are some of the factors which threaten peace today. We all are so engrossed in our busy lifestyles and yet want our lives to be peaceful. We expect that peace to be omnipresent but what we need to realize is the fact that if we want peace- we have to live peacefully, love everyone, forgive, forget, etc.

It's not enough to stand around asking if world peace will ever happen because that won't do anything. Actions speak louder than any words. If everyone starts living the peaceful, loving way, things will change. But someone has to start and lead by example. Mahatma Gandhi once said "You must be the change you wish to see in the world." We can't rely on anyone else to do this. We have to do these ourselves.

Acceptance, compassion, and tolerance are the foundation of peace. Mahatma Gandhi showed that peace ends suffering and oppression, not by warring against an enemy but by bearing witness to wrongs and allowing sympathy and common humanity to do their patient work. Nelson Mandela and Mother Teresa lived different aspects of peace, which was proven to be a viable way to achieve great things.

Quotes and Thoughts for Reflection Peace

If we have no peace it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other. - Mother Theresa

May we keep inviolate an area of light and peace within us. - Corazon Aquino

Love and peace of mind do protect us. They allow us to overcome the problems that life hands us. They teach us to survive... to live now... to have the courage to confront each day. - Bernie Siegel

Peace cannot be kept by force; it can only be kept by understanding - Albert Einstein

You find peace not by rearranging the circumstances of your life, but by realizing who you are at the deepest level. - Eckhart Tolle

If you let go a little, you will have a little peace. If you let go a lot, you will have a lot of peace. - Ajahn Chah

May all beings be peaceful - May all beings be happy - May all beings be safe - May all beings be free. - Buddhist prayer

Do not let the behavior of others destroy your inner peace. - Dalai Lama

Peace is a day-to-day problem, the product of a multitude of events and judgments. Peace is not an 'is,' it is a 'becoming.' - Haile Selassie

It isn't enough to talk about peace. One must believe in it. And it isn't enough to believe in it. One must work at it. - Eleanor Roosevelt

Peace is its own reward. - Mahatma Gandhi

The greatest love you can experience is in communion with God in meditation. The love between soul and Spirit is the perfect love, the love you are all seeking. When you meditate, Love grows . . . if you strive to love all and to meditate more deeply there will come into your life such love as you never dreamed possible. --
Paramahansa Yogananda



Session Plan
Theme: Peace
December 2018

Opening Words & Chalice Lighting:

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Brief Check-in

Focus Reading:

I have noticed that when I am in the vibratory field of joy, appreciation and gratitude, I am somehow insulated from the swirling madness of our time. It is as if I am suspended above the conflicts that I was so engrossed in only moments before. And I have also noticed that if these feelings continue long enough, my external circumstances reflect this vibratory field. In other words, reasons to feel joy, appreciation and gratitude pop up all around me through such things as serendipity, and odd coincidences (i.e., synchronicities) that assist me.

When I succumb, however, to the lower vibratory fields of fear, anger and hostility (often after watching or reading too much of the news, or simply indulging in my own bad habits of imagining worst case scenarios), I find myself immersed in a world of conflict. Serendipity and joy disappear, and the world that was so full of magic and possibility evaporates before me.

But I am clear that this is all my own creation. -- Tom Kenyon

Focus Questions:

- What does peace mean to you?
- Where do you find the relationship between internal and external peace – how are they the same, how are they different?
- How do you cultivate internal peace?

Checkout/Likes and Wishes

Closing Words & Extinguishing Chalice:

May all beings be peaceful - May all beings be happy - May all beings be safe - May all beings be free. - Buddhist prayer