



Many to Many

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Anthony & Gita Brooke,
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“Many to Many” is a quarterly publication under the aegis of Peace Through Unity as a communicating link between “we, the peoples” of all nations, races, creeds and ideologies offering in the spirit of the preamble of the United Nations Charter an instrument for the furthering of better relationships based on deepening mutual understanding and the aspiration to promote unity and cooperation beyond all differences.

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Your feedback is welcome. Please visit our new website (under construction) and leave your comments.

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Tolerance

It is difficult in today's turbulent climate of trauma and change to understand how to apply the concept of tolerance correctly and truthfully. Surrounded everywhere by the falling rubble of dysfunctional structures, we are recoiling from the ugliness of the deceit, corruption and betrayal unveiled. Stress lines and breaking points are appearing within and throughout our communities and neighbourhoods, and the bellowing soot from the erupting fires of fear, resentments and consuming greed make it difficult to see what can or should be tolerated and endured.

So, while grappling with how tolerance can best be practised and applied by law, this noble but somewhat de-energised and de-valued human aspiration is often failing to secure a better life for the refugee who is fleeing from intolerable circumstances in search of a safer neighbourhood within a more stable environment. And the notion of being 'tolerated' may not be the reassuring foundation on which to establish good relationships within new and unfamiliar surroundings. The invisible, unspoken, conditions for acceptance can add stress and uncertainty to the lives of newcomers already bearing the burden of rejection and loss; 'tolerance' inadvertently leading to the collapse of the very principle it holds. Even so, people throughout the world are persevering in their attempts to deal with and control the consequences of fanatic and intolerant behaviour.

The limited successes in practising tolerance within the prevailing miasma of distress and decay might suggest to us that only in a world in which choices are freely made can tolerance come to reflect its own opposite. Only in a world of dualities can a pale look-alike be created and allowed to take the place of Tolerance in its true being. Should we perhaps acknowledge that it is in this earthly 'hall of learning' we are being taught to distinguish between the qualities and values that are real, authentic, and enduring, and the many shifting forms through which these principles can, if we so choose, bring healing and redemption to our world. And, witnessing the brightest and finest fire of the unconquerable human spirit rising from the darkest places where rages the most brutal and vindictive assaults on human dignity and worth, how can we ever doubt the victorious outcome of our strivings?

Tolerance 'in its true being' might be likened to a sphere of clear and unflickering light within which we allow ourselves to *see*, without fear or favour, all members of our troubled human family and ourselves; the kind of tolerance which lets us, dispassionately, acknowledge the faults and failings we have in common, which can only be solved and remedied in a spirit of truth-finding solidarity and inclusion. This beneficent light of truth may also pierce into the dark depth of past trespasses and enable us to release old, generationally ingrained, patterns of thought and behaviour which have been conditioning our ways of life.

As Nature demonstrates, movement is constant. Today even hardcore deniers are beginning to accept that the entire planetary climate is undergoing drastic changes. Isn't it timely that we also acknowledge the unmistakable signs of change and transformation within the human being: the irreversible arrival of a new season which offers new opportunities to those who are willing to grow up and evolve? Humanity has already sensed and prepared for the arrival of this new season and affirmed that: *"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood."* (Article 1, Universal Declaration of Human Rights. <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>) So let all mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers from all corners of the world unite and make this Truth come true. Let us forgive and let the livingness of Life unfold.

Editorial by Gita Brooke, Many to Many, September 2012

Crisis as a Catalyst for a New World of Peace

"Unless there is a spiritual renaissance, the world will know no peace."

Dag Hammarskjöld, United Nations Secretary-General 1953-1961

Finding inner peace during times of chaos and war demands much more of us than our ordinary mode of living. To avoid being swept up in the roaring currents of these times, we are called to develop resources we may not have realized we had. We have to look beyond physical, emotional and mental responses to the outer world, as what is needed can only be found within.

There are many tried and true methods of stilling mind and emotions to generate feelings of peace and well-being, but often their effects do not last. Something more is required to attain a steady state of peace, when violence and chaos relentlessly pound away at our sense of security and stability. There is a path we can follow--a universal path at the core of all genuine spiritual teachings and faith traditions. By treading this path, a human being is transformed into a spiritual being, one who has the inner resources to live in a steady state of peace.

For all the trauma of this period of global catastrophe, there is a positive side: human beings are awakening and seeking the way of higher truth. It has always been the case that pain and suffering have been major catalysts for breaking the grip of fixed ideas about life and allowing new light to enter awareness. What is unique to our time is that masses of human beings are simultaneously experiencing both the suffering and a breakthrough to greater light.

The mega-crisis through which we are living has produced a gathering wave of seekers on our planet. People everywhere are searching for an exit from the growing darkness of the external world, knowing in the depths of their souls that there must be more to life than death and destruction. Those who persist in the search for light will inevitably discover the dimension of awareness where peace can be found: the plane of the Soul, where the higher human Self resides.

Finding this place of peace is the fruit of the spiritual path, by which one shifts from identification with matter to identification with spirit. The once-separative personality turns into a vessel for the light of the soul to enter the world. Only rare individuals were known to tread the path of transformation to its end, in previous generations. The requirements are steep, especially when undertaken by a lone human being. The great promise of our time is that the number of seekers is rapidly growing, the arduous challenges of the journey are being lightened in the process of sharing, and the way is being eased and accelerated for many.

A pathway to peace is being formed by the growing body of light workers who are developing the inner resources to forge ahead through these times. One source of inner peace that allows the work to continue is learning to become a silent observer of life, attaining a level of detachment and dispassion that enables one to perceive the deeper causes of events and discern how they may be serving the course of evolution. A more profound source of peace, encountered on the path, is the inner experience of oneness. The part of the soul that is pure Spirit reveals the indivisibility of life, in all its forms and dimensions.

People who recognize their oneness with all life are stirred to actively serve that life. They feel impelled to bring light into the world to counteract darkness, and love to counteract hatred. Unlike those who sought enlightenment in the past, and were confined to monasteries or caves, awakened souls in our time are fulfilling their purpose for being incarnate at this crucial moment in planetary evolution. In doing so, they find the way to inner peace and bring that peace into the world.

The emergence of the higher human self at the dawn of a new era is in keeping with the plan of evolution outlined in the modern ageless wisdom teachings. This body of wisdom foresaw humanity's leap from the limits of mind to the birth of soul awareness as the foundation of a new civilization. Through our struggle to find inner peace in the midst of raging global conflicts, we are actually laying the groundwork for a new world to be born from the peace of the soul.

Nancy Seifer

Coauthor, *When the Soul Awakens: The Path to Spiritual Evolution and a New World Era*

whentheshoulawakens.org

For inspiration about the emergence of the soul in our time, the reader may wish to visit: <https://atreeoflight.org>



Women Peacemakers Need To Take The Stage, Now. We Need You.

It's past time for women to get on the world stage. Women are the peacemakers our world needs now.

As the crisis in Ukraine unfolds, with a massive invasion by Russia, women are taking up arms to defend their homes and communities. Yet, we wonder, if women of Ukraine and Russia met with each other, wouldn't they turn to each other and say, 'we don't want our sons to die. Let's not do this.'

In 500 BC, Aristophanes produced the *Lysistrata*. In the height of the ancient Hellenistic era, it was a smash hit comedy. The idea was simple, yet absurd: Athens and Sparta are continually at war. It's dragged on for ages. No clear victory is in sight. Treasuries are depleted. The women are fed up. So *Lysistrata*, an Athenian woman, organized a secret meeting with women from both cities, and proposed a way to stop the endless wars:

A sex strike.

No woman was to have sexual relations with her husband until they agreed to stop the fighting.

The women struggled with this concept, but eventually agreed. Then the comedy play unfolds to show how men were eventually crippled by the sex strike and agreed to stop fighting.

While this is an ancient comedic example of how women can wage peace, you can easily see how women think differently, and could offer a great deal in peacemaking.

The Dali Lama said, "Our world will be saved by a woman leader." We agree! During the Pandemic, we saw that the female-led countries of New Zealand, Germany, Finland, and Slovakia weathered the crisis better than their male counterparts. Why? Because women don't leave anyone behind.

Barbara and her late husband Robert Muller, former UN Assistant Secretary General, traveled the world meeting with world leaders, heads of state, authors and scientists. I'll never forget our meeting with evolutionarily biologist Elizabet Sahtouris on her return trip from a two-year sabbatical in Peru. She was studying the human reality of how we are all connected.

As she was getting ready to leave, she had her last visit with an elder woman in the village, who was often sought out for her wisdom, ideas and solutions to community problems. Elizabet decided to ask her one last question, "How would you run the world? ...How would that look?"

Here was her answer:

"I'd run the world like a family with love and security, nurturing their individual gifts and letting our children know that they also have a duty to the community and a goal to keep our world at peace which is essential for our human survival. I would give them a sense of courage and compassion."

Women Peacemakers In Action

On Halloween of 2000, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1325. This resolution reaffirms the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and in post-conflict reconstruction and stresses the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. The resolution called for increased participation of women and sought to incorporate gender perspectives in all United Nations peace and security efforts. The resolution also called on all parties to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence in situations of armed conflict. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N00/720/18/PDF/N0072018.pdf?OpenElement>

Right now, our hearts are with women in Ukraine, Cameroon, Sudan and all areas of the world facing armed conflict, where women are in the most danger.

Resolution 1325 has already become effective, with the rise of women peacemakers all over the world. Let's meet one of them.

Fatuma Abdulkadir Adan – Kenyan lawyer and peace ambassador.



She uses football (because she loves it) to include people, and she has this amazing tagline:

Shoot to score, not to kill.

Fatuma says this initiative was born out of frustration because women's voices were not being heard, after the 2005 massacre in Masaba where 100 children were killed in school.

"A ball can silence the guns. We can't stop the manufacture of guns. But the minute they see a ball, they want to put down the guns and play. Even among fighting clans. The passion is so high for football. So a simple idea, like playing football, can bring people who want to fight, together."

In 200+ villages in Kenya, women congregate under the tree (a site of decision-making) to help make decisions on conflict, security, and gender mutilation. This is huge, to have women participate in the decision-making process. UN Secretary General António Guterres has repeatedly called for this. Now, one Kenyan village is literally ruled by women, something inconceivable until recently.

Fatuma thought she'd never see girls in shorts and hijabs, carrying footballs out to play. In 2012, she lost the entire team because they were kidnapped for marriage.

In the World Cup of 2018, the team went to the Euro Championship, for the first time ever.

Boy soldiers will happily put their guns down to play football. When girls join the game, they become leaders from the first time they kick the ball.

Her challenge: up your game, whatever you're doing. Achieve and conquer – it's possible. Resolution 1325 CAN Happen. Are you on the sidelines, cheering, or are you in the game?

"You only have one life to live, and there's no rehearsal. Go out and do what you feel you must and forget fear."

In January 2011, Adan received the [Stuttgart Peace Prize](#) for "combining soccer and emancipation".

Barbe Chambliss, Ph.D. is the author of [Women Peacemakers: What We Can Learn From Them](#). Dr. Chambliss defines the practice of peacemaking simply as people treating each other with equal respect.

That's a pretty revolutionary thought right there. Sit with that for a moment.

How many arguments have you witnessed, whether at your dinner table, or across the world, where people just weren't treating each other with equal respect? When we need to be 'right', or 'win', are we starting from a place where we're treating the others with equal respect?

In the book, Chambliss shares remarkable stories of a wildly diverse band of women change agents, including an Israeli soldier to an Irish nun to a young Zimbabwean orphan who now directs the Future of Hope Foundation.

In Cameroon, women have gone to the frontlines of Peacemaking. More than five years of fighting between separatists and the state have hit Cameroon hard. Women have been uprooted by the hundreds of thousands. They have suffered more than the men in their conflict and are moving the fastest to try to resolve it. Some have joined the insurgency, moving to rebel, out of anger and desperation. Others have begun to use their voice, highlighting the harsh landscape of fighting and sexual violence perpetrated on women, and pressing for peace. The call is for women to be provided with space to make their case, to campaign for peace without fear of reprisal. The women of Cameroon are moving from being victims to getting out in front of making peace in their country.



Sally-G (CIDA) @SallyGeorgette · Feb 24

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Welcome to Bamenda NW Region of **Cameroon**, where the Guns are loud. We can only communicate with Grassroots communities to build the bridges of Peace, Piece by Piece.

[#Peacemaker](#) 🗣️

[#EndAnglophoneCrisis](#)

[#EveryVoiceCount](#)

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What Can Women (and Men) Do To Create More Peace In The World?

Anyone can be a peacemaker. You simply decide to create more peace in the world.

Really. That's how Barbara and I both started our work. We made up our minds to pursue and wage peace.

Start with yourself, with understanding. As Barbara always says, Peace is a journey, not a destination. You commit to treating others with equal respect, whether in traffic, at the family dinner table, the City Council hearing, or the United Nations. If you have committed to waging peace, you will first seek to attain peace within yourself. There are many paths for this: meditation, daily readings, attending peace seminars, learning about peacemakers and how they work,

Bite off what you can chew. You can look around your community, your city, your region and start seeing opportunities for peacemaking. There was a stabbing in my neighborhood last night.

Someone needs peace. How do I go about creating that peace?

Women are often in the best position to be peacemakers. They know who's who and what's what in their environments, whether that be their family, or their community, or their country. They know who's always making trouble, and often why. An agitator is not always the problem. Sometimes they're agitated because there is a problem, and no one is recognizing it. How can we learn to see with new eyes, at what is happening around us, and decide to move things in the direction of peace?

Simply by being present and treating others with equal respect.

If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, you must go with others. When you begin the work of peacemaking, you will find others are key. Barbara started PeacePodcast.org to explore and highlight the work of peacemakers and bring it to everyone far and near. Sharon decided to work with the Common Table Foundation, a group that stages long tables in a public venue, like a street that's been closed off to traffic for this purpose and invites the entire community to bring something to share, to sit down together, and have a meal. When you're eating with people, it's harder to argue. The Common Table proved wildly popular, pre-Pandemic, as a way to bring a community together and remove barriers to connection. No speeches, no politics. Just food and connection.



Courtesy: Common Table Foundation

Declare your community a place of peace. Barbara and Sharon decided, under the auspices of the United Nations Association, to pursue the designation of **International City of Peace** for Santa Barbara, California. We contacted Fred Arment, founder of International Cities of Peace, and he coached us on how to do it. Sharon contacted City Council members, who at first weren't sure. Does this involve funding? Why should this be a priority?

The case was simple: when we are a City of Peace, how does that inform our dialogue? Do we still rip into our colleagues over political disagreements, or do we choose to say, 'I respectfully hear you on this policy, but I need to Stop and ask, can you Help me understand?' As a City of Peace, and we see a rise in gang violence in our community, do we immediately deploy police to squelch it? Or do we send in peacemakers, like Church Fathers, and youth leaders, mothers, and grandmothers? Are our police engaged in oppressive tactics, or do we have Guardians of the Peace? Think about the differences in approach that are possible here, just by changing our way of thinking about our city, and what it means for us to actively pursue peace in our practices and daily lives

The City Council members eagerly signed on, as did a former gang member, and Santa Barbara is now #323, a proud International City of Peace. We estimate Sharon spent about 20 hours on this endeavor and look at the possibilities it could create.

And who led the charge? A couple of women....

Get Involved With Peacemaking Entities. Start by joining your United Nations Association. <https://unausa.org> You will meet others interested in waging peace, just like you. You'll meet speakers working in the world for the cause of Peace and learn from them. Join Human Rights Watch for the same reason. If we're going to treat each other with equal respect to make peace, we won't get far if basic human rights aren't even present.

Our United Nations Association of Santa Barbara created the UNA Santa Barbara Peace Prize in 2017. Again, three women decided it would be a good idea to recognize the work being done from our region for the cause of peace in the world. We've discovered amazing peacemakers in our community, mostly women, from awarding the Peace Prize annually.

What would it look like if your community had its own Peace Prize?

Why Should Women Lead Peacemaking? Women are collaborators. They'll work across lines. They don't want to send their children, or anyone else's, off to conflicts where they can be killed. Women are inclusive, they seek to make sure all the voices are heard, and that no one gets left behind.

Women are ideal for peacemaking.

But women need to be encouraged to step up, to realize they are the right person to take up the cause of peace, and space needs to be made for them to engage in peacemaking. The United Nations has taken a strong lead on this, with the annual Conference on the Status of Women, and UN Resolution 1325. The United Nations has continually pushed for the Convention on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Handbook on Elimination of Violence Against Women. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/cedaw> You may never have heard of some of these initiatives, but now you know you can learn about them, and educate your own community. If every community across the world embraced these initiatives, wouldn't the world be a much better place?

Women's voices are key to making that world happen.

This is your call, in the words of Dolores Huerta, to get off the sidewalk, and walk with us in the streets. The journey we're on is that of peace.

By Sharon Byrne and Barbara Gaughen-Muller, United Nations Association - Southern California.

Living in Peace in Times of Crisis

"Each one has to find his peace from within. And peace to be real must be unaffected by outside circumstances." - Mahatma Gandhi

It is much easier to live in peace when things are going well, than during a time of crisis or challenge. A crisis can come in many forms - a global pandemic, war, the ending of a relationship, losing a job, financial or health, the death of a loved one, or other. When crisis hits it disrupts all aspects of our daily lives. This is when nurturing inner peace is most significant, as it can be our greatest source of strength. It can also be a survival mechanism that not only helps us cope with and heal from the crisis at hand, but also gives us the fortitude and authenticity to be compassionate, caring, and responsive to others. Authentic peacebuilding calls

us to live the experience of peace ourselves, regardless of our external environment. It is both a challenge and reward.

We take comfort from the notion that *we can create peace* through the choices we make. That means that while we may have little or no control over the external forces that surround us in our complex world, we can, during chaos and adversity, *choose peace*. Nurturing our inner landscape through daily practices that keep us centered, balanced, and hopeful, makes our lives easier and more durable.

We are inspired by the countless stories of people throughout history that, when experiencing extreme hardship, injustice, violence, and abuse, chose to respond with compassion, forgiveness, and hope. We might ask, how or why did they consciously choose those responses over understandable anger, hopelessness, and despair? The answer appears to be that each one, on some level, recognized that their own *survival and sustainability depended on it*. They knew that succumbing to their unjust and inhumane circumstances would not serve them, the people around them, or the circumstance. And they knew how to draw on their inner resources to respond with strength, courage, and compassion, as a means to survive.

Today, we recognize that hopelessness and powerlessness, and the resulting apathy and immobilization, does not serve us or the peace we wish to see in the world. The importance of embracing inner peace is based on the awareness that individual, group, and community *survival and sustainability* depends on achieving some measure of it.

As Austrian neurologist, psychiatrist and Holocaust survivor, Victor Frankl reminds us, "*When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves. Forces beyond your control can take away everything you possess except one thing, your freedom to choose how **you** will respond to the situation.*" ([Viktor Frankl - Wikipedia](#))

How can we create and maintain inner peace during a crisis, for ourselves and for others? We believe the first step is to nurture our inner landscape, the place where peace resides. Each of us will choose to come into inner peace through actions and practices that fit our unique needs. Perhaps we have the inherent capacity to remain centered and calm, or perhaps we will choose to "do" something that nurtures our inner peace. Whatever our choices, it is likely to involve positive 'self-talk' and practices that support, nurture, and help us nurture ourselves. As the Buddha said, "*You yourself, as much as anybody in the entire universe, deserve your love and affection.*"

The following are some practices that have helped us cope and heal through crisis.

1. The Importance of Self-Care

We all have busy lives, and that typically doesn't change in a crisis. In difficult times, it is even more important to take time for self-care. This includes any practice that nurtures our mind, body, and Spirit. What practices help you stay healthy, calm, positive, and balanced? It could include a daily walk, playing piano, reading a good book, practicing yoga, journaling, spending time with friends and family, meditating, taking a bath, doing an art project, eating healthy foods, or other. Often others will respond favorably if we are able to communicate our needs and ask for support. Having a healthy social network is important for support and to not feel alone. In addition to friends and family, your social network may include involvement in a faith community or other organization. At the heart of self-care is knowing that we are worthy of love, and that self-love is essential for us to love and care for others. Being agents of change in our world begins with caring for ourselves *first*.

Self-care might also mean protecting our inner peace by honoring our own limitations and saying 'no' when our plate is full. This can be hard if others are depending on us and expecting us to say 'yes.' It might mean restricting situations, activities or relationships that interfere with our well-being. The crisis itself might contribute to additional feelings of vulnerability, making it even more difficult to say 'no' and to set limits and boundaries.

Crisis can consume all our internal resources, so it's helpful to check-in and be lovingly honest with ourselves, determine our priorities (those things that must be done) and give ourselves permission to limit or eliminate external obligations. We can either change the situation or change the way we respond to it. Since work often dominates much of our time, we want to spend that time doing work that sustains us.

Any crisis can lead us into depression as we struggle to cope. Our self-esteem and feelings of self-worth can decline, sometimes exacerbated by our 'Inner critic'. Our inner critic (our critical inner voice) amplifies or exaggerates self-criticism, creates negative self-talk, and interferes with the confidence we need to take positive action. We want to be aware of our inner critic and eliminate any self-sabotaging thoughts that hamper our healing.

Saying daily positive affirmations (such as "I am worthy"), practicing self-compassion, and getting support from others helps overcome our inner critic. Making intentional choices will help restore our confidence, self-esteem, and sense of self-worth through a focus on the positive. Healthy people know when it is time to reach out for professional help or to engage with positive friends and family members. Even though we often cannot control our circumstances, we can control our reactions to our circumstances, seek help when we need it, and do our best to be and stay centered.

Hope is a quintessential ingredient for survival and 'thrival'. Maintaining hope, knowing you are not alone, embracing an optimistic attitude, and recognizing that this too shall pass, assist in the healing process. What are the ways in which

you care for yourself? Service to others, seeking gifts that may be embedded in the crisis, and finding peace and joy in simple moments are ways to create and maintain inner peace.

2. Living our Values

Focusing on our values can give us a sense of peace and control over our world and helps us ride the bumps and challenges in our life. Many powerful emotions can surface in a crisis - fear, anxiety, anger, hurt, loss, betrayal and more. We can give ourselves permission to feel them, allow them, and accept them. While these feelings are a natural part of the healing process, experiencing crisis may not be the right time to make major life decisions until we can better balance emotion with judgment.

When all else fails us, gratitude can restore our weary spirit and bring us back into balance. Practicing gratitude provides peace of mind and reminds us to appreciate what we have rather than what we are lacking. A sense of optimism supports the practice of gratitude. For many, gratitude is not just a virtue but also a survival skill. Daily practice of embracing gratitude provides a direct connection to our Spirit.

Our sense of purpose inspires us through the crisis and provides motivation and direction that can keep us on track and feeling fulfilled. Focusing on actions that fulfill our purpose helps us transcend our current situation by engaging our passion in opportunities that have meaning to us and that make a difference to others. Pursuit of purpose is a core element in finding lasting joy and well-being. A crisis calls on our courage to face the challenge, feel our feelings, ask for help as needed, and discern some next right actions. Courage does not mean being fearless, rather it is the ability to face our fears and move forward anyway. Crises may provide insights and opportunities to look at underlying issues that we may have avoided. This can ultimately be an opportunity for positive growth and change.

3. Avoiding Overwhelm

Overwhelm is often a natural response to a crisis, yet it can be counterproductive when it takes us into unhealthy coping mechanisms. Typical coping strategies might be to work more, faster, harder, we may eliminate exercise, or eat unhealthy food - just when we tend to our physical bodies to be able to deal with the crisis at hand. We may not be sleeping well and compensate by drinking too much coffee, and then wonder why we are depressed or irritable. Paying attention to our bodies is essential!

To avoid overwhelm, we need to allow time to reflect and to examine how we can conserve our time and energy. Ultimately, our overscheduled lives can limit us from doing what really calls us and brings us joy, as we are too busy to listen to the voice of our inner landscape. While always a good practice, it is essential during a crisis to take stock of our priorities, so that we know and can dedicate time to the things that truly must be done, leaving time and energy for us to nurture our way through the crisis. We suggest being bold about nurturing and

protecting our inner peace, as each of us is worthy of taking the time to care deeply about our self.

4. Responding to Loss and Grief

Any change, including changes that come through crisis, typically result, to a greater or lesser degree, in loss. It might be a more general, ambiguous loss of the large and small things that have changed during a pandemic that brings sadness or grief. A natural response to crisis is a loss of one's control. When we experience loss, we also experience some common responses to grief. These grief responses include crying, exhaustion, powerlessness, short-term memory loss, a loss of focus, forgetting things, feeling overwhelmed and hopeless, among many others. We may be wishing for things to 'be the way they used to be,' or we may feel that we have lost ourselves, or our sense of self. Times of crisis call us into radical self-forgiveness and acceptance of these emotions and responses. Pushing them down or repressing them only extends the time for the natural grieving process to unfold and come into acceptance. We need to be kind to ourselves. While things will be different on the other side of the crisis, a 'new normal' will bring us back into the strengths and skills that make us who we are.

5. Nurturing our Spirit

Spirituality might be defined as an "inner navigation system" that we look to for guidance or direction, or to bring us a sense of joy, peace, and comfort. It doesn't matter how we define or name our spiritual source or how we see our "soul," we know that it is core to who we are as unique sacred beings. Our connection to our soul gives meaning and purpose to our lives, and is expressed through our work, our relationships, and our work in the world. During a crisis, we may feel disconnected from our soul, the source of our identity. It can feel like we have lost the very essence of who we are. Our inner peace and joy might be diminished, and we may feel hopeless, powerless, and lost.

As the former monk and author Thomas Moore writes in *Care of the Soul*, "*When soul is neglected, it doesn't just go away; it appears symptomatically in obsessions, addictions, violence, and loss of meaning. Our temptation is to isolate these symptoms or to try to eradicate them one by one, but the root problem is that we have lost our wisdom about the soul, even our interest in it.*" ([Thomas Moore \(spiritual writer\) - Wikipedia](#))

Since we are spiritual beings, our souls, or our life essence, require care and nourishment if we are to survive and thrive, just as our bodies do. While we never are truly separate from our source, we may feel a sense of loss of identity or 'soul' when coping with and responding to a crisis. We will come back into a sense of our sacred identity as we heal from the crisis. However, we can quicken the recovery by paying attention to nurturing our soul through daily activities that give us comfort, peace, and joy. It could mean quiet walks in nature, connecting with your spiritual community, quiet reflection, meditation, writing, listening to sacred music or whatever else nurtures your soul and brings you back into connection with your sacred self.

Buddhist master Maticintin explains, "*Everyone is nourished when you develop yourself spiritually – whereby, you know that you're being true to yourself, and you can*

feel this richness unfolding, and it makes you feel more generous and patient to all of life around you, more loving – an unconditional kind of loving.”

Particularly in difficult times, it is often our spirituality that carries us through, gives us hope, and recognizes that this too shall pass. It is possible we might also see that there are gifts in every crisis that can reaffirm our connection to our sacred source, allowing us to see beyond our physical selves and circumstances.

6. Coherence and Building Resilience

To achieve balance during a crisis, it is useful to recognize the role of coherence and resilience. Dr. Rollin McCraty of HeartMath Institute ([HeartMath Institute](#)) explains that coherence is the state when the heart, mind and emotions are in energetic alignment and cooperation. “It is a state that builds “resiliency” – personal energy is accumulated, not wasted – leaving more energy to manifest intentions and harmonious outcomes.” The research based HeartMath techniques tap into an individual’s multiple intelligences to bring greater capacity to self-regulate, cope with crisis, and bring us into coherence, or inner peace. Used over time, HeartMath techniques also build resilience.

Huda Akil, a neuroscientist at the University of Michigan ([Huda Akil | UM Neuroscience Graduate Program \(umich.edu\)](#)) who studies resilience, explains, “*Active resilience happens when people who are vulnerable find resources to cope with stress and bounce back, and do so in a way that leaves them stronger, ready to handle additional stress in more adaptive ways.*” Her research indicates that resilience can be learned and is based on brain connectivity: “*Our research shows that really depressed people have lost their power to remodel their brains, which is devastating because brain remodeling is something we need to do all the time.*” Depression can be a natural response to crisis, and it interferes with our ability to feel balanced or to experience inner peace.

Brain modeling, which results in resilience, begins before birth, and is shaped and informed by life experiences. Resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity or ‘bouncing back’ from difficult experiences. Being resilient does not mean that we do not experience difficulty or distress, rather that we have a greater capacity to deal with the crisis.

There are many ways to build resilience. Surviving the crisis itself builds resilience. Being proactive with our health, finances and relationships builds resilience and can help to avoid unnecessary crisis in the future. Taking care of our bodies, avoiding unsafe behaviors, monitoring our media consumption, nurturing our relationships, managing our finances, and not procrastinating can keep our inner landscape as free as possible from stress and the resulting crisis. While the changes brought on by difficult times in our lives can create fear, uncertainty, and doubt, as crises usually do, it can also open new opportunities. We know that change is a constant part of our everyday life. We have found that embracing it and going with the flow is a much easier ride than resisting it. Remaining flexible helps us ride the inevitable waves of change.

As hard as it is, we have found that living through a crisis can make us stronger and more able to deal with life's challenges in the future. We each have extraordinary inner resources - they are there, sometimes just below the surface. We hope this information has resonance with you and will be helpful in your individual journey with crisis. We know that nurturing our inner landscape can help us thrive in peace, even during a crisis.

"Peace does not mean being in a place where there is no noise, trouble, or hard work. It means being in the midst of all those things and still be calm in your heart." Maya Angelou

Kim Weichel is an author and activist. This article is an edited version of a chapter in Kim's newly released book, [Uncovering New Possibilities: Uncovering New Possibilities | kimweichel](#)

Tezikiah is the Executive Director of Pathways To Peace, owner and senior consultant for Gabriel Associates, and an ordained interfaith and intercultural minister.

Institute for Permanent Peace (IPP)

Maharishi International University (MIU): Epicenter of Peace

MIU's Global Country of World Peace is a beautiful organization that embodies what we are: peace-loving citizens of the world, who are not divided by political or governmental surface levels of difference. As Maharishi said: What we put our attention on grows stronger. We are coming together and experiencing that field of life which is the field of unity consciousness – the unified field of natural law. Vedic technologies of consciousness, that operate from this deepest level of natural law, are a million times more powerful than nuclear technologies.

MIU launched an Institute for Permanent Peace (IPP) this month, for applying a scientifically validated Vedic approach to creating an environment for permanent world peace. It is urgently needed to mitigate an existential risk from local wars evolving into an uncontrollable global conflagration. The purpose can be achieved by the sustained group practice of Vedic technologies, including Transcendental Meditation™ and TM-Sidhis, to create coherence in global collective consciousness. The square root of 1% of any population – about 10,000 for the world-- practicing these technologies in a group is sufficient to form a lighthouse of peace and prosperity for the whole world. Over 50 demonstrations and 23 scientific published studies have documented the benefits of large group practice of TM and its related advanced techniques on society as a whole. In every case, this approach produced marked reductions in crime, social violence, terrorism, and war, and increased peace and positivity in society.

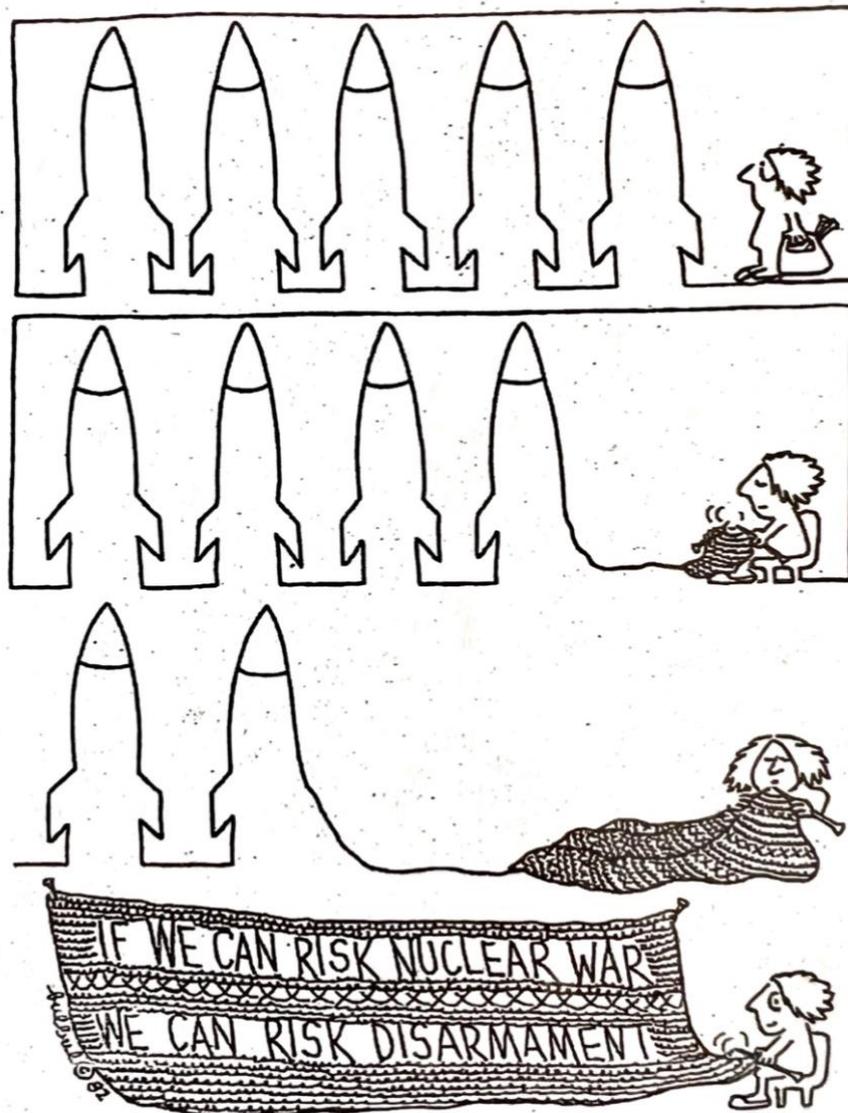
MIU's IPP is proposing the creation of a permanent coherence-creating group comprised of 10,000 specially- trained Vedic experts to perform yoga and yagya. Results will be measured and monitored by an independent board of scientists. Global celebrities have expressed support for the project. IPP broke ground on a project to create Vastu housing for thousands of such Vedic experts to live on MIU's campus in Fairfield, Iowa.

Noted filmmaker David Lynch, founder of an international charity that has brought Transcendental Meditation to more than one million under-resourced children worldwide, has issued a challenge to the world's philanthropists: use a fraction of your wealth to establish large groups of advanced peace-creating Vedic experts in Ukraine and other critical hotspots, and leave a legacy of world peace that will last for generations. <https://davidlynch.gusp.org/>
[First published in Rotary Newsletter, May 2002.]

Please see this recent 10 minute video on Transcendence and World Peace, to learn more about our mission and approach.

https://youtu.be/_ArjTu8_wD8

Dr Anil K Maheshwari, Professor of Management, MIU; and member, Rotary E-club for World Peace
akm2030@gmail.com



Creating Resilience in the Midst of Crisis

“Do you really believe that your little 5 day camp can change the reality of war in the Middle East ?”

It was 2019 and we were outside of Beirut, Lebanon. We were facilitating the training for those who would run our day camp program for 50 children from the local community. The husband of the on-site Director turned to me and asked me this question. That got my attention.

This particular question had not been posed to me in such a direct way before. It stopped me in my tracks amidst the lunch break on that busy day. I realized it was a great moment to formulate an authentic response to the sincere query of a father raising his children in a community that was still rebuilding from the bombing of his neighborhood ten years prior.

“How do I talk about peace with my four-year-old when she saw a man being killed on her way to school?”

This was the second thing a new friend said to me after she introduced herself. Again, Beirut. Again, a sincere, and almost mind boggling, question from a parent with a broken heart watching her children suffer the effects of living amidst combat.

In the work that we do with Peace Village Global (PVG), we have developed a system of peace education that addresses the whole human being, not just the intellectual or theoretical aspects of wrestling with peace amidst war. We work to educate the children, families, and teaching staff with the knowledge that focusing on cultivating strong internal resilience will prepare each of us to make choices that lead to peaceful action rather than those relying on violence to solve problems.

When I was asked to write about the theme of “Living in Peace in Times of Crisis”, I first thought of my friends and colleagues living abroad in combat and post-combat zones. Then my thoughts turned to the violence here in the U.S. and, eventually, to the violence I have survived in my own life.

As a survivor of both violent childhood bullying and domestic violence in my adult life, I have some insight into what it means to come to terms with the visceral, physiological, mental and spiritual effects of violence. As an activist and peace educator for over 30 years, I have worked with survivors escaping domestic violence in my community, with the Diné peoples of the Southwestern U.S. who survived the genocide of the Native peoples on this continent, with refugees from around the world who have fled to the U.S, and in war torn countries in the Middle East and Africa amongst many others.

What I am continually struck by among all of these people, including myself, is the amazing - and often surprising - resilience with which they are able to face the next steps of their emancipation and the rebuilding of a beautiful quality of life for themselves and their children.

How do we find that resilience within ourselves right here, right now?

This is a question I ask myself almost every day. Meanwhile, the effects of violent action, greed, dominance, colonialism, racism and so many other of the worst aspects of humanity seem to be destroying our beautiful planet: impacting the environment and our mental and physical health...the sustainability of our humanity.

This juxtaposition of resilience in the face of crisis is one of the deepest challenges I believe humanity must come to terms with if we are to carry ourselves forward and steward this planet into lasting Peace.

To speak to this, **I invite you to join me in an exercise** we have practiced with many different people ... from children in a camp, to classroom teachers to directors of front-line agencies serving some of the most fragile and hardest hit populations.

We are experiential educators and, as a team, **we use this exercise to keep ourselves focused and resilient in the face of work that is so often heart wrenching and seemingly hopeless: teaching peacemaking in combat and post-combat zones.**

Ok, take a pause in your reading and grab a blank piece of paper and a pen. You can even get colored pencils if you want. Really, go grab that stuff and come back - it'll be worth it :)

So now, suspend your judgment mind and imagine you have the freedom in yourself to just draw the outlines of a tree standing cross section in the earth. That is, you can draw the earth as a horizontal line with the roots going down and out below the line and the trunk and branches soaring up above the line. Resist the temptation to perfect the tree. It's just the vehicle and image for the next part.

Next, imagine the wind comes into the branches of your tree and starts to blow it around...leaves begin flying all over and maybe you even hear branches cracking or breaking! Where I live in the foothills of Corbett, Oregon, we experience severe ice storms every year. These storms coat the tree branches with heavy ice and many break or blow over with the combination of weight and the wind.

Now, think of things in your life that tax you or weaken you or challenge you. They can be simple and clear: being tired, lonely, feeling overwhelmed, not having enough money for bills, a neck injury, losing a loved one, too much work, the car needs brakes, etc. Write these things along the branches of your tree - these are the things you are trying to carry and even overcome every day as you strive to stand upright with the trunk of your tree and branches intact.

Pause here and imagine the weight of the branches of the tree you have drawn amidst the wind or ice storms of your life. We all have these challenges. Some are simple, some are complex, some are small and some are deeply disturbing or seemingly overwhelming. The pause here is to acknowledge your own moments of challenge.

Now, take a deep breath and: let's switch and turn our focus to some of the simple and clear things we know help to sustain us on any given day...that is, things we love to do and things that fulfill us or restore us. We all have them; we all know them.

For me, they are things like: play music, go outside, sit down and eat healthy food, take a nap, call a friend, spend time near a body of water, take a walk with a friend, do yoga, etc. Contemplate your own list of ways to restore yourself. They can be simple or complex: reading a book, playing with your dog, reading to your child, playing soccer, knitting, etc.

These, then, go along the roots of your tree. Take a minute or two and write them down. It's ok if your words don't all fit, or you have to draw more roots or you can't think of a lot right now. You get the idea.

You now have a tree that shows you some of your challenges and also, some of the ways you already know to sustain your resilience amidst the storms of life.

At some of the lowest and most overwhelming moments of my life, I have used this idea to literally make the list to fill in my roots and get myself to just do one thing from my root system. I find one thing that I know gives me a glimpse of relief or even an unexpected moment of joy amidst the hell of it all. We've all been there. We all suffer. We witness great suffering and wrestle with how we can even take a step to help in the face of overwhelming odds.

My answer to how do we cultivate resilience is: start with one simple thing.

It may be that this leads to just one other simple thing. It may be that you will need support or counseling or to change jobs or to move or ... who knows what! Life can be complex and often demands discernment.

What I know is that being present and moving through our moments of despair usually includes taking a deep breath and then engaging a combination of acknowledging the feelings, naming them, allowing versus avoiding them and then deciding to try again by starting with a simple action.

This can often lead to more clarity, energy or even a set of steps leading to a solution. This is one way we are able to attend to ourselves, restoring peace to our anxious minds, broken hearts and horrified souls while we watch the terrible things happening in the world.

While I really have no realistic hope of our day camp overcoming the eons of wars in the Middle East, I do know that for that week back in 2019, over 200 hundred children, teachers, trainers and their families living outside Beirut were all talking about and practicing building peace every day for five days in a row. And they want to do it again and teach others to do it because it makes a difference, it feels good, and it helps us find peaceful solutions. We can't solve everything and yet, we can still effect change.

With simple exercises like this tree practice, we can create a pause to acknowledge our challenges and see that we actually do have some resources within us right here, right now.

In this way, we are more able to listen to the still, small voice that inspires and guides us to know our part in the broader sphere: to know the actions we must take in our families, communities and the world at large to face and dismantle the horrifying systems that are causing so much strife and suffering for all the beings on this precious, beautiful, resilient earth.

Elizabeth Wilson
Co-Founder & Director, Peace Village Global
peacevillageglobal.org

Peace in Times of Crisis



When deciding on what to write for this theme, luckily, I had a meeting scheduled with Mara Zepeda, co-founder and co-doula of [Zebras Unite](#), one of the world's most promising "new economy" organizations. Although we have worked together for a couple of years and I had [written about the Zebras before](#), this was going to be our first face-to-face meeting (outdoors of course). As we talked about what I had experienced in my careers as an academic political scientist and as a peacebuilder and what she had gathered from her shorter but still extended career as a social change entrepreneur, three things became clear.

- We are not dealing with a crisis in the singular, but crises in the (very) plural that include war, climate change, economic and other forms of inequality, racism, and more
- The solutions don't lie "simply" in building peace or an egalitarian economy but in addressing all of the issues more or less simultaneously
- Those efforts will take a long time to bear fruit and will have to take us through periods in which we face strong headwinds, some of which could even be more powerful than the ones we face today

Nonetheless, there seem to be six themes in the life stories of the activists I've studied and, more importantly, in the people Mara and I have worked with over the course of our careers which have helped our colleagues and ourselves keep at it "through thick and thin."

The First Four Themes

I've seen, written about, and helped promote the first four throughout my career.

Crisis meme. At least since President Kennedy used the phrase, a lot of us have thought of a crisis as involving dangers and opportunities. Linguists quibble over

whether that is the best translation for the characters that make up *weiji*, but we don't have to. Kennedy was politically (if not linguistically) correct in suggesting that we take a step back from our problems and look for the opportunities to take constructive steps whenever we face daunting challenges. Since then, complexity scientists and others have shown that such opportunities always exist no matter how dire our circumstances might seem. Our challenge is to identify and, then, act on them, something successful activists have done wherever I have worked.

Audacious goal. We have to think big. Really big. In the language of the startup world, at the activists who survive over the long haul have a BHAG – big, hairy, audacious goal – and they focus everything they do on reaching it. For me, it's a peaceful world. Mara envisions a more equitable economy, especially for women and people of color. Systems theorists often talk about the importance of having a "North Star" toward which we point everything we do. The most successful activists I've worked with rarely "counter" what's wrong, like violent extremism today. Instead, they draw everyone's attention to the alternative we all want to build toward.

Rational basis for hope. If I just focused on the first two themes, it would still be easy to fall into a utopian trap in which I lay out idealistic, laudable, but unreachable goals. Even as a teenage student activist, I was reluctant to tilt at political windmills. I wrote my first book on the reasons why activists in the French Unified Socialist Party (PSU) felt they might succeed and how that sense kept them going. I entitled my first-ever article on peacebuilding "a rational basis for hope" because I could see how we in the Beyond War movement could succeed. When I look at my generation of activists when we were young fifty years ago or as activist senior citizens today, I see that same sense of what I called organizational efficacy when I wrote about the PSU of the early 1970s.

Metrics. Any such basis for hope can still be delusional because the "North Star" lies so far out in the future that what I just called rational can actually be downright irrational. So, there is a fourth theme which I've also seen in my activism and in my scholarly research over the years. Activists who sustain their activism for a decade or a lifetime all find something akin to metrics that they can use to measure their progress and make course corrections when the political winds change direction. As a young political scientist, I tried to lay them out using statistical measures so that I could quantitatively track success and failure. As I've matured, I've realized that, like everyone else, the metrics I use tend to be precise and quantitative. Nonetheless, the veteran activists I know and respect all pay at least as much attention to the impact they are having in the "here and now" as they do to the larger north star that lies way out there on the celestial horizon.

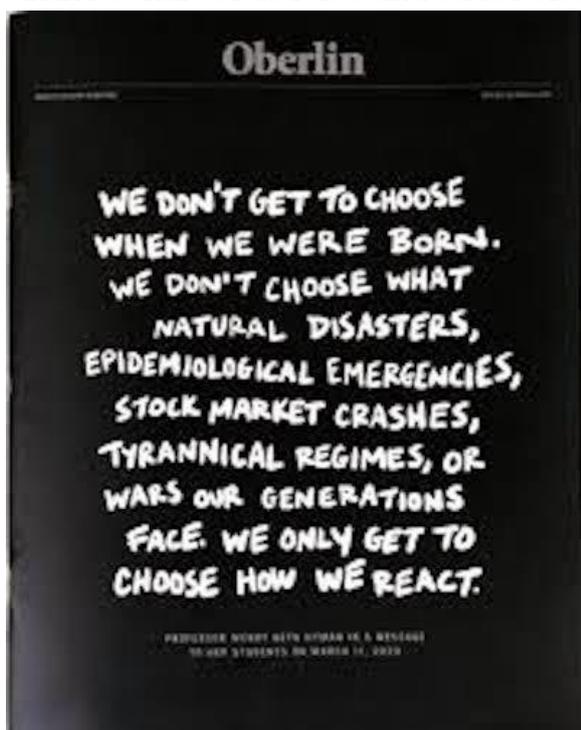
And Two More for the Roaring Twenties

As should be clear already, I had thought about these themes a lot over the years. I've added two more to my list since the pandemic hit which seemed to open the floodgates to the multiple crises I mentioned above.

There certainly have been times during the last two years in which I've been on the verge of getting a "disease" that I've seen break out all around me – becoming politically, clinically depressed. I was able to stave it off because two things literally fell into my mental lap in April 2020 which I've since expanded into two more themes for sustaining activism during times of crisis.

Both came from unusual sources. Each of them, too, overlaps with one or more of my first themes. Nonetheless, they are powerful enough in their own right that I've added them to my peacebuilding "arsenal."

We only get to choose how we respond. I did my undergraduate degree at Oberlin College. For readers unfamiliar with the American higher education scene, Oberlin is what we call a small liberal arts college. It was the first institution of higher education to admit African Americans and be coeducational from the moment it was founded in 1833. It is also known for producing more than its share of activists and educators.



Like most American colleges and universities, Oberlin sent its students home for the spring holiday in 2020 knowing that they would not return for the rest of the academic year but little else about what the future would bring. Many faculty members sent their students emails wishing them well in whatever came next. When the alumni magazine came a few weeks later, it had this cover which was extracted from an email literature professor Wendy Beth Hyman sent to her students.

I had never heard of Professor Hyman, but her message struck a nerve. My generation did not choose to be in college during the height of the Vietnam war. Her students in 2020 didn't pick to have a pandemic or a recession or racial upheaval disrupt their education.

We only get to choose how we respond.

And that includes the choice of doing nothing.

The activists I've worked with and respected the most over the years never chose to do nothing (grammatical flaws intended). They choose to respond because they know that "not responding" for whatever reason is a choice, too. As a footnote, I've had the privilege of helping a few of those Oberlin students carve out their personal responses in ways that have helped me define my own.

Nailing it. On April 29, 2020, I was watching the PBS NewsHour when host Judy Woodruff introduced Kelly Corrigan whom I'd never heard of before either. In the three minutes and three hundred words in her segment, she talked about how we could nail what was then only the corona virus crisis.

She had been stuck in line at her local supermarket. As you can see by clicking the link after this paragraph, she kept getting more depressed and more annoyed until she did something she often does when she gets frustrated. She took a mental step backward, took a deep breath, and imagined what it would take for us to "nail" the pandemic in the days when George Floyd was still alive and before American democracy entered the danger zone.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BJCs89wQXrA>

I won't bore you with how she would have nailed it then; too much has happened in the last two years for her vision to still hold water.

Nonetheless, I've followed her work almost non-stop since then and I've seen an author who delights in telling the stories of real people who have succeeded in nailing it in some critical aspect of their lives. They have north stars which most of them assume that they will never reach. However, they also have more realistic intermediate goals which they can get to. And more importantly yet, they develop strategies that could get them there while also being flexible enough to change directions when the world throws new obstacles in their face.

In some ways, like Professor Hyman, everything Kelly Corrigan says in that statement can be found in the four themes I've been stressing for years. However, the image of nailing it adds the same kind of urgency that we get when we realize that we can only control how we respond to the social and political "cards" we've been dealt.

And that's saying a lot.

Academic Failure? Political Success?

My PhD advisors steered me toward the PSU because they thought it could tell my friends in the new left a lot about what could keep our own movement afloat once the Vietnam war disappeared from the nightly news. I rather pompously hoped to use that research to develop a general theory or model of activism.

In the end, I feel far short of that lofty academic goal. Still, in the half century since I came back from that year in France studying the PSU, I have seen something like these six themes play themselves out in movement after movement. And perhaps

more importantly, I've seen how their absence has doomed too many others that disappeared despite achieving some early success. Especially during times of crisis when we needed them the most.

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Alliance for Peacebuilding or its members.

Chip Hauss www.allianceforpeacebuilding.org
www.charleshauss.info

A LOCAL "INFRASTRUCTURE FOR PEACE" (I4P) IN SMALL TOWN USA

*The Riverton Community Peace Pole Coalition *

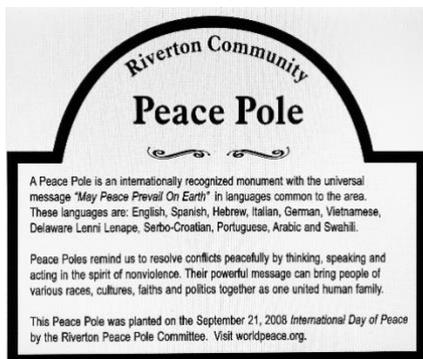


~ Sit by a Peace Pole in a Park on a "Bench of Dreams" and Imagine Peace ~

The term "Infrastructure for Peace (I4P) has finally become familiar in the field of Peacebuilding. The United Nations Development Program defines I4P as a dynamic networking of skills, capacities, resources, tools and institutions that help build constructive social and political relationships and enhance sustainable resilience of societies against violence. I4P come in the form of departments, ministries, councils, committees, coalitions, academies etc. often connected with governments. Sometimes the shape they can take is not so obvious. Such as in the simple structure of a community Peace Pole nestled in a peace grove in a public park, where individuals and groups gather; a place whose mere presence can instruct in ways informal and formal about the Culture of Peace (pictured above). The **Riverton Community Peace Pole Coalition** is one such local I4P that in the last 15 years has evolved peace consciousness in Riverton, New Jersey.

Fifteen + years ago when I began NGO work at the UN, I represented the Peace Pole organization "May Peace Prevail on Earth International." I naively thought then how much my hometown would welcome a Peace Pole in our small, historic borough on the Delaware River opposite the City of Brotherly Love, Philadelphia. Boy was I wrong! For the Iraq War had not turned sour yet. Thus, our Coalition was perceived as unpatriotic, so the idea of a Peace Pole seemed blasphemous. A big 3-year conflict ensued, making headlines that provided opportunities to inform the public about the Peace Pole's "pro-peace" mindset (as opposed to "anti-war"). Eventually we won the hearts of town Council and in 2007 the **Riverton Community Peace Pole** was planted on municipal ground in a location

selected with town input. In 2008 we had a participatory Peace Pole dedication ceremony with the Mayor and Council, school children, clergy, librarians and neighbors “speaking their peace.” It concluded in a peace circle all holding hands around the Peace Pole – led by two members of our land acknowledgement Delaware Lenni-Lenape Tribe of the Algonquin Family.



Because of its controversial beginnings, the community peacebuilding activities envisioned to happen around the Peace Pole were slow to advance. Until last year when the dire state of the world’s escalating levels of violence thrust our Coalition back into action. To raise Peace Pole / Culture of Peace awareness on its upcoming 15th anniversary this year, we decided to erect an informational plaque and christen it in a rededication ceremony in observance of the 2022 International Day of Peace. The Coalition has spent the last year gaining

Council approval, fundraising, promoting and designing the plaque which now awaits order fulfillment before planting in our park’s peace grove in time for Peace Day. (See proof image).

To increase the plaque’s power to enhance peace consciousness at this inflection point in history, a dimension was just added to our “peace benches” Dennis Creter originally sculpted back in 2008 for the dedication ceremony. Inspired by **Dr Robert Muller’s “Bench of Dreams”** concept in Muller Peace Park near the UN University for Peace in Costa Rica, we now dub them “benches of dreams” too in his honor. Dr Robert Muller is former UN Assistant Secretary General. He said: *“Feel free to create a “bench of dreams” in your community. Your “bench of dreams” will be a special place of quiet and beauty, a place in the natural world where you can spend some time and become attentive to the dreams being dreamed with you and within the Earth – dreams for yourself, your family, your world.”* There is even a rock exercise Dr Muller suggests can be done to make the spot more interactive. This imagining is where manifestation of the Culture of Peace begins -- as the law of attraction states that thoughts create reality (energy follows thought). See <http://robertmuller.org/mr/p01.html> .



Our local **infrastructure for peace** story ends on a heartening note. For a recent event took place at our Peace Pole which demonstrates Riverton’s evolution of peace consciousness in the last 15 years. Turns out, our year-long “plaque” quest enabled us to spring into fast action when the shocking Feb 24th Russian invasion of Ukraine began. *For people felt the need of coming together in community at the Peace Pole, helplessly not knowing what else to do!* In just a few days of

miraculous teamwork, an impromptu yet surprisingly successful Peace Vigil was held for the March 6th **Global Day of Action in Support of Ukraine**. Over 60 folks showed up with many expressions of gratitude. The Peace Pole had really fulfilled its intended purpose! With the Ukrainian War now still raging on and gun violence out of control everywhere, we look forward to our park peace grove

becoming a more utilized local beacon of hope for a better world. See short Peace Vigil video:  A1 Riverton Peace Vigil.mp4 .

"Love for peace is not enough. Beyond it we need a vision of peace, a science of peace, a strategy for peace and innumerable actions for peace." Dr Robert Muller ("Philosopher of the UN")

Anne Creter on Memorial Day 5/30/22 (annecrets@aol.com)
Peace Through Unity UN Rep, Global Movement for the Culture of Peace, Global Alliance for Ministries and Infrastructures for Peace, US Peace Alliance International Lead & Department of Peacebuilding Committee.

The Peace of Wild Things

by Wendell Berry

Listen

When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

Tezikiah (Tez) Gabriel, Executive Director, Pathways To Peace (PTP) www.pathwaystopeace.org

United Nations International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace - April 24th

*And the War in Ukraine and President Zelenskyy and the Need for a UN
"Infrastructures for Peace" Resolution
April 21, 2022*

How will the General Assembly promote its 4th annual **International Day of "Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace" on 24 April** this year as the war in Ukraine teeters on the brink of WW-3? That UN day calls for 'promoting the values of the UN, reaffirming faith in principles enshrined in its Charter, including multilateralism and international law for sustained peace through diplomacy. And sharing these advantages through public awareness-raising.'

So how are "multilateralism" and "diplomacy for peace" faring at the UN and in the world these days? According to Ukrainian President Zelenskyy - not well, having recently told the Security Council there is NO "security" there. He knows

this from bravely leading his country's defense against the illegal, immoral Russian invasion of Ukraine (however justified Russia's contentions may or may not be). Since a negotiated settlement seems unlikely, this conflict can only be resolved by one side winning the war. As that is how the age-old War and Peace game has been played through history. But in the 21st Century that game is pathetic and annihilating. It begs the question: *Can humanity become civilized resolving conflicts?*

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in War & Peace



"Sin and grace, absence and presence, tragedy and comedy, they divide the world between them and where they meet head-on, the Gospel happens." Frederick Buechner

Comedy and tragedy met head-on in Comedian turned President Zelenskyy and the Gospel of peace happened. For in his urgent pleas to the world to stop the bombing, he also pleads for *"new (peacebuilding) institutions."* *Because all current ones (including the UN) failed to prevent this gut-wrenchingly barbaric way of resolving conflict from erupting.* Ukraine is not the only country where such atrocities occur. Yet Ukraine gets the media attention because President Zelenskyy in the chaos remains articulate and media savvy about issues of War and Peace. Can this be a teachable moment for change?

"War is a failure of politics and humanity, a shameful capitulation, a stinging defeat before the forces of evil" Pope Francis preaches. Thus, we observe this April 24th UN day addressing President Zelenskyy's plea for "new peacebuilding institutions" by sharing news of the rapidly evolving global movement calling for governmental Departments, Ministries and Infrastructures for Peace (I4P) aligned with the science of nonviolence, proven to prevent and reduce violence by making "nonviolence" a national priority organizing principle at all levels. This is also the perfect UN day to amplify the need for the General Assembly to pass a resolution urging all member states to establish I4P worldwide to end the scourge of war that can save the planet from extinction. For as Martin Luther King said, "it is nonviolence or nonexistence" as humanity foolheartedly pushes the envelope ever closer to that fateful precipice divide.

Yet 'war and violence' cannot be abolished until alternate more effective, life-affirming 'peace and nonviolence' systems are solidly in place. As these structures will provide the platforms necessary to enable positive conflict resolution to take place at all levels. "Infrastructures for Peace" are a critical peacebuilding step in

constructing the culture of peace. **A UN Development Program (UNDP) Issue Brief on I4P published by their Crisis Prevention and Recovery Unit documents remarkable I4P successes reducing and preventing violence in troubled countries.** UNDP defines I4P as a network of interdependent systems, resources, values and skills held by government, civil society and community institutions that promote dialogue and consultation; prevent conflict and enable peaceful mediation when violence occurs.

President Zelenskyy wisely implores us to find new approaches – seeming to believe war is not inevitable (revolutionary thinking for a commander-in-chief). Because the underlying issues that caused this war cannot be solved militarily, it is time to mainstream peacebuilding. Albert Einstein said war is a failure of “imagination.” Yet in this 21st Century, peace is really BEYOND just “imagination” because the evidence-based discipline of peace studies about the science of nonviolence has become firmly rooted in the last 50 years since the UN was founded after WW 2. Unfortunately, this knowledge remains largely in the ivory towers *not yet reflected much in governmental policies and practices.* The power of governmental I4P is that they intentionally reflect and mandate this significant knowledge about prevention and the need to comprehensively get at the root causes of violence. Because the best way to end war is to prevent it from happening.

I4P are aligned with the new UN post Covid recovery **Our Common Agenda (OCA)** designed to steer the world from breakdown to breakthrough at this most dangerous inflection point in history. Secretary-General Guterres’ OCA report, after the 75th anniversary of the UN’s founding, calls for “*a new agenda for peace*” to accelerate implementation of existing UN agreements, such as the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace (A/RES/53/243). OCA’s Commitment #3 to “promote peace and prevent conflicts” stresses *reshaping response to all forms of violence and investing in prevention and peacebuilding*” (i.e., *that’s what I4P do!*). OCA seeks to identify global public goods where governance improvements can be proposed for UN reform. A viable reform addressing commitment #3 exists in the growing peacebuilding field *promoting I4P to build and strengthen capacity for the culture of peace. Such I4P architecture can include governmental and civil society commissions, committees, councils, academies and forums for peace at the local, national and international level. Country-wise, Costa Rica has long had an active Ministry for Justice & Peace. The Solomon Islands, Nepal, Autonomous Region of Bougainville, Ethiopia and Afghanistan have had national ministries of various sorts at different times. The US and Canada have developed actual national I4P bills in their legislative bodies.*

Civil society participation is a major emphasis of OCA which challenges us “to strengthen the global governance architecture to address the world’s most pressing challenges ... to do what is necessary for peace.” Thus, the **Global Alliance for Ministries and Infrastructures for Peace (GAMIP)** strongly asserts that I4P are necessary for peacebuilding as shown by its PeaceNow “OneBillionSignatures4Peace” online petition garnering worldwide signatories calling for the UN General Assembly to pass an I4P resolution. See peacenow.com/resolution.

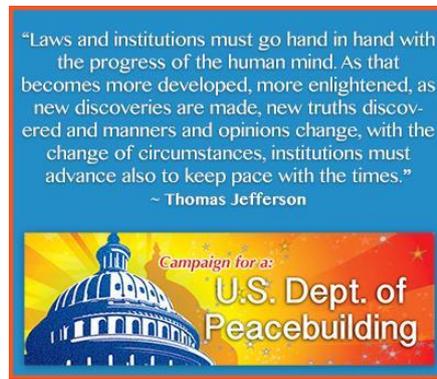
Conflict prevention is a major responsibility of member states as set forth in the UN Charter. Diplomacy is still the primary political means at the UN for conflict prevention. But formal diplomacy between high level officials is obviously not enough as it only goes so far. I4P are a supplemental layer of conflict prevention enhancement that synergistically reinforces and deepens diplomacy by coordinating at the other levels. **I4P are a win-win, advancing both the UN's OCA while also helping achieve the prized UN Sustainable Development Goal #16 on "Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions" too.**

The **Institute for Economics & Peace** provides metrics for measuring peace in **The Global Peace Index**. Their 2021 report states: The key to building peacefulness in times of conflict is Positive Peace. Positive Peace is the attitudes, **institutions and structures** that sustain peaceful societies. Most countries found to be in deficit, record increasing levels of violence. High Levels of Positive Peace are found in countries where institutions are resilient and responsive to society's needs, with structures in place that create an environment conducive for the nonviolent resolution of grievances.

In conclusion, we observe the **April 24th UN Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace** by sharing this article globally to emphasize the urgent need to establish governmental departments, ministries and other infrastructures for peace worldwide that can shift our harmful trajectory of violence into the culture of peace. As we believe that will help the UN fulfill its vision for this important UN Day. War is a crime against humanity. Violence is a primary obstacle to planetary well-being. For it impedes implementation of the Culture of Peace Programme of Action, whose Article 5 declares that governments have an essential role in promoting the culture of peace. Thus, conflict transformation can come about by creating governmental "infrastructures for peace" to build the structures necessary to support a strong and enduring culture of peace. "Culture of Peace" and "Infrastructures for Peace" are mutually supporting aligned concepts. The UN Culture of Peace Programme of Action provides the overarching global justification imperative for establishing I4P. And I4P provide a demonstrated concrete, viable means for implementation of the Culture of Peace UN normative mandate.

Escalating existential violence indicates that government is not meeting its basic mandate to secure humanity's right to peace and security. Peace requires a robust, sustainable architecture that structurally facilitates conflict prevention. I4P are effective because they apply the science of nonviolence to building the underlying structures proven conducive to conflict prevention. **For peace to prevail on earth, a primary world focus now must be on establishing governmental I4P to build and strengthen the culture of peace and institutionalize peacebuilding.** So, on this International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace we urge the UN General Assembly to pass an I4P resolution in 2022.

MAY PEACE PREVAIL ON EARTH!



“Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable. It is an unfortunate fact that we can secure peace only by preparing for war. Peace is a daily, a weekly, a monthly process, gradually changing opinions, slowly eroding old barriers, quietly building new structures.” US President John F Kennedy

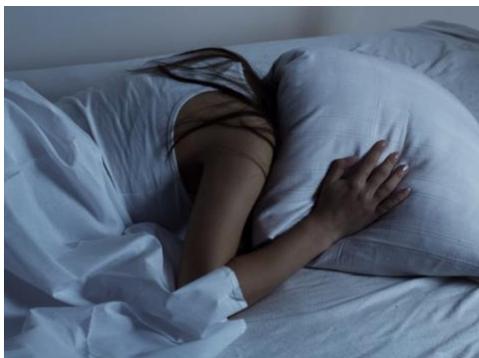
Global Alliance for Ministries and Infrastructures for Peace (GAMIP.ORG) is a 15+ year old worldwide civil society organization composed of country I4P campaigns, organizations, committed citizens and government officials supporting the development of departments, ministries and other infrastructures for peace.

Anne Creter - Global Alliance for Ministries & Infrastructures for Peace (UN Committee Chair), Global Movement for the Culture of Peace, Peace Through Unity UN NGO Rep, US Peace Alliance Department of Peacebuilding Campaign & International Lead (annecrets@aol.com)

How to Thrive in the Middle of Chaos

Finding your inner peace while the outside world is in turmoil

It *hits you as soon as you wake up*. The world is in messy disorder and it's seeping relentlessly into your daily life. Inflation, Supply shortages, War etc., are making you feel anxious and stressed. According to a survey by [American Psychological Association this month](#), over 81-87% of Americans are worried, anxious, and fearful about these issues now. How can you maintain some sense of equilibrium so that you can manage your work, personal life, and health without feeling overburdened by the parade of challenges?



Unpreparedness dreams often indicate that a person is nervous about some aspect of their life.

Many years ago, I used to have occasional dreams where I was not prepared for a presentation. I would wake up with a start, sweating. Such dreams are an indication

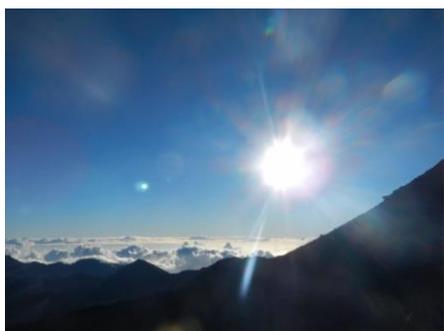
that a person is feeling less confident in handling some aspect of their lives. During our current tumultuous times, it is easy to feel insecure. I am happy to share the simple tools that have helped me manage my life and world view with self-assurance, equanimity, and faith.

Paraphrasing Rudyard Kipling, **if you can keep your head while others are losing theirs, you'll master the world and all that's in it.** Here's how:

First of all, breathe. Deep belly breaths to release the knots in your shoulders, tightness in your chest and to slow down the buzzing in your head. When you are tense, your breathing is shallow, and you may not realize that your shoulders are hunched up by your ears. Breathe deeply to release the tension. Repeat.

Smile. [Smiling, even a fake smile triggers the neuropeptides](#) (endorphins) to relieve stress, pain and help you relax. The old songwriter who penned the lyrics for the song, "Smile" knew before the confirming research:

*"If you smile through your fear and sorrow
Smile and maybe tomorrow
You'll see the sun come shining through for you"*



The sun will shine through when you smile.

Stretch, move your body. [US Dept of Health & Human Services](#) has shown that **movement reduces feelings of depression and stress, enhances your mood and overall emotional well-being, increases your energy level, and improves sleep.** Another great benefit? It's free. You can move any time you feel tight and anxious.

Meditate. Quiet your mind. As hard as that may sound when you are feeling stressed, it's possible. Do the above three steps first and then find a quiet place where you can be alone and feel more relaxed. Sit comfortably. Divert from your anxiety to focusing on your breath, or on a single point like a plant, a candle or some favorite object, and breathe deeply and regularly. When your mind wanders to other matters, bring it back gently and repeat the process. Start with a short period, say 5 minutes, build up from there. You will find that you feel more refreshed and calmer afterwards.



Meditating in nature gives you a double bonus of feel goodness.

Go **outside**. Find support in nature. You are part of the natural world. When you are in nature, a park, lake, ocean, mountains or just a small patch of green in your neighborhood, [it will improve your attention quality, lower stress, reduce risk of psychiatric disorders, increase empathy and cooperation.](#) A double bonus is when you meditate in nature, you will reap the rewards of both!

Seek help. You are not alone, there are people, organizations, and spiritual support to assist you. A friendly ear, a helping hand, a reassuring hug, a useful referral, a heartfelt prayer. There are many ways for help to come, ask for them. Be open to receiving them.

List the most challenging things you are dealing with. Prioritize them. Place possible action steps next to each item. Realize that you can affect each situation in some way, even the ones that seem out of your apparent control. When you feel that you can influence the matter, you will feel more empowered. A phone call, making a decision, a small donation to the cause, a prayer and/or your positive intention can make a difference.

Find the good in the situation. Your choice of how you perceive the issue changes how you feel. Viktor Frankel, the psychiatrist, and Holocaust survivor said, *“Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms – to choose one’s attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one’s own way.”*
~ Viktor Frankel

It’s challenging to perceive good in grim circumstances. In Viktor Frankel’s case, and he suffered greatly in the concentration camps, he lost many friends and his entire beloved family in the holocaust. Being a psychiatrist, he did his best to support his fellow inmates, and he observed that the ones who survived were the ones who had a reason for living. Viktor Frankel’s will to live came from his determination to be reunited with his wife and to use what he was learning in the horrific conditions to help humanity. Fortunately, our problems generally are not as dire as Dr. Frankel’s, and we have more resources to support us.



Use the 8 tools to guide your heart and mind to a calmer, happier and more creative life journey.

The world may seem frightful, but you can be a light and support in shifting the trajectory in your own way, by living from a place of awareness positivity and calmness. I'm with you. Breathe. Smile. Stretch.....

For more information, please visit: <https://marilyn-88979.medium.com>
Marilyn Tam <https://marilyntam.com>

Cities4Peace

The following links are included to present two current programme projects undertaken by Cities4Peace led by Mandar Apte. Should you wish to find out more details about any of the programmes offered, please visit:

[Bridging the divide in Cyprus](#) - sponsored by UN Peacekeeping mission in Cyprus
[Healing the changemakers of Los Angeles](#) - sponsored by LA County Office of Violence Prevention

Mandar Apte, Director, Cities4Peace. [Cities4Peace](#) | [Cities4Peace](#)

THE GREAT INVOCATION

**From the point of Light within the Mind of God
Let light stream forth into human minds.
Let Light descend on Earth.**

**From the point of Love within the Heart of God
Let love stream forth into human hearts.
May the Coming One return to Earth.**

**From the centre where the Will of God is known
Let purpose guide all little human wills
The purpose which the Masters know and serve.**

**From the centre which we call the human race
Let the Plan of Love and Light work out
And may it seal the door where evil dwells.**

Let Light and Love and Power restore the plan on Earth.