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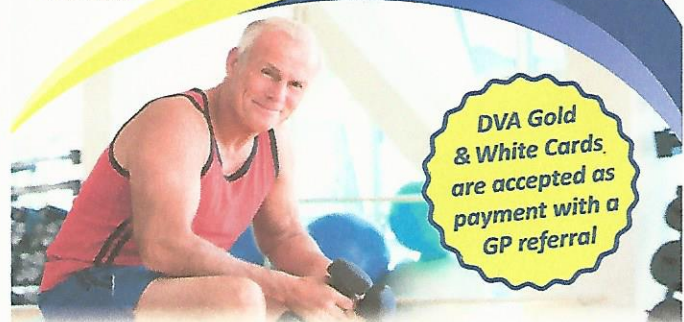
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Conflict Resolution and Peace starts with Individual Commitment

With increasing levels of violence and discourse, the world in which we live seems a far cry from yesteryear. But, is it really a different world or is it that our awareness of acts of violence and conflict been raised through having wider media coverage? Or, are more people wanting to see change? Or, is it just due to there being more people on earth and incident rates have increased exponentially as a result?

On January 1st 2016 open carry by licensed gun owners became the norm in Texas USA. Some business owners, government buildings and public places have made clear their intention not to allow open carry, yet many will advocate that by restricting open carry an individual's lawful rights are being restricted. When people feel unsafe, they deserve the right to protect themselves. The question of whose rights are more important then creates an inevitable ambiguity and the potential for litigation and conflict again raises its ugly head. One can clearly see that Texans and Texas will take a while to adapt to the new norm, however will it mean an end to mass shootings, or an increase in lone actors taking situations into their own hands and resolving conflict with a gun?

US Presidential Candidate Jeb Bush recently spoke of the need for peace and yet had to ask for the audience to applaud after he finished speaking. Is that a sign that humanity has become so used to conflict, violence and

atrocities that most are thinking 'war and conflict are inevitable?'. When the media, as recently as Dec 2015, place headlines advocating that terrorism is the new norm....who do we need to start holding accountable for the lack of positive change (towards peace)? When US President Obama challenges his citizens to ask "why?" in the face of increasing gun violence and senseless killings, and Congress and lobby groups choose not to act in the way that is best for peaceful outcomes, who do we need to start holding accountable?

Each individual can achieve inner peace and choose a life of calm and serenity. Each family can choose to resolve conflict and learn to get along together. Every community (social, business, educational, government and diplomatic) has the capability to talk through issues, find common ground and resolve conflict. Does that gives us the answer as to who should be held accountable? The individual who makes the choice to side against peace and harmony?

These are challenging questions. And yet, if humanity does not become extinct in this century due to the selfish and non-strategic choices of many, who will our future generations hold accountable for the current dysfunction? Each person is given options to choose from, in every context, every day.

What will your choice be today?