

Some simple yet effective things you can do to bring peace to your life and in your relationships with others

For some people even the 'concept' of a peaceful world seems unachievable. For the majority of people though, peace has grown from being a silently-held belief to one where some people openly plead for peace and others even work tirelessly to that end. Particularly since the anti-war protests and peace movements of the 1960's, we're seeing more people loudly object to violence, hate crimes and war; we're seeing more artists use their mediums to call for peace, tolerance and compassion; we're hearing of people holding steadfast in their vision of a world where people can just 'get along' together instead of always fighting.

I've long used the phrase "slowly, slowly, catchy monkey" when I know something really important is hard to achieve, and that 'something' will take patience, tenacity, dedication and strength by the people working for it. The analogy is drawn from being in the wild and wanting to tame a wild beast (e.g. an angry monkey) and you know the only way to hold and tame that beast will be through taking things slowly, carefully and strategically. When I think about personal peace, which is the foundation for global peace, it's clear that change will happen when people are ready for it. People need to own change, embrace it and stick with it, in order for the right outcomes to be achieved. Likewise, people taking ownership in moving the *world* to peace requires the same level of personal commitment.

The first layer in achieving global peace is achieving 'individual to individual' level peace, where conflict is minimized, communication is high, and understanding, compassion and tolerance are the norm. What this first layer requires is that both those individuals are 'at peace' within themselves as much as is humanly possible. As no human being is perfect and therefore one's level of commitment and strength is always going to be subject to stressors and pressures, like the body's GAS¹ which works to maintain homeostasis and restore balance, there's always going to be a balancing act going on. However, there are some fundamental things that each person can do, every day, to maintain a level of inner peace and contribute positively to peace in their relationships with others:

- Be patient: a hard one at times, but critical to being able to maintain a sense of humour and understanding when circumstances and others' choices and actions are completely out of your control.
- Discern information: don't take everything on-board or see everything as the truth. There's a lot of BS in the world and, in the 21st Century when we're all in information overload, being discerning about what you see and hear is really important in filtering the BS from useful facts.
- Risk manage situations: funnily enough, people risk manage life every day so in reality this is not a new concept. However, people don't often recognize risk management for what it is. Since late 2009 we've had a new international standard (31000) and its principles and framework can be applied by us in every context, every day.
- Own the fact that you alone are responsible and accountable for *your response* to people and events: It doesn't take a rocket scientist to understand that someone doesn't *make* you feel a certain way, or make you cry, or make you revengeful. A generic situation can present itself (e.g. one that any normal person would be adversely impacted by), but *how* we each respond is going

to be unique and how well we transition through that response and let go coming out of it, will also depend on our mindset (be it positive or negative).

- Let go of a negative mindset: recognizing that you have a tendency to be (or are) a negative thinker can be challenging and confronting at first. However, once you do know you're being negative, journeying to and staying positively-focused is going to be a blessing. Being negative about people and things is a bit like choosing to stay in the dark. It's a whole lot nicer, happier, fun and warm being in the light! Other people will naturally gravitate towards people who, despite setbacks and negative events, remain positive and forward-focused.
- Demonstrate genuine compassion: do for others what you would *appreciate* (but not demand) in return; show care and consideration for people, even total strangers; if someone is hurting or clearly needs a hand, then help them if you can (after you've done a risk assessment preferably).
- Actively listen: this requires your focus, full attention on the other person, willingness, and empathy for the other person's situation. You'll know that you've been actively listening, staying present in the moment with another person, when you can paraphrase or quote back to them exactly what they said, in context. This communication tool will also help you at those times in life when you "hear" something completely different to what is "said", or "say" something completely opposite of what you meant to say (i.e. actively listen to yourself too).
- Be honest, using tact and diplomacy, at all times: truth grows trust, and trust grows respect between people. Demanding respect is not appropriate. You earn respect and respect is what we need as the foundation for understanding and tolerance.
- Be courteous: treat people with courtesy as that, in itself, is the foundation for normal happy relationships.
- Never hold grudges: let go of the need for revenge. Time will take care of things and universal justice will be served whether you directly intervene or not. You don't have to be a party to righting a wrong, unless it's reasonable and lawful to do so and, in many instances, staying out of a situation is usually a much better outcome. When you meddle in things, or take revenge, you are (ultimately) only prolonging the negative for yourself.
- Apologize: when it's right to do so, say sorry and actually own the apology. It's a bigger person who can apologize first when they've done a wrong, and an even bigger person who doesn't back away from the apology.

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ⁱ General Adaptation Syndrome