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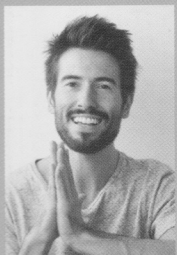
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FINDING PEACE IN A TROUBLED WORLD



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FINDING PEACE IN A TROUBLED WORLD

We can choose peace at any moment to experience a calmer, more meaningful and satisfying existence, writes Carol Howe

Most would agree that we are living in times of fast-paced change, diving headlong into uncharted waters with peace nowhere on the horizon. Many feel afraid, victimised by systems, individuals, or lack of information. Historically, with our backs against the wall, the survival mechanism swings into action and we instinctively defend, resist, fight back, feeling the need to do something. Indeed, something does need to be done, but different from our learned responses of resisting or 'making war' on what we don't like or fear. Terrorising others will never produce a happy outcome, or allow us to feel deeply peaceful, and is actually throwing gasoline on fire.

So what does work? We all know the saying, "Be the change you want to see" – a good idea rather than focusing on the more common requirement for others to be different so we can stay in our comfort zones. This is neither reasonable nor possible although we've all tried that to no avail. If we really want deep sustainable peace of mind, we must heal the discord in our own minds, the only area where we are 100% in charge. We must, for our own sanity, learn how to reduce our own internal conflict in order to feel peaceful amidst the distress and fear in the world.

Inside job

So what must be changed to be peaceful? First, realise peace/safety or conflict/danger is always an inside job. It looks like others are 'causing' our distress, but they really are only triggers or reminders, mirrors of what's going on inside our own minds. And what is going on? Uncountable numbers of thoughts, beliefs that are fear-driven, small, unloving, self-serving and more. And most importantly, they are unexamined and presumed to be the truth about us, which they are not.





“So if we want peace in the world, our private world and the world at large, we look no farther than ourselves, which is great news. Trying to control the world is a daunting and impossible task. And we don’t have to.”

And why do these thoughts matter? Most of us have always believed they were private, invisible, and inconsequential, but they are actually the drivers of all our experience. Hardly inconsequential. They drive both perception, “Is the world safe or dangerous?” and particularly important, our emotional states. Differing types of thoughts, loving or fearful, produce widely varied chemical cocktails in our bodies and they create our emotional states – feeling safe and peaceful, or angry, terrified, and endangered.

So if we feel small and victimised, the first place to look to change the emotions is to upgrade those thoughts. If we practice trading fearful unloving thoughts, premises, and ideas for compassionate ones, adopting a broader and more understanding frame of mind, we calm the chemicals and our emotions find some equilibrium. So our thoughts, not others’ behaviour, are running the show, creating either an internal peaceful, safe state or just the opposite. Knowing that one fact – no one creates our upset except ourselves – would change the world.

Raising awareness

Therefore, being the change we want to see involves realising that people, including ourselves, who exhibit selfish, fearful, or uncaring behaviour are driven by fearful programming and conditioning, mostly unknown and unrecognised. This behaviour doesn’t reflect the truth of ourselves, but the unexamined belief that we are not loved or lovable, which induces a lot of pain. Those who act in an unloving way, feeling burdened, hassled or distressed, are trying to ‘self-medicate’ by exporting that pain onto others. This fear-induced perspective distorts reality and magnifies the sense of danger, leaving us feeling imprisoned because we don’t realise we are doing this to ourselves.

None of us feel inclined to hurt people when we feel happy, loved and valued. No one wants to attack when feeling deeply cared for. Therefore, ‘bad behaviour or words’ is actually a call for love and understanding. The ego mind, the false sense of separate self, hates this and ignores the call. It thrives on conflict, war, and a sense of danger. Notice the draw to conflict in our culture. For our own sake, however, we need to say yes to this request for love and acceptance ‘in disguise’ and offer our understanding and

goodwill. That is not condoning the behaviour, but understanding its origin.

Peace, now

A fundamental law of consciousness is that we always receive what we give, have more of what we offer to others, 100% of the time. Offer kindness, non-judgemental acceptance and we feel safer and more cared for. Conversely, offer guilt and we increase our own suffering and sense of threat. The reason is that the the desire, the thought, to make anything/anyone wrong is in the mind of the thinker. The attention to the ‘wrongness’ in the thinker’s mind is like a prayer asking for more of the same. And it won’t be delivered to that ‘other one’ who seems to be the problem, but to the one focusing on the problem. If we give the ‘gift’ of wrong-making, we will fully receive it. Therefore, it can’t be said too many times, we can only be at peace when this is what we want for others, understanding that their unloving behaviour is a call to be loved and understood.

So if we want peace in the world, our private world and the world at large, we look no farther than ourselves, which is great news. Trying to control the world is a daunting and impossible task. And we don’t have to. As we establish the habit of choosing a kinder way of looking at the world, everything quite mysteriously changes. That is because a more generous outlook alters our body chemistry, allowing us to feel safer, more cared for, the mind is clearer, right action becomes inevitable, and our energy fields are elevated. The good we do for self and others thereby is incalculable. We contribute mightily to our collective consciousness; we have done our part.

And the great news is – don’t take my word for it! Try it out and claim the peace that is right here, right now, awaiting only your choice. No matter what is going on around you. ॐ

Carol Howe is one of the original and most respected teachers of A Course In Miracles. A personal friend of co-scribe Bill Thetford, she wrote his biography, Never Forget To Laugh. Throughout her 40 year career with ACIM, she has guided many thousands on their journey to inner peace. To download a free copy of her latest book “The Best Guide Ever to A Course In Miracles,” visit: carolhowe.com/p/ebook