

# Self-Empowerment

Autumn 2006

The newsletter dedicated to nurturing personal development

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## SEEKING INNER PEACE

I did a search on the Internet for the phrase "Inner Peace" and found the following on wikipedia.org:

**Inner peace** (or **peace of mind**) is a colloquialism that refers to a state of being mentally or spiritually at peace, with enough knowledge and understanding to keep oneself strong in the face of discord or stress. Being "at peace" is considered by many to be healthy (homeostasis) and the opposite of being stressed or anxious. Peace of mind is generally associated with bliss and happiness. Many spiritual or religious people believe that it is only truly possible to achieve inner peace with divine intervention of some form or another.

Peace of mind, serenity, and calmness are descriptions of a disposition free from the effects of stress. In some cultures, inner peace is considered a state of consciousness or enlightenment that may be cultivated by various forms of training, such as prayer, meditation, T'ai Chi Ch'uan or yoga, for example. Many spiritual practices refer to this peace as an experience of knowing oneself.

Finding inner peace is often associated with religions such as Buddhism and Hinduism.

### PEACE IN THE FACE OF STRESS?

I have been on a path of self-healing for the past 36 years. I have benefited from greater inner peace as a result of psychological counseling as well as spiritual practices. I still have the experience of stress and conflicts in my life, but I have a different perception about the meaning of people's behavior and my suffering is considerably less. I consider myself a work-in-progress, enjoying the fruits of the work done so far. The periodic peaceful view from a "plateau" (between stressors) makes it easier to do the work of the next part of the "mountain climb" towards the summit of Unconditional Peace. Do you think such a summit exists? I think so. But regardless of whether I reach it in this lifetime or not, it is clear to me that my motivation to move in that direction is an ironclad commitment on my part.

What do we imagine a life of non-stop inner peace would look like? Would it be boring? Creative? Stupid? Blissful? How much peace could we accept, contain, and express?

I think most of us have a fear of *too much* peace, *too much* love, and *too much* joy. Sound crazy? Do any of the following thoughts seem like good reasons to avoid peace?

*If I were peaceful all the time, my life would be boring.*

*If I were unconditionally loving, people would expect or demand too much of me.*

*If I were joyful all the time, I'd look like an idiot.*

Such statements reflect ego defenses, since the ego's investment in conflict and drama is threatened by peace. I am sure that peaceful people can be active, creative, assertive, and intelligent.

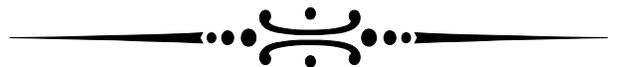
### PEACE EXPERTS

I remember a pivotal event in the midst of a huge drama with a co-worker about 25 years ago. During a meeting with a high-level supervisor, I found myself in awe of this woman's peaceful demeanor while discussing the issues in which I was embroiled. In that moment I had a strong desire to acquire the peace that I believed she had. It was my prayer of the moment, desiring with all my heart and mind to achieve a state that would transcend the pettiness of my workplace situation. There is an expression that describes the result of my prayer – I've achieved progress, not perfection. I am truly grateful for the progress that I experience (and so are some of my co-workers).

Over the years I have had the great blessing of connecting with people who have shared their knowledge and experience from which I learned much. Any person can be a "Peace Expert" when they help another to deepen their experience of inner peace. They don't have to be at peace all the time, but have access to the tools that work and know how to share them.

It gives me great joy to continue to share with you.

Your fellow traveler, *Rev. Jill*



*Each one has to find his peace from within. And peace to be real must be unaffected by outside circumstances.*

*~ Mahatma Gandhi*

# Steps Toward Inner Peace

By Peace Pilgrim

In my early life I made two very important discoveries. In the first place I discovered that making money was easy. And in the second place I discovered that making money and spending it foolishly was completely meaningless. I knew that this was not what I was here for, but at that time (this was many years ago), I didn't know exactly what I *was* here for. It was out of a very deep seeking for a meaningful way of life, and after having walked all one night through the woods, that I came to what I now know to be a very important psychological hump. I felt a complete willingness, without any reservations, to give my life, to dedicate my life to service. I tell you, it's a point of no return. After that, you can never go back to completely self-centered living.

And so I went into the second phase of my life. I began to live to *give* what I could, instead of to *get* what I could, and I entered a new and wonderful world. My life began to become meaningful. I attained the great blessing of good health; I haven't had a cold or headache since. (Most illness is psychologically induced.) From that time on, I have known that my life-work would be work for peace; that it would cover the whole peace picture – peace among nations, peace among groups, peace among individuals, and the very, very important inner peace. However, there's a great deal of difference between being willing to give your life, and actually giving your life, and for me 15 years of preparation and of inner seeking lay between.

During this time I became acquainted with what the psychologists refer to as *Ego* and *Conscience*. I began to realize that it's as though we have two selves or two natures or two wills with two different viewpoints. Because the viewpoints were so different, I felt a struggle in my life at this period between the two selves with the two viewpoints. So there were hills and valleys – lots of hills and valleys. Then in the midst of the struggle there came a wonderful mountaintop experience, and for the first time I knew what inner peace was like. I felt a oneness – oneness with all my fellow human beings, oneness with all of creation. I have never felt really separate since. I could return again and again to this wonderful mountaintop, and then I could stay there for longer and longer periods of time, and just slip out occasionally. Then came a wonderful morning when I woke up and knew that I would never have to descend again into the valley. I know that for me the struggle was over, that finally I had succeeded in giving my life, or finding inner peace. Again this is a point of no return. You can never go back into the struggle. The struggle is over now because you *will* to do the right thing, and you don't need to be pushed into it.

However, progress is not over. Great progress has taken place in this third phase of my life, but it's as though the central figure of the jigsaw puzzle of your life is complete and clear and unchanging, and around the edges other pieces keep fitting in. There is always a growing edge, but the progress is harmonious. There is a feeling of always being

surrounded by all of the good things, like love and peace and joy. It seems like a protective surrounding, and there is an unshakeableness within which takes you through any situation you may need to face.

The world may look at you and believe that you are facing great problems, but always there are the inner resources to easily overcome these problems. Nothing seems difficult. There is a calmness and a serenity and unhurriedness – no more striving or straining about anything. Life is full and life is good, but life is nevermore overcrowded. That's a very important thing I've learned: If your life is in harmony with your part in the Life Pattern, and if you are obedient to the laws which govern this universe, then your life is full and good but not overcrowded. If it is overcrowded, you are doing more than is right for you to do, more than is your job to do in the total scheme of things.

Now there is a living to give instead of to get. As you concentrate on the giving, you discover that just as you cannot receive without giving, so neither can you give without receiving – even the most wonderful things like health and happiness and inner peace. There is a feeling of *endless energy* – it just never runs out; it seems to be as endless as air. You just seem to be plugged into the source of universal energy.

You are now in control of your life. You see, the ego is never in control. The ego is controlled by wishes for comfort and convenience on the part of the body, by demands of the mind, and by outbursts of the emotions. But the higher nature controls the body and the mind and the emotions. I can say to my body, "Lie down there on that cement floor and go to sleep," and it obeys. I can say to my mind, "Shut out everything else and concentrate on this job before you," and it's obedient. I can say to my emotions, "Be still, even in the face of this terrible situation," and they are still. It's a different way of living. The philosopher Thoreau wrote: *If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps he hears a different drummer.* And now you are following a different drummer – the higher nature instead of the lower.

It was only at this time, in 1953, that I felt guided or called or motivated to begin my pilgrimage for peace in the world – a journey undertaken traditionally. The tradition of pilgrimage is a journey undertaken on foot and on faith, prayerfully and as an opportunity to contact people. I wear a lettered tunic in order to contact people. It says 'PEACE PILGRIM' on the front. I feel that's my name now – it emphasizes my mission instead of me. And on the back it says '25,000 MILES ON FOOT FOR PEACE.' The purpose of the tunic is merely to make contacts for me. Constantly as I walk along the highways and through the cities, people approach me and I have a chance to talk with them about peace.

I have walked 25,000 as a penniless pilgrim. I own only what I wear and what I carry in my small pockets. I belong to no organization. I have said that I will walk until given shelter and fast until given food, remaining a wanderer until mankind has learned the way of peace. And I can truthfully

tell you that without ever asking for anything, I have been supplied with everything needed for my journey, which shows you how *good* people really are.

With me I carry always my peace message: *This is the way of peace: Overcome evil with good, falsehood with truth, and hatred with love.* There is nothing new about this message, except the practice of it. And the practice of it is required not only in the international situation but also in the personal situation. I believe that the situation in the world is a reflection of our own immaturity. If we were mature, harmonious people, war would be no problem whatever – it would be impossible.

All of us can work for peace. We can work right where we are, right within ourselves, because the more peace we have within our own lives, the more we can reflect into the outer situation. In fact, I believe that the wish to *survive* will push us into some kind of uneasy world peace, which will then need to be supported by a great inner awakening if it is to endure. I believe we entered a new age when we discovered nuclear energy, and that this new age calls for a new renaissance to lift us to a higher level of understanding so that we will be able to cope with the problems of this new age. So, primarily my subject is peace within ourselves as a step toward peace in our world.

*Excerpt from "Steps Toward Inner Peace," a booklet available from Friends of Peace Pilgrim. Peace Pilgrim (1908-1981) walked more than 25,000 from 1953 to 1981 across this country to spread her message of peace. She talked with people on dusty roads and city streets, to church, college, civic groups, on TV and radio, discussing peace within and without. She believed that world peace would come when enough people attain inner peace. Her work is continued by many, including Friends of Peace Pilgrim, 7350 Dorado Canyon Rd, Somerset, CA 95684 phone:(530) 620-0333 www.peacepilgrim.org*

### **A Gathering with David Hoffmeister**

**Come join us for a gathering and discussion with spiritual teacher and friend David Hoffmeister. The Inner Peace that David embodies is a gift that he shares all over the world. Come to Northeast Philadelphia to share in this opportunity to ask questions and learn from this gentle and loving man.**

**Sunday, October 1, 2006  
7:00 pm – 9:00 pm  
Holy Innocents St. Paul's Episcopal Church  
7001 Torresdale Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA 19135  
(near Cottman Avenue exit of I-95)**

**Call Jill Carel at 215-742-0552 to register.**

**Freewill donations will be accepted to support David's continued work.**

## **Peace Pilgrim Song by Jody Kessler**

*(Chorus sung between verses)  
Step by step, one mile at a time  
Seattle to Atlanta, New York to Anaheim \*  
State by state and town by town,  
She'd walk across America  
Till they lay those weapons down*

No one knew just what her age was  
but her hair was silver grey  
If you asked her what her name was  
"Peace Pilgrim," she would say  
Townsppeople gathered 'round her as she talked  
about her mission  
in churches, schools, on street corners  
wherever folks would listen

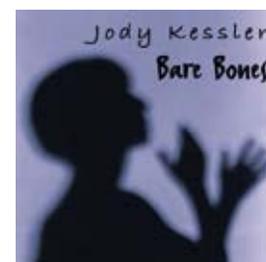
A bed of forest leaves, a canopy of stars  
so simple were her needs  
though she journeyed far  
She carried no possessions but a toothbrush and a comb  
With the love of God surrounding her, everywhere was home

She fasted until given food  
walked 'til given shelter  
touched the hearts and changed the lives  
of everyone who met her  
In the days of Joe McCarthy  
and the Korean War  
Cuban missiles, Vietnam, and El Salvador  
She said, I'll remain a pilgrim till all fighting will cease  
twenty-five thousand miles I shall walk for peace

\*2<sup>nd</sup> chorus) Texas to Montana, Utah to Caroline

\*3<sup>rd</sup> chorus) Across the Mississippi, and the Mason-Dixon line

*You can listen to the entire song on the Peace Pilgrim website: [www.peacepilgrim.org](http://www.peacepilgrim.org) by clicking on "Friends of Peace Pilgrim," "Peace Links," "Jody Kessler." To hear other songs by Jody and order her delightful and inspirational CDs visit [www.jodykessler.com](http://www.jodykessler.com). The Peace Pilgrim Song is on "Bare Bones" and costs \$15 plus \$2 shipping.*



## Help, I'm Lost!! by Scott Kalechstein

I like to find my own way. Stopping to roll down the window to ask for direction is not something I do easily. Yet sometimes I need help... OK, *often* I need help. And *sometimes* I'm smart enough to ask for it....

Early in 2004 I stormed out of my mother's house in Brooklyn after yelling at her at the top of my lungs. In a few seconds I went from being a dormant volcano to some major erupting. The switch stunned both of us. After that we didn't talk for two years. No contact at all.

By the beginning of this year the hard feelings I was harboring had become unbearable. I'd dug my heels into a very cold, dark place, and all the forgiveness tricks and techniques I had learned over the years weren't making a difference. I couldn't seem to melt the ice around my heart with my own will.

On a freezing January morning in Ann Arbor, Michigan, I finally asked for some thawing out. I prayed for direction in how to give up this bitterness towards my mother. I told the universe that even while I didn't *feel* willing to forgive her, I wanted to *become* willing, and needed some assistance to get there. I had a good cry and, in finally admitting that I was lost and needed help, felt some relief.

An hour later when I walked into the bookstore at the Unity Church where I was about to speak, a little booklet by Marshall Rosenberg caught my eye. It was called 'Getting Past The Pain Between Us' and I decided to bring it home. That night, browsing through it, I arrived at a section that said 'Anger Towards Mother Role Play'.

As I started reading that page, the words of an unidentified male participant seemed strangely familiar. I went to the front of the book and to my amazement discovered that it contained a transcript of a workshop that took place in San Diego four years before - one that I attended and had somehow conveniently forgotten about. That section was a dialogue between Marshall and me, with him taking the role of my mother. He listened and responded to me with openness and compassionate understanding. Then he did his best to intuit and verbalize, in a way that I could hear and understand, my mother's deepest feelings and needs. Marshall was using the principals of Non-Violent Communication to translate our two very different dialects back into the root language of love.

What an intimate and glorious shock, to be led to this book the same day I got real before God, admitted my need, and asked for help. I had found our role-play helpful back then, but nowhere near as powerful and timely as I was experiencing it now. As I reviewed it, a warm, healing presence penetrated and flooded my body. Gentle tears softened the grip I had held around my grievances. I realized that I was in the midst of a miracle, and I gave thanks for so quickly experiencing the change of heart I

had prayed for that very morning.

When I got home I started a letter to my mom. With a combination of new willingness and some old trepidation, I sent the booklet to her along with the letter. This is what I wrote:

*Dear Mom,*

*This is hard for me to write. I would love it if you and I could find a way to be in each other's lives again.*

*I was hoping you would reach out to me first. A part of me has been scared to let go of my anger. I want to protect myself from further pain. I don't know if I am able or ready to take it in stride when I perceive you putting me down and being critical of me with no regards for my feelings. I'm not even sure if that is a goal I want to have. I do know that this 'not talking' is getting old and I'm ready to take a risk.*

*I'm sure we both have our reasons for letting this time pass and not picking up the phone. I can only guess that you feel similar to me.... deeply hurt, angry, and justified about not being in contact.*

*I'm very sorry I screamed at you last time we were together. I need to learn to do anger without letting it build up and taking it out on you. I regret how I vented at you with no regards for your feelings. In that moment I wanted to hurt you, to scare you in that moment, to show my fangs after so many years of feeling intimidated. Of course, none of this was deliberate, rehearsed, or conscious. I just blew up and acted out, and I apologize.*

*I miss you, Mom! I miss you caring about me and I even miss you worrying about me (once in a while). I wonder how you are and how you are doing?*

*So, I'm taking what feels like a big risk in sending you this little booklet, which contains a dialogue on page 24 between Marshall Rosenberg (founder of Non-Violent Communication) and me. It took place at a workshop Marshall was giving in San Diego in 2002, a few weeks before I would visit you in Brooklyn for Thanksgiving.*

*In the session Marshall role-played a non-defensive version of you. I was very candid with my feelings, especially my anger, in order to get my pain up and out and have it heard and understood. My intention was that in expressing and venting the anger in a therapeutic environment I wouldn't be bringing it home and dumping it on you. Some of the things I said may be hard for you to read. My hope is that you can feel how much I hurt, how much I love you, how much I want your love, caring, and respect, and how much I want to find a way of being in relationship with you without us hurting each other so deeply.*

*Mom, I want a non-violent relationship with you. I perceive that in our history together we both were violent. It was as if we were boxing. You would take frequent small, quick verbal jabs and I would hold my anger inside until I exploded with one big loud primal punch. Doing our relationship differently might require some work. Do you*

want that, too?

*I'm somewhat afraid that sending you this letter and this booklet might somehow make things worse, but hey, we are not talking right now, so how much worse can it get?*

*One day I'd like you to meet Venus, the love of my life. I would think that the two of you would really enjoy each other.*

*One day I hope we can laugh together about all this and disagree respectfully when we don't understand each other or don't see eye to eye.*

*What do you say, mother of mine?*

*With Love,  
Scott*

A week after I sent it my mother called, and we had a very touching conversation. We both expressed joy at being back in contact, along with regrets, some new insights, and meaningful amends. After a few months of lively and delightful phone chats I went east for a visit, and while it wasn't easy and smooth, it was very rewarding and heartfelt. We both had a willingness to put the past behind us and proceed with new beginnings. My mother got to meet Venus, and they had a great time getting to know each other. It was a joy to see them become instant friends.

The next time someone or something is driving me crazy, I hope to be much more quick to take my foot off the accelerator, roll down the window, admit that I'm lost, and ask for direction.

My mom and I still speak two different dialects, and probably always will. It can be hard to relate to our relatives! But I'm beginning to realize that all we are ever really saying is either 'I love you' or 'ouch'. And to that I can always relate.

*"The holiest place on earth is where an ancient hatred has become a present love."*

*– A Course in Miracles*

Scott Kalechstein serves as a singer, songwriter, speaker, humorist, recording artist, minister, and workshop leader. Visit him in cyberspace at [www.scottsongs.com](http://www.scottsongs.com).

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## “Ask the Experts” Interviews

DavidPaul and Candace Doyle, authors of *The Journey That Never Was: A Guide to hearing God's Voice regardless of one's faith, religion, or personal beliefs*, are a husband and wife team who hear the Holy Spirit as a distinct and conversational Voice. Their recent schedule has included working on a new edition of their book, traveling the country leading workshops, giving radio and TV interviews, teleconference trainings, and interviewing leading spiritual teachers about their experience accessing Inner Wisdom.

Now the interviews are posted on the Internet, available to those who missed the “live” interviews. Through the Summer of 2006 they conducted and recorded several

wonderful interviews with several spiritual teachers who practice living from Inner Peace and Wisdom. If you would like to listen to them, go to the following Internet web pages, type in your first name and email address, confirm registration, and enjoy! They average 90 minutes each.

[www.AskDavidHoffmeister.com](http://www.AskDavidHoffmeister.com)

[www.AskRobertAndMary.com](http://www.AskRobertAndMary.com)

[www.AskTomAndLindaCarpenter.com](http://www.AskTomAndLindaCarpenter.com)

[www.AskJohnNagy.com](http://www.AskJohnNagy.com)

[www.AskMarkVirkler.com](http://www.AskMarkVirkler.com)

[www.AskGaryRenard.com](http://www.AskGaryRenard.com)

If you have any questions or are interested in their empowering and enlightening trainings, contact the Doyles at [www.Rightmindedness.com](http://www.Rightmindedness.com) or call 541-488-0426.

They are happy to answer your questions.

Enjoy!

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## Giving Birth to Peace

When the world appears chaotic  
And there's drama in our life,  
Sometimes it feels there's nothing  
But just struggle, stress and strife.

Anxiety keeps on mounting  
And we fear what might yet come to be.  
The dreadful outcomes we imagine  
Don't seem to ever let us free.

It's then that we must simply stop  
Breathe deeply and remember  
That all we really need to do  
Is let go and to surrender.

The peace that we are longing for  
In the world and in our hearts  
Arises from our thoughts and words—  
The only place where it can start.

Its up to us to hold the vision  
Of what can truly come about—  
A world of peace, of joy and love  
When we surrender fear and doubt.

We each must be a vehicle  
A vessel and the fire  
That births the universal peace  
Which all the world desires.

Rev. Margo J. Ford

# Daily Word

*I experience indescribable peace  
through the spirit of God.*

Before I open my eyes to the outer world, I look within to the peace of God. From this place of inner peace, I have a vision that affirms peace in the world.

I envision a world in which spiritual seekers are nourished with divine strength. Conflicted souls learn to forgive through God's compassionate presence. Hurting hearts are healed through God's love.

I envision a world in which those who once despaired have hope and where love enfolds us all. All human beings are experiencing and expressing inner peace.

From deep within, I claim an indescribable inner peace that is mine to bask in and to share. As I send my peaceful thoughts out into the world, I envision peace reflected back to me from people near and far.

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**The mission of Agape Interfaith Ministries is to encourage, support and inspire a deepening conscious relationship with Divinity for the greater experience of wholeness, abundance, love and peace. We serve to elevate consciousness through individual and group educational activities, and community service.**