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Toward Peace

Achieving It Depends on Your Mind

By 1944, a young woman named Jill Jackson Miller had experienced plenty of tough times. Her own mother had deserted her, she'd been raised in foster homes, had sought stardom in Hollywood and even landed some minor movie roles, but her husband made her quit acting to raise their two young daughters, and then he left her.

At the age of 31, in despair, she tried to kill herself. "When I attempted suicide, I didn't succeed," she later explained, "But for the first time, I knew unconditional love—which God is.

"You are totally loved, totally accepted, just the way you are," she continued. "In that moment, I was not allowed to die, and something happened to me that's difficult to explain. I had an eternal moment of truth, in which I knew I was loved, and I knew I was here for a purpose."

That knowledge of God's love never left her. She began writing children's stories, and five years later, in 1949, married Sy Miller, a musician with Warner Bros. studios. In 1955, she was inspired to write the lyrics for a special song, and her husband wrote the melody.

That song was the one we just sang: "Let There Be Peace on Earth, and Let It Begin with Me."

Since then, millions of people have sung her song. It's been featured repeatedly at the United Nations and voices still sing its beautiful message in countless gatherings—large and small—in many countries.

Through God's intercession in her attempted suicide, Jill Jackson Miller realized that peace *does* begin with each one of us. It's a message that continues to strike a beautiful chord around the world.

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Peace is a sentiment central to all of the major religions.

For many of us, our schooling, parents, and religious faith have taught us to think of peace in terms of a lack of war and an end to strife, where people can live in harmony, without fear of conflict.

We pray for peace to prevail in faraway lands we've never visited. We pray for peace when civil disorder erupts in our own land. We pray for peace when political disputes occur within governments that threaten the well-being of citizens we've never met.

And all of this is good. We *should* pray for peace in all of these situations and more. As Jesus taught us during his Sermon on the Mount, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."

But there's another aspect of peace—one that's much more personal. We know it as peace of mind.

Jesus spoke of this kind of peace as well. When he told his disciples he would be betrayed and taken from them, he added this to reassure them:

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you.

I do not give to you as the world gives.

Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not be afraid."

This morning I want to talk to you about peace. I'll probably speak for about 20 minutes. I'm not going to build to a special conclusion. Instead, I'll be telling you the

same thing over and over, but from a number of very wise sources who all teach us the same thing—just as Jill Jackson Miller realized:

True, lasting peace must begin inside each one of us.

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We all want peace for ourselves and we want peace for our world. And this is where peace becomes complicated. A person filled with anger, turmoil, frustration, or contempt cannot bring peace to others.

Yet finding or creating peace within ourselves can be elusive.

The early 20th century philosopher and spiritual writer Ralph Waldo Trine wrote this:

“Peace lies not in the external world. It lies within one’s own soul. We may travel many different avenues in pursuit of peace. We may seek it through the channels of the bodily appetites and passions. We may seek it through all the channels of the external. We may chase for it hither and thither, but it will always be just beyond our grasp because we are searching for it where it is not.”

To be at one with God and with ourselves is to be at peace.

The spirit teacher White Eagle—who was channeled in the early 20th Century through an English woman named Grace Cooke—gives us this same powerful message. Here’s what White Eagle says:

“You long for peace. You think of peace as being goodwill towards each other, goodwill among the nations, the laying down of arms. But peace is far more than this.

“It can only be understood and realized within your heart,” White Eagle tells us. “It lies beneath all the turmoil and noise and clamor of the world, beneath feeling, beneath thought. It is found in the deep, deep silence and stillness of the soul. It is spirit: it is God.

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Among the most profound lessons the band of Spirit teachers who communicated here at New Era many years ago through Rev. Anita Rutter were several on the topic of Releasing. They taught that releasing is a powerful way to obtain peace when we're pelted by the troubles of everyday life. Surrendering to a higher power our anxieties, frustrations, angers, and disappointments creates a space within us for peace.

So, what exactly is this "peace" we can experience when we release the negativity?

A good description comes from David Hawkins, a leading psychiatrist, consciousness researcher, and spiritual lecturer who crossed over in 2012. In his book *Letting Go*, he wrote this:

"In peace, there is no longer any conflict. There is a total absence of negativity, and an all-encompassing lovingness that is experienced as serenity, tranquility, timelessness, completion, fulfillment, stillness, and contentment.

"There is inner quiet and light, a feeling of oneness, unity and total freedom. The peace is imperturbable. Actions become effortless, spontaneous, harmonious, and loving in their effect.

"There is a shift of perception of the universe and of our relationship to it. The inner Self prevails. The personal self has been transcended, with all of its feelings, beliefs, identities, and concerns. This is the ultimate state sought by all seekers, whether they are religious, humanist, or have no spiritual or philosophical identification at all."

One characteristic of peace is that if it leaves us, we won't ever forget it. As Dr. Hawkins explained: "We have all had moments of profound peace where time and the world seemed to suddenly stop, and we have come in contact with the Infinite."

In recent years a number of books about the near-death experience have appeared. Characteristically, the experiencers' lives have been transformed, and they never forget it. Their vision of the world, its significance, and their personal place in it has been changed considerably.

With guidance from Spirit, I've put together a list of eight actions each of us can do to help achieve personal peace. I'm sure we could add dozens more, but these are a good start.

Forgive

Forgiveness may be the most powerful of all steps to reach peace of mind. We often nurture bad thoughts toward people who hurt or harm us. We forget that the damage was done to us once, and yet we keep perpetuating the wound. We must believe in God's justice and move on.

Pray and Meditate

Prayer and meditation are holy states of mind we can achieve while still on the earth plane. Prayer and meditation enable us to raise our vibrations so we can commune with higher spirits and the Christ consciousness so we can gain more truth. The serenity that comes from meditation is peace of mind. When we set aside time to meditate, we become calmer throughout the day. We become better instruments for peace.

Don't Regret

We waste a lot of time wondering "should I or shouldn't I?" The fact is, we can never plan enough because we can never anticipate the future. While it's good to learn from our mistakes, we must learn without brooding over the past. Whatever happened was destined to happen. It was the will of God for reasons we may never understand. In fact, Paul taught the Philippians to avoid worry and regret when he wrote: "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Be Patient

Too often we create our own problems by interfering in the lives of others. We're convinced that our way is the best way, our logic is the perfect logic, and those who do not conform to our way of thinking must be steered to the right direction—which means our direction. This attitude denies the existence of free will, individuality, and the vast expanse of God's love, for God has created each of us to be unique.

Beware of Jealousy

We've all experienced how jealousy disturbs our peace of mind. We've all had experiences where other people achieved what we wanted to do, or own what we'd love to own. But is that a reason to be jealous? We gain nothing by blaming others for our misfortune or in scorning them because of their good fortune. Jealousy does not get us anywhere, least of all in finding peace of mind.

Ralph Trine reminds us:

“Oh, the thousands of men and women all about us—wary with care, troubled and ill at ease, running here and there to find peace, weary in body, soul, and mind; going to other countries, traveling the world over, coming back, and still not finding peace. Of course they have not found peace and they never will find it in this way because they are looking for it where it is not. They are looking for it without—when they should look within. Peace is to be found only within, and unless you find it there, you will never find it at all.

Trust in the Higher Power

Every day we face things that are beyond our control. God's plan and our own karma are beyond our comprehension.

Again, White Eagle speaks to this point: “Take little notice of passing difficulties and obstacles. Keep on keeping on, steadily. There are forces that would buffet and confuse you, but you will overcome these forces by steadily looking up

toward the Christ. Surrender to divine wisdom, knowing that what is happening to you is an opportunity to grow in love, to draw close to divine love. This is the goal of your life: conscious union with God, divine love and wisdom, peace, and joy.”

Raise the Vibration

We know that vibration is throughout all of God’s creation. It surrounds us and is the substance of heaven and earth. Our ability to influence the vibration is among our greatest gifts, and is vital to achieving peace. As the hymn says about “Peace on Earth and Let it Begin with Me,” if we’re fortunate enough to experience peace of mind, we can send it out and help influence a much larger vibration.

This is from a 1978 lecture Rev. Anita Rutter channeled here at New Era from her Spirit teacher, Doctor Martin, who explained: “Those living on the earth plane cannot have the proper perspective to see how man is gaining in wisdom, gaining in strength, gaining in understanding. They cannot see these things because of the earth turmoil. Negative events are reported by your news media, and very little news is reported about positive things happening in your world. One day this will change and quiet down, and they will have time to bring forth that which is beautiful and true and good. The more the good is brought forth, the sooner the negative will drop away. For it has been said—and it is true—that ‘like attracts like.’ So when those who want peace and are willing to actively work toward peace can gather together, this will help greatly in bringing peace to your world.”

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We can see by the list of actions above that achieving peace both within ourselves and for the world in general is a matter of focus, of consciously adopting behaviors that foster peace. As I draw toward concluding this talk, I want to leave you with a powerful insight from Thich Nhat Hahn.

Thich is a Vietnamese Buddhist monk, now in his 90s and in ill health, living in exile in France. He's published more than 100 books, including the popular *Living Buddha, Living Christ* in which he discusses the shared strengths of both religions. This is a quote from his book *Peace is Every Step*:

“Every morning, when we wake up, we have twenty-four brand-new hours to live. What a precious gift! We have the capacity to live in a way that these twenty-four hours will bring peace, joy, and happiness to ourselves and others.

“Peace is present right here and now, in ourselves and in everything we do and see. The question is whether or not we are in touch with it,” Thich writes.

“We don't have to travel far away to enjoy the blue sky. We don't have to leave our city or even our neighborhood to enjoy the eyes of a beautiful child. Even the air we breathe can be a source of joy. We can smile, breathe, walk, and eat our meals in a way that allows us to be in touch with the abundance of happiness that is available. We are very good at preparing to live, but not very good at living.

“We know how to sacrifice ten years for a diploma, and we are willing to work very hard to get a job, a car, a house, and so on. But we have difficulty remembering that we are alive in the present moment, the only moment there is for us to be alive,” he adds. “Every breath we take, every step we make, can be filled with peace, joy and serenity. We need only to be awake, and alive in the present moment.”

Amen and bless you.