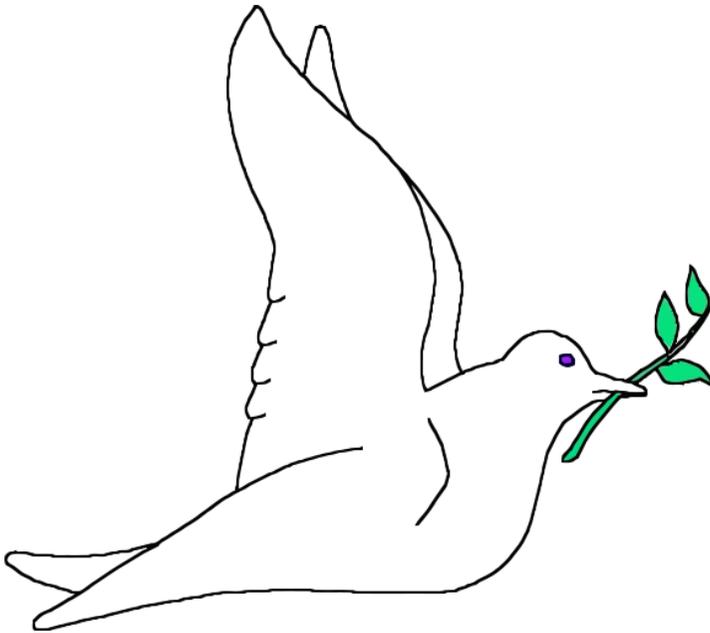


HOW TO BE A PEACEFUL PRESENCE

Finding Your Inner Peace



Andrew Kahn

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ISBN: 1492164992

ISBN-13: 978-1492164999

Dedication

This book is dedicated to my most precious wife, Lori, and to my son, Aaron.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank those who edited this writing including Christina M. Rau, who provided great input in addition to basic editing. I would also like to thank Miriam Abrahams, Melissa Boo, Stephen Frank, and Vivienne Frank, for their valuable input. Thanks to my mother and father, Barbara Kahn and Herb Kahn, for encouraging me to keep an open mind. Thanks to my brother, David Kahn, for his editorial suggestions and meaningful contributions. Finally, thanks to my wife, Lori Cohen-Kahn, who supported my efforts to the end.

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Preface

Being a peaceful presence means having inner peace. Throughout history, there have been many people who have sought inner peace and have endeavored to disclose to others the methods that they found successful. This book is written by one such person. I often use the terms “we” and “our” to acknowledge those who share the principles set forth in this writing. *The primary goal of this book is to provide the individual - YOU - with a clear and reliable path to inner peace.*

There is something real about inner peace that is guaranteed to spread. In school, children learn subjects like language, science, and mathematics. Now we need a time-tested and reliable method that leads towards inner peace and the external behavior that is a reflection of it.

These ideas are not original. These universal principles are found within all the major religions and are woven into democracies and governing systems the world over. However, obviously there is still a distance to go. It is my intention for this book to reach the broadest possible audience. Hopefully, people of all backgrounds will be able to benefit from these teachings.

Additionally, my hope is that this writing will help to bring together disconnected but potentially compatible individuals and groups who share the same goal – more internal peace. While this writing deals with inner peace, it is obvious that an increase in outer peace (peace on earth) is a natural byproduct. There is presently a level of disconnect, hate, and violence in the world that is distressing. This external discord can be greatly reduced by individuals like you and me who are willing to take on the inner

work detailed in this book. Inner peace is possible for everyone who wants it and is willing to actively cultivate it.

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Chapter One: From Darkness towards Light

I will begin with my own sad to happy story and then detail the approach I used to gain inner peace. While I had a specific issue, the same principles can be used by almost anyone who is struggling with internal turmoil. Furthermore, these principles can be implemented regardless of where you presently are on your journey.

By the time I was eight years old, familial discord caused me great shame and distress. I struggled in school. Both of my parents were liberal minded and prided themselves in not being submissive to any external religious authority. They finally decided to separate after years of clashing. This exacerbated my feelings of insecurity and inadequacy. Feeling like an outsider, I played the “class clown” in order to gain the attention I was craving. I also found temporary relief with binge eating which got more compulsory and solitary over time. I wanted to feel better, to come out from my sad isolation, but I could not control myself or my situation.

It was comforting to know that I could turn to food whenever I needed to deal with anxiety, fear, rejection, boredom, loneliness, or just for enjoyment. The food became my “Higher Power” that I used to fill the many voids in my heart. My over-dependency made me seek more food, rather than secure the appropriate “ingredients” I needed in order to have a fulfilled life: stable and loving relationships, a purpose to live for, and clear moral guidelines to develop contentment and inner peace.

Eventually, it became clear to me that the strategy I was using was not working. Life too often felt like torture. How to gain self control was a pressing question. I needed to keep my head above water. *Nearing my wit's end, I looked around for whatever was in reach that I might grab hold of as a life preserver.* My mother practiced yoga so I asked her to teach me. She also introduced me to a spiritual recovery fellowship. My father spent hours talking with me about psychology and philosophy and eventually gave me a book about meditation. I studied psychology in college and graduate school. While it seemed like a logical place to find answers regarding mental health, and also a means to earn an income, I found the answers to questions like “what is a healthy human being” to be insufficient. Ultimately, there were three significant decisions which led me toward alignment with a reliable source of strength and self control:

(1) I made a growing commitment to a support group that would eventually help me overcome my food obsession and compulsion. I was compassionately guided out of isolation and towards gaining self control with my eating and in other areas of my life. I found that only with significant commitment came consistent recovery.

(2) I left my psychology program and immersed myself in the study and practice of yoga in the beautiful Berkshire Mountains. This reinforced my physical discipline and helped me learn to quiet and focus my mind. Once my mind settled down, I was able to better align myself with solid principles like Love, service to others, and the surrendering of self-will. I was strengthening my commitment to a higher purpose.

(3) Finally, I deepened my connection to the tradition to which I was born but had little understanding of - Judaism. With the help of compassionate teachers and role models, I embraced my faith.



This elevated my thinking and got me even more passionate about my purpose: to continue to come into greater alignment with the Loving source of strength that I had learned to open up to. It became clear to me that my goal in life was to help others gain wellbeing and peace.

I moved from inner discord and lack of clarity to solid ground. There was a new sense of meaning, purpose and direction and I had a deepening sense of inner peace. *I learned that I could change internally and choose to react differently to those around me. My peace and well-being were not dependent upon others changing.*

Today, I feel free and happy. There is no teacher like experience. The best guide not only knows how to read a map but has “been there” and found his way home. I feel blessed to be where I am today, and I see it as an obligation to share what I have learned and am still learning. You, too, can move towards light and peace by making choices that work in your life. The intention of this book is to help guide you there.



Chapter Two: Love, Purpose, and Peace - Why You Have the Power to Succeed

Maybe you have had enough discord and you are tired of having your well being become a casualty of an unpredictable world and the fluctuating moods of others.

Maybe you are tired of looking outside yourself for a sense of fulfillment or wholeness: seeking the approval of others or turning to food, alcohol, or other addictive substances or behaviors which offer only temporary fixes.

Maybe you know that you are capable of great things if only you could have inner stillness and the clarity of purpose that comes from it.

Maybe you want to know your deepest self better. Some call this inner reality the soul.

The good news is that you can put the “maybes” aside. Your peace is within your control. It is not dependent upon what other people say or do, your social status, or your level of income. Our method of developing inner peace can be validated through your own experience and is consistent with the teachings of the great masters and sages of many of the world’s major religions and philosophical traditions.

Like most people, you try hard to be “in control,” of your life, but, too often, the outcome is a condition that controls you: anxiety, fear, headaches, physical tension, pain, disease, depression, insecurity. There are a very limited number of things in this world that you actually have control over. To take control over what you can —yourself, your attitude, and your inner peace— you need a simple approach that is grounded in the truth of who you are in the world.

When control is exercised merely as a means to personal gratification, to the exclusion of all else, it is called “willfulness.” This is not the control we are trying to develop. When control is exercised in an effort to bring your will into harmony with a Higher Purpose, like Love, then this alignment brings about inner peace.

Having inner peace is no mistake. It is not luck. It is a result of definite actions. You will need to get in touch with your purpose, so your energy can be channeled in the appropriate way. The correct channeling of your energy results in peace. In the same way that we cultivate a field so that it yields the desired crops, we must cultivate our inner field of consciousness to gain the desired fruit of peace and well being.



Because we are communicating to people with very different backgrounds, we must find a term that is universally acceptable and easily understood. You are probably familiar and comfortable with the concept of “Love.” *Aligning with Love not only brings you into harmony within yourself but also with others who are aligned with Love, regardless of their religion or perspective. Therefore, “Love” will be our term of choice.*

It is an ongoing process to discover why we are here and to see the truth beyond illusions. Let’s consider the difference between the illusion of Love and real Love. In everyday conversation, the word Love is casually thrown around and “I Love...” often is not about real Love, but means “I am very amused by...,” or “I get great pleasure from...” In this way the concept of Love is distorted. Here is an oft told story that helps us to understand what Love is not: Someone may say that he Loves fish. But what does he do with the fish? He cuts it, cooks it, and then eats it. *He doesn't really “Love” the fish. He enjoys the satisfaction it brings him. It would be more accurate to say that he Loves himself.* If he truly Loved the fish he would protect, feed, and try to make it comfortable.

Our concept of Love can be described as a creative goodness which transcends selfish individual aims and serves a greater goal. Love is a real, living, intelligent power that has a purpose way beyond the perpetuation of the human species. Love is the recognition of goodness and virtue in others. Love lives in the hearts of all human beings and is an inexplicable force in nature. Love is beyond the human mind’s ability to fully comprehend it.

True Love, small or large, always has a connection to a greater goal or higher purpose.

There are many ways in which Love exists and is expressed- such as the attachment parents feel for their children, the desire for another to succeed, as well as through acts of kindness. Altruism, hospitality, charity, and compassionate discipline are other expressions of Love. Love is often accompanied by efforts to protect and provide for, and efforts to help heal and repair. Love leads to patience, trust, and an enduring commitment to caring actions.

The power in the world that we call Love is both universal and intrinsic. Finding it within leads to greater selflessness and enlightenment. The purpose of this book is to help you clear away the obstructions and tap into this most powerful resource.

To achieve the kind of lasting inner peace that you want, you are going to need to develop your relationship with Love itself. You need to let it in, let it grow inside of you, and let it flow through you and into the lives of others. You, like everyone, have great potential as an instrument of Love.



Purpose

This world, from the smallest sub-atomic particle to the outer limits of the galaxies, has order. Order serves a purpose, whether or not you or I understand that purpose. Today many scientists are finding that even what looks like chaos, when looked at more closely, proves to be a necessary part of an orderly, deliberate cosmos.

Human existence is no exception. You are here for a purpose, too, whether or not you understand what that may be. When you do understand your purpose, you become a greater instrument of Love. By embracing your strengths and passions (whatever they may be) and trying to use them for good, you are on the path which leads to peace.

Recognizing that each individual has a unique purpose helps you find inner peace. To be fully open to Love, realize that we all have different strengths and weaknesses. If you do not acknowledge these differences, you are liable to become frustrated by your limitations and those of others. *What you are given comes from Love, and that which you were not given is either within your grasp or is unnecessary to complete your purpose.*

You may ask, “How do I know what my purpose is or if I am fulfilling it?” Moving towards Love means striving to share more of yourself - your perspective, gifts, talents, and skills - with an eye on bettering the lives of others.

As you progress along this path your inner stillness will grow, and thus you will be more in touch with your true purpose. Reading further will clarify this process by which we quiet down the agitated mind and are better able to listen. Once you know where you are trying to go, then the thoughts, words, and deeds that will move you there become more apparent. If you abandon your purpose, then lasting peace will drift away and you will be left trying to find substitutions that are forever inadequate.

If you can identify what brings you the greatest joy, you will most likely begin to discover your purpose. You may not be the neurosurgeon at the medical staff meeting or the mother who runs a large household along with the parent-teacher association. That is not necessary. You occupy a place in this world that no one else does. You are not here by accident. You have individual opportunities that matter. By learning to consciously attend to them, you gain greater footing on the right path. The results of your efforts are not fully in your hands and you may not see the outcome with your own eyes, but your efforts are very important. You are here to make a distinct contribution.

Defining Success

Let us define your success as being an instrument of Love. This means you are playing whatever roles you assume with energy, enthusiasm, focus, generosity, and a grateful heart. When you have the right relationship with Love, all other relationships fall in to place.

A truly successful person is a balanced person, not a person who is just successful in one area alone (like the man who is financially prosperous but is absent from his family). If you are only peaceful when closing a lucrative business deal or winning a race, then that is not a real demonstration of the mastery and alignment that we



are talking about. While it is fine to have favorite activities, we are seeking a peace and a positive inner environment that is truly mobile and flexible.

You are in this world to receive what you need in order to develop and thrive so that you can get on with the work of serving others. Your success lies beyond self-centeredness. You are not in this world to serve yourself as an end in itself; this will not work in bringing you lasting peace. Pursuing such distractions as social status, unnecessary material acquisitions, glory, fame, and sensual gratification sidetracks you from your goal. Stay focused on giving what you can, and you will avoid these time-consuming detours.

Rather than combating powerful societal forces alone, such as those promoted by the marketing and entertainment industry, many find it helpful to follow some traditional path. This may be a religion, a recovery program, or some other time-tested system. Be aware that teachers are humans, too, and a clue that you might be following the wrong leader or off track is if you notice that your actions are mostly serving your teacher's personal interests. You are also on the wrong path if you notice your inner discord increasing over time or if you have an increasing preoccupation with hate and violence. People overflowing with Love and those who have inner peace rarely create conflict around them.



Love + Pursuing your unique purpose = Growing inner peace

Who is a peaceful presence?

A peaceful presence is not just a person who has inward tranquility. A peaceful presence has a recognition of his or her purpose in the world and works to fulfill that purpose. Without some sense of this basic agenda, you cannot maintain enduring peace.

Being a peaceful presence is not a final destination. It is a way of being and a direction in which one is choosing to travel. It is relative to where you have been and to your environment: a peaceful presence in a big city will look different from one on a farm or in a war zone. A peaceful presence who just lost a job or suffered an accident may momentarily look less peaceful than a disagreeable person who has had no such problem. It is not the lack of a life challenge that defines a peaceful presence but rather how one responds to life's challenges.



We believe the following:

- 1) You can cultivate peace within.
- 2) There is a relationship between your inner peace and your self-control.
- 3) When you are in control of your mind and passions, you become relatively calm, like a flame burning in a place where no wind blows.
- 4) As you create peace within yourself, you cannot help but bring more peace into the world.
- 5) Mastering your own passions helps to subdue the anger and discord of other people in your life.
- 6) Your peace is promoted with a healthy, vital body.
- 7) It is only through harmony with your true purpose that you become an instrument of peace in the world.

You may already agree with the above beliefs, and maybe you think of yourself as peaceful. Maybe you've never thought about yourself in these terms. Here are some questions to help you assess your own standing:

Self-Assessment

- 1) Do you have a feeling of inner peace?
- 2) Do you have mostly loving thoughts of others?
- 3) Do you mostly avoid thoughts of violence, anger, rage, envy, or resentment?
- 4) Are your words and actions consistent with your thoughts?
- 5) Do you have harmonious relationships?
- 6) Do you try to avoid being pulled into physical or verbal confrontations?
- 7) Is your main goal and energy directed toward building up others?

- 8) Do you mostly avoid spending your time and energy tearing others down?
- 9) In your mind and heart, do you want Love and peace to prevail?
- 10) Do you try to defuse explosive situations?

If you answered “yes” to most of these questions you are already well along on the path to becoming a peaceful presence. If not, these questions will help get you thinking and may give you a greater sense of where you currently stand.

Our approach for aligning with Love and developing inner peace is through the discipline of thought, word, and deed. This approach is not quick or easy, but it is clear, down-to-earth, and possible.

Being a peaceful presence in the outside world

Beyond the challenges and worries involved in promoting peace within yourself, your family and community, creating peace in the larger world can be overwhelming and discouraging. Negative headline news is ever more conveniently available. People are afraid of nuclear proliferation and destruction. With weapons in the hands of beings who are less than enlightened, we have reason to worry. The good news, however, is that collectively we have the capacity to be a positive agent for peace and Love more powerful for uplifting humanity than a nuclear force is for the destruction of it.

Huge amounts of research have already been conducted on the power that can be generated from proper alignment and self-mastery. Let’s now help to support this research and development and launch this force for good. Let nothing stand in your way. With thoughts, words, and deeds, you are either moving toward peace or away from it. Move toward it.



Chapter Three: Thoughts, Words and Deeds - Transforming Through Practice

If over the years you have already practiced self-control and developed self-mastery with regard to thought, word, and deed, you have made significant progress in preparing yourself to be an instrument of Love.

Though there are exceptions, it is most difficult to control thoughts, which are subtle. Still difficult, but less so, come words, which are more recognizable. Deeds are generally the easiest to control, being the most overt of the three. Often people need to start with the most obvious — deeds — and work backwards to thoughts. This is recommended because control over actions is most likely to result in immediate tangible improvement and it will change your inner reality. Also, the results of negative actions are more difficult to undo than negative thoughts. There is no one starting place for everyone. If it is too difficult to begin in one place, then just start in another. The important thing is to begin.

For a tree to grow strong, the soil must be conducive. For you to grow into a strong peaceful presence, you must create the right environment by consciously choosing your mental, verbal, and behavioral activities. Know that effort alone, like just “suing up and showing up”, is a large part of success.

The following list shows some of the attitudes, ideals, principles, and virtues to strive for. This perennial philosophy can be found in

ancient and newer systems for living, including 12 step recovery programs:

- Cultivate hope, faith, and commitment.
- Learn to surrender willfulness and let selfishness be replaced by selfless Love.
- Develop courage and strength by embracing challenge. Be willing to change even when change is difficult.
- Make a personal commitment to live with honesty and integrity.
- Practice acceptance of who you are even as you strive to be better.
- Have the humility to receive needed support.
- Enjoy the good company of others who are trying to live and travel in the same straight forward and positive direction as you.
- Make time for inner reflection to see where you are in relation to your destination.
- Practice forgiveness of yourself and others.
- Gain the qualities of perseverance and vigilance.



- Learn what you need to do to maintain a peaceful way of being. Some call it spirituality.
- Make time for attunement; stilling the mind and tuning in to your own intuition. Silence may be your best approach to achieve this, even if it is just for a moment.
- Give help and service to others who want to take the path that you are taking. Try to create a reinforcing, self-perpetuating dynamic with such people.

As you can see we are recommending the practice of many moral principles as the way to develop lasting inner peace. There is no way around it.

You may be wondering why inner-peace should be dependent upon morality. Some people may think that the development of moral character traits is only for those who follow the formal religions. There are even some health professionals who do not see the link between immoral behavior and mental health problems. Perhaps you feel that, given your personal philosophy, you need not purify your thinking, speaking, and acting. These beliefs, however, are untrue. What is true is that you are connected to others in ways you do not see.

Like a drop of water in the ocean, you are a part of something much larger. Those who think they can secure peace while lying, cheating, stealing, or committing violence are in denial of their interdependent status and will move in the direction of confusion and despair. The temporary comfort that comes from these hurtful

behaviors is fleeting, whereas inner peace is enduring. As you refine yourself, you will discover how the notion that anyone can gain peace for himself or herself alone, while being offensive or insensitive to others, is an illusion.

Remember that no matter how you try, you can't control how others will react or what they will do with your words and deeds. This is no reason for worry because when it comes to building peace within yourself, effort equals results.

$$\begin{aligned} & \textit{Self-control} + \\ & \textit{Identifying and pursuing your purpose} \\ & = \textit{Inner peace} \end{aligned}$$

Deeds

There are many ways that our deeds can bring us closer to inner peace. We will examine some ways to channel our energies so that our actions create the desired peaceful result.

Non-attachment in deeds

The concept of “non-attachment” is tricky and easily misunderstood. Let's try to make it clear. True Love endures. Align with it and devote yourself to it and try not to get thrown off course by the many unpredictable details of life that are out of your control. If you give yourself to Love (something lasting), then you come to identify with that which is lasting. Consequently, you lose your insecurity and sense of vulnerability with regard to that which is changing. Less identified and attached with those things which are shifting, you are not as distraught when events occur which take away your things and relationships.



To be unattached means that while you care and feel pain when things don't turn out as you wish, you know that you are part of something much larger, and your heart continues to live for something beyond your finite loss and upset plans. You are thus freed from much unnecessary suffering.

Your attachment to a particular job or material thing is understandable, especially when your position or some object served you well in serving others. If it is lost, try to find a replacement so that you can serve again. As with everything else here, practicing little by little is the way.

Perform all your actions with awareness and devotion to humanity, Love, God, or some other higher principle but with no absolute attachment to the specific results. Give help with open arms when you can, whenever the opportunity arises and without keeping score. The emphasis is on action and effort, not on the specific results; for results are not completely under your control.

Non-violence

Non-violence means to do no harm and cause no injury to yourself or others physically, emotionally, or spiritually. There is a recognition that the divine spark of Love is in all human beings, and, therefore, any harm done also affects the one doing the harming. *Never resort to violence against another unless absolutely necessary.* Exceptions include when under attack and in some situations when under the threat of attack. Even if you are remotely involved in violence that you do not instigate, your inner peace will suffer repercussions.

Mahatma Gandhi said, “The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated.” Cruelty to animals cultivates cruelty in general. Suffering should be minimized. Through the diligent practice of non-violence, we can go a great distance toward cultivating inner peace and creating a compassionate world.

Non-stealing

Strive to maintain your integrity. Material possessions are less important than inner peace. Don't steal the money or belongings of others. If you are being paid to do a job between certain hours, don't use that time for your own personal tasks – that is a form of stealing, too. If you do, it will affect your peace, even if in subtle ways. It is tempting to pilfer small items from the work place and use rationalizations such as, “My employer underpays me anyway. They are such a large, moneyed business. They will never miss it. Nobody will know...” As with everything else, try to keep it simple and start with small changes. Your success will build your confidence. You might simply say to yourself, “I have what I need; that is not mine.” Additionally, when referring to an idea that you did not originate, try to credit the source. Stealing what is not yours creates a pattern. Having a clear conscience is a wonderful experience and is also habit forming.

Eating

Eating is meant to help keep us physically healthy, mentally alert, and in touch with our intuition. It can also open our heart to great joy and gratitude for what we are receiving. Eat mindfully and moderately according to your individual needs to maintain a healthy body weight. Foods that are closest to nature like non-canned, unprocessed, fresh, whole foods are best for the human body because it, too, is natural.



Eat pure, simple, nourishing, balanced foods. Eat most of your calories earlier in the day and then a light supper in the evening, at least two hours before you go to bed. Your diet should leave you feeling energetic. Try to avoid excessive or habitual use of stimulants like caffeine, tobacco, alcohol and drugs that disrupt natural cycles.

When possible eat vegetables and those things that grow directly from the earth rather than animal products. Once again, this is an invitation to experiment and see how it affects your state of being rather than an absolute statement of right and wrong. As you eat right, you create room and energy to discover new sources of pleasure and satisfaction.

Exercise

Exercise means exerting yourself physically for a sustained period of time. Having a strong, healthy, functional body that can help others in many ways is a worthy goal. Do your best to see that the foundation is solid. Even if you are already very productive using your sharp intellect, caring for your body is important. Having a healthy functional body is a visible reflection of your self-control.

Exercise helps get the metabolism working well, increases overall circulation, and helps the body release wasteful toxins. Regular exercise helps keep the body strong, flexible, and vital. There are many exercise routines that are beneficial such as swimming, walking, hiking, boating, dancing, martial arts, and yoga. Make at least one activity part of your routine 3 times a week and work towards doing it daily. Practice for a minimum of 30 minutes, if possible. If necessary, 3 ten-minute segments can also be beneficial. If you can, build up gradually to one hour. If you are

carrying around a lot of excess weight, you won't have enough energy to do all you might have done for others or to enjoy all of what life has to offer. Exercise can help.

With exercise, you will have the energy to actually do, which goes far beyond merely knowing what you should do. You will find that the state of your body has a great influence on your moods, your thinking, and your feelings.

Recreation

Reading, watching television, browsing the internet, seeing a show, attending a sporting event, going to amusement parks, visiting museums—the choice of activities is vast. Fortunately, the guideline is simple and adaptable: Do those things that create calm, steady thought waves in the mind, health for the body, and a feeling of connection with your own soul. It is fine to experiment to some degree as long as you are paying attention to and learning from the results. Try to avoid movies and videos with graphic violence and immoral behavior. These images tend to leave enduring impressions on the mind which can interfere with tranquility and negatively affect your sleep and behavior.

Nurture yourself

At least once a week treat yourself to something that really nurtures you deeply. This may be a hot bath, a massage, an exercise or yoga class, a walk on the beach- the possibilities are endless. The point is that this is something that recharges you, and leaves you feeling like you have been deeply cared for. Do not attach any guilt for your need for this time. It is essential to your well being.



Sleep and rest

Go to sleep early and rise early. When possible maintain a regular schedule, setting a usual time for bed and for waking. This pattern of working hard each day and sleeping well each night also creates a healthy foundation.

It is recommended that you also give the body a full day of rest once a week. This is a practice that millions have adopted over the ages. It creates a beneficial rhythm to the week and helps the body and mind become fully rejuvenated and reenergized. While too much rest could shift into lethargy or laziness, it is not good to be working all the time. Doing so can elevate stress levels and can lead to headaches, chronic tension, and emotional imbalance. You can do better work if you rest and recharge.

Sexuality

Intimacy can be an enjoyable, healthy, balanced part of life, and should be reserved for use with a loving partner. It can be an expression of Love and it can deepen Love, hence the expression “making Love.” Marital intimacy is something that draws Love into the home. Self-control in this area is difficult yet essential if we want peace. Sexual energy is very powerful and, in addition to procreation, when contained can be channeled for many other creative acts. It is broadly known that sexual energy, when properly channeled, fosters greater mental concentration and physical vigor. Many great leaders, athletes, and scholars will corroborate this statement.

The sexual drive can also be channeled in another direction and can take the form of lust. Lust sometimes precedes a feeling of Love but should not be confused with it. Adultery and certain other sexual behaviors are often manifestations of lust and distance

people from this life giving source. Under many circumstances, lust will oppose the growth of Love, leading away from enlightenment and peace. Other obstacles which distance a person from Love and peace are pride, anger, hate, greed, envy, and selfishness.

There are many forces that tend to lead us, men especially, toward excess. Be sure that you are being moderate in how often you have a sexual release. If you want peace, you should not steal energy from others (including sexual energy). Try to be a giver and not a taker, straight-forward and not deceptive, with regard to physical affection, passion, and sex. You do not want to devote this most potent energy toward solely selfish ends. Whether it is for pleasure or procreation, it should promote Love, health, strength and peace-not create pain, weakness, and discord.

If you practice restraint diligently in this area, in addition to feeling at peace, don't be surprised if people begin saying things like, "you look radiant." The proper control of this primal energy produces radiance, along with greater confidence, concentration, and clarity. No one who wishes to reach the goal of enduring peace, health or vitality can afford to be too casual with this most powerful life force.

Moderation

Moderation is a key to inner peace. Try to avoid excesses and extremes. Use all forms of energy wisely and also avoid wasting money and time.

If you want to discover your own attachments and addictions, look at your checkbook records and receipts. Also, take a good look at the things you say you Love. Do not just focus on how the food or drink makes you feel, but on who it helps you be in the world. For



example, if you say “I Love my sweets,” what you may really be saying is that you Love the way these things make you feel in the short term. Be aware that you also may be subconsciously saying, “I don’t care that these things make me weak and sick and less able to contribute to the lives of others.” To be free of addictions, we need to find a sustainable source of strength and fulfillment. If necessary, wage an all-out battle to find freedom from your particular addictions. This is a worthy battle.

Exercising your willpower is essential, yet you may find that to be successful in breaking old habits, you need some form of group support. Once you have clear and positive guidelines, a deeper connection to a power greater than your own strength will help you live within those boundaries. As so many have discovered, that strength is available, and the obstacles can be removed with persistence.

Purity in deeds

Pure deeds are simple and straightforward. Be willing to look carefully and honestly at what you do and the effect it has on you over time, and you will soon discover which actions create purity. You will know what to eat, drink, read, watch, listen to, as well as who has a positive impact on you and who you may want to have limited contact with. Keep the body clean and wear clean clothing, too. Be attentive to the many things that lead toward impurity, especially in the areas where you have been vulnerable in the past. This may mean limiting contact or even avoiding certain people, environments and stimuli.

If your goal is to be open to Love, growing it within, and sharing it, then be very careful about what else you are open to. It is easy

to mix up lust, excitement, and comfort with Love. If something is really bringing you Love, it will make you healthier, stronger, more independent, and more peaceful.

Kindness

Be considerate, have courtesy, and show respect, especially to those who are different from you and who have different struggles than you. Resentment, harsh judgment or intolerance of others, and even haste can interfere with kindness. Try to leave enough time to get where you are going. One of the best ways to promote Love inside is to try to extend it toward others with loving actions.

Try to see Love everywhere and act accordingly. Do not disrespect anyone - from the lost soul, to the sincere seeker, to the sage. Show respect for scriptures and religions, even though there are some people who use these very resources to foster hate and destroy life. Obviously, that behavior is absolutely counter to your aim.

Keep good company

Choose to spend your time with fellow travelers who share an interest in living in a peaceful way. The company you keep has a very powerful influence upon you. It is tempting to hang around people who are fun or witty or adventurous, but it is good to consider whether you want to go in the same direction in which these people are going. If not, you can choose again. Those with simple, straightforward values will add to, and not detract from, your progress toward inner-peace.

If you have a family member or are in a situation where you just cannot extricate yourself from the individual's negativity, you will need to find a way to set the necessary boundaries to protect your inner peace. This may mean avoiding certain conversations, limiting solo time and carefully choosing the activities that you



engage in with that person. You must always remember that even though you are connected to this person, you are a separate individual and you are walking on your own path. It is not about trying to control others. If necessary, take the attitude that “this is a sick person whom I must deal with. How can I be helpful to them?” Do not let yourself be drawn into their confusion or bitterness.

Study

Study the lives of great people or spiritual or religious texts which have withstood the test of time. Biographies of great people can fill you with inspiration. Rather than picking those who are rich and famous, seek out those who are widely respected and deeply admired for living consistently with their ideals. From these resources, you can draw the most useful lessons.

Breath awareness and control

The physiological benefits of breathing exercises have been proven using the recording of people’s blood pressure, heart rate, and brain waves. If the breath is deep and steady, your mind will be steady, your emotions more balanced, and you will have more energy at your disposal. Focusing on the breath helps ground the mind in the present moment. This gives you the ability to focus on critical matters with more effectiveness. This practice is especially helpful for those who are plagued by stress and its many debilitating symptoms.

One technique that promotes breath awareness is to focus on the sensation of breath right above the upper lip or even within the nostrils. This can be practiced in a safe and controlled environment until you feel confident that you can practice it during your daily

activities. Of course, driving, crossing the street and anything else that has potential danger should get your full attention.

If you would like to experiment with a simple practice take five minutes now to try focusing on your breathing. Close your eyes and notice the sensation of air as it enters and exits your nostrils. Each time you notice your mind wondering off, gently return to the sensation of the breath. This simple meditation on the breath done anywhere from 5 to 30 minutes each morning and/or evening can calm and steady the mind as well as increase concentration.

While there are vigorous breathing exercises for a quick energy boost and alertness, we are looking for the more balancing and calming techniques that help facilitate peace. Detailed information about these techniques can be found at www.peacefulpresence.com. You will soon discover how breathing exercises have a beneficial effect on thoughts, words and deeds. With deeper breathing comes more oxygen, which means a more steady flow of energy with which to live intentionally and consciously respond rather than instinctively react.



Words

Unlike the way animals communicate, speech is an exclusively human ability. Words express our thoughts to the world. Now you will focus on refining and properly utilizing your gift of speech which enables you to create. Truthfulness, kindness, and purity of speech will help you create what you really want for yourself and others.

Truthfulness

Truthfulness means stating the simple facts of a situation from your perspective. Use words with great care and attention. Aim to build others up and add to what is beautiful, true, and pure. Speak words with compassion and Love. Before speaking or responding ask yourself whether what you are about to say is true, kind, and necessary. If even one of these three is missing perhaps then it is best to remain silent.

Truthfulness can be hurtful, so find ways to speak the truth pleasantly, and remember that sometimes silence is the better choice. Even white lies take away from the truth. Maybe you don't want to hurt somebody's feelings or you need to keep a secret (like an upcoming surprise party). Even in those situations, do your best to tell the truth. It will give you an opportunity to be creative.

Kindness

“What wisdom can you find that is greater than kindness?”

- Jean Jacques Rousseau

Kindness shows care for the hearts of others. Don't disparage others through gossip or lies. Also, be careful not to intentionally

or unintentionally embarrass others. When introducing people, why not start by mentioning something positive about the individual? It will put everyone at ease and set the tone for the rest of the discussion.

Purity of words

This refers to simple and unembellished speech. Don't use words to create complexity and confusion that serve your own interests. Try to avoid meaningless conversations. When you waste words, that in itself says a great deal. More and more you will be consciously choosing to say that which is accurate, constructive and beneficial. It has again been found that practicing silence is a great ally as you cultivate this habit.

Don't swear if you can help it. Don't spend energy belittling what others find most meaningful. Focus instead on what is meaningful to you. Thinking before speaking works really well.

Words powerfully connect thoughts and actions. The ability to speak is part of our given ability to create. You are becoming an effective creator as you marshal the power of the spoken word. If you practice more and more, over time, you will see that others will come to listen to and respect you.



Thoughts

In this section you will focus on moving toward the mode of thinking which is most conducive to peace. This includes developing purity of thought, and cultivating humility, faith, acceptance, contentment, and gratitude. We will also focus on the need to avoid harboring ill will towards others. Letting go of certain selfish attachments along with the practice of silence, prayer, and meditation will help you reach your goal.

Purity of thought

Your ideal should be a mind that is filled with thoughts that nurture inner calm. This state of mind will help generate words and actions that are deliberate and constructive. The practice involves choosing wisely where to let the mind dwell. Focus your mind on things that are beautiful and wholesome: nature, and the beauty and Love inherent within it; music with a positive message; and ways in which you can help others. Simplify your mind to simplify your life, and simplify your life to de-clutter your mind. Monitor what your mind is fed; make conscious and carefully considered decisions when it comes to what you watch on television, listen to on the radio, read in magazines, and look at on the internet. Periodically take breaks from all of this streaming input. All of your associations have an impact on your thoughts. They can bring you forward or backward. Just as the saying goes, “you are what you eat,” what you think and come to believe play a major role in determining whom you become.

Humility

Humility is the clear and honest recognition of who you are. Standing in the way of humility are arrogance and pride. If you want to be humble, do what you can in service to others without

trying to get others to notice or to believe that you are important. Talents are often Love given gifts meant for you to share. Other people's gifts are also essential. Learn to accept your limitations and your need for support as you reach toward your potential.

Faith

Faith sets a person free from unnecessary worry and wasted energy. While some fears are healthy and useful, there are also fears that are simply a waste of energy. It is these fears that need to be replaced by faith. Strive to see that Love is an intelligence, power and purpose greater than you and me, and make your best effort to tap into it. Whatever name you call your belief (Love, God, Reality) and however you choose to understand and relate to it, nurture your faith and trust. Having faith and trust in yourself is very important too, but without also having faith in something greater than yourself, lasting inner peace is not possible. This is because when we rely only on our own intelligence and willpower we inevitably end up in the grip of fear, doubt, and insecurity. We intuitively know that we need something more, and if we don't believe that anything greater will help us, we experience the contracting emotion of fear.

Acceptance

One of the best ways to build Love in the world is to Love and to accept yourself. Here is a prayer that expresses this principle well:



God grant me the Serenity to
Accept the things I cannot change
Courage to change the things I can and
Wisdom to know the difference.
Patience with the changes that take time
Gratitude for all that I have
Tolerance for those with different struggles and
The Strength to get up and try again,
One day at a time.¹

In order to cultivate acceptance, you will need to maintain perspective by attuning yourself to the circle of life. We live with seasons and cycles: birth, growth, and death are reality. Even untimely losses can be met with strength when you appreciate the impermanence of the physical and the immortality of Love. Obstacles to acceptance are expectations and attachments to having things your way alone and an unwillingness to let go. As you come to a place of acceptance of life on life's terms, serenity, courage, and wisdom will be yours.

¹ Note: The above is not the version written by Reinhold Niebuhr but the 12-step movement's extension of his first four lines. They added the last five lines.

Contentment

Contentment is a state of mind and heart. To paraphrase a wise Jewish teaching: *Who is rich? One who is happy with what he has.* Another way that this has been said is that “happiness is not in getting what you want but in wanting what you have.” As much as possible, reduce your wants so that they are the same as your needs.

Perhaps the opposite of being content is spending mental energy in the discord of jealousy or envy. Unfortunately, there is a very sophisticated advertising industry whose aim to get you to feel that you need something new in order to be content. (“Get the latest cell phone or the newest car model - and then you will be happy!”) Though our culture has been greatly influenced by this industry, you are now developing the insight to see your *real needs*.

Gratitude

When the mind is focused on what it is grateful for, it helps lead the heart to a state of openness. Gratitude also leaves you with a positive and receptive disposition toward others. Gratitude for what one has is a key to serenity and peace. Gratitude helps us to abolish envy, resentment and anger and it leads to joy. Gratitude is a mental condition that creates openness to all that is good.

Recognize that what gives you your deepest joy is actually a gift from Love (or God): your children and/or spouse, your friends, the strength that allows you to achieve, and all of your accomplishments. Appreciate the miracle of birth, all living creatures and nature. If you can acknowledge these gifts, you will move toward gratitude.



Do no harm

Do not wish harm to others, even if they have wronged you.

Doing no harm means not causing mental, emotional, or physical pain or distress to yourself and others. It is tempting to focus on resentment at times, but don't harbor ill will. Resentment is like taking in and holding poison in your own body.

Each night, let go of anger and resentment. Journaling before bed about things you did well and things you can do better the next day can help you notice when you are getting off track. Before going to bed, you might ask for forgiveness for those who have wronged you and that they not be punished on your behalf. Remember, this is more about your own mental purification and peace and less about what happens to anyone else. You benefit yourself by being forgiving.

Non-attachment

Your ability to think is meant to help you advance. Used correctly, your mind will help you live more fully on many levels. The tranquil mind is ever so powerful and can enable you to see better options, make better choices, and let go of deleterious preoccupations which interfere with your ability to create a meaningful and satisfying life.

Think of yourself as working for a higher purpose. Give help with open arms and without keeping mental score when the opportunity arises.

You sometimes have fixed expectations of people, places, and things. Often these expectations are not met. Thus, by virtue of your own attachment to these expectations, you create pain and

suffering for yourself. How often do you get the praise you feel you deserve (i.e. the praise you “expect”)? Practicing non-attachment in thought means that you consciously choose not to dwell on unmet expectations, past disappointments and the overreaching, destructive need to be in control.

To be free and peaceful, focus on giving rather than on securing and holding on. In a variation of a poem often attributed to Mother Theresa, an ideal attitude is clarified as we are reminded not to be sidetracked from seeking the higher ground of Love (or God) by the limitations of others:²

It's Between You And God

People are often unreasonable,
illogical, and self-centered;
forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse
you of selfish ulterior motives;
be kind anyway.

If you are successful, you will win some
false friends and some true enemies;
succeed anyway.

² Note: The original poem upon which this version is likely based is called, “The Paradoxical Commandments,” written by Kent M. Keith of Harvard in 1968 as part of a booklet for student leaders.



If you are honest and frank,
people may cheat you;
be honest and frank anyway.

What you spend years building,
someone could destroy overnight;
build anyway.

The good you do today, people will
often forget tomorrow;
do good anyway.

Give the world the best you have,
and it may never be enough;
give the world the best you got anyway.

You see, in the final analysis,
it is between you and God.

It was never between you and them
anyway.

Silent prayer and meditation

Try to understand that “prayer” is really a way of focusing the mind and helping you to tap into powers beyond yourself. Meditation helps quiet down the chatter and opens you to a deeper understanding of yourself and your place in the larger universe.

When you are practicing meditation, you are generally focusing on something and then returning to that focus each time that you notice that your mind has wandered off. There are many forms of

meditation which include a mental focus: concentration on the breath, a word or phrase, a candle flame, sounds, pictures. This practice leads to inner focus and quiet, and an ability to connect with a deeper part of yourself, including the divine spark of Love within. (Please see the breathing meditation exercise at the end of the “deeds” section above.)

Here is a simple sitting or walking meditation exercise using the repetition of a phrase which helps settle the mind and create more receptivity. Try using the phrase, “I am peace.” First say it out loud for about one minute, then as a whisper for about one minute, and then say it only to yourself without any sound for another minute. Next, go back to the whisper, say it out loud again, as a whisper, and end after a moment of silent repetition. Stay with this for 7 minutes or more and notice what changes.

Silence

Silence is a gift. Learn to become comfortable in silence. Almost nothing acts as a better antidote for our loud, multi-media driven, anxious, and fearful world. Start with small periods of silence and gradually build up. If you need activity with your silence, you can experiment walking silently in nature, eating in silence, or working in silence.

Don't get discouraged. Nobody is perfect. Just try your best. By and by, as you practice, you will see more deeply into yourself, past the superficial disturbances. You will become more aware and sensitive, and will develop the ability to fill your mind with positive thoughts.



Chapter Four: Keep Practicing - A Lifelong Journey

Perhaps you are wondering how you can apply these teachings given your present real life circumstances: children to tend to, toxic bosses, a hostile work environment, a long commute, etc. The frustrations and challenges get in your way. “What can I do now,” you ask. Here is short to-do list to help get you started on the path towards inner peace:

- (1) Remember to breathe deeply during the day. Try to wake up just 5 minutes earlier to sit and silently practice the breath meditation set forth in chapter three. If you can’t do this first thing in the morning, any time during the day will do.
- (2) At the end of this time focus for a moment on your purpose. Perhaps the most important thing you do today is to be loving to someone who needs you.
- (3) Before moving on into your day, pick one or two essential tasks to focus on accomplishing that day.
- (4) When with others, try not to be drawn into gossip or purposeless chit chat. Instead, spend your time and energy doing what you need to do with your full attention and energy.
- (5) Don’t dwell on how your efforts are unappreciated but instead remember that your virtue will grow as you do the right thing even when no one is looking or seems to care.

(6) Recognize your limitations even if those who depend on you do not and be brave enough to remove yourself from situations that are causing you too much inner strife and threatening to compromise your integrity.

(7) Treat yourself to a 30 minute nurturing activity or an exercise routine. You deserve it and need it in order to continue to be a source of strength for others.

(8) Be aware of what you are eating, watching on television, and who you are becoming in this world. Acknowledge and Love yourself for the good things you are doing and for the person you are trying to become.

(9) Have faith that Love (your Higher Power or God) will see you through.

Hopefully we have given enough information to help you recognize whether your current path brings peace or not. There are so many approaches that can lead to your goal. If you already belong to a peace-loving religious faith, or are following a tested spiritual path like a 12-step program, we encourage you to deepen your engagement with that group. If you are inclined toward the teachings of yoga, learn about the eight-limbed path and practice the disciplines suggested. We definitely encourage the consistent practice of meditation for all seeking peace and the direct knowledge that comes with it.

Here are three essentials which lead toward success: *Practice, practice, practice!*

Practice... when within or outside yourself you see failure and deficiency.



Practice... when you find inner or outer demonstrations of success and mastery.

Practice... when you feel like you are going nowhere.

Practice leads to success.



Summary and Conclusion

Can a peaceful presence be certified as such? How does one know if he or she is there? Don't focus on the "finish line." The focus should be on continuing to progress on the chosen path. While there may not be any earthly authority who can give you a grade, your efforts are assured to bring the fruits of reward.

Very powerful instincts that are overriding your reason and their original purpose stand in the way of your having inner peace. While to a degree they are necessary for your survival, these overpowering impulses too often work to your detriment as they dictate your thinking, speaking, and acting.

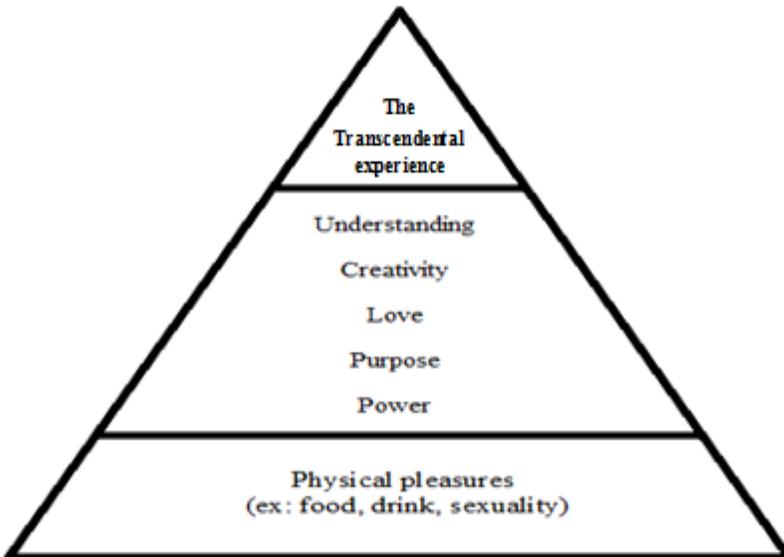
The wise have said, "You are both the rider and the horse." The rider is the soul, the spark of Love or God within. The horse is the body, the animal instinct which, in human terms, has been called selfish desire or even evil inclination. The goal is to have the soul be in charge of the body, in charge of the animal within you.

The forces of "good" versus "evil" exist in all of us at all times. You have the ability to control the animal inside of you that wants to run wild. As a general rule, the horse should not run wild. Unbridled and undisciplined "freedom" does not create enduring inner peace. Humans are different from animals. You can think and exercise self-control. You have the potential to reach a higher state if you exercise the faculties of the mind and the will that you have been given. Do you use the expression "I am only human" to justify acting like an animal? A human can choose to do better.

Control the flow and your pleasure will grow.

To align with Love you must exercise control. You will find that in addition to peace, your experience of pleasure will grow. People are pleasure seekers. Some people shy away from the kind of practices we suggest, afraid that their pleasure will be diminished. This is a common, understandable error in perception. By disciplining yourself, you will discover that you are raising up your energy level, intensifying your enjoyment, and deepening your satisfaction.

Motivation, and the corresponding level of pleasure, can be thought of as a pyramid with seven levels. (The terminology and ordering of these levels vary with different sources.) Generally speaking, when one's basic needs - food, clothing, shelter, safety - are unmet, it is impossible to aspire to higher levels of motivation. Physical pleasures lie near the foundation. Many people remain stuck at the base of the pleasure pyramid their whole lives (see figure below).





As the basic level needs are met there is greater ease and opportunities for progressively shifting upward to the higher levels. These higher level motivations (and the corresponding levels of pleasure) include power, purpose, Love, creativity, understanding, and the transcendental experience. For example, the pleasure derived from a good meal (basic level) pales in comparison to the pleasure derived from making a real difference in people's lives (power level). An even higher pleasure is that derived from true Love, as when two people form an enduring bond (Love level). Even greater still is the awe of acknowledging your small but yet essential place within a much larger reality. From such a vantage point you keep your peaceful perspective amidst the vicissitudes of life: you don't get flustered by the ups and downs of human existence. This is an example of the highest level of pleasure—the transcendental level. These higher levels of motivation/pleasure are achievable if you are diligent in your practice and patient enough.

The Love we are pointing to in this book is also like an upward moving escalator. Link up with it and you can ride all the way to the top. You will find that the higher levels are much more fulfilling and compatible with enduring peace.

Regardless of your background and in whatever state you find yourself, you are free to take the journey toward becoming a peaceful presence. While there are many influences that you cannot control, there are also many things that you can. Focus on your sphere of influence. As you exercise this control, you will inevitably discover that there is *even more* that you can exert control over than you had ever thought. You will soon discover that you can have a positive impact on your life and the lives of

others simply by disciplining and aligning your thoughts, words and deeds with Love in a conscientious, intentional manner.



Appendix

Anyone can learn how to become a peaceful presence and teach it to others. There are no barriers to full participation and you don't need any external authority to initiate you.

If you wish to learn more from us about becoming a peaceful presence:

- **Send an email to andrewkahn@peacefulpresence.com**
Feel free to ask questions or inquire about our consulting services, lectures, and workshops. The more involved you become, the more this present wave will grow in size and power.
- **Visit [www. peacefulpresence.com](http://www.peacefulpresence.com)**
To see our schedule of classes, workshops and other offerings visit our website. Our growing list of resources includes:
 - 1) Prayers, meditations and quotes from various traditions, scholars, and great leaders that you may find helpful in your quest to be a peaceful presence
 - 2) Suggested written material, audio, and video for continued learning
 - 3) Simple guidelines for eating, meditation, and breathing techniques
- **Share the principles outlined in this book with others.**

