

Let Them!

In our last month's message, I asked you whether you would like to join me in committing to having a peaceful day as soon as you wake up each morning. Well this month, I want to say a little more about how on earth we can keep our inner peace going throughout the day when the world around us is anything but peaceful.

A good friend of mine recently told me about a book entitled *The Let Them Theory* by Mel Robbins. I have to confess I have not bought the book as it is quite expensive, but having read a bit about it, I think I get the gist of Mel Robbins' key message which is simply 'Let Them!' Someone pushes in front of you in a queue of some kind - let them save a few seconds at your expense. Someone expresses a political view that is diametrically opposed to your own - let them think and say whatever they want to think or say. Whose business is their politics anyway? Unless you are a politician trying to get their vote, who they vote for is really *their* business not yours.

Does this sound rather shocking to you? It may well do so because we now live in a culture where even saying something that is mildly offensive to some minority or other can get you into seriously hot water. These days, we are all encouraged to take offence when someone is even slightly at odds with our own values and our own view of the world.

When I was young, a man and wife could easily vote for different political parties whilst staying happily married. But these days, so many family members will not even speak to one another because they hold different political views on the hot topics of our day such as transgender rights or whether or not to support Palestine or Israel in the Middle East.

So I do know that it is not at all easy these days to let go of that strong egoic urge to erupt like Mount Vesuvius whenever someone says or does something that instantly presses our buttons. However, if we continue to over-react to the world around us day in and day out, our morning commitment to having a peaceful day is pretty meaningless.

If we are really serious about becoming Pillars of Peace in a world full of conflict and chaos, we urgently need to build up some 'mental immunity' to all the triggers in our daily life such as frighteningly bad news pouring into our mobile or laptop 24/7.

So my key question this month is: How can we all cultivate a little more mental immunity to all the dis-ease in the world around us? Well, my favourite way to do this these days is to spend some really quiet time each day, gently tuning into my wise and compassionate heart and your heart is just as wise and compassionate as mine by the way.

Doing this on a really regular basis gives me a break from being bombarded by a universal egoic thought system that is always trying to convince me that I have every right to lose my peace of mind because everyone else in this world is so crazy and their views and actions so dangerous. Resting in my heart for a short time each day also strengthens my resolve to simply say 'Let them!' whenever anyone pushes my buttons in any which way as I go through my 'peaceful' day.

Every Sunday afternoon these days, I join a guided meditation on Zoom led by the Franciscan mystic Bruce Davis who is the co-founder, with his wonderful wife Ruth, of Simple Peace Retreats in Assisi. Bruce Davis's meditations are all based around a simple but profound practice in which we connect to a well of infinite peace deep within us. Bruce insists that we can all access this deep, deep peace simply by resting in our own beautiful heart space for a while each and every day.

So why not give this wonderful practice a go this month? Just sit quietly for say 10-15 minutes as you gently do your best to let go of all your hyperactive thinking and doing by slowing down your breathing and setting your intention to rest in deep peace for a short time. Then bring your awareness to focus with a really light touch on your own heart and the beautiful space around it. Next, stay in your heart space for a while letting all distracting thoughts and bodily sensations come and go like tiny little clouds passing through an infinite blue sky.

I like to think of this practice as a way to be as natural as a little baby bird feeling so safe and secure as it returns to its warm, safe nest. I love to do this gentle practice over and over again because I always feel so much calmer and more optimistic at the end of it. I also have a sense that returning to inner peace in this way is the very best way that I can help our troubled world at the moment.

Bruce Davis calls our heart 'the doorway to our sanctuary of peace'. Once we commit to spending some time resting and restoring our well-being in the sanctuary of our own heart, we can then go out into the world and naturally bring our peaceful energy with us wherever we go and whomever we meet. As we do this, every conversation we have and everything we do will be imbued with peace as our peaceful energy flows quite effortlessly out into the world around us.

Once we are securely anchored in the unshakeable peace of our own heart (that is naturally connected to an infinite and eternal field of pure, perfect peace), we can offer our whole crazy world true peace with every breath we take without even having to think about it.

Doesn't this sound wonderful to you? It certainly does to me, although I have to tell you I have a *very* long way to go before I can do this day in and day out. However, at least I now have some hope that becoming an unshakeable pillar of peace in this world is perfectly possible.

Last October, Gloria and I went on a Simple Peace Retreat in Assisi that was led by David Nowe, an American who spent many years of his youth in an ashram led by the exceptionally powerful Indian Hindu guru Muktananda. David Nowe (also known as Brahmananda) has done some incredibly intense and advanced spiritual retreats over many, many years and his dedication to his chosen path has really paid off because he now gives off a palpable energy of deep peace and unshakeable inner strength. When we were on retreat with him, even when a hoard of noisy day trippers poured into Assisi mid-morning and began to disturb my fragile sense of inner peace, I noticed that David was completely undisturbed by the jostling crowds. I asked him about this and he confirmed to me that nothing in the external world bothered him much at all anymore.

Now on the one hand, it was a little galling to realise how far I still had to go to attain anything like the unshakeable state of inner peace and awakening that David Nowe appears to have attained. On the other hand, seeing what an incredibly strong and inspiring pillar of peace he had become, did give me hope that this extremely rare state of being in this world is perfectly attainable for all of us in the very long run.

We just need to put quite a bit effort into building up our own 'mind immunity' to all the stormy worldly waves that now constantly crash all around us. We need to keep coming home over and over again to the deep peace of our own heart until saying a really calm, strong 'Let them!' to anyone who is potentially disturbing our peace comes perfectly naturally to us. Are you ready to join with Gloria and me to give this a go in the fabulous spring month of April? I do hope you will say YES!

Peggy Foster

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