

Today is going to be my peaceful day.

I don't know if you watched any of the Buddhist monks' 23,000 mile Peace Walk from Fort Worth Texas to Washington? I stumbled across a video of the monks walking through the USA on YouTube and then got hooked on tuning into their walk virtually every day for the last few weeks of their monumental journey. On more than one occasion, I was moved to tears by the bravery, deep wisdom and extraordinary compassion of the lead monk Bikkhu Pannakara.

Bikkhu Pannakara gave many great talks along the way of the Peace Walk and each time he gave a speech, he emphasised that their incredible walk was not a peace protest, was not in any way political, and it was definitely not intended to convert anyone to Buddhism. His core message was that if we want to live in a more peaceful world, each of us has to find a way to cultivate, and then to keep, inner peace in our own mind and heart.

How do we begin to do this? Well Bikkhu Pannakara suggested that we commit to a simple practice every morning from now on. As soon as we wake up, rather than automatically reaching out for our mobile phone or for a cup of tea or coffee, we should pause, reach for a piece of paper and pen by the side of our bed, and write down the following simple sentence:

Today is going to be my peaceful day.

We should then read this sentence out loud slowly before getting on with the rest of our day.

The simple statement *Today is going to be my peaceful day*, is not a wish that everything will go our way in the next 15 hours or so. It is a statement of intention - or a decision if you like - to choose peace over irritation or to choose inner serenity over holding a grievance all day long. First and foremost we set our peaceful intention for the day. Then, whenever we mindfully notice that our mind and heart are no longer at peace, we simply pause, take one or two compassionate, soothing, deep breaths and gently remind ourselves that today is our day of peace.

I have been doing this short morning practice for a week or so now and I have to tell you I have definitely not had completely peaceful days after saying to

myself each morning, *Today is going to be my peaceful day*. In fact, on a number of days, I have completely lost my equilibrium and ended up feeling either really anxious or really annoyed with someone or something in the external world that seems to constantly push my buttons.

But the good news that I would love to share with you this month is that now whenever I lose my sense of inner peace, I usually quite quickly hear a gentle but firm inner voice saying to me, 'Don't forget you have set your intention to have a peaceful day!' Hearing that inner voice then seems to help me to renew my 'peace vow' even in the midst of worldly and personal chaos, conflict, and uncertainty.

Bikkhu Pannakara not only asks us to cultivate inner peace each and every day he also asks us to contemplate on the possibility that despite all the noise and conflict in our modern world, peace is not actually missing. It is simply waiting for enough of us to tune into it to make a real difference to our troubled world. He also emphasises that peace in our world will never be created through force or by any type of forceful, angry protest against wars or violence of any kind.

Peace has always been with us living in the depths of our being, but peace will only break out in our world when enough of us have cultivated a strong peaceful presence. As more and more of us vow to become pillars of peace or pools of serenity in the midst of so many worldly storms, our choosing peace over and over and over again will eventually change the whole collective environment for the better.

So, rather than going out to fight against all the wars and conflicts in our world, we urgently need to keep going within to cultivate a radiant and unshakeable peaceful presence. We need to keep going within to find inner peace until we finally realise that nothing outside of us, no hardship, no change, no chaos can touch the purity of our inner peace unless we let it.

Whenever someone shines a radiant, serene inner light out into the world, the darkness that surrounds them will naturally begin to dissolve away. So, each of us needs to keep choosing to extend nothing but love and peace out into the world around us day in and day out, even when faced with un-peaceful individuals or situations.

This month I am asking you to join with Bikkhu Pannakara and so many other inspiring spiritual leaders to commit to becoming a truly peaceful presence in this world. Please just set your intention every day to have a peaceful day, then mindfully and compassionately notice whenever you lose your inner peace, take a few deep relaxing breaths, and see if you can restore your inner peace within a minute or two.

However, there is a big, big caveat to this invitation. Please, please, please, whatever you do or do not do this month, do not beat yourself up if you have one, or even more than one not so peaceful March day. Remember, we are practising peace on behalf of the whole of humanity, but this means we are not there yet. We are all 'work in progress.' We are all learning from our mistakes. Moreover, our brains are biologically designed to send us warning signals whenever they perceive any kind of threat to our safety, so no wonder we 'lose it' over and over again in our highly stressful modern world.

No one is asking us to be perfectly peaceful 24/7. But I do believe that all of us who are a little bit awake in this crazy, dream world are being called to practise being peace day after day, until being a pillar of peace comes as naturally to us as breathing in and breathing out.

Wishing you a truly peaceful month!

Peggy Foster
March 2026