

PEACE – LET IT BEGIN WITH ME

As we come to the end of 2015 we have much to look back upon and much to look forward to. Our world has changed so much, really and truly. If we reflect back ten years, we can see how much is different, and also at the same time see how much remains the same. We are blessed now with the power of the internet and that has shrunk our little blue dot in the sense that more and more information is able to travel around the world in seconds. We hear so much more. We are more aware. We are tolerant and intolerant at the same time. We are compassionate and dispassionate at the same time. We love and hold fear at the same time. We are so much more, and we process more information daily than we have ever processed in our lifetime.

We are no longer in our simple bubbles, we have become one, perhaps more than any of us realize. We are now a global community and as such we are immersed in the chaos and disorder that happens outside of our bubble. We are also privy to the good things that are happening, and thus offer us hope and faith that our world is basically good.

I am struggling to ensure my words come across clear in this article, and that my thoughts are translated from my mind to the keyboard exactly as I feel. They come from deep within and are not entirely my own in the sense that they are much more than I am. It is a deep seated knowing that I am no different than any other person who resides in the community known as earth. I have fear and I know love, just like each person who lives here.

Peace starts within us. Each of us. It does not matter where you reside in our community, we are all in this together and we need to figure that out. There have been songs written for millennium that sing the praises of peace on earth, *“let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me. Let there be peace on earth.”* Yet we do not get the basic concept of how it begins with “me”.

Peace starts in our hearts and minds, individually, not outside of ourselves. We cannot go to the corner store and purchase a pound of peace, or a can of feel good. We have to be firmly rooted in our own selves. Oh, our minds will still chatter with troubled thoughts, and our emotions will not all be happy go lucky. The way to peace is to not lend our energy to those troubled thoughts and emotions. We must simply let them rise and fall like waves upon the ocean. Think of them as surface tension on a lake, the wind comes up and blows across the water, causing waves to crash upon the shore, yet if we were to dive deep down to the bottom we would find the water undisturbed. That is where we want to come from, that depth within us where peace resides.

Part of the problem is, we feel, and society sees it as such, that if we are not reacting and putting our two cents worth in, we are disconnected or don't care about the issues going on. However, nothing could be further from the truth. When we lend our energy to the surface that is bubbling and brewing, we can no longer bring peace to the world, for we do not have it to offer. What we are offering is our fears. It does not matter if we disguise them in an appearance of love, the root is fear, and we have left the calm center to ride the wave upon the surface. This is not necessarily a bad thing. For if we can recognize at some point we are surfing, we can take a deep breath and return to the deep, dive down and realize peace.

How do we dive down deep when a troubled thought or emotion rolls through us? How can we not join the herd when our fears bubble to the surface as chaos and disorder are fed to us via all media?

We can start with mindfulness. When we are mindful, we are in an active state of open attention to the present. This means that we are not trying to hide or control the troubled thoughts or emotions coming forth. Instead, we are observing them without judging them as good or bad. We are not being passive and letting life pass us by, we are living that moment and awakening to that experience. Essentially, we are discovering that side of ourselves, and shifting the vibration within us to a place of acceptance, which brings us peace.

There is more than one way to practice mindfulness, all mindfulness techniques allow the mind to refocus on the present moment. A simple technique is the sensory technique in which you engage your 5 senses.

Become aware of your body, what messages is it signaling to you? Start at your toes and work your way up, noticing any tension you feel in any part of your body and taking a few moments to relax it. Close your eyes and focus on breathing, take three deep breathes and slowly calm yourself down. With your eyes closed, notice the sounds and scents around you, and try to name them. Open your eyes slowly and notice what sights are around. Name them, touch them - name how they feel, if you wish taste them – what do they taste like? Any thoughts that come to you during this exercise, name the emotion behind it, without judgement and let it float to the surface.

Doing this simple exercise will help you to come to a center of peace. You extend your energy, not to the thoughts, but to your being. Aligning yourself with the present moment and short circuiting the “what ifs”. From this place you are able to share peace with the global community as a whole and also those around you. It brings you to a center of love and a deep knowing that the disorder and chaos are not something you can control. You are not enacting the catalysts that cause it, you are just expanding and awakening to a deeper place of acceptance and love.

“Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me.”

Namaste
Marlene

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