

**Inner Peace**

Main Line Unitarian Church, Devon, PA, Herb Seifert, January 2007

**Opening Words & Chalice Lighting:**

“The Tao person embraces the One  
And lives in peace by its pattern.  
Do not dwell on your ego,  
and you will discover your soul.  
Avoid prideful acts,  
and your work will endure.  
If you do not compete,  
no one on earth will compete against you.

Follow the ancient wisdom:  
‘Yield and Overcome.’  
True peace is achieved  
By centering  
And blending with life.”

(Tao Te Ching 22 (As found in *The Tao of Inner Peace*, by Diane Dreher)

**Check-in:** *What is most on your mind today? Share one high and one low from your life right now.*

**Focus Reading: “True Peace vs. Peace of Mind”**

At this point, it's of great importance to differentiate between peace of mind that is mainly a psychological state and deep Inner Peace. Psychologically-based peace of mind comes when we perceive we have control over our lives. Deep Inner Peace, or True Peace, is unconditional and cannot be moved by any circumstances outside of the self. Peace of mind is much more superficial and is a conditional, ego-oriented state with which we should not be satisfied. True Peace is an internal status that represents a pure, complete, whole, harmonious state of being.

No pleasure in the world will last, no goal in the world will satisfy you forever when attained, unless you find this deep peace first. With this ultimate intention of enduring peace in mind, you will be truly surprised how many times you choose options that do not result in peace.

Why is that? Because you may be still following rules, beliefs, and expectations that you have accumulated throughout the years. Such guides may promote conflict and stress, which typically creates chaos and disarray. To choose peace, you have to learn to let go of your investment in these concepts.

Peace is what you feel when all these concepts are pushed away. Keep asking yourself, ‘What would be the peaceful choice in this situation?’ If you do that, you will always be the winner.

True Peace has to be accompanied with letting go. Remember that the goal is to feel peace inside without anything in particular on the outside.”

Bob Gottfried, *Shortcut to Spirituality, Mastering the Art of Inner Peace*

**Focus Questions:**

When in your life has the concept of “Yield and Overcome” worked for you? Where do you see problems with this concept?

Can you think of a situation where letting go of control has led to a sense of deep inner peace?

What rules, beliefs, and expectations have you accumulated over the years that when followed promoted conflict and stress?

What do you need to let go of to achieve True Peace?

**Check-out/Likes and Wishes:** *Did this session meet your needs for connection and spiritual growth? Was our covenant honored?*

**Closing Words & Extinguishing Chalice:**

“Peace, it does not mean to be in a place where there is no noise, trouble or hard work. It means to be in the midst of those things and still **be calm in your heart.**”(unknown)

“Peace is not simply the absence of violence; it is the cultivation of understanding, insight and compassion, combined with action. Peace is the practice of mindfulness, the practice of being aware of our thoughts, our actions, and the consequences of our actions.”

Thich Nhat Hanh, *Creating True Peace: Engage Violence in Yourself, Your Family, Your Community, and the World*

**Inner Peace Practices**

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**Opening Words & Chalice Lighting:**

"At birth all people are soft and yielding.  
At death they are hard and stiff.  
All green plants are tender and yielding.  
At death they are brittle and dry.  
When hard and rigid,  
We consort with death.  
When soft and flexible,  
We affirm greater life."

(Tao Te Ching 76)

"Practice wu wei,  
Work without contending.  
Enjoy the mild and subtle tastes,  
Watch the actions,  
Great and small.  
And always  
Meet conflict  
With compassion."

(Tao Te Ching 63)"

(A key principle in realizing our oneness with the Tao is that of *wu-wei*, or "*non-doing*." *Wu-wei* refers to behavior that arises from a sense of oneself as connected to others and to one's environment. . . Our contemporary expression, "*going with the flow*," is a direct expression of this fundamental Taoist principle. From Taoism - **The Wu-Wei Principle, Part 4** by Ted Kardash at <http://www.jadedragon.com/archives/june98/tao.html> )

**Check-in:** *What is most on your mind today? Share one high and one low from your life right now.*

(The facilitator should briefly remind the group of confidentiality/anonymity, that this is not the time for cross conversation, etc.)

**Focus Reading:**

In Shortcut to Spirituality, Mastering the Art of Inner Peace by Bob Gottfried, he summarizes the spiritual practices discussed in the book. A partial list of these practices provides a good start for inner peace practices:

- "Face the issues you still carry from the past and let them go.
- Let go of your needs for control, attention, and approval.
- Let go of your need to be right.
- Accept yourself unconditionally.
- Accept others unconditionally and be kind to them.
- Breathe deeply
- Shake hands with the moment and accept it as it is.
- Tell the truth (facts – sensory based), not your perception of it.
- Reduce attachments.

- Strive for simplicity.
- Find joy in simple things.
- Observe.
- Slow down.
- Love.
- Laugh.
- Be peace!”

### Peace Pilgrim: Her Life and Work in Her Own Words

“To attain inner peace you must actually give your life, not just your possessions. When you at last give your life – bringing into alignment your beliefs and the way you live – then, and only then, can you begin to find inner peace.”

“Few find inner peace but this is not because they try and fail, it is because they do not try.”

“Live in the present. Do the things that need to be done. Do all the good you can each day. The future will unfold.”

### **Focus Questions:**

1. Can you think of a situation where you “met conflict with compassion”? Did it lead to inner peace?
2. Bob Gottfried lists many practices that can contribute to inner peace. Which have you tried and how have they increased your inner peace?
3. Peace Pilgrim talks about “giving your life, not just your possessions.” What does that mean to you? How has that contributed to your inner peace?

**Check-out/Likes & Wishes:** *Did this session meet your needs for connection and spiritual growth? Was our covenant honored?*

### **Closing Words & Extinguishing Chalice:**

“If we are peaceful, if we are happy,  
we can blossom like a flower,  
and everyone in our family,  
our entire society,  
will benefit from our peace.”

Thich Nhat Hanh  
in Being Peace

If you would like to explore this topic further you may want to consider the following:

- Meditation: Buddhism Meditation Introduction, Level I and Level II offered at MLUC\*
- Yoga: Prana Yoga offered at MLUC, Yoga Exercises 2/7/07\*
- Drumming: at MLUC, 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday at 7:00
- Daily readings or affirmations
- Spending time in nature
- Going on a weekend or longer retreat
- Participation in a seminar or workshop, i.e. Omega Institute

\* Check the MLUC Church calendar on the web or in What’s Happening