

Peace Begins With You

This is an excerpt from *Peace Begins With You*, a book written by Katherine Scholes and published in 1989.

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Tier 2 terms

gentle, lasting, peacemaker, conflict, natural, invented, depend, philosophies, involved, behalf

Web Version: <https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/texts/peace-begins-with-you>



This article contains a multimedia feature that is available at the web address above.

Peace

can feel warm, bright, and strong –

or calm, cool, and gentle.

It can be found in a place that is busy and loud –

and be missing in the calmest, quietest place on earth.

Peace means different things to different people,

in different places, at different times in their lives.

So . . .

What is peace?

Where does it come from?

How can you find it?

And how can you keep it?

There are some things you need just to stay alive:

food, water, a place to live,

clothes to keep warm,

help when you are ill or injured . . .

Peace is having the things you need.

Then there are things that you want,

to help make life good.

Small things . . .

like a cup of hot chocolate on a winter evening,

or a walk along an empty beach,

or a special place to be alone with your friends.

And big things . . .

like not being afraid, like having the chance to study and learn,

like knowing you are loved by family or friends.

Peace is being able to have,

or to hope for and work for,

at least some of the things you want.

Everybody is different.

They want and need different things, in different places,

at different times in their lives.

Peace is being allowed to be different –

and letting others be different from you.

Because people are different,

their needs or wants don't always fit easily together,

in the same place, at the same time . . .

Some people think only about having peace for themselves.

They don't care about what others need or want.

They try to stay inside their own peaceful place

and keep everyone else's problems outside it.

They might get away with this

for a little – or even a long – while.

But in the end, the only hope of lasting peace –

in our homes, our communities,

and all the countries of the world –

is a peace that is real for everyone.

This can only begin to happen
when more people work toward making sure others
have the things they need,
and at least some of the things they want –
when more people work toward making sure
everyone is treated fairly.

All through history, there have been peacemakers –
people who have worked for peace
by trying to make life better for others.

They have worked to have laws changed
and things shared more fairly,
so that everyone – whoever and wherever they are –
can have the chance of a good life.

Being a peacemaker often means saying “No!”

It may mean starting a conflict.

Because if you believe something is wrong, or unfair,
you may have to speak up, and you may have to act.

But there are different ways to speak and act,

and some are more likely to bring change,

with peace, than others.

Our world is full of change.

Ideas and beliefs change, ways of living change,

the natural world itself changes –

in our lifetimes,

and across whole chapters of history.

And our ideas about what we need,

and especially what we want,

change as well.

To keep up with these changes, we have invented new ways of finding and using

more and more of what our planet can give us.

Often this causes conflict

between the needs of plants and animals

and the needs or wants of people.

And too often it's people who have their way.

But all living things are part of one giant web of life.

And – in the end – they all depend on one another.

So when we think about the future,

we must think about living in peace with the land.

Caring about problems in the world,

and even having problems of your own,

doesn't mean you can't feel peace anymore.

There is a special kind of peace that lives inside you.

Some people can feel this peace

even when they are in great pain, fear, or danger.

Many different philosophies and religious faiths

teach about this "inside" peace –

and also about making peace in the world.

Peace

is not a gap between times of fighting,

or a space where nothing is happening.

Peace

is something that

lives,

grows,

spreads –

and needs to be looked after.

How to be a peacemaker:

Learn about what is happening in the world around you.

Learn about different ways of living and thinking.

Be involved in the decisions being made on your behalf by parents, teachers, counselors, politicians.

But first of all,

learn about yourself,

about why you think, believe, feel, and act as you do.

Learn how to listen

and how to see things from another point of view.

Learn how to solve problems peacefully in your own life,

because peace begins with you –

in your own backyard.

Source

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TEXT DEPENDENT QUESTIONS

1. Question

The narrator explains that peace “means different things to different people, in different places, at different times in their lives.” However, the narrator also goes on to try to describe what peace means to her. She tells what peace is at five different places in the text. What are they?

2. Question

What does the narrator think is our “only hope of lasting peace”?

3. Question

What is a peacemaker?

4. Question

How can you be a peacemaker?

TEXT DEPENDENT QUESTIONS & Answers

1. Question

The narrator explains that peace “means different things to different people, in different places, at different times in their lives.” However, the narrator also goes on to try to describe what peace means to her. She tells what peace is at five different places in the text. What are they?

Answer

Peace is having the things you need. Peace is being able to have, or to hope for and work for, at least some of the things you want. Peace is being allowed to be different—and letting others be different from you. There is a special kind of peace that lives inside you. Some people can feel this peace even when they are in great pain, fear or danger. Peace is something that lives, grows, spreads—and needs to be looked after.

2. Question

What does the narrator think is our “only hope of lasting peace”?

Answer

The narrator says the only way we can establish an ongoing peace is to secure a peace that is real for everyone in the world.

3. Question

What is a peacemaker?

Answer

A peacemaker is someone who works for peace and tries to make others’ lives better.

4. Question

How can you be a peacemaker?

Answer

See last section.