

Steps Toward Inner Peace



*Harmonious Principles
for Human Living*

by PEACE PILGRIM



**This discourse is lovingly dedicated
to all seekers by Peace Pilgrim.**

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In my early life I made two very important discoveries. In the first place I discovered that making money was easy. And in the second place I discovered that making money and spending it foolishly was completely meaningless. I knew that this was not what I was here for, but at that time (this was many years ago), I didn't know exactly what I *was* here for. It was out of a very deep seeking for a meaningful way of life, and after having walked all one night through the woods, that I came to what I now know to be a very important psychological hump. I felt a complete willingness, without any reservations, to give my life, to dedicate my life to service. I tell you, it's a point of no return. After that, you can never go back to completely self-centered living.

And so I went into the second phase of my life. I began to live to *give* what I could, instead of to *get*

what I could, and I entered a new and wonderful world. My life began to become meaningful. I attained the great blessing of good health; I haven't had a cold or headache since. (Most illness is psychologically induced.) From that time on, I have known that my life-work would be work for peace; that it would cover the whole peace picture—peace among nations, peace among groups, peace among individuals, and the very, very important inner peace. However, there's a great deal of difference between being willing to give your life, and actually giving your life, and for me, 15 years of preparation and of inner seeking lay between.

During this time I became acquainted with what the psychologists refer to as *Ego* and *Conscience*. I began to realize that it's as though we have two selves or two natures or two wills with two different viewpoints. Because the viewpoints were so different, I felt a struggle in my life at this period between the two selves with the two viewpoints. So there were hills and valleys—lots of hills and valleys. Then in the midst of the struggle there came a wonderful mountain-top experience, and for the first time I knew what inner peace was like. I felt a oneness—oneness with all my fellow human beings, oneness with all of creation. I have never really felt separate since. I could return again and again to this wonderful mountaintop, and then I could stay there for longer and longer periods of time, and just slip

out occasionally. Then came a wonderful morning when I woke up and knew that I would never have to descend again into the valley. I knew that for me the struggle was over, that finally I had succeeded in giving my life, or finding inner peace. Again this is a point of no return. You can never go back into the struggle. The struggle is over now because you *will* to do the right thing, and you don't need to be pushed into it.

However, progress is not over. Great progress has taken place in this third phase of my life, but it's as though the central figure of the jigsaw of your life is complete and clear and unchanging, and around the edges other pieces keep fitting in. There is always a growing edge, but the progress is harmonious. There is a feeling of always being surrounded by all of the good things, like love and peace and joy. It seems like a protective surrounding, and there is an unshakeableness within which takes you through any situation you may need to face.

The world may look at you and believe that you are facing great problems, but always there are the inner resources to easily overcome these problems. Nothing seems difficult. There is a calmness and a serenity and unhurriedness—no more striving or straining about anything. Life is full and life is good, but life is nevermore overcrowded. That's a very important thing I've learned: If your life is in

harmony with your part in the Life Pattern, and if you are obedient to the laws which govern this universe, then your life is full and good but not overcrowded. If it is overcrowded, you are doing more than is right for you to do, more than is your job to do in the total scheme of things.

Now there is a living to give instead of to get. As you concentrate on the giving, you discover that just as you cannot receive without giving, so neither can you give without receiving—even the most wonderful things like health and happiness and inner peace. There is a feeling of *endless energy*—it just never runs out; it seems to be as endless as air. You just seem to be plugged into the source of universal energy.

You are now in control of your life. You see, the ego is never in control. The ego is controlled by wishes for comfort and convenience on the part of the body, by demands of the mind, and by outbursts of the emotions. But the higher nature controls the body and the mind and the emotions. I can say to my body, “Lie down there on that cement floor and go to sleep,” and it obeys. I can say to my mind, “Shut out everything else and concentrate on this job before you,” and it's obedient. I can say to my emotions, “Be still, even in the face of this terrible situation,” and they are still. It's a different way of living. The philosopher Thoreau wrote: *If a man does not keep*

pace with his companions, perhaps he hears a different drummer. And now you are following a different drummer—the higher nature instead of the lower.

It was only at this time, in 1953, that I felt guided or called or motivated to begin my pilgrimage for peace in the world—a journey undertaken traditionally. The tradition of pilgrimage is a journey undertaken on foot and on faith, prayerfully as an opportunity to contact people. I wear a lettered tunic in order to contact people. It says 'PEACE PILGRIM' on the front. I feel that's my name now—it emphasizes my mission instead of me. And on the back it says '25,000 MILES ON FOOT FOR PEACE.' The purpose of the tunic is merely to make contacts for me. Constantly as I walk along the highways and through the cities, people approach me and I have a chance to talk with them about peace.

I have walked 25,000 miles as a penniless pilgrim. I own only what I wear and what I carry in my small pockets. I belong to no organization. I have said that I will walk until given shelter and fast until given food, remaining a wanderer until mankind has learned the way of peace. And I can truthfully tell you that without ever asking I have been supplied with everything needed for my journey, which shows you how *good* people really are.

With me I carry always my peace message: *This is the way of peace: Overcome evil with good, falsehood with truth, and hatred with love.* There is nothing new about this message, except the practice of it. And the practice of it is required not only in the international situation but also in the personal situation. I believe that the situation in the world is a reflection of our own immaturity. If we were mature, harmonious people, war would be no problem whatever—it would be impossible.

All of us can work for peace. We can work right where we are, right within ourselves, because the more peace we have within our own lives, the more we can reflect into the outer situation. In fact, I believe that the wish to *survive* will push us into some kind of uneasy world peace which will then need to be supported by a great inner awakening if it is to endure. I believe we entered a new age when we discovered nuclear energy, and that this new age calls for a new renaissance to lift us to a higher level of understanding so that we will be able to cope with the problems of this new age. So, primarily my subject is peace within ourselves as a step toward peace in our world.

Now, when I talk about the steps toward inner peace, I talk about them in a framework, but there's nothing arbitrary about the number of steps. They can be expanded; they can be contracted. This is just

a way of talking about the subject, but this is important: the steps toward inner peace are not taken in any certain order. The *first step* for one may be the *last step* for another. So, just take whatever steps seem easiest for you, and as you take a few steps, it will become easier for you to take a few more. In this area we really can share. None of you may feel guided to walk a pilgrimage, but in the field of finding harmony in our own lives, we can share. And I suspect that when you hear me give some of the steps toward inner peace, you will recognize them as steps that you also have taken.

In the first place I would like to mention some preparations that were required of me.

Preparations

The first preparation is a *right attitude toward life*. This means—stop being an escapist! Stop being a surface-liver who stays right on the froth of the surface. There are millions of these people, and they never find anything really worthwhile. Be willing to face life squarely and get down beneath the surface of life where the verities and realities are to be found. That's what we are doing here now.

There's the whole matter of having a meaningful attitude for the problems that life may set before you. If only you could see the whole picture, if only you

knew the whole story, you would realize that no problem ever comes to you that does not have a purpose in your life, that cannot contribute to your inner growth. When you perceive this, you will recognize problems as opportunities in disguise. If you did not face problems you would just drift through life, and you would not gain inner growth. It is through solving problems in accordance with the highest light that we have that inner growth is attained. Now, collective problems must be solved by us collectively, and no one finds inner peace who avoids doing his or her share in the solving of collective problems, like world disarmament and world peace. So let us always think about these problems together, talk about them together, and collectively work toward their solutions.

The second preparation has to do with *bringing our lives into harmony with the laws that govern this universe*. Created are not only the worlds and the beings but also the laws which govern them. Applying both in the physical realm and in the psychological realm, these laws govern human conduct. Insofar as we are able to understand and bring our lives into harmony with these laws, our lives will be in harmony. Insofar as we disobey these laws, we create difficulties for ourselves by our disobedience. We are our own worst enemies. If we are out of harmony through ignorance, we suffer somewhat; but if we *know better* and are still out of

harmony, then we suffer a great deal. I recognize that these laws are well-known and well-believed, and therefore they just need to be well-lived.

So I got busy on a very interesting project. This was *to live all the good things, I believed in*. I did not confuse myself by trying to take them all at once, but rather, if I was doing something that I knew I should not be doing, I stopped doing it, and I always made a *quick relinquishment*. You see, that's the easy way. Tapering off is long and hard. And if I was not doing something that I knew I should be doing, I got busy on that. It took the living quite a while to catch up with the believing, but of course it can, and now if I believe something, I live it. Otherwise it would be perfectly meaningless. As I lived according to the highest light that I had, I discovered that other light was given, and that I opened myself to receiving more light as I lived the light I had.

These laws are the same for all of us, and these are the things that we can study and talk about together. But there is also a third preparation that has to do with something which is unique for every human life because every one of us has a *special place in the Life Pattern*. If you do not yet know clearly where you fit, I suggest that you try seeking it in receptive silence. I used to walk amid the beauties of nature, just receptive and silent, and wonderful insights would come to me. You begin to do your part

in the Life Pattern by doing all the good things you feel motivated toward, even though they are just little good things at first. You give these priority in your life over all the superficial things that customarily clutter human lives.

There are those who know and do not do. This is very sad. I remember one day as I walked along the highway a very nice car stopped and the man said to me, "How wonderful that you are following your calling!" I replied, "I certainly think that everyone should be doing what feels right to do." He then began telling me what he felt motivated toward, and it was a good thing that needed doing. I got quite enthusiastic about it and took for granted that he was doing it. I said, "That's wonderful! How are you getting on with it?" And he answered, "Oh, I'm not doing it. That kind of work doesn't *pay* anything." And I shall never forget how desperately unhappy that man was. But you see, in this materialistic age we have such a false criterion by which to measure success. We measure it in terms of dollars, in terms of material things. But happiness and inner peace do not lie in that direction. If you know but do not do, you are a very unhappy person indeed.

There is also a fourth preparation, and it is the *simplification of life* to bring inner and outer well-being—psychological and material well-being—into harmony in your life. This was made very easy for

me. Just after I dedicated my life to service, I felt that I could no longer accept *more* than I needed while others in the world have *less* than they need. This moved me to bring my life down to need-level. I thought it would be difficult. I thought it would entail a great many hardships, but I was quite wrong. Now that I own only what I wear and what I carry in my pockets, I don't feel deprived of anything. For me, what I want and what I need are exactly the same, and you couldn't give me anything I don't need.

I discovered this great truth: unnecessary possessions are just unnecessary burdens. Now I don't mean that all our needs are the same. Yours may be much greater than mine. For instance, if you have a family, you would need the stability of a family center for your children. But I do mean that anything beyond need—and need sometimes includes things beyond the physical needs, too—anything beyond need tends to become burdensome.

There is great freedom in simplicity of living, and after I began to feel this, I found a harmony in my life between inner and outer well-being. Now there's a great deal to be said about such harmony, not only for an individual life but also for the life of a society. It's because as a world we have gotten ourselves so far out of harmony, so way off on the material side, that when we discover something like nuclear energy, we are still capable of putting it into a bomb

and using it to kill people. This is because our inner well-being lags so far behind our outer well-being. The valid research for the future is on the *inner* side, on the psychological side, so that we will be able to bring these two into balance, so we will know how to use well the outer well-being we already have.

Purifications

Then I discovered that there were some purifications required of me. The first one is such a simple thing: it is *purification of the body*. This has to do with your physical living habits. Do you eat sensibly, eating to live? I actually know people who live to eat. And do you know when to stop eating? That is a very important thing to know. Do you have sensible sleeping habits? I try to get to bed early and have plenty of hours of sleep. Do you get plenty of fresh air, sunshine, exercise and contact with nature? You'd think this might be the first area in which people would be willing to work, but from practical experience I've discovered it's often the last because it might mean getting rid of some of our bad habits, and there is nothing that we cling to more tenaciously.

The second purification I cannot stress too much because it is *purification of thought*. If you realized how powerful your thoughts are you would never

think a negative thought. They can be a powerful influence for good when they're on the positive side, and they can and do make you physically ill when they're on the negative side.

I recall a man 65 years old when I knew him who manifested symptoms of what seemed a chronic physical illness. I talked with him and I realized that there was some bitterness in his life, although I could not find it at once. He got along well with his wife and his grown children, and he got along well in his community, but the bitterness was there just the same. I found that he was harboring bitterness against his long-dead father because his father had educated his brother and not him. As soon as he was able to relinquish this bitterness, the so-called chronic illness began to fade away, and soon it was gone.

If you're harboring the slightest bitterness toward anyone, or any unkind thoughts of any sort whatever, you must get rid of them quickly. They aren't hurting anyone but you. It isn't enough just to do right things and say right things, you must also *think* right things before your life can come into harmony.

The third purification is *purification of desire*. What are the things you desire? Do you desire new clothing, or pleasures, or new household furnishings, or a new car? You can come to the point of oneness of desire just to know and do your part in

the Life Pattern. When you think about it, is there anything else as really important to desire?

There is one more purification, and that is *purification of motive*. What is your motive for whatever you may be doing? If it is pure greed or self-seeking or the wish for self-glorification, I would say, *Don't do that thing*. Don't do anything you would do with such a motive. But it isn't that easy because we tend to do things with very mixed motives, good and bad motives all mixed together. Here's a man in the business world: his motives may not be the highest, but mixed in with them are motives of caring for his family and perhaps doing some good in his community. Mixed motives!

Your motive, if you are to find inner peace, must be an outgoing motive—it must be service. It must be giving, not getting. I knew a man who was a good architect. It was obviously his right work, but he was doing it with the wrong motive. His motive was to make a lot of money and keep ahead of the Joneses. He worked himself into an illness, and it was shortly after that I met him. I got him to do little things for service. I talked to him about the joy of service and I knew that after he had experienced this, he could never go back into really self-centered living. We corresponded a bit after that. On the third year of my pilgrimage route, I walked through his town and I hardly recognized him when I stopped in to see him.

He was such a changed man! But he was still an architect. He was drawing a plan and he talked to me about it: "You see, I'm designing it this way to fit into their budget, and then I'll set it on their plot of ground to make it look nice." His motive was to be of service to the people that he drew plans for. He was a radiant and transformed person. His wife told me that his business had increased because people were now coming to him from miles around for home designs.

I've met a few people who had to change their jobs in order to change their lives, but I've met many more people who merely had to change their motive to service in order to change their lives.

Relinquishments

Now, the last part. ➤ ➤ ➤ These are the relinquishments. Once you've made the first relinquishment, you have found inner peace because it's *the relinquishment of self-will*. You can work on this by refraining from doing any not-good thing you may be motivated toward, but you never suppress it! If you are motivated to do or say a mean thing, you can always think of a good thing. You deliberately turn around and use that *same energy* to do or say a good thing instead. It works!

✧ ✧ ✧ The second relinquishment is *the relinquishment of the feeling of separateness*. We begin feeling very separate and judging everything as it relates to us, as though we were the center of the universe. Even after we know better intellectually, we still judge things that way. In reality, of course, we are all cells in the body of humanity. We are not separate from our fellow humans. The whole thing is a totality. It's only from that higher viewpoint that you can know what it is to love your neighbor as yourself. From that higher viewpoint there becomes just one realistic way to work, and that is for the good of the whole. As long as you work for your selfish little self, you're just one cell against all those other cells, and you're way out of harmony. But as soon as you begin working for the good of the whole, you find yourself in harmony with all of your fellow human beings. You see, it's the easy, harmonious way to live.

Then there is the third relinquishment, and that is *the relinquishment of all attachments*. Material things must be put into their proper place. They are there for use. It's all right to use them; that's what they're there for. But when they've outlived their usefulness be ready to relinquish them and perhaps pass them on to someone who does need them. Anything that you cannot relinquish when it has outlived its usefulness possesses you, and in this

materialistic age a great many of us are possessed by our possessions. We are not free.

There's another kind of possessiveness. *You do not possess any other human being*, no matter how closely related that other may be. No husband owns his wife; no wife owns her husband; no parents own their children. When we think we possess people there's a tendency to run their lives for them, and out of this develops an extremely inharmonious situation. Only when we realize that we do not possess them, that they must live in accordance with their own inner motivation, do we stop trying to run their lives for them, and then we discover that we are able to live in harmony with them.

Now the last: *the relinquishment of all negative feelings*. I want to mention just one negative feeling which even the nicest people still experience, and that negative feeling is *worry*. Worry is not *concern* which would motivate you to do everything possible in a situation. Worry is a useless mulling over of things we cannot change. Let me mention just one technique. Seldom do you worry about the present moment; it's usually all right. If you worry, you agonize over the past which you should have forgotten long ago, or you're apprehensive over the future which hasn't even come yet. We tend to skim right over the present time. Since this is the only moment that one can live, if you don't live it you

never really get around to living at all. If you do live this present moment, you tend not to worry. For me, every moment is a new opportunity to be of service.

One last comment about negative feelings which helped me very much at one time and has helped others. No outward thing—nothing, nobody from without—can hurt me inside, psychologically. I recognized that I could only be hurt psychologically by my own wrong actions, which I have control over; by my own wrong reactions—they are tricky but I have control over them too; or by my own inaction in some situations, like the present world situation, that needs action from me. When I recognized all this, how free I felt! And I just stopped hurting myself. Now someone could do the meanest thing to me and I would feel deep compassion for this out-of-harmony person, this psychologically sick person who is capable of doing mean things. I certainly would not hurt myself by a wrong reaction of bitterness or anger. You have complete control over whether or not you will hurt psychologically, and any time you want to, you can stop hurting yourself.

These are the steps toward inner peace that I wanted to share with you. There's nothing new about this. This is universal truth. I merely talked about these things in my own everyday words in terms of my own personal experience with them. The laws which govern this universe work for good as soon as

we obey them, and anything contrary to these laws doesn't last long. It contains within itself the seeds of its own destruction. The good in every human life always makes it possible for us to obey these laws. We do have free will about all this, and therefore how soon we obey and thereby find harmony, both within ourselves and within our world, is up to us.

—[From a KPFK radio talk, Los Angeles]

Summary

- FOUR PREPARATIONS -

1. Assume right attitudes toward life.

Stop being an escapist or a surface-liver as these attitudes can only cause inharmony in your life. Face life squarely and get down below the froth on its surface to discover its verities and realities. Solve the problems that life sets before you, and you will find that solving them contributes to your inner growth. Helping to solve collective problems contributes also to your growth, and these problems should never be avoided.

2. Live good beliefs.

The laws governing human conduct apply as rigidly as the law of gravity. Obedience to these laws pushes us toward harmony; disobedience pushes us toward inharmony. Since many of these laws are

already common belief, you can begin by putting into practice all the good things you believe. No life can be in harmony unless belief and practice are in harmony.

3. Find your place in the Life Pattern.

You have a part in the scheme of things. What that part is you can know only from within yourself. You can seek it in receptive silence. You can begin to live in accordance with it by doing all the good things you are motivated toward and giving these priority in your life over all the superficial things that customarily occupy human lives.

4. Simplify life to bring inner and outer well-being into harmony.

Unnecessary possessions are unnecessary burdens. Many lives are cluttered not only with unnecessary possessions but also with meaningless activities. Cluttered lives are out-of-harmony lives and require simplification. Wants and needs can become the same in a human life and, when this is accomplished, there will be a sense of harmony between inner and outer well-being. Such harmony is needful not only in the individual life but in the collective life too.

- FOUR PURIFICATIONS -

1. Purification of the bodily temple.

Are you free from all bad habits? In your diet do you stress the vital foods—the fruits, whole grains, vegetables and nuts? Do you get to bed early and get enough sleep? Do you get plenty of fresh air, sunshine, exercise, and contact with nature? If you can answer “Yes” to all of these questions, you have gone a long way toward purification of the bodily temple.

2. Purification of the thoughts.

It is not enough to do right things and say right things. You must also *think* right things. Positive thoughts can be powerful influences for good. Negative thoughts can make you physically ill. Be sure there is no unpeaceful situation between yourself and any other human being, for only when you have ceased to harbor unkind thoughts can you attain inner harmony.

3. Purification of the desires.

Since you are here to get yourself into harmony with the laws that govern human conduct and with your part in the scheme of things, your desires should be focused in this direction.

4. Purification of motives.

Obviously your motive should never be greed or self-seeking, or the wish for self-glorification. You

shouldn't even have the selfish motive of attaining inner peace for yourself. To be of service to your fellow humans must be your motive before your life can come into harmony.

- FOUR RELINQUISHMENTS -

1. Relinquishment of self-will.

You have, or it's as though you have, *two selves*: the lower self that usually governs you selfishly, and the higher self which stands ready to use you gloriously. You must subordinate the lower self by refraining from doing the not-good things you are motivated toward, not suppressing them but transforming them so that the higher self can take over your life.

2. Relinquishment of the feeling of separateness.

All of us, all over the world, are cells in the body of humanity. You are not separate from your fellow humans, and you cannot find harmony for yourself alone. You can only find harmony when you realize the oneness of all and work for the good of all.

3. Relinquishment of attachments.

Only when you have relinquished all attachments can you be really free. Material things are here for use, and anything you cannot relinquish when it has outlived its usefulness possesses you. You can only live in harmony with your fellow humans if you have

no feeling that you possess them, and therefore do not try to run their lives.

4. Relinquishment of all negative feelings.

Work on relinquishing negative feelings. If you live in the present moment, which is really the only moment you have to live, you will be less apt to worry. If you realize that those who do mean things are psychologically ill, your feelings of anger will turn to feelings of pity. If you recognize that all of your inner hurts are caused by your own wrong actions or your own wrong reactions or your own wrong inaction, then you will stop hurting yourself.

Thoughts

➤ We can all spend our lives going about doing good. Every time you meet a person, think of some encouraging thing to say—a kind word, a helpful suggestion, an expression of admiration. Every time you come into a situation, think of some good thing to bring—a thoughtful gift, a considerate attitude, a helping hand.

➤ There is a criterion by which you can judge whether the thoughts you are thinking and the things you are doing are right for you. That criterion is, *Have they brought you inner peace?* If they have

not, there is something wrong with them—so keep trying.

➤ If you love people enough, they will respond lovingly. If I offend people, I blame myself, for I know that if my conduct had been correct, they would not have been offended, even though they did not agree with me. “Before the tongue can speak, it must have lost the power to wound.”

➤ To those who feel depressed, I would say: Try keeping your surroundings full of beautiful music and lovely flowers. Try reading and memorizing thoughts that inspire. Try making a list of all things you have to be thankful for. If there is some good thing that you have always wanted to do, start doing it. Make a meaningful schedule for yourself and keep to that schedule.

➤ Although others may feel sorry for you, *never* feel sorry for yourself—it has a deadly effect on spiritual well-being. Recognize all problems, no matter how difficult, as opportunities for spiritual growth, and make the most of these opportunities.

➤ From all the things you read and from all the people you meet, take what is good—what your own ‘Inner Teacher’ tells you is for you—and leave the rest. For guidance and for truth, it is much better to look to the Source through your own ‘Inner Teacher’

than to look to people or books. Books and people can merely inspire you. Unless they awaken something within you, nothing worthwhile has been accomplished.

➤ No one is truly free who is still attached to material things, or to places, or to people. We must be able to use things when we need them and then relinquish them without regret when they have outlived their usefulness. We must be able to appreciate and enjoy the places where we tarry, and yet pass on without anguish when we are called elsewhere. We must be able to live in loving association with people without feeling that we possess them and must run their lives. Anything that you strive to hold captive will hold you captive, and if you desire freedom you must give freedom.

➤ The spiritual life is the real life—all else is illusion and deception. Only those who are attached to God alone are truly free. Only those who live up to the highest light they have find their lives in harmony. Those who act on their highest motivations become a power for good. It is not important that others be noticeably affected. Results should never be sought or desired. Know that every right thing you do—every word you say—every positive thought you think—has good effect.

➤ All people can be peace workers. Whenever you bring harmony into any unpeaceful situation, you contribute to the total peace picture. Insofar as you have peace in your life, you reflect it into your surroundings and into your world.

➤ That which is received from without can be compared with knowledge. It leads to a believing, which is seldom strong enough to motivate to action. That which is confirmed *from within* after it is contacted from without, or that which is directly perceived *from within* (which is my way), can be compared with wisdom. It leads to a *knowing*, and action goes right along with it.

➤ In our spiritual development we are often required to pull up roots many times and to close chapters in our lives until we are no longer attached to any material things and can love all people without any attachment to them.

➤ You cannot leave a situation without spiritual injury unless you leave it lovingly.

➤ If you want to teach people, young or old, you must start where they are—at their level of understanding. If you see that they are already beyond your level of understanding, let them teach you. Since steps toward spiritual advancement are

taken in such varied order, most of us can teach one another.

➤ Physical violence can end before we have learned the way of love, but psychological violence will continue until we do. Only outer peace can be had through law. The way to inner peace is through love.

➤ Concentrate on giving so that you may open yourself to receiving. Concentrate on living according to the light you have, so that you may open yourself to more light.

➤ Sometimes difficulties of the body come to show that the body is just a transient garment—that the reality is the indestructible essence which activates the body.

➤ After you have found inner peace, spiritual growth takes place harmoniously because you—now governed by the higher self—will to do God's will and do not need to be pushed into it.

➤ Nothing threatens those who do God's will, and God's will is love and faith. Those who feel hate and fear are out of harmony with God's will and are likely to have difficulties.

➤ All difficulties in your life have a purpose. They are pushing you toward harmony with God's will.

➤ There is *always* a way to do right!

➤ What we suffer from is *immaturity*. If we were mature people, war would be no problem—it would be impossible.

➤ Of course I trust the Law of Love! Since the universe operates in accordance with the Law of Love, how could I trust anything else?

➤ For Light I go directly to the Source of Light, not to any of the reflections. Also I make it possible for more Light to come to me by living up to the highest Light I have. You cannot mistake Light coming from the Source, for it comes with *complete understanding* so that you can explain and discuss it.

➤ Judging others will avail you nothing and injure you spiritually. Only if you can inspire others to judge themselves will anything worthwhile have been accomplished.

➤ Never think of any right effort as being fruitless—*all* right effort bears good fruit, whether we see results or not. Just concentrate on thinking and living and acting for peace, and inspiring others to do likewise, leaving results to God's hands.

➤ You cannot change anyone except yourself. After you have become an example, you can inspire others to change themselves.

➤ In a conflict situation you must be thinking of a solution which is fair to all concerned, instead of a solution which is of advantage to you. Only a solution which is fair to all concerned can be workable in the long run.

➤ Your motives must be good if your work is to have a good effect.

Questions from my Correspondence:

Q: Do you work for a living?

A: I work for my living in an unusual way. I give what I can through thoughts and words and deeds to those whose lives I touch and to humanity. In return I accept what people want to give, but I do not ask. They are blessed by their giving and I am blessed by my giving.

Q: Why don't you accept money?

A: Because I talk about spiritual truth, and spiritual truth should never be sold—those who sell it injure themselves spiritually. The money that comes in the mail—without being solicited—I do not use for myself; I use it for printing and postage. Those who attempt to buy spiritual truth are trying to get it before they are ready. In this wonderfully well-ordered universe, when they are ready, it will be given.

Q: Don't you get lonely or discouraged or tired?

A: No. When you live in constant communication with God, you cannot be lonely. When you perceive the working of God's wonderful plan and know that all good effort bears good fruit, you cannot be discouraged. When you have found inner peace, you are in contact with the source of universal energy and you cannot be tired.

Q: What can retirement mean to a person?

A: Retirement should mean, not a cessation of activity, but a change of activity with a more complete giving of your life to service. It should therefore be the most wonderful time of your life—the time when you are happily and meaningfully busy.

Q: How can I feel close to God?

A: God is Love, and whenever you reach out in loving kindness, you are expressing God. God is Truth, and whenever you seek truth, you are seeking God. God is Beauty, and whenever you touch the beauty of a flower or a sunset, you are touching God. God is the Intelligence that creates all and sustains all and binds all together and gives life to all. Yes, God is the Essence of all. So you are within God and God is within you—you could not be where God is not. Permeating all is the law of God—physical law and spiritual law. Disobey it and you feel

unhappiness—you feel separated from God. Obey it and you feel harmony—you feel close to God.

Q: What are the good things, and how do I fill my life with them?

A: Good things are of benefit to you and to others. You may get some inspiration from the outside, but in the final analysis you must know from the inside what good things you want to fill your life with. Then you can make a schedule of what you think the good life should be like, and live according to that schedule. It may include something beneficial to the body—like walking to exercise. Or something to the intellect—like meaningful reading. And something uplifting for the emotions—like good music. But most important of all, it needs to include service to others if it is to be spiritually beneficial to you.

Q: When confronted with a problem, can I do anything about it intellectually?

A: If it's a health problem, ask yourself, "Have I abused my body?" If it's a psychological problem, ask yourself, "Have I been as loving as God would want me to be?" If it's a financial problem, ask yourself, "Have I lived within my means?" What you do in the present creates the future, so use the present to create a wonderful future. Constantly through thought you are creating your inner conditions and helping to create the conditions around you. So keep your thoughts on the positive

side, think about the best that could happen, think about the good things you want to happen—think about God!

Q: How can I really live life?

A: I began to really live life when I began to look at every situation and think about how I could be of service in that situation. I learned that I should not be pushy about helping, but just willing. Often I could give a helping hand—or perhaps a loving smile or a word of cheer. I learned it is through giving that we receive the worthwhile things of life.

Q: How does an ordinary housewife and mother find what you seem to possess?

A: One who is in the family pattern (as most people are) finds inner peace in the same way that I found it. Obey God's laws, which are the same for all of us—not only the physical laws, but also the spiritual laws which govern human conduct. You might start by living all the good things you believe, as I did. Find and fit into your special place in the divine plan, which is unique for every human soul. You might try seeking in receptive silence, as I did. Being in the family pattern is not a block to spiritual growth, and in some ways it is an advantage. We grow through problem-solving, and being in the family pattern provides plenty of problems to grow on. When we enter the family pattern, we have our first outgoingness from self-centeredness to family-

centeredness. Pure love is a willingness to give without a thought of receiving anything in return, and the family pattern provides the first experience of pure love—a mother's and father's love for their baby.

Q: Will there always be pain in one's becoming more beautiful?

A: There will be pain in your spiritual growth until you will to do God's will and no longer need to be pushed into it. When you are out of harmony with God's will, problems come—their purpose is to push you into harmony. If you would willingly do God's will, you could avoid the problems.

Q: Will I ever come into a state of feeling at rest, with no more need to become?

A: When you have found inner peace, you have no more feeling of the need to become—you are content to be, which includes following your divine guidance. However, you keep on growing—but harmoniously.

Q: What is a truly religious person?

A: I would say that a truly religious person has religious attitudes: a loving attitude toward fellow human beings, an obedient attitude toward God—toward God's laws and God's guidance, and a religious attitude toward self—knowing that you are more than the self-centered nature, more than the body, and life is more than earth life.

Q: What overcomes fear?

A: I would say that religious attitudes overcome fear. If you have a loving attitude toward your fellow human beings, you will not fear them. “*Perfect love casteth out fear.*” An obedient attitude toward God will bring you into constant awareness of God's presence, and then fear is gone. When you know that you are only wearing the body, which can be destroyed—that you are *the reality* which *activates* the body and cannot be destroyed—how can you be afraid?

Excerpts from Peace Pilgrim's Progress

FOUR LETTERS: One day as I was answering my mail a woman said to me, “What can people do for peace?” I replied, “Let's see what these letters say.” The first one said, “I'm a farm housewife. Since talking with you, I've realized I should be doing something for peace—especially since I'm raising four sons. Now I am writing one letter every day to someone in our government or in the United Nations who has done something for peace, commending them to give them moral support.” The next one said, “World peace seemed a bit too big for me, but since talking with you, I have joined the Human Relations Council in my town, and I'm working on peace among groups.” The third one said, “Since talking

with you I have resolved an unpeaceful situation between myself and my sister-in-law." The last one said, "Since talking with you, I have cut out smoking." When you do something for world peace, peace among groups, peace among individuals, or your own inner peace, *you improve the total peace picture*. Whenever you bring harmony into any unpeaceful situation, you contribute to the cause of peace.

THE MOST VALUABLE THINGS: After a wonderful sojourn in the wilderness, I walk again the streets of a city which was my home awhile. It is 1:00 p.m. Hundreds of neatly-dressed human beings with pale or painted faces are hurrying in rather orderly lines to and from their places of employment. I, in my faded shirt and well-worn slacks, walk among them. The rubber soles of my soft canvas shoes move noiselessly along beside the clatter of trim, tight shoes with high heels. In the poorer section I am tolerated. In the wealthier sections some glances seem a bit startled, and some are disdainful. On both sides of us as we walk are displayed the things which we can buy if we are willing to stay in the orderly lines, day after day, year after year. Some of the things are more or less useful, many are utter trash—some have a claim to beauty, many are garishly ugly. Thousands of things are displayed—and yet the most valuable things are missing. Freedom is not displayed, nor health, nor happiness,

nor peace of mind. To obtain these, my friends, you too may need to escape from the orderly lines and risk being looked upon disdainfully.

NEGATIVE vs. POSITIVE: I have chosen the positive approach—instead of stressing the bad things which I am against, I stress the good things which I am for. Those who choose the negative approach dwell on what is wrong, resorting to judgment and criticism, and sometimes even to name-calling. Naturally, the negative approach has a detrimental effect on the person who uses it, while the positive approach has a good effect. When evil is attacked, it mobilizes, although it may have been weak and unorganized before, and therefore the attack gives it validity and strength. When there is no attack but instead good influences are brought to bear upon the situation, not only does the evil tend to fade away, but the evil-doer tends to be transformed. The positive approach inspires—the negative approach makes angry. When you make people angry they act in accordance with their baser instincts, often violently and irrationally. When you inspire people they act in accordance with their higher instincts, sensibly and rationally. Anger is transient, whereas inspiration sometimes has a lifelong effect.

WORKING FOR PEACE: A few really dedicated people can offset the ill effects of masses of out-of-

harmony people, so we who work for peace must not falter. We must continue to pray for peace and to act for peace in whatever way we can. We must continue to speak for peace and to live the way of peace; to inspire others, we must continue to think of peace and to know it is possible. What we dwell upon we help to bring into manifestation. One little person, giving all of her time to peace, makes news. Many people, giving some of their time, can make history.

BLESSED are they who give without expecting even thanks in return, for they shall be abundantly rewarded.

BLESSED are they who translate every good thing they know into action—ever higher truths shall be revealed to them.

BLESSED are they who do God's will without asking to see results, for great shall be their recompense.

BLESSED are they who love and trust their fellow human beings, for they shall reach the good in people and receive a loving response.

BLESSED are they who have seen reality, for they know that not the garment of clay but that which activates the garment of clay is real and indestructible.

BLESSED are they who see the change we call death as a liberation from the limitations of this

earth-life, for they shall rejoice with their loved ones who make the glorious transition.

BLESSED are they who after dedicating their lives and thereby receiving a blessing have the courage and faith to surmount the difficulties of the path ahead, for they shall receive a second blessing.

BLESSED are they who advance toward the spiritual path without the selfish motive of seeking inner peace, for they shall find it.

BLESSED are those who instead of trying to batter down the gates of the kingdom of heaven approach them humbly and lovingly and purified, for they shall pass right through.

YOU CAN KNOW GOD: There is a power greater than ourselves which manifests itself within us as well as everywhere else in the universe. This I call God. Do you know what it is to know God—to have God's constant guidance—a constant awareness of God's presence? To know God is to reflect love toward all people and all creations. To know God is to feel peace within—a calmness, a serenity, and an unshakeableness which enables you to face any situation. To know God is to be so filled with joy that it bubbles over and goes forth to bless the world. I have only one desire now—to do God's will for me—there is no conflict. When God guides me to walk a pilgrimage I do it gladly. When God guides me to do other things I do them just as gladly. If what I do

brings criticism upon me I take it with head unbowed. If what I do brings me praise, I pass it immediately along to God, for I am only the little instrument through which God does the work. When God guides me to do something I am given strength, I am given supply, I am shown the way, I am given the words to speak. Whether the path is easy or hard I walk in the light of God's love and peace and joy, and I turn to God with psalms of thanksgiving and praise. This it is to know God. And knowing God is not reserved for the great ones. It is for little folks like you and me. God is always seeking you—every one of you. You can find God if you will only seek—by obeying divine laws, by loving people, by relinquishing self-will, attachments, negative thoughts and feelings. And when you find God it will be in the stillness. You will find God within.

ON FEAR: There's no greater block to world peace or inner peace than fear. What we fear we tend to develop an unreasoning hatred for, so we come to hate and fear. This not only injures us psychologically and aggravates world tension, but through such negative concentration we tend to attract the things we fear. If we fear nothing and radiate love, we can expect good things to come. How much this world needs the message and example of love and faith!

THE FREEDOM OF SIMPLICITY: Some seem to think that my life dedicated to simplicity and service is austere and joyless, but these do not know the freedom of simplicity. I know enough about food to nourish my body properly, and I have excellent health. I enjoy food, but I eat to live. I do not live to eat, and I know when to stop eating. I am not enslaved by food. My clothes are most comfortable as well as most practical. My shoes, for instance, have soft fabric tops and soft rubberlike soles—I feel free as if I were walking barefoot. I am not enslaved by fashion. I am not a slave to comfort and convenience—for instance, I sleep equally well in a soft bed or on the grass beside the road. I am not burdened by unnecessary possessions or meaningless activities. My life is full and good, but not overcrowded, and I do my work easily and joyously. I feel beauty all around me and I see beauty in everyone I meet—for I see God in everything. I recognize the laws which govern this universe, and I find harmony through gladly and joyously obeying them. I recognize my part in the Life Pattern, and I find harmony through gladly and joyously living it. I recognize my oneness with all mankind and my oneness with God. My happiness overflows in loving and giving toward everyone and everything.

ON PEOPLE IN OUR TIMES: In order to help usher in the golden age, we must see the good in people—we must know that it is there, no matter

how deeply it may be buried. Yes, apathy is there and selfishness is there—but good is there also. It is not through judgment that the good can be reached, but through love and faith. Love can save the world from nuclear destruction. Love God—turn to God with receptiveness and responsiveness. Love your fellow human beings—turn to them with friendliness and givingness. Make yourself fit to be called a child of God by living the Way of Love!

SPIRITUAL GROWTH is a process the same as physical growth or mental growth. Five year old children do not expect to be as tall as their parents at their next birthday; the first grader does not expect to graduate into college at the end of the term; the truth student should not expect to attain inner peace overnight.

MAGIC FORMULAS: There is a magic formula for resolving conflicts. It is this: *Have as your objective the resolving of the conflict, not the gaining of advantage.* There is a magic formula for avoiding conflicts. It is this: *Be concerned that you do not offend, not that you are not offended.*

ON IMMATURITY: What people really suffer from is immaturity. Among mature people war would not be a problem—it would be impossible. In their immaturity people want, at the same time, peace and the things which make war. However, people can mature just as children grow up. Yes, our

institutions and our leaders reflect our immaturity, but as we mature we will elect better leaders and set up better institutions. It always comes back to the thing so many of us wish to avoid—working to improve ourselves!

MY MESSAGE: My friends, the world situation is grave. Humanity with fearful faltering steps, walks a knife-edge between complete chaos and a golden age, while strong forces push toward chaos. Unless we, the people of the world, awake from our lethargy and push firmly and quickly away from the chaos, all that we cherish will be destroyed in the holocaust which will descend.

This is the way of peace: Overcome evil with good, falsehood with truth, and hatred with love.

The Golden Rule would do as well. Please don't say lightly that these are just religious concepts and not practical. These are laws governing human conduct, which apply as rigidly as the law of gravity. When we disregard these laws in any walk of life, chaos results. Through obedience to these laws this frightened, war-weary world of ours could enter into a period of peace and richness of life beyond our fondest dreams.

GRASS-ROOTS PEACE ACTIVITY: You can start a Community Peace Fellowship with a peace prayer group for seeking the way of peace. In some places my literature has been used since it deals with peace

from a spiritual standpoint. Read a paragraph, dwell upon it in receptive silence, then talk about it. Anyone who can understand and feel the spiritual truths contained therein is spiritually ready to work for peace.

Then would come a Peace Study Group. We need to get a clear picture of what the present world situation is like and what will be needed to convert it into a peaceful world situation. Certainly all present wars must cease. Obviously, we need to find a way to lay down our arms together. We need to set up mechanisms to avoid physical violence in a world where psychological violence still exists. *All* nations need to give up one right to the United Nations—the right to make war.

We people of the world need to learn to put the welfare of the whole human family above the welfare of any group. Starvation and suffering need to be alleviated, as do fear and hatred. There are some national problems in connection with peace. Work needs to be done on peace among groups. Our number one national problem is the adjustment of our economy to a peacetime situation. We need a Peace Department in our national government to do extensive research on peaceful ways of resolving conflicts. Then we can ask other countries to create similar departments.

After world problems and steps toward their solutions become pretty clear to you, you are ready to become a Peace Action group. You can become a Peace Action group gradually—acting upon any problem that you have learned to understand. Peace action should always take the form of living the way of peace. It can also take the form of letter-writing—to commend those who have done something good for peace, to members of Congress about peace legislation, to editors on peace subjects, speakers on peace subjects, distributing peace literature, talking to people about peace, a Peace Week, a Peace Fair, a Peace Walk, or a Peace Float. It can take the form of voting for those who are committed to the way of peace.

Grass-roots peace work is vitally important. In this crisis period, there should be a Community Peace Fellowship in every town. Such a group can begin with a handful of concerned people. It can begin with you!

If you have been inspired by this little spiritual classic you may want to read:

**PEACE PILGRIM: HER LIFE AND WORK
IN HER OWN WORDS**

This 224-page book was compiled by five of Peace's friends after her death in 1981. It tells her experiences as she walked more than 25,000 miles across America as a penniless pilgrim, walking until given shelter and fasting until given food. She spoke to thousands of individuals and groups, sharing with them her message that the way to peace is to overcome evil with good, falsehood with truth, and hatred with love.

In this book she gives examples of dealing lovingly and fearlessly with violent and confused persons and tells some of her unique solutions to problems. Her thoughts on peace, prayer, simplicity, and the way of love portray the life of a joyous person.

Peace Pilgrim offered her message without any charge, and in the same spirit we are sending this little *Steps Toward Inner Peace* booklet and the Peace Pilgrim book free to any who ask. Unpaid volunteer workers and many small donations make this possible. We also publish Peace Pilgrim's book and booklet in Spanish and Russian. For copies write to:

FRIENDS OF PEACE PILGRIM

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PEACE PILGRIM 1908-1981
On her pilgrimage from 1953 to 1981

A pilgrimage is a gentle journey of prayer and example. My walking is first of all a prayer for peace. If you give your life as a prayer you intensify the prayer beyond all measure.

PEACE PILGRIM walked more than 25,000 miles spreading her message—"This is the way of peace: Overcome evil with good, falsehood with truth, and hatred with love." Carrying in her tunic pockets her only possessions, she vowed, "I shall remain a wanderer until mankind has learned the way of peace, walking until given shelter and fasting until given food." She talked with people on dusty roads and city streets, to church, college, civic groups, on TV and radio, discussing peace within and without.

Her pilgrimage covered the entire peace picture: peace among nations, groups, individuals, and the very important inner peace—because that is where peace begins.

She believed that world peace would come when enough people attain inner peace. Her life and work showed that one person with inner peace can make a significant contribution to world peace.

Steps Toward Inner Peace is not copyrighted and you are welcome to reprint it in whole or in part. It has now been translated into twenty languages and published in a few countries. We hope that in time it will be translated into many more languages and published in every country in the world.