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Resolving Conflict through Peaceful Discourse

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Resolving Conflict through Peaceful Discourse

Abstract

In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

"Today we live in a world where we are affected by tragedy and loss, death and heartbreak. Our lives are not only overtaken by the grief and sorrow because of destruction in our neighborhoods, but we are flooded with information from the media and government about new acts of violence happening all around the world. This violence is not because of wrong-doing, but because of prejudice, religion, and political power. We are not struck by the inconsistencies in the world and do not seek change. We as humans, only seek power for ourselves, whether it is wealth, fame, or government. We are not concerned with the fate of others if it means advancing ourselves. What does this say about the fate of our race? What does this say about the source and future of our morality? Are we meant to remain power hungry and violent or can we seek a better and more peaceful future for our children?"



Juliet Janicik

Resolving Conflict through Peaceful Discourse

“All the people of the world will have to discover a way to live together in peace, and thereby transform this pending cosmic elegy into a creative psalm of brotherhood.” – Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

(The 1964 Noble Peace Prize Acceptance Speech)

Today we live in a world where we are affected by tragedy and loss, death and heartbreak. Our lives are not only overtaken by the grief and sorrow because of destruction in our neighborhoods, but we are flooded with information from the media and government about new acts of violence happening all around the world. This violence is not because of wrong-doing, but because of prejudice, religion, and political power. We are not struck by the inconsistencies in the world and do not seek change. We as humans, only seek power for ourselves, whether it is wealth, fame, or government. We are not concerned with the fate of others if it means advancing ourselves. What does this say about the fate of our race? What does this say about the source and future of our morality? Are we meant to remain power hungry and violent or can we seek a better and more peaceful future for our children?

There have been many efforts put together by activists and politicians alike to achieve peace across the world. It is well known that we will not achieve brotherhood or camaraderie without peace. However, it is not possible to achieve peace across a border, sea, or an ocean without knowing how to

achieve peace within our own country. The work starts at home and grows with example. Many people think if the politicians start acting peacefully with other nations, violence will decrease, but the civil unrest within the country has nothing to do with foreign relations. We cannot decrease hate and violence among people of different color, race, and religion with actions in other nations without addressing it in our own first.

As humans, we have innate needs and feelings that have to be met by those who are closest to us. We must be able see beyond the faults and failures of others. People are defined by the love and care that they show others, not by the circumstances that have been defaulted in. It is healthy for us to examine these things and allows us to come together as a community and realize our commonalities that have existed from the beginning of time. Sometimes, we are unable to see the potential in a relationship between ourselves and someone who is different because they are, in fact, different. However, it is the fact that they are different, which strengthens the relationship and quite possibly, make that relationship stronger. Sometimes we are scared that we will have nothing in common and therefore, we will have nothing to talk about. However, we can always find *something* in common with another person – whether we both have a mom, dad or sibling. It does not have to be we speak the same language or wear the same clothes. We, as humans, were made differently and that's what makes us unique, but we were made similarly and that is what brings us together.

We are all equals and desire a commonality between us. We want to be desired and loved for our individuality, for our knowledge, for our passions. We do not want to be sought after for the kingdoms we own or the businesses we inherited because that will not produce an abundant love or a fruitful family (or nation). Though we talk in different tongues, work at different paces and levels, and have talents that are unlike others, we are able to come together as a people and comprise money and power for two individuals that share a bond in love and friendship. It is our duty to break the barriers

that the media, the politicians, and our neighbors put up for us about people who are different from us. We must escape the trap that is held open for us by them so that we might form our own opinions and have a positive attitude about a new world. Just because people are unlike us does not simply mean we can disregard their opinion. We must be open to their crafts and talents, as we may learn from them and discover that we are not dominant in our knowledge and goods. Our advancements may make it easier for us to get tasks done, but their simplicities could prove to distress our lives.

Unfortunately, it is hard not to focus on the negative aspects of a country that is “lesser” than one who has advanced as far as the United States. Instead of looking at the whole as a negative, let us focus on what we share and what we can teach each other. We as humans are not bound by what we differ in, but are bound by the commonalities we share. Though some may be more primitive than others, we must realize that we are not defined by technology, but by relationships and if we can unite those relationships, we can escape the conflicts and preconceptions that we have about others.

It is this type of thinking that can aid in the advancement of nonviolent behavior. However, it is simply stated, but not simply carried out. We are often drawn to violent and hateful tendencies, but if we are able to put those thoughts aside and think about how we would like to be treated, maybe our predispositions toward discrimination might change. Though we may always have that one negative assumption about a person or whole group of people, we must be able to push past that curtain to find the “real” self that lies behind it. The undesirable qualities may cause conflict, but should only cause questions and curiosity. We can grow together as a race if we are not disgusted by each other’s individuality (or commonality for that matter).

Our ability to make choices should allow us to live in harmony *while* advancing ourselves with power and success in mind. With the addition of other people into our lives, we will essentially be able

to bring and use more knowledge to advance our society and our lives. The extra input from different races, religions, and nations will allow for the inclusion of all peoples and the advancement of nations, peoples, and attitudes. We are not only seeking this to simply better ourselves, but also to save ourselves from an immeasurable amount of heartbreak. As a species that has the capacity to learn and feel emotions, we have grown to need the comfort of human contact and human intimacy. Though we have that comfort from those around us, would it be possible to feel even more loved if we knew that we were not constantly fighting with people across the city, country or world? What if we could make connections with people in the Middle East and let them know how much they are loved? Would they believe us?

How can we create a dialogue that encompasses people of all different languages and cultures, which shows them that we are looking for peace? How can we show them that not all people are power-hungry and violent? We know that violence will probably never stop, but we can make small efforts at a time to decrease its occurrence and its severity. We can show each other love every day and reach out to those who do not feel it at all because of destruction and dangerous situations. We are not restricted just to our residential area or just our country of origin, but are called to seek out places that are dark with hatred. A life of nonviolence is not safe; it is a risk. However, this risk is so utterly important for communications across the world, and for the emotions of children, women, and men who feel untouchable, unworthy, and insignificant. It is important for those who have nothing and those who have everything. It is not just for the poor nations, but for the rich nations. We are called to a better life – a life of love, sacrifice, and nonviolence – living in harmony *together*.