

## **The Love of Peace**

**by Stewart Blackburn**

In general it is taken for granted that we love peace. We talk about it frequently, especially around Christmas. There are symbols and gestures that proclaim our deep desire for peace. We have foundations and organizations for promoting peace. Yet we struggle to actually bring about peace. I don't think the problem is that we don't love peace; it's that we love other things more. We seem to have forgotten how wonderful the experience of peace truly is.

Peace is a feeling, and, like a beautiful diamond, it has many facets. One facet is the feeling of tranquility. Tranquility is a calm, serene, and harmonious stillness. To experience tranquility, one must let go of all the busy-ness that pervades our lives. For those unaccustomed to tranquility, it can seem disturbing or unnatural. It requires us to trust that everything will be alright even if we stop watching it. This trust includes being okay with who we are and how we are living our lives. When we finally do relax into tranquility, we find that the pleasure of tranquility is one of the greatest pleasures we can know.

Tranquility is often symbolized by still water as in a pond or lake. But ponds and lakes, when there is more water than they can hold, overflow into streams and rivers. In this same way, another important facet of peace is flow. When we allow the natural changes of life to unfold without disruption, we have a flow that feels delicious and calming. We accept the pressures to change and do so with grace and ease. This serene flow is a major part of peace.

A second facet of peace is quiet growth. Everyone of us is growing towards what we hope will make our lives better. We learn things, we solve problems, we explore and go on adventures. We try out new things, we admire things and ways of being that might enhance our existence, and we look for new ways to enjoy our days. Each of these efforts is a part of our growth. They are part of our existential imperative to improve the quality of our lives. And they are all pleasurable. We love the feeling of them. And each of these avenues of growth are aspects of peace.

A third facet of peace is the way we make peace. We make peace primarily with acceptance, forgiveness, and kindness. Acceptance removes the inner conflicts of judgements and criticisms. Forgiveness counters all the discord of blame and resentment. And kindness is the powerful act of putting

peace above all else. When we make peace, we change the world for the better, as well as adding to our own joy.

Trust is a fourth important facet of peace. We can never relax into peace when we are full of fear and doubt. Trust is a choice that allows us to put away our fears and doubts, at least for a time. This decision may not be based on much of anything, but it grants us the space to enjoy life. It lets us let down our guard and focus on the things that make life worth living.

This is not to say that all effort, competition, and challenge are harmful and to be avoided. There are great joys in testing ourselves with others. The stimulation and excitement of competition is obviously healthy and worthwhile, but it is not peaceful. There is a time for the many things that aren't peaceful. But harmony is essential for our lives, and making time for peace is a way to counterbalance the chaos around us. Peace gives our minds and hearts time to heal and perform the processes that allow us to move on.

Loving peace is an act of savoring. It is taking the time to enjoy the splendors of serenity and equanimity. It is a focus on the bodily sensations of quietude, the mental satisfaction of clarity and wisdom, and the emotional nourishment of stillness. It is treasuring the moment, just as it is, without thoughts of any changes needed.

I don't think that we will ever find peace because it is virtuous or because we hate war. We will only seek peace because it feels so good. That's why we love it. I suggest that the only way we will ever welcome more people into peace is by helping them experience the joy, the spaciousness, and the delight in the various facets of peace.

So how do we cultivate peace, whether it be world peace or inner peace? It is by valuing it above busy-ness, perpetual competition, and mindless distraction. It is by choosing to live in trust and let the constant fear drop away. It is by savoring the feelings of pleasure and joy that are the hallmarks of peace. It is by choosing peace over discord, anger, and pain. And it is by loving the experience of peace in all its forms. May we all say yes to peace wherever we find it in our lives!

Stewart will be starting up the course he and Pete Dalton teach - Healing with Focused Imagination - on January 12, 2026. He can be found at [www.stewartblackburn.com](http://www.stewartblackburn.com).