

## THE PURSUIT OF PEACE

*A meditation give at Ohio State Convention 2004*

When you think of this years' convention theme, "The Pursuit of Peace and Purity", what comes to your mind? Do you think first of your own inner peace? Or are you thinking of your community or perhaps our nation as we struggle with the war in Iraq? What about this past week? Has it been hectic making arrangements from work and home in order to be here?

This morning I would like to help all of us strengthen our "inner peace". It is written that we must seek peace first within ourselves...only then will we be able to help others find peace. Deng Ming Dao said, "Only when peace and purity lives within each of us, will it live outside of us."

Peace begins when our children are born. Mothers, we hold the key to a peaceful world. Beginning in those early, impressionable years and through all of the developmental years, when we show love, gentleness, goodness, kindness, and forgiveness, with firm and loving discipline and guidelines, we are sowing the seeds of peace.

Dr. Karl Menninger, the famous psychiatrist claims that we learn to resolve hostility in the **HOME** or we don't learn it at all.

We are peacemakers when we show the way of love and peace...but how do we do that? It may be to avoid triggering arguments, or speaking softly to end a quarrel. It might be to be the first to admit a misunderstanding, apologizing for angry or unkind words.

The person with peace of mind tries to deal with negative thoughts and feeling without hurting another.

Constant activities and pressured schedules, as you may have been exposed to this week, destroy a person emotionally, physically and spiritually. Our best thoughts can come by setting aside some time each day to be alone and have a quiet time to enable our inner peace to surface and be renewed. As Sue said in her acceptance speech last year, "Our own inner peace leads to peaceful relationships and peace within our family, chapter, church, workplace, and eventually the world." Let's find our "Inner Peace" this morning together.

Would you kindly clear your laps of any materials or belongings that you are holding and settle back into your seat in a relaxed, comfortable state?

"Begin by taking some deep breaths. Breathe in peace. Breathe out conflicts and thoughts and fears. Just fill a balloon with them and let them go. And when you're ready, look up and let your eyes close gently if they haven't by now. And now let a wave of peace move down through your body. You might give it a color if you like, or

repeat a word like “peace” or “relax” to yourself. Let go of the tension in your jaw muscles, and your neck and shoulder muscles.

I’d like you to try to remember sitting in a school room, a classroom with those old wooden desks, names carved on the surface, the sound of your classmates around you, the teacher at the blackboard filling the board with lessons and chalk writing. When the board was full and the lesson was done the teacher would take the eraser and just erase the blackboard. Do that now. Clean your slate and erase the blackboard of your mind so that you are ready for new lessons and new experiences.

We’ll now go on a journey to a place that always brings you peace and comfort. Find that place and sit your self down and reflect on the peacefulness it brings. Take a deep breath and let it out.

From your special place, take a path that leads you to an old house with a garden off to the side. Walk through the garden and find a spot that you would like to plant a seed. - A seed that will grow and remind you that love, compassion and kindness will be the basis of inner peace. Plant your seed now...press it deep into the ground. Now watch it grow, watch your inner peace spread to your family, your P.E.O. sisters, your friends, your community and the world. Remember, only when peace lives within us, will we be able to help others find peace.

And now, while maintaining your quiet and reflective state, we’ll take another journey as you open your eyes and surround your spirit with the beauty and serenity of “Pathways to Peace.”

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.” Matthew 5:9

“Integrity is one of several paths. It distinguishes itself from the others because it is the right path and the only one upon which you will never get lost.” M. H. McKee

“Joy – if the sight of the blue skies fills you with JOY, if the simple things of nature have a message that you understand, rejoice, for your soul is alive.” Eleanora Duse

“Kindness is the language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see.” Mark Twain

“Faith is the strength by which a shattered world shall emerge into the light.” Helen Keller

“Courage – this is courage, to bear unflinchingly what heaven sends.” Euripides

“Hope is faith holding out its hand in the dark.” George Iles

“Charity – we must not only give what we have; we must also give what we are.”  
Desire-Joseph Mercier

“Love – I have found the paradox that if I love until it hurts, then there is not hurt, but only more love.” Mother Teresa

“Patience – never think that God’s delays are God’s denials. Hold on, hold fast, hold out. Patience is genius.” George Louis Leclerc de Buffon

“Determination – the greatest thing in this world is not so much where we are, but in what direction we are moving.” Oliver Wendell Holmes

“Gratitude – a single grateful thought raised to heaven is the most perfect prayer.” Gotthold Ephraim Lessing

“Humility – pride is concerned with who is right. Humility is concerned with what is right.” Ezra Taft Benson

“Forgiveness is the answer to the child’s dream of a miracle by which what is broken is made whole again, what is soiled is again made clean.” Dag Hammarskjold

“Peace – we must come to see that peace is not merely a distant goal we seek, but it is a means by which we arrive at that goal. We must pursue peaceful ends through peaceful means.” Martin Luther King, Jr.

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