

“That since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed” - (UNESCO Constitution)

What is my Responsibility for Peace in the World?

Helping to heal the wounds of history

To encourage peace, harmony, & understanding between peoples regardless of our ethnic origin or religion

To understand how our collective memories of the past influence our present identities and how we tell and live our lives

We would like to explore together how historically compounded grievances and deeply buried wounds may continue to hold us, as individuals and future generations, in the cycle of violence: yet, through compassion, understanding and forgiveness, these grievances may be transformed, so that we can break the cycle, become 'good ancestors' and become part of the peace process!

Through individual in-depth reflection and feeling in a safe way, we may then share together, draw on each other's experience and explore our own responsibility for peace. We may discover which aspects of ourselves are not fully contributing to peace and where these parts originate. We may then understand how: best to align them and release the grievances which these parts carry through forgiveness and surrender to the Divine or Great life force.

What is normal is the ebb and flow of tensions that form part of a healthy interaction among the life forces, which influence us in this world. Conflict need not be the norm, but the exception. When tensions and fears rise high, conflicts can erupt and we often blame others for our grievances instead of taking responsibility for the part which we may have played in fuelling these tensions.

The following five steps are for each one of us, who wishes to develop a greater awareness of the need for harmony and develop more capacity to manifest it in our lives.

These five steps can be experienced individually by anyone. In this exercise we take ample time to explore and share these experiences and emotions with each other. The practice of open communication, which includes compassionate listening among individuals and actively facilitating group dynamics, is helpful to this peace process.

Five Steps towards a Peace Process

Step One: Taking Responsibility

The first step is to take responsibility for one's own part in any conflict/imbalance/tension/grievance/problem with courage, honesty, and humility, even if one does not feel personally involved in conflict.

Step Two: Asking and Reflecting

The second step is to ask a number of questions, examples of which are found on the following pages of this leaflet.

Step Three: Releasing, surrendering and forgiving

The third step is to understand the power of forgiveness and compassion. By understanding and allowing for forgiveness of oneself and others, including our ancestors and our collective past, we can let go of guilt, shame and fear. We then no longer need to uphold, consciously or unconsciously, the same grievances from one generation to another. As we forgive others, we forgive ourselves and vice versa

(Many of us resist forgiveness, because of the feeling that we may be letting a significant other or others off the hook of justice and betraying our obligations to our ancestors or our collective past. Also many of us resist forgiving because we have been so badly hurt within our family or group and fear forgetting our pain and suffering. if we let go of our beliefs and grievances. Forgiveness is not about forgetting, it is about releasing and surrendering the pain embedded in memory. Our resistance to being able to forgive holds us back with the weight of the past and stops us from fully and freely expressing ourselves with our gifts and talents to day).

Surrendering our pain and asking for forgiveness can be done at any time in this healing process.

Step Four: To understand our authentic selves

The fourth step is to understand the changes we can make in order and speak with our 'inner' cohesive authority, thereby helping us to promote harmony and peace in the world.

Step Five: Sharing

The fifth step is to go out and share this healing process with others. Practising this process can transform ourselves, others and our communities

(This 5-step process can encourage spiritual understanding and an awareness of our "inner authentic selves".)

A few guidelines about the Asking-and-Reflecting process:

Before Asking Questions:

- 1) Sit or stand quietly, relaxing for approx.3 to 4 minutes.
- 2) Allow thoughts to come and go to clear the mind of daily events and to become quiet.
- 3) Ask each question internally and wait – the reply may come in a variety of ways: a picture, a series of images, words in the head, words written on an internal screen, a feeling, thoughts, a combination of all or some of these responses.
- 4) Reflect for a few moments on what has been received and get an inner understanding.
- 5) Pause, relax and clear your mind, before asking the next question

Ask ... at this time ... (repeat "at this time" before all questions)

- What is peace and harmony for me?
- In what way am I preventing peace and harmony in and around me?
- What is the special gift (spiritual or physical) I am not yet fully using to bring healing in me and around me?
- In what way am I preventing harmony in my body? *
- What is the gift that I am not yet using to bring harmony to my body? *
- In what way am I preventing harmony with [name of the person/s with whom I have the greatest conflict]?

** These questions are to be repeated replacing the word 'body' with other words, such as: self, family, work, group, nation, and world.*

Forgiveness: Asking and Allowing:

A) At this time ...

- What stops me from forgiving myself?
- How do I forgive myself?
- Can faith allow me to forgive myself?
- What is forgiveness when it comes from grace and faith?
- What is my gift for healing when I have fully forgiven myself or allowed myself to be forgiven?

B) At this time ...

- Who is the “victim” in me?
- Who is the “persecutor/victimizer” in me? (The “racist”, the “enemy”, the “terrorist”, the “other”, etc.)
- Who is the “saviour” in me?
- How can I enable these aspects in myself to be forgiven?
- How can I be enabled to forgive these aspects in others?

C) At this time ...

- How may I fully accept the “other” to bring unity to myself?
- What is the potential for healing when I fully accept the “other”?
- How is it when all parts of me are fully in harmony?

Ancestors:

The following questions related to family history, experiences, ancestral beliefs and patterns are essential to understand the deeper roots of present conflicts:

At this time ...

- What do I model or inherit from my father’s *family line*, which is no longer appropriate?
- What do I model or inherit from my father, which is no longer appropriate?
- What do I model or inherit from my mother’s *family line*, which is no longer appropriate?
- What do I model or inherit from my mother, which is no longer appropriate?

Ask for the grace of an inner awareness of forgiveness for ourselves, our parents, and our ancestors.

At this time ...

- What is the gift from my father’s *family line*, which I am not yet fully using in my life at this time?
- What is the gift from my father, which I am not yet fully using in my life at this time?
- What is the gift from my mother’s *family line*, which I am not yet fully using in my life at this time?
- What is the gift from my mother, which I am not yet fully using in my life at this time?

Ask for an inner awareness of gratitude for ourselves, our parents, & our ancestors.

Alexandra Asseily (Alexandra@asseily.org)
Guerrand-Hermès Foundation for Peace
www.ghfp.org