

"In the midst of the continuing struggle between my lower and my higher selves, I caught glimpses of harmony. Many years passed, however, before I found myself slipping into harmony, almost never to leave it. To attain it one must pass over the second spiritual hump—the actual giving of one's life, not just one's possessions. When one at last gives one's life—brings into alignment one's beliefs and the way one lives—then, and only then, can one begin to find real inner peace."

It was when she had reached that point that Peace Pilgrim vowed to go on her pilgrimage of walking, to become a wanderer until mankind has learned the way of peace. Often, at the end of a day's walking, she gives a public lecture in which she outlines the way in which our lives can come into harmony with a power higher than ourselves.

Twelve Steps to Peace

There are four preparatory steps. First, we must get beneath the surface of our lives. "Never wish for a life without problems," says Peace Pilgrim, "for only our problems give opportunities for spiritual growth." We must learn to face life squarely in all its depth, not run from it. Our collective problems, too, must be faced in this way. "We must approach them prayerfully and think them through, talk them over and find solutions."

Second, we must resolve to live what we believe. Third, each of us must find his own place in God's plan; this we can know only within ourselves, seeking it in receptive silence. Only as we fulfil both of these points can we accomplish what we feel motivated to do and thus grow to understand its meaning as part of the totality of life. And only with the discovery of this meaning can we find happiness.

Fourth, we must simplify our lives. Instead of piling up possessions, we must begin to recognize the unmet needs of others around us. We should also learn to say no to the demands of others to perform tasks they should be doing themselves.

Four purifications are required. First, we must emphasize the positive side in our thinking. Peace Pilgrim asserts that this can be a powerful influence for good, while negative thoughts can even make us physically ill.

Second, we must purify our bodies through correct eating habits, sufficient exercise and rest. Third, we must strive for purity of will, to unify our desires with what God wants of us. Fourth, we must purify our motives, taking as our model the motive of service. We do so many things with mixed motives or with the surface motive of striving to attain inner peace. When we learn to give, not to seek to get, we experience a joy of service that makes it impossible to go back to self-centered living.

Finally there are four relinquishments. First, we must let go of our self-will, which means finding one's true spiritual center—God's will in us—and embracing this rather than our spontaneous selfish impulses. When we feel like saying something mean about someone, for instance, we should find something good to say instead.

Closely related to this is the second point, the relinquishment of separateness. We must see ourselves as individual cells of spirit in the spiritual organism of humanity. If we pit one cell against all other cells, we cause disease, but if we act from our true spiritual center, we work in harmony with the basic oneness of mankind.

Third, we must let go of our hold on human beings. When we try to run the lives of others, try to possess them, cling to them, we find disharmony. Each must be free to find his own spiritual center. We must bear in mind that we do not own anyone, no matter how near and dear; only when we free each of our dear ones in this way can we live in harmony with them.

Fourth, we must let go of our worries. Worry is a sign of lack of faith. The spiritual law is invariable, says Peace Pilgrim: as long as we cling to our problems, God will leave them right in our hands. The only alternative is to leave our worries in God's hands.

Peace Pilgrim looks upon every difficulty as an opportunity for growth. Once she was asked if she ever had trouble with vagrancy laws. "Oh, yes," she smiled. "I've been jailed twice. Once overnight for protective custody. The other time they locked me up for twenty-four hours, though at the time I hadn't the slightest idea how long they would keep me. I'm glad for