



# Culture of Peace: Finding our light and 3 feet of Peace

BY **DEBORAH GREENE** October 22, 2018

Sitting in front of the new World Peace Flame Monument in Ashland, I thought of all the people who will find their way to this moment. Perhaps that's one of the greatest gifts of these global flames — those quiet, private, unknown moments where a person is comforted, inspired or held by the light. Finding our own light is at the heart of what is needed in this very moment around the world. These are the times we can find a space between the moments to create our own 3 feet of Peace.

## **The 3 feet of Peace theory**

It started for me after 9/11 when I traveled up and down the West Coast with a small film crew to talk with high school students. One thing rang out loudly: "How can I as an individual possibly save this mess? World peace is unrealistic."

Our discussions created the Theory of 3 feet of Peace. How do we each create a peaceful existence and aren't we more likely to come to each other in peace if we are experiencing more peace individually? The 3 feet of Peace speaks to our own personal three-foot circumference. We spoke of paradox; the woman who cuts you off in traffic because she is late for yoga, the father who interrupts his own meditation to scream from his room when he hears a glass drop in the kitchen, the parents who restrict their children's television consumption but are permanently affixed to their iPhones.

What if you were calm, and I was calm, and she was calm, just for a moment ... What if we do it in the next moment and the next? OK, well, maybe not this one, but how about the next? If I can create a peaceful world, and she can create a peaceful world, and he can create his peaceful world, maybe we will be less likely to blow each other apart, in all the small daily ways as well as the earthshaking, truly soul shattering, literal ways.

## Empathy and technology

Before the 2016 presidential election, I decided to hit the road again, traveling more than 9,000 miles by car, making my way through 40 states and interviewing hundreds of people. And I am changed by the experience.

I have been blessed on my travels with the opportunity to sit in front of hate and dig deeper. That may feel like a strange sentence, but it is in fact a blessing. My humanity has been stretched to the point where I am now self-trained to breathe and seek to soften when up against the very thing that may repulse or disarm me.

It's not just the shooter to be considered. It's the hate that has been allowed to grow beneath each act of violence. This is not easy. It is not condoning, weakening my personal resolve, or finding joy in any of the horrific pain we are putting each other through. It is instead, a visceral desire to understand and find our way back from the edge of fully devaluing the beautifully diverse group of people that make up the human race.

When people feel safe, they are kind and even generous. Period. We are built to be kind. Even our molecular structure is designed to heal, replenish and make new ... the greatest example of empathy is the pattern of our very life. And that's just our base constitution. Imagine what capabilities we could have with some consciousness behind that power.

There is a lack of safety that is fostering the violence the world is facing at large. The best way to shift viewing each other as a threat is to step outside our bubbles and meet each other.

We need to pause collectively, separately and in every moment that challenges us, to reach beyond, and see the humanity beyond the pain. When in those moments, consider the similarities that bind us. Even if all you see in the moment is "I breathe. You breathe," you can build from there.

We are being called on to save ourselves. We are being challenged to self-identify with the pain that creates dysfunction. We are not falling apart, we are deepening.

There is a connective dot ... and that dot is empathy.

May your next choice bring you peace. And then, may we each bring our peace to the world.

LiveaMoment has released a first-of-its-kind app designed to help people create connection with others, aid in the teaching of emotional intelligence, and working towards inspiring a deeper peace. The [Ashland Culture of Peace Commission](#) is an active partner.

Join in the evolution — for a free download, go to [itunes.apple.com/app/apple-store/id1237058310](https://itunes.apple.com/app/apple-store/id1237058310).

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