



## Things to Ponder

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### Personal Peace

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*By Judi Moreo*

Finding our way to an inner peace, especially at this time of year is not always easy to do. The hustle and bustle of the holiday season inevitably catches up with all of us. We get caught up in the hectic pace of getting all of the decorating, shopping, cooking and visiting done along with our regular schedule of activities. Many of us travel to visit family and old friends and host or attend holiday gatherings and celebrations. But it is also a time to celebrate peace. It is a time to allow ourselves to renew and regenerate our energy.

How do we accomplish this and still manage all of the other things that are expected of us? We do it by incorporating some new habits into our day. First, **do no harm** – to yourself or to anyone else. It sounds simple enough. Most of us would not deliberately run head on into a brick wall. And yet our words and actions create invisible walls that we crash into all the time. Treat yourself and those around you with respect and kindness. If everyone on the planet subscribed to that simple instruction, we would soon find ourselves in a very different world. Peace comes when we learn to be gentle.

**Allow yourself to think and act spontaneously.** Don't base your actions on past experiences or "what ifs" and fears. It's a new day. You are not the same person you were last year or even yesterday. You have more knowledge and experience than you did then. Trust yourself to make the right decisions. When we act out of fear and worry, we stifle our creative energy without which it is difficult to accomplish all of the things we need to do. Let yourself enjoy the moment. Of course there is always a need to make a list and check it twice, but we also need to plan some flexibility into our schedule. Leave yourself time for the unexpected guest or a cup of tea in the middle of the afternoon. Allow yourself to laugh at your mistakes and find new ways to solve problems.

It may seem impossible, **but stop doing things that irritate you.** One of the quickest ways to become irritated is to judge someone else. When we judge we often feel the need to "fix" what we have decided is the other person's issue. Learn to accept people and situations for what they are. Most importantly, stop judging yourself. You are, after all, only human. There are only 24 hours in a day. Not everyone can do everything. Changing your attitude about what must get done and exactly how to accomplish it can make a difference in how you feel at the end of the day. Do the things you can and stop beating yourself up for the things you don't get done. Your time and energy can be better spent showing appreciation for the people that are truly important in your life.

**Accept and share love.** A smile, a hug or a kind word can make someone's day. You may be surprised just how good you feel when you give someone else a lift. Peace is not some grand and glorious unreachable dream. Peace is in the little things. It is a breath of fresh air, a kind word, the laughter of a child or finding an empty bench in the middle of the mall. Each of us in our own way is responsible for acknowledging the peace that exists in our world and making it our own. Take a moment to enjoy a sunset or the shimmer of moonlight on new fallen snow. Bring a basket of flowers to a shut-in or buy a gift for a needy child. Invite someone to share in a family holiday meal. Focusing on and sharing peace allows it the freedom to grow. Start a new tradition to build on each year. Stop worrying about how much there is to do and how much it will cost. Focus instead on all you have to be thankful for. Give yourself the gift of quiet time to contemplate the beauty around you.

Before you go to sleep each night, **count your blessings.** Each morning give thanks for a new day and a new opportunity to have the peace you seek.

Posted with permission from Judi Moreo

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