Bringing Peace into Education

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Education is the primary and most potent means for bringing about peace. The first and most important step in the peace process is to bring peace into education. Education for peace must happen on the individual, family, community, regional, national and international level. Education for peace will not only require a change in how we think and feel about peace, it will also require a motive force to translate that knowledge and desire into action. The human values and spiritual principles related to peace are the primary source of the needed motivation for change and must be engendered in ourselves, our families and our societies if our present turmoil is to be found.

The bringing about of peace in ourselves and others involves a change in how we see ourselves and others, how we feel about ourselves and others, and how we live with ourselves and others. The accomplishment of any objective requires knowledge, volition and action. Seeing something differently often leads to feeling differently about it. For the change process to result in the accomplishment of an objective like peace, then the new knowledge and attitudes must be translated into action. The establishment of peace will not necessarily follow these three steps in order, but some change in all three areas will be necessary before we can reasonably expect peace. These areas are similar to the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains in education. These three essential elements of the peace process: 1) cognitive/knowledge/seeing, 2) affective/volition/feeling and 3) psychomotor/action/doing, will each be considered below and some implications for education briefly discussed.

Knowledge of Peace

Knowing what peace is and how to establish peace will not in itself bring about peace, but without an understanding of the nature of peace, there can be little hope for change. Peace is a complex issue and establishing peace will be a complex process. It is the healthy state of the world, but like individual health, it depends on many seemingly unrelated factors. Most people do not make the connection between knowledge (truth), justice and unity and peace, just as individuals in the past did not make any connection between smoking, cleanliness and nutrition and health. Until the causes of war and peace are understood, there will be little hope for the peace process. Because there is a lack of understanding, many of the solutions that have been put forth have not had the desired results.
better understanding of peace, we must move beyond the definition of peace as merely the absence of war, in the same way we have had to move beyond the condition of warlessness. To view peace this way is the same as viewing light as the absence of darkness or good as the absence of evil, rather than as a positive force and in its own way. Peace is the positive force and war results from its absence. Peace is the state of health, whereas war is the state of sickness; peace is light and war is darkness. The definition of peace agreed upon by UNESCO helps us better understand peace.

Peace cannot consist solely in the absence of armed conflict but implies principally a process of progress, justice and mutual respect among the peoples of the world's intellectual and material resources. The building of an international society in which everyone can find his true place and enjoy his share of the world's intellectual and material resources.

Peace is sometimes seen as a mystical quality beyond our understanding. Peace, being very complex and largely influenced by inner forces, has been defined as a process of progress, justice, and mutual respect. The elements of the peace process or the conditions that must be met before peace can be established are progress in the areas of mutual respect, unity needed to build an international society. Knowledge is needed to overcome the prejudice that prevents mutual respect. This prejudice or lack of respect creates social injustice, and without a level of justice, the foundation for the unity needed to build an international society necessary for peace exists.

Understanding the relationship between knowledge, justice and unity and peace is vital to bringing about peace. The elements of the peace process or the conditions that must be met before peace can be established are progress in the areas of mutual respect, unity needed to build an international society. Knowledge is needed to overcome the prejudice that prevents mutual respect. This prejudice or lack of respect creates social injustice, and without a level of justice, the foundation for the unity needed to build an international society necessary for peace exists. Understanding the relationship between knowledge, justice and unity and peace is vital to bringing about peace.

For Peace

Peace differently should lead to feeling differently about peace. Feeling differently about peace should also cause one to begin looking at peace differently. Volition is important in bringing about change as it involves the attitudes, values, willpower and perseverance needed to bring about peace. The more we overcome our limited knowledge based on traditions and prejudices, the more we see the basic unity of ways. The more we overcome our limited knowledge based on traditions and prejudices, the more we see the basic unity of ways. The more we overcome our limited knowledge based on traditions and prejudices, the more we see the basic unity of ways. The more we overcome our limited knowledge based on traditions and prejudices, the more we see the basic unity of ways.

The oneness of the human race has been fairly well accepted by science. Physiologically it is indisputable that all humans share a common genetic structure which allows for procreation to occur naturally among peoples of all races and backgrounds. Anthropology has shown the basic cultural similarities of people who may smoke, drink, overeat and not take care of their health, may nonetheless value health or at least claim to value health.

Far from aiming at the subversion of the existing foundations of society, it seeks to broaden its basis, to remodel its institutions in a manner consonant with an ever-changing world. It can conflict with no legitimate allegiances, nor can it undermine essential loyalties. Its purpose is neither to stifle the intelligent patriotism in men's hearts, nor to abolish the system of national autonomy so essential if the evils of excessive centralization are to be overcome. It does not ignore, nor does it attempt to suppress, the diversity of ethical origins, of climate, of history, of language and tradition, of thought as it renames the peoples and nations of the world. It calls for a wider loyalty, for a larger aspiration than any that has animated the human race. It insists on national impulses and interests to the imperative claims of a unified world. It repudiates excessive centralization on one hand, and disparity of uniformity on the other. Its watchword is unity in diversity.

Education about the great importance of peace in the present stage of the peace process. The following elucidation by Shoghi Effendi gives some features of this principle.

Volition can result from a number of sources, both internal and external. It could be engendered by an awakening of our inner desire for peace or be brought about from the outside. It is obvious that such basic needs as survival are in the balance, but even this threat seems powerless to arouse the type of volition needed to bring about peace. People may feel helpless and hopeless because they either do not know what to do or they do not feel that they can do what is needed. Thinking about such things may only increase their hopelessness and despair, so many choose to either deny or avoid the problem. This is a normal reaction to a life threatening episodes that are beyond our control, something like shock. Part of the solution to creating the volition for peace is to educate people about the importance of peace in the present stage of the peace process.
his spirit that we can transform this war-torn world into a world of peace. It is only when we can look at the spirit of peace, as opposed to the pure aspects of peace that we will awaken that dynamic will in human nature which has been the cause of the advancement of civilization. We must see a fundamental truth and good. If we continue to argue the value of peace from a pragmatic perspective, we will be lost in the complexity of the issue. But if we have the tremendous motive force need to bring about the transformation of the planet to that of a united and peaceful organism. Again we can look at the spirit of health for an analogy. Pragmatism alone does not work for people who are not truly committed to the principle and spirit of health. If people accept the principle and value of peace, then the spiritual energy needed to find and pursue the path of peace will come.

Principles for Peace

We change the world from its present sick condition of fighting and conflict to a world of harmony and cooperation? Establishing peace, like building a great edifice, is more than simply wanting it and knowing what is required to bring it about—it is committed living according to the principles that have been laid down. Even in individual cases, some people will not do what is necessary to preserve their health or prevent their preventable death. For instance, it is wrong to smoke or not take of their health and may even want to do the right thing, but do not have the volition and or perseverance to act. So wanting and knowledge alone are not enough, what is needed is a commitment to doing the right thing and then doing it. The actual act of the new knowledge and attitudes is the final stage in the change process. Until the motivations for peace and principles of peace are translated into action, there will be no real or measurable change.

The most fundamental guiding principle is the acceptance of the essential oneness of humankind. If we are to bring peace into education, then we can to bring the oneness of humankind into education. If we wish to prepare our children, youth and ourselves for the future, we can begin by his vital principle, for upon this principle is based peace and it portends the future of our world. We can best see this transformation by examining the ends toward it. It is apparent that the world is daily becoming more and more of a global village.

Y has developed to the point where it will no longer tolerate the injustice, disunity and war that have been with us throughout history. This is a recent event. The growth and development in education, knowledge, peace movements, awareness and concern for social justice, and the many advances in unity and order are all signs of this change—the coming of age of humanity. These trends toward ever-greater unity is seen in creation and development of United Nations and many regional organizations such as the European Community, as well as the numerous other international activities in almost every nation in the world. It is not hard to imagine this trend continuing until the world is unified in all aspects of life. These developments all are indicative of the need to bring about peace.

Principles for Peace

Singing the condition of the world for peace, the most we can presently say is that the majority of people want peace. Whether they want peace enough to make the changes needed to bring peace about remains to be seen, but clearly peace is possible. The world has not yet reached the threshold, let alone what the prescription should be. Even when some sick people are given a sound diagnosis and fairly clear and indisputable information, they do not to follow the prescription. That the people of the world are struggling to bring peace about even when they have neither a clear diagnosis nor prescription is understandable.

Singing the problems that are preventing peace, the problems can be summarized as a failure to live according to the principles of peace. The main problem is the oneness of humankind and the symptoms of its absence is war, disunity, injustice and ignorance. In realizing this principle of peace we need to be addressed that result from a limited understanding of the oneness of the human race.

Fear is that unity will result in conformity and uniformity and that individuality will be lost. This will probably happen to a limited degree as happens in States and other countries that have brought together previously disparate groups in one united nation. It is only reasonable that people will be reduced into it. It has not occurred and is not likely that people will lose their individuality or be more more constrained that they were in their fact there should be greater opportunities for individuality as a result of the greater diversity present.

Fond fear is that more limited loyalties will be jeopardized by broader loyalties. This is most pronounced in the fear that nationalism and patriotism in we can see from our experience and history that such fears are not founded. Just as a child in his or her ever-changing world must constantly adjust to an ever-widening circle of people, so must we widen our loyalties in this ever-changing world. To say the child is not well served by broadening his or her circle of loyalty from himself, to his mother, to the family, to his neighborhood and so on, to include his nation and the world is contrary to the truth. He or she is a sane and healthy loyalty to each level of society without compromising a higher level just as individuals in a large national or international sys
to maintain loyalty and identity to their community, region and state.

The fear is that of over-centralization. Of all the fears, this is the most legitimate, as excessive centralization could adversely affect our welfare. This deals with the many nations that have central governments and the models and policies they have developed to avoid over-centralization can lead to a world system. In fact, the United Nations and many other international organizations bear witness to its applicability on an international level.

d can be put in place internationally and they are done nationally to prevent the problems of over-centralization.

The role of education in furthering peace go far beyond the academic study of war and peace. It must include the social and spiritual principles upon which a world system is based, for without these principles, peace is not possible. Bringing peace into education will require an organic change in our view of peace and in the process of education. Some prescriptions for peace are mentioned below.

ne events and attitudes, past and present, that prevent peace. Examine our own attitudes, feelings, ideas and behaviors. Acknowledge the fact that revenge is possible. Understand how peace develops. Identify individual and institutional practices that propagate and prevent peace. Develop plans and make peace demonstrations of peace in our daily activities. Free yourself as much as possible from self-centeredness, passion, lack of moral
tation. Recognize the essential oneness of humankind. Empathize with others. Respect and be fair to yourself and others. Demonstrate social commitment and action. Appreciate unity in diversity.

The treatment of the diagnosis and prescription for peace has been discussed elsewhere (Clarken, 1986, 1988, 1989) and a more complete treatment can be found in numerous books (see Boulding, 1988; Brocke-Unte, 1985; Carpenter, 1977; Sloan, 1983; Wulf, 1974). Reardon offers an excellent bibliography of significant works in peace education (1988a) and an annotation of peace curricula and handbooks (1988b).

Conclusion

Most people desire peace and many are willing to work for it, but most of us do not have a clear idea of what peace is or how it can be brought about. The peace is one of the greatest threats to the continued existence of life of this planet. We can play a leading role in assisting humanity to make the transition to peace and by teaching how peace can be achieved. Peace has more to do with raising the consciousness and conscience than with the signing of treaties or the limiting of arms. Education is the best means for creating the knowledge and attitude needed for peace. The world is primarily a process of changing how we think about peace, feel about peace, and work for peace.

A preliminary scan of the conditions in the world serve as an early warning system of what we can expect in the years to come. This early warning system is an opportunity as well as problems in our immediate future. How we prepare ourselves to address these challenges will determine our ability to change the world of conflict into a world of peace. The young adults of the year 2000 are in their formative years now and are currently being taught how to think. Whether they are given the skills and attitudes, as well as the hope and volition to make that a peaceful future depends largely on the education they receive today.

One of the growing needs of the coming century will be to change our conflict-ridden approaches with cooperative approaches. The growing awareness of the unity of the human race is vital in this process. This involves at the most basic stage, the elimination of ignorance and prejudices. Ignorance and prejudice are upon which injustice is based, and injustice is the major impediment to meaningful unity, which is a precondition to a harmonious planet. The underlying principle in all of these issues is the acceptance of the essential oneness of the peoples in the world.

References


