

The Quest for Peace: A Self-Assessment Tool

By Louise Diamond

The Quest for Peace

September 11 changed many things in our world. Among other things, it brought to the foreground our collective hunger for peace.

More and more people are finding a deep eagerness in themselves for opportunities to take positive action, to make a difference, to counter the images of violence and revenge with acts of compassion and reconciliation.

I know this because in the months following 9/11 I was deluged with requests for public appearances, and for my book, *The Peace Book: 108 Simple Ways to Create a More Peaceful World*. Other peace-oriented organizations noticed a similar upsurge of interest.

As I spoke with people around the country, I heard the same plea, repeated countless ways: "Please help us find a way to step forward on the peace path." This booklet is an offering to address that cry.

The peace path I have traveled for over thirty years of work—at home and abroad—is not a single, simple road. Rather, it is a myriad of different journeys, all aiming to arrive at the same place.

First, let's consider the final destination--Peace. Peace is one of those capital-letter words, like Justice, Freedom, or Beauty, that operates at the soul level for humanity. They signify ideals that are encoded in our spiritual DNA. We could say that the history of human evolution is marked by our striving to embody these ideals, however fleetingly.

I would say that Peace is the evolutionary challenge to humanity in this particular moment. Can we find ways to live together, with all the richness of our differences, as one loving family of life on this planet? This is a life-or-death question for humanity. If the answer is 'yes,' we will thrive and generate solutions to our global challenges that are hardly imaginable now; if 'no,' we may not survive our own forces of destruction. In this context, the search for Peace--at every level of our daily lives--becomes an urgent imperative, for those who feel its call.

Peace is a concept rich with multi-layered meaning. Elsewhere I have defined peace as the presence of connection.¹

"Inner peace is about connection with our true and natural self and a sense of being part of something larger. This connection gives rise to serenity, balance, and a feeling of well-being.

¹ *The Peace Book: 108 Simple Ways to Create a More Peaceful World*, p. xx

Peace with others is about our connection with the open heart, through which we remember our shared humanness. This brings us to the practice of conflict resolution, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

Peace in our communities and in the world requires a connection to respect for our multiple differences, and for the right of all people to justice, freedom, and dignity. This leads to trust, community, and co-existence."

Whether we are on an inner journey or a global one, the ultimate aim, then, is connection--to remember ourselves as inseparable from the whole. When we are actively plugged in to this core source of power, Peace is all there is. It is the heartbeat of the family of life. Peace may appear in different forms--here like a peace treaty between nations, there like a happy family at the dinner table--but its essence is always the same. In spiritual terms, we would say it is the return to the Source, or union with the Divine.

Next, let us consider the route. In this booklet, I am suggesting that there are eight major paths winding their way toward the goal of Peace. Each takes a different direction, and moves through a different landscape, but they all end up at the same Source.

I believe these paths are archetypal in nature, and attract travelers who are aligned with certain personality and evolutionary streams. The eight I am positing are:

- The Activist Path, whose mission is to seek Justice.
- The Personal Path, whose mission is to seek Integrity.
- The Relationship Path, whose mission is to seek Love.
- The Global Path, whose mission is to seek Community.
- The Educational Path, whose mission is to seek Wisdom.
- The Creative Path, whose mission is to seek Harmony.
- The Leadership Path, whose mission is to seek Transformation.
- The Spiritual Path, whose mission is to seek Unity.

I believe that each of us, while having some element of all these archetypes within us, has a particular attraction for one path in particular. We respond to certain stimuli--some of us get an adrenaline rush toward action when we see oppression; others of us cannot bear to see people hurting each other through mis-communication; yet others feel a strong need to unravel prejudices, or to build bridges between conflicting parties, or to teach children about respect. Some simply crave stillness in the midst of tension or chaos.

Our behaviors differ, too, depending on the path we walk. Some are teachers, while others are hands-on peacemakers. Some meditate, while others mediate. Some make stories or pictures, while others engage in nonviolent protest. Some work in war zones, while others work in their own families.

There is no one way to peace; there are multiple paths, which often intersect, overlap, or glance off each other. At different periods in our lives, we might be on different paths. Still, we can learn so much about ourselves in the world by identifying which path is most aligned with our nature in this moment; which is our primary path to Peace. This

self-assessment tool will help you unfold the exquisite magic and mystery of your own unique approach to Peace at this time in your life.

Finally, let us consider the journey itself. I believe that whichever of the paths we travel, the journey toward Peace is more than a simple trip. I see it as a sacred quest, an heroic adventure, that takes us places we have never been before, requires us to go through great testing, and returns us back to where we began, completely changed, carrying a boon or a gift, that others may benefit from our travels (and our travails).

The heroic journey is a staple of our culture, appearing endlessly in our myths, literature, and popular culture. It always involves someone leaving the familiar to face the unknown in search of some great prize. The search brings the hero/heroine face-to-face with dangers (often manifestations of their greatest fears), and in the process of overcoming those challenges, the traveler must 'die' symbolically (leave some part of themselves behind). This 'death' permits the searcher to discover some strength or gift in themselves they never recognized before. The traveler then returns home a new and better person, ready to use this gift to benefit those who have not been on the journey.

We know this storyline well. We find it in the legend of King Arthur and the search for the Holy Grail. We follow it faithfully through the adventures of Dorothy, Tin Man, Scarecrow and Cowardly Lion in 'The Wizard of Oz.' We recognize it in the inspiring life of Nelson Mandela.

Lancelot, Dorothy, and Mandela are no different from you and me. We are all seeking something better, something special, something meaningful to assuage the ills of our time. For those willing to accept the incredible challenge and opportunity, that quest today is for the prize we call Peace. Each one of us can be a hero or heroine on this sacred journey, following our own unique path.

I invite you, dear reader, into the most incredible endeavor I can think of in these troubled times, the Quest for Peace. I hope you will find this personal assessment tool helpful, and can use it as a map and as a lure, as a walking stick and as a treasure hunt. Above all, I hope the self-knowledge you gain will spur you to action, and that your action will bring you to delve even more deeply into the possibilities of your path.

In my own Quest for Peace I have met many incredible people on these different paths. Like you and me, they are answering a heart call that draws them, inexorably, toward Peace with a capital 'P.' There is no other place I want to go, and no one else I want to travel with but each of you, dear readers. We need each other's company, now, more than ever.

I will wave to you along the way. Please wave back.

Louise Diamond

Which Peace Path Are You On?

When we start on a journey, we want to know which direction to travel. This simple self-test allows you to get a sense of where your particular strengths and strongest values are as a peacebuilder. This will help you know which path(s) may be right for you.

For each of the Eight Paths, there are a series of statements for you to rank. With that data, you will be making your own Personal Peacebuilder's Profile, which will give you a better understanding of your unique ways of contributing to a more peaceful world.

For all of the statements below, please circle the number (from 1 - 5) which best describes you – either your actual experience or your preferences. Number 5 is the highest score, representing ‘very much so,’ and number 1 is the lowest score, representing ‘not at all.’ There are no right or wrong answers, no better or worse responses – only the truth of your own experience, to help you better understand your unique approach to peace.

The statements are written in the present tense, as if you were already involved in a particular set of actions; however, feel free to read them as choices you would make if you were to become more active.

The Activist Path to Peace

1. I strongly believe that there is no peace without justice. 1 2 3 4 5
2. I see myself as an agent of change. 1 2 3 4 5
3. Protesting injustice, inequity, abuse, and oppression is a big part of my life. 1 2 3 4 5
4. I demonstrate my commitment to peace and justice by participating in non-violent actions. 1 2 3 4 5
5. I can be counted on to respond to a call for action on the issues I feel deeply about. 1 2 3 4 5

Please add up all the numbers circled, and enter the total _____

The Personal Path to Peace

1. I give a lot of time in my life to activities that help me find and maintain inner peace. 1 2 3 4 5
2. Given a challenging situation, I would rather meditate than mediate. 1 2 3 4 5
3. I know, and use, effective ways to reduce stress in my life. 1 2 3 4 5
4. I do deep inner work to transform the blocks to my inherent wholeness. 1 2 3 4 5
5. I strongly believe that peace does indeed begin with me. 1 2 3 4 5

Please add up all the numbers circled, and enter the total _____

The Relationship Path to Peace

1. Given a challenging situation, I would rather mediate than meditate. 1 2 3 4 5
2. I strongly believe that the essence of peace is love. 1 2 3 4 5
3. When I see people fighting or not getting along, I offer to help. 1 2 3 4 5
4. I am skillful at helping to mend broken relationships. 1 2 3 4 5
5. I have a big heart, and bring love and healing to all my efforts for peace. 1 2 3 4 5

Please add up all the numbers circled, and enter the total: _____

The Global Path to Peace

1. I pay attention to world affairs regularly. 1 2 3 4 5
2. I actively engage myself with people and issues in other countries. 1 2 3 4 5
3. I find practical ways to support peacebuilding in places of violent conflict around the world. 1 2 3 4 5
4. I give money or time to address global issues of poverty, war, education, health, refugees, etc. 1 2 3 4 5
5. I strongly believe in the need to be a good world citizen. 1 2 3 4 5

Please add up all the numbers circled, and enter the total: _____

The Educational Path to Peace

1. I keep myself and others well-informed about issues of peace and violence in the world around me. 1 2 3 4 5
2. I strongly believe that the ongoing process of learning and inquiry is essential for peace. 1 2 3 4 5
3. I find opportunities to teach and learn various methods for making a more peaceful world. 1 2 3 4 5
4. I search out and share information and ideas that can help me and others in our efforts to create peace in our lives. 1 2 3 4 5
5. I give my time and resources to helping children walk the peace path. 1 2 3 4 5

Please add up all the numbers circled, and enter the total: _____

The Creative Path to Peace

1. I strongly believe in the essential connection between art and peace. 1 2 3 4 5
2. Where there is dis-harmony or imbalance, I work to bring harmony and beauty. 1 2 3 4 5
3. I rely on intuition and inspiration to find effective ways to work for peace. 1 2 3 4 5
4. I am an innovator, finding new forms to bring more peace into the world. 1 2 3 4 5
5. I use my creative energies (drawing, painting, sculpting, poetry, drama, writing, etc.) in the service of peace 1 2 3 4 5

Please add up all the numbers circled, and enter the total: _____

The Leadership Path to Peace

1. I am committed to leading for change in our world. 1 2 3 4 5
2. I have a strong vision for peace, and can attract others to work for that vision. 1 2 3 4 5
3. I am willing to be a public figure, making my views known and putting my activities in the public eye. 1 2 3 4 5
4. I strongly believe that peace comes primarily through the process of transformation. 1 2 3 4 5
5. For some (or for many), I am a guide on the peace path. 1 2 3 4 5

Please add up all the numbers circled, and enter the total: _____

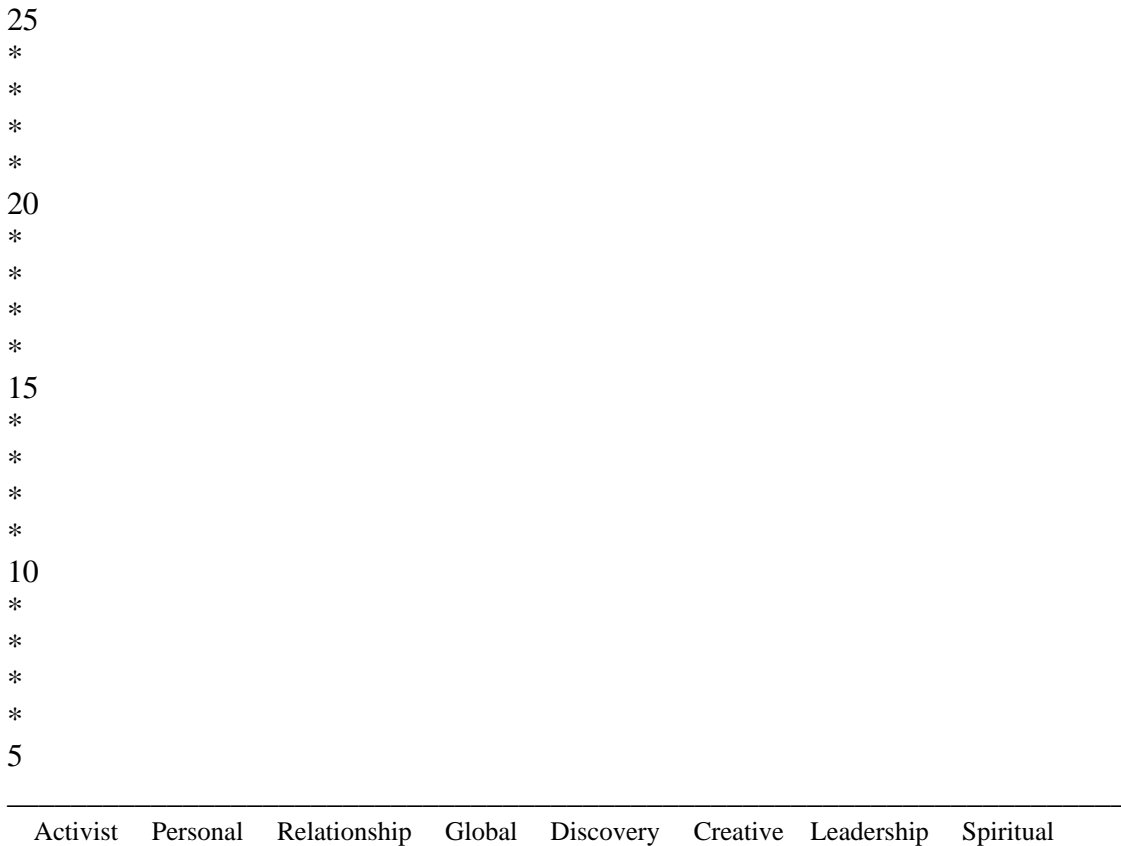
The Spiritual Path to Peace

1. Peace is a central part of my spiritual journey. 1 2 3 4 5
2. I strongly believe that the sacred oneness of all life is the essence of peace. 1 2 3 4 5
3. Role models for my life and work are the spiritual giants of our world (like Christ, Buddha, Gandhi, etc.) 1 2 3 4 5
4. I am here to serve peace. 1 2 3 4 5
5. I think of myself as a light-bearer. 1 2 3 4 5

Please add up all the numbers circled, and enter the total: _____

Creating Your Personal Peacebuilder's Profile

Use the simple chart below to get an overall picture of your unique quest for peace. For each of the Eight Paths named on the horizontal line, place a dot at the corresponding point on the vertical line that indicates your total score in that area. For instance, if your total from the section on The Global Path to Peace is 11, find Global on the horizontal axis, and trace up to 11 on the vertical axis, and place a dot there.



Now, connect the dots. This will let you see immediately where your particular strengths are on the peace path, and where they aren't. There is no right or wrong, good or bad in this exercise. Whatever your profile shows is information for you to understand yourself better, and to make choices about your activities on the Quest for Peace.

You may notice you have one area that stands out above all others as your preferred path; or you may notice that you are equally aligned with several paths. Whatever the data is, it can be a stimulus for increasing your effectiveness on the peace path. You might also find it helpful to do this activity with others, and to talk about your results together, for greater understanding.

However you choose to use the information gathered in this section, let it be a departure point for the rest of your Quest for Peace. I wish you a joyous and successful journey!

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