

FINDING PEACE

PULSE OF SPIRIT
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DAVID KARCHERE is a speaker and workshop leader who assists people to renew their Primal Spirituality—an experience that virtually all human beings know at birth, and that ideally grows as they mature.

On the weekend of November 15, 1969, I was a junior in high school. With friends, I chartered a bus from my hometown, Westport, Connecticut, to participate in the Moratorium March on Washington, protesting the war in Vietnam. The month before, friends and I had led a protest march from my high school. Twelve hundred of us left the school and marched three miles to the downtown area, where I was one of those speaking to thousands more. Like many people, I was angry at a government that had deceived us. At that point, we were not clear about how that had happened. It just seemed wrong. Later, it became evident through the Pentagon Papers that lies about the war were being told for many years. By the end of 1969, 43 thousand Americans had already died in the war.

A half million people joined the march on Washington. It ended at the Mall, where friends and I got within a hundred feet of the band shell. After a series of speeches and musical performances, Pete Seeger led us in song. Pete

was a folk singer but much more. He was a magic man. He knew how to get a crowd of people singing with him.

The rally in the Mall culminated with Pete leading us in John Lennon's "Give Peace a Chance." Years later, Pete said this about the singing of that song:

I guess I faced the biggest audience I've ever faced in my life. Hundreds of thousands, how many I don't know. They stretched as far as the eye could see up the hillside and over the hill.

I'd only heard the song myself a few days before and I confess when I first heard it I didn't think much of it. I thought, "That's kind of a nothing of a song, it doesn't go anyplace." I heard a young woman sing it at a peace rally. I never heard Lennon's record. I didn't know if the people there had ever heard it before. But I decided to try singing it over and over again, until they did know it.

Well, we started singing, and after a minute or so I realized it was still growing. Peter, Paul and Mary jumped up onstage and started joining in. A couple of more minutes, and Mitch Miller hops up on the stage and starts waving his arms. I realized it was getting better and better. The people started swaying their bodies and banners and flags in time, several hundred thousand people, parents with their small children on their shoulders. It was a tremendously moving thing.

The refrain repeated and repeated. *All we are saying is give peace a chance.* With the sound of a half million voices behind me, I joined in.

A report from the march says it went on for over ten minutes. I couldn't tell you how long it was myself—it seemed like eternity, because in the middle of a political rally something else broke out. Transcendence. I heard the echoes of that prayer from the mouths of those half million people behind me, and my 17-year-old heart opened to the heavens.

All we are saying is give peace a chance.

We were connecting with a prayer that is deep in the heart of every man and woman on the face of the earth, usually unspoken, often not admitted, even to oneself. And yet deep in the human heart is a prayer for peace, with all of what that word means, knowing that to have peace, so much else has to happen. The reality of peace transcends the cessation of war. It means the activation of an experience that was being activated on the Mall.

I could hardly believe it. All the rancor of my heart melted and I realized I came to Washington for *that*—something far larger than a political protest.

Though the war was diabolical, I came for something far larger than protest. I touched something to which my whole life has been devoted: making a place for the transcendent in the human experience.

Give it a chance, make a space for it. Clear out whatever is in the way that would block it—all the stuff and nonsense of the human experience, all the lying, and the fear. Give peace a chance! Create some space for it so that it can come in.

That's what the human heart is saying.

It has amazed me since, how we as human beings have a way of avoiding the touch of what is in our heart of hearts—the desire for peace, and the pain we feel when that desire is not fulfilled. We walk around in sophistication, perhaps angry because of politics and so many other things. And then, at the same time, we look for some kind of cheap solution that is not a solution. All the while, staying out of touch with that great longing and desire that is present in the human heart—that desire which is for peace.

How big do you think that desire is in the human heart? How much do you think human beings want peace, around the planet? And how much do you think it hurts in the human experience not to have it? Like hell. But rather than touch the pain of how much it hurts to be without

peace in their life, and touch the overwhelming desire to manifest it, most people would rather live in sophistication, in the shallows of human experience. That is a generalization, to be sure. But in our culture it is so prevalent. And yet occasionally someone breaks through and realizes what is going on.

For me, I went back to my high school after that march and went about my life as it had been. But a seed had been planted that grew and became my life. I was willing to drop into the deep desire that I had for what my life was to be about. I dropped into what I came to know is the answer for the world in which I live: that we make space for what is most deeply desired and call it in.

Emeli Sandé's song, "Next to Me," includes these lyrics:

*You won't find him tryna chase the devil
For money, fame, for power out of greed
You won't ever find him where the rest go
You will find him, you'll find him next to me.*

I take the *him* she is singing of to be the Divine, the one who brings peace. I notice that "finding him" or "finding peace" is a reciprocal matter. We are looking for it. We have the desire for it in the human heart. In our heart of hearts, we want something so badly we don't know what to do, even though we perhaps can't admit it to ourselves. We want it, and if we are wise we start looking for it. We allow our soul to find what it is looking for and don't deny it that opportunity. If we truly seek, we find.

But it is reciprocal too, in the sense that when we seek, not only do we find but what we are looking for is seeking for us and is finding us. Peace finds us. The Divine finds us. When we allow our heart's desire to be activated in our life, it is like a homing device, so that what we are seeking can now find us. It is as if we are raising our hand, "Here I am, I am looking for you," and it comes and it finds us. So it makes the seeking easier. You don't have to go looking all over everyplace, because what you are seeking for is actually looking for you. And in your seeking, you are inviting it—you are holding up your hand.

Are you willing to be found?

I could ask, *Where are you?* And I could ask that question with all kinds of different colorations of tone. I could ask it in a demanding way. *Where are you and what are you doing there?* But I could also ask in a deeply loving, inviting way: *Where are you?* With the implicit invitation to come to me, or let me come to you. That is true seeking that brings true finding.

When we seek him, and let ourselves be found, we become the voice of the finder.

Where are you? I am looking for you. Come to me. I am coming to you.

That is what the Divine is saying. Something glorious happens in that. *Spiritual activation.* We become personally activated, because now all the creative factors that ignite a human life are in play. Through our seeking, those factors can get

to each other and interact and create an incredible fusion in the human experience. It is, first of all, individual. I am having an amazing experience with the creative power that made me. I am having the experience of fusion, of finding and being found, and then experiencing the peace of that. Peace, by the way, is not the same as being placid. Peace can be very active and alive.

But having experienced that individually and personally, now I become an agent of that experience. I become an agent of the finding. I have known fusion within me, and now I have the opportunity to find you.

The power of spiritual activation creates attraction when the forces of Creation are activated within you and within me. We are not just inert, relative to each other. We are not passive or uninterested. We are activated because the creative forces within us have been

activated. They are activated *in us*, and therefore they can be activated *between us*. We are attracted together by your creative power and mine. Whatever it is in this cycle of creativity that you have to bring, and whatever I am bringing, it is coming together.

And then there is some kind of communion and fusion that occurs, releasing great power and ability. There is a larger creative impetus released into the world. There is an opening for peace. There is a giant wormhole for the Divine, which is now pouring through. Peace is activated on earth, for real. Not just saying prayers about it—the power of peace is coming through activated people in fusion.

David Karchere
dkarchere@emnet.org
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