

Point III. To live and work in friendship

Once we have finished with these absurd resentments, why can we not be friends and work together globally to build a more united and gratifying world for our children and ourselves?

The Absurdity of Historical Resentments

This third point of the Letter of Peace begins by broaching the topic of resentments and labeling them as absurd, because they are directed toward people that lack any responsibility for the events of the past.

Based on the notion that absurd attitudes and feelings stand at loggerheads with the intelligence that supposedly characterizes us for being human it is quite evident that historical resentments are instruments of domination that enslave us. Hence, contemporary people and generations to follow will only experience freedom when these “absurd resentments” are eradicated.

Once freed from these resentments that set us apart from others, what will the optimal attitude towards others be?

Friendship

The human being, by nature, is a social creature; all it takes to see this is to notice that our existence is the fruit of the relationship between two people: a man and a woman. Precisely because we are social creatures we need to communicate. It would be impossible for just one free and one intelligent agent to develop. Culture and wellbeing are built upon dialogue and cooperation, in other words, upon friendship.

Friendship is a human trait. It implies all folks; it is an essential attitude for coexistence. Rare is the instance when an individual is isolated on an island unable to engage in friendship for lack of someone to communicate with. Although, less unusual is the case of those who choose to live as secluded islands, because they are afraid of forming bonds with any one.

Today society is beginning to rescue values, one of the most basic for human coexistence being friendship, which must be nurtured so it may grow and mature.

Friendship is a fact which bears a biological essence. It is created within a person's brain. It is quite false to say that friendship only originates in the heart, in reality it embraces the person in their entirety!!

Historically the notion of friendship has been confined to relationships based on love or companionship, when in fact it includes multiple realities; realities that encompass different human relationships such as: parent-child, wife-husband, employer-employee, professor- pupil, etc. Also, different levels of friendship exist in each relationship. These hold an important connotation which is not the same for each one. These represent different ways of loving constituted by diverse verbal and physical attitudes in each relationship.

Friendship is the acceptance of others for who they are and without comparison to ideal or unrealistic models; never speculating possible benefits that may result from such friendship.

Friendship leads us to treat others as we wish to be treated by them. It breaks away from the logic of resentments and treats the other, regardless of who he may be, in an equitable manner. The Letter of Peace considers friendship a basic ingredient for peace, so much so, that it declares friendship as one of the foundations upon which it may be built.

Listed below are some minimum requirements for true friendship to occur.

Never use force. One can't achieve friendship through coercion or impositions, freedom must always be respected.

Never be deceitful. Friendship must never be simulated; feelings must not be false, nor must they reflect something other than what they are. Only with truth and honesty can true friendship exist. Without it one would not be a true friend just merely an imaginary being that does not exist in a friendship that doesn't exist.

Never shed false hopes. One can not be frivolous or unfair with other people's feelings allowing them to hold on to the hope of a friendship one is not willing to share. One is open to forming a true friendship for life.

Never put someone in a difficult situation. Do not force or pressure anyone into doing what they do not wish to do, or put them in an embarrassing situation.

Never be egotistical. Do not cultivate the ego through friendship. Those who seek having friends solely for personal gain will find they are alone in the end, since others will drift away.

Never buy or prostitute friendship. Friendship cannot be bought; it cannot be paid for in any way, nor must it be given in exchange for anything. Also, friendships should not be sought out for any reason other than the friendship itself, in other words, with other ideas or intentions, doing so would serve only to prostitute said friendship.

Never use irony. So many friendships lost to bitter ironies! One cannot jest using the intimate conversations among friends as frivolous banter.

Never press or allow oneself to be pressed. Never corner friends into a friendship without escape or exit. Friendships must be mature, autonomous and free at all times.

Never command or allow oneself to be commanded. In a friendship, no one must lose their responsibility and autonomy. There must be no domination or submission in friendship.

True friendship cannot exist without love. That is to say, without giving of oneself to others, and receiving of them. This develops and completes the person that is created to connect with others. Not only does one have to love, one must also let oneself be loved.

These conditions are necessary for mature friendships to occur and thrive.

Friendship can not be imposed, within the Letter of Peace this subject is dealt with using the utmost subtlety. Friendship must be given freely, and one must be free to experience it. From this point arises the following question: *Why not become friends...?* And from this simple act of questioning one comes intuitively to the conclusion that a negative response would be absurd. In the presence of a human being that we don't hold any resentment against, why not be open to friendship? Why not make friendship the common denominator for all human relationships.

Peace in the Workplace

Peace cannot be built by itself. Passivity will not help to create it, we must work in order to build it. Often, the work must be done intrepidly and with great effort. Hence, it is important to elaborate on the topic of work, it being such an essential part of the human being and the construction of peace.

The work of all people should be a tool in the development of peace; given many people dedicate the majority of their time and often their best energy to the work they do. However, if work takes place under destructive competitiveness, coercion, severity, without compassion,

with scarce freedom, beauty, and creativity, or for the sole purpose of obtaining power it will fail to spark or construct peace.

Developing freedom and dignity in all areas of a person's life, including labor and the distribution of goods is the great challenge for this XXI century. Among situations that can improve societies and build peace are: the possibility for people to choose their careers and jobs in accordance to their personal preferences and aptitudes, professional teams based on friendship and harmony instead of solely on competition and salary; the opportunity for all workers to achieve sufficient cultural and professional training, the wise enjoyment of leisure time, and dignified livelihoods for all folks.

Our western culture lugs obstacles that deprive us of one of life's basic dimensions; the enjoyment of labor. Parallel to the problem of unemployment we face the problem of lack of personal direction. Historians and sociologists alike have stated that work has been carried out as an obligation or an economic need for centuries, especially after the Industrial Revolution which was highly driven by lucrative ends. Maybe this is why little has been pondered about the importance of freedom to choose a career or job of preference.

Given the chance, large numbers of people stop "going to work"; this is a sign that they don't feel happy or free in the workplace.. The two principal tracks that social life runs along are the home and the workplace. Within the home people are expected to live with the freedom to choose who they wish to live with, marry, have as friends... in many cultures today such liberties are achievements we are not willing to give up. Following this line of thought, efforts must be made to assure that freedom, personal development, and joy prevail within the workplace or any other social activity.

The Letter of Peace does not regard work as a cold and absolute reality but as an activity associated with cordiality and friendship. Friendship in the workplace is a fundamental building block in the eventuation of peace. Therefore, the only way to yield joy instead of slavery within the workplace is through friendship; and the repercussions of such positive changes will result in numerous benefits for society.

Work for Peace; Solidarity

Once the duress of historical resentments has been overcome we can become friends. Point III of the Letter of Peace states that friendship between persons, social groups, countries, and nations is the key to erecting a more united and gratifying world.

The spirit of solidarity has no bounds. It extends to people we know and work with as well as to people of whose existence and needs we are merely aware. Hence solidarity is another pillar on which peace shall be built.

Jordi Cussó explains it below¹:

“The Letter of Peace begins and ends with the word ‘friends’; this is the opening and closing word. The remainder of its content is included within. It is a path to follow: you must part from friendship to reach friendship. We begin with a relationship based on common bloodlines, justice, and history to reach a relationship based on freedom and love.

To build peace we must not become complacent with our origin: being born into a family, in a town, in a country or the notion that this has produced sufficient ties to others. We must look ahead and understand that friendship must be achieved based on a freedom that will allow us to form new and strong ties of solidarity.

Feeling obliged, imposed upon, “I have to”, complaining, fatalism, resignation, and the norm do not provide a solid base on which to erect peace. Whenever we have a personal interest or atypical circumstance we must appeal to established laws. All too often this appeal is conditioned and manipulated to meet personal interests.

Negotiations, agreements and the desire to attain a specific result are not sufficient to achieve solidarity, as it will either dissolve when the results have been achieved, and if they are not, we will get tired of trying to overcome those in our way.

Only when brothers, neighbors, friends, citizens, and contemporaries along with all their limitations, issues and interests freely accept one another will they be able to love each other. Freedom is a good foundation for friendship. It allows us to partake not only in peace but also in celebration. We must transcend from friendships that arise out of circumstance (such as those resulting from bloodlines or nationality), to free and grateful friendships. This friendship is universal and solid because it is free. True friends are friends without resentments.”

¹ J. Cusso, “*La Carta de la Paz, un itinerario de evidencias*”, en J. Rigor y Otros, *Convivencia en el siglo XXI: La Carta de la Paz*. Barcelona, 1995. p. 71-72