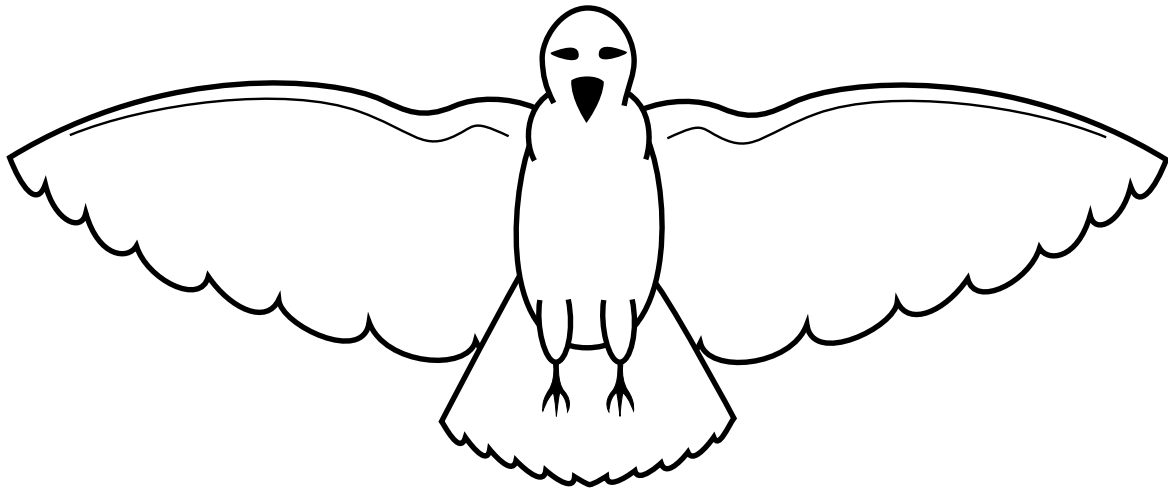


Creating a **Peace Plan**



**Revealing the Peace That
Passes All Understanding**

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with Rev. Marcia Sutton


www.GracefulWays.org

God's the Peace That I Am



Revealing the Peace That Passes All Understanding

Whenever adversity enters our lives, our human tendency is to immediately react in some self-defeating manner, or to simply *'stew in our suffering'* until our problem eventually resolves itself, one way or another. However, there is a better way to deal with the misfortunes of life, and that is to stop thinking about our problems and to start thinking about God *instead*.

This simple practice has been called the *'Golden Key'* of self transformation. It is the means by which we can create a *'Peace that passes all understanding.'* (Phil. 4:7) In other words, it is a Peace that is not dependent on outer conditions. Instead, it is a Peace that comes from inside out of us to miraculously change the conditions and circumstances of our lives.

The key to developing such a Peace is to have a simple Plan that we can rely on in the face of adversity. Such a Plan is the means by which we turn our desperation into the inspiration that will bring newness into our lives.

We can create our very own Peace Plan by simply developing a list of the *'Top Ten Ways to think about God,'* instead of our problems. Such a Plan will be unique to each of us, and can only be developed on the basis of our own understanding and personal experience.

The Principle of the Peace Plan

The spiritual Principle from which our Peace Plan draws its power is known as the universal *'Law of Worship,'* which is simply stated as:

'Whatever we worship we become.'

Keep in mind that to worship something is simply to give it our *'full attention.'* Consequently, whenever we give the Divine our full attention, by thinking about God instead of our problems, we tend to become like God. Furthermore, the scriptures tell us that God is Love, and Love is the *'awareness of oneness that changes all things for good.'* In other words, It changes them for the better, and forever.

Consequently, whenever we begin to think about God instead of our problems, our problems begin to change into something good through the power of *'God's Love,'* that flows from the inside out of us.

On the other hand, we must remember that *worry* is a form of *'problem worship.'* Consequently, whenever we *worry*, we tend to become like our problems, instead of what we want to be, which is something good, like God.

Creating a Personal Peace Plan

Your *'Peace Plan'* will simply be a list of the *'Top Ten Ways'* that you choose to think about God, instead of your problem. These can be any activities of your body, mind or spirit that bring about a sense of inner Peace and Inspiration.

Following are a few general suggestions to get you started:

- **Take** some immediate action to break your mind's obsession with your problem, so you can begin to start thinking about God instead. (See the attached *'Quick Stop Prayers'*)

- **Say** something True by reading aloud a favorite Scripture or passage from a favorite spiritual book. (See the attachment 'Two Sacred Scriptures'.)
- **Pray** in your own words, or in the words of other inspired teachers. (See the attachment 'Two Precious Prayers,' also the 'Love Prayer'.)
- **Meditate** on a mantra, or on your breath, or in whatever way brings you inner Peace.
- **Do** something physical that you enjoy, such as hiking, painting, cooking or playing tennis.
- **Sing** a favorite chanting hymn, or spiritually inspiring love song.
- **Read** a favorite spiritual book, or Sacred Scripture such as the Bible, the Koran or the Bagavad Gita.
- **Watch** a favorite spiritually inspiring movie or TV program.
- **Go** to a favorite place where you feel at peace and closer to God, such as in nature, at church, or perhaps in some spiritual bookstore.
- **Give** something to others, such as a gift, a helping hand or just a kind word.
- **Listen** to your favorite spiritual music, or to the recorded talks of an inspiring spiritual teacher.
- **Smell** something pleasant such as fresh flowers, fragrant incense, an essential oil or a favorite perfume.
- **Take** a break, a hot bath or a moment for your self.
- **Teach** others how to find inner Peace by sharing the ways that work for you.

It is highly suggested that you take some time to develop your personal Peace Plan, and allow it to evolve in conjunction with your *'Daily Dedicated Spiritual Practice.'*

For this purpose it is recommended that you read aloud on a daily basis the attached *'Prayer for Peace of Mind'* by Ernest Holmes. Do this for thirty days, and jot down one or two ideas that come to you each day that will reveal your own inner Peace.

It is also suggested that you write down each of your ideas on a separate 3x5 index card, so that they can be easily rearranged in order to prioritize them, with the most potent and practical practices on the top. You could also use a computer for this same purpose.

At the end of the thirty days, assemble the *'Top Ten Ways'* that you plan to think about God, instead of your problem, and write them out on the attached worksheet entitled *'My Peace Plan.'* You can use the large full page version. Or, you might find it more convenient to use the half sheet version, which is designed for you to fold in half and place in a *'Personal Information Manager'* binder.

Another alternative is to assemble your Peace Plan in a computer, or other electronic device that you use with regularity, such as a *'Smart Phone.'* **The most important thing is to have your Plan in a handy form where it can be quickly referred to whenever you need to use it.**

Using Your Peace Plan

Once you have assembled your Peace Plan, it is time to put it into practice. Following are ways that you can use your Plan to good advantage:

- **Put your Peace Plan into your heart.** You probably used your head to put your Plan together. Now you must empower it by putting it into your heart. You can do this by reading it aloud, once a day for thirty days. When your head and your

heart are in agreement, something wonderful will always happen.

- **Make your Peace Plan pleasing.** Your Plan will be more useful if it is placed in an attractive and convenient format that expresses your own personal taste. You might want to print it out on decorative or colored paper, and use a pleasing, easy to read font style.
- **Keep your Peace Plan handy.** You should probably have a few copies that can be strategically placed where you will frequently see them. You might even want to frame a copy and hang it on the wall in your home or office.
- **Practice using your Peace Plan.** Don't wait for disaster to strike before you actually use your Peace Plan. Instead, turn the elements of your Plan into a form of *'daily dedicated spiritual practice.'* Ironically, if you do this, you will avoid many of the problems that you created the Plan to deal with. Furthermore, you will find that its *fun* to think about God, even when you don't have a problem.
- **Use your Peace Plan.** If a problem should ever arise in your experience of life, turn immediately to your Peace Plan. Don't waste time with worry, and don't attempt to solve your problem until you first have peace of mind. Instead, go straight to your Peace Plan, and begin to do the things that will help you to think about God, instead of your problem. Often you will come up with simple solutions to your problems in the midst of thinking about God. Other times, you will find that thinking about God will *dissolve* your problems

instead of *solving* them, and they will seem to miraculously disappear. Also, keep in mind that thinking about God will deepen your faith, and *'your faith can do what you don't know how to.'*

- **Revise your Peace Plan.** Because you are an evolving being, your Plan will need to evolve as well. By frequently reviewing and updating your Plan, you will keep it alive and active in your life.
- **Share your Peace Plan.** By sharing your Peace Plan with other *'God loving,'* and supportive souls, it will be greatly empowered. This is because of the *'power of agreement,'* that was promised by God through Jesus, who said, *"If two of you agree on earth concerning anything, it shall be done by my Father who is in Heaven."* (Matt. 18:19)

Additional Tips and Suggestions

- When you are reciting the *'Prayer for Peace of Mind.'* you might try doing it three times in succession. First use your normal tone of voice, then repeat it in a very loud voice. Finally, perform a third recitation in a very soft whisper voice,
- If you are dieting, put a copy of your Peace Plan on your refrigerator, since your Plan is comprised of things you can do to think about God, instead of overeating.
- Here's a little affirmation that captures the essence of the Peace Plan Practice:

*"When I'm in adversity,
I think Universally.
When I am in harmony,
Then I think Individually."*

Rev. Lloyd Strom

August 2013



I am at Peace in knowing that my Spirit is the Light of the Living God within me. My Spirit is the Principle of Peace within me. My Spirit is the manifestation of Love within me. In the Presence of my Spirit my mind is poised in Peace and Beauty. All sense of fear and doubt is gone. I rest in calm trust and rely on the Laws of Spirit to bring good into my experience of Life.

I contend with none, argue with none, and am filled with wonderful Peace and Light. There is no uncertainty about my future and no fear as a result of my past. I live in the eternal Now, which is filled with good alone. Goodness and Beauty follow me. Happiness and Wholeness fill my entire being with the realization of Love and the revelation of Perfection.

I accept that my Spirit is the Light of the Living God within me. Therefore, my blessed Soul is now Divine and complete. It has no worries and no fears. It is Whole, Complete and Satisfied. I look at the present moment and find that it is very good, simply because I am Alive. I look back over all previous experience and find that it was also very good, for it has brought me to this present moment, where I am Alive. I look towards the future and find that it is also very good, for it provides me with the opportunity to express my Life more abundantly than I have ever done before. My Spirit, which is the Light of the Living God within me, is acting through me, and all around me, as the Truth of that which I Am.

I trust in my Spirit, the Light of the Living God within me. I am filled with Confidence. I am poised in Love and Reason. I am blessed by the perfect Laws of Truth, and the complete Presence of Beauty.

I am now made Whole, Perfect and Complete by my Spirit, the Light of the Living God within me. Amen. 🙏

This is a universalized version of a healing prayer by Ernest Holmes.

Principle of the Prayer

The 'QuickStop' Prayer is an easy spiritual practice designed to dispel troubling thoughts the moment they arise. This prayer practice is based on the Spiritual Truth that any thought that does not reveal something good for yourself or another is a 'lie from the beginning.'

Form of the Prayer

• There are five basic elements to this prayer process:

1. First, stop the thought process.
2. Then, say what you don't believe.
3. Then, say what you do believe.
4. Then, say why you believe what you believe.
5. Finally, conclude with a statement of covenant, or acceptance.

• Following is the universal form of the prayer which is to be individualized by you to meet each specific need that you may have:

STOP! Any thought that does *not* reveal (Insert Something Good) for me, or for another is a lie from the beginning. I do not believe in lies. I believe in the Word of God. For it is written: (Insert a Scriptural Promise). Amen!

• Here is a general example of the prayer:

STOP! Any thought that does *not* reveal something good for me is a lie from the beginning. I do not believe in lies. I believe in the Word of God. For it is written: "All things work together for the good of those who love God." Amen! (Romans 8:28)

Practice of the Prayer

- Immediately use this prayer anytime you have a thought that causes you to suffer.
- Whenever possible, say the prayer aloud with as much authority as you can muster.
- If you are in a public place, you may wish to perform the prayer silently.
- When possible, clap your hands in front of your face when you say the beginning word "STOP." Then hold your hands in a prayer position as you say the rest of the prayer. Conclude by placing your hands over your heart and bowing your head as you finish with your "Amen," or another alternative ending.
- Other effective alternative endings are: "It is finished." "So be it now." "That's the Truth." "It's in God's hands now." "I am grateful God is gracious."
- Your scriptural passage can be any statement of Truth that inspires you and awakens your faith. Try to personalize the wording of your passage so that it makes sense in the context of the overall prayer.
- You are encouraged to write your own specific prayer for any continuing thought pattern that is troubling you. Then, continue to use that prayer until the pattern is gone, no matter how long it takes. The harder it is to do, the greater the healing effect it will have.

Examples of the Prayer

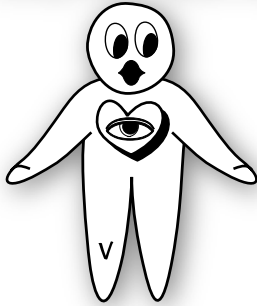
STOP! Any thought that does *not* reveal perfect health for me is a lie from the beginning. I do not believe in lies. I believe in the Word of God. For it is written: "The Lord forgives all my iniquities and heals all my diseases." Amen. (Psalms 103:3)

STOP! Any thought that does *not* reveal prosperity for me is a lie from the beginning. I do not believe in lies. I believe in the Word of God. For it is written: "The Lord is my shepherd and I shall not want," and that's the Truth. (Psalms 23:1)

Here's the hardest one of them all:

STOP! Any thought that does *not* reveal my love for (name of someone you're upset with) is a lie from the beginning. I do not believe in lies. I believe in Jesus Christ. For it is written: "You shall love one another as I have loved you." Amen. (John 13:34)

I Accept You... I Bless You...



The Two Outcomes of Love

If you are willing to Love what you hate, it will either: 1) Change; or 2) Go away.

Purpose: Self-Contemplation

Intention: To duplicate the activity of Love by 'accepting and blessing' all that arises in your experience of life.

Principle:

Until you can accept the worst, the best can never be. If your energy and attention is always devoted to keeping something bad from happening, it cannot be used to create something new and better in your life. The underlying principles that lie behind this practice are:

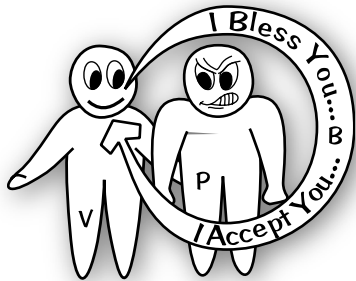
Whatever you resist will persist and grow stronger.

Whatever you accept you can change.

Whatever you bless, you will change for good.

(For the better and forever.)

The Love Prayer Procedure



Other Options:

"I Accept This...I Bless This."

"I Accept My Thoughts...I Bless My Thoughts."

"I Accept My Feelings...I Bless My Feelings."

"I Accept Myself...I Bless Myself."

"I Accept ____ ...I Bless ____."

"I am Accepting...I am Blessing."

Give your full attention to whoever or whatever is presently before you. As distracting thoughts and judgments arise in your mind, gently push them aside in order to engage the following procedure:

On your inhale, silently say: "I Accept You..."

On your exhale, silently say: "I Bless You..."

Once your mind has quieted down, see if you can hold your attention steadily upon the person you are noticing or listening to. As your mind again intrudes, notice where it wants to go, and then gently bring it back to *stillness*, using the procedure described above.

Meditation

Meditation is the art of *stilling* the mind to listen to the *silent* voice of God. Therefore, this technique can also be used for this purpose by simply 'accepting and blessing' intruding thoughts and feelings as they arise. (See 'Other Options' to the left.)

An Easy Way to Practice



A way to practice this technique is by using our television. We all know certain individuals who regularly appear on television who upset us in some fashion. As a form of spiritual practice, you can tune to the programs where these people appear, and then attempt to really listen to them. If they are extremely upsetting to you, try turning off the sound, and use the 'Love Prayer' procedure until you are *calm* once again. Then, very gradually begin turning up the volume. Once you have developed the capacity to listen to these upsetting individuals in a "mood of love," you have taken one more step towards finding heaven on earth.

& My Lord's Prayer

Our Father which art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done in earth,
as it is in heaven.
Give me this day my daily bread.
And forgive me my debts,
as I forgive my debtors.
And lead me not into temptation,
but deliver me from evil;
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power,
and the glory, forever.

Amen. ...Matthew 6:9-13

& The Serenity Prayer

God grant me the serenity to accept
the things I cannot change,
the courage to change the things I can,
and the wisdom to know the difference.

🕊️ The Twentythird Psalm

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures: he leads me beside the still waters.

He restores my soul: he leads me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for you are with me; your rod and your staff they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: you anoint my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

...Psalms 23:1-6

🕊️ The One Hundred and Third Psalm

Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:

Who forgives all my iniquities; who heals all my diseases;

Who redeems my life from destruction; who crowns me with loving kindness and tender mercies;

Who satisfies my mouth with good things; so that my youth is renewed like the eagle's.

Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

...Psalms 103:1-5

Just as a single snapshot could not show us a whole house, likewise a single description could hardly capture the whole essence of the spiritual experience of Peace. Therefore, we can only come to understand the nature of Peace by looking at it from as many different views as possible. Following is a short collection of notable quotes about Peace. By considering how each one of these individuals 'sees' the nature of Peace, we will begin to develop a more holistic view of what Peace really means.

Jesus Christ

"Peace I leave with you, my *peace* I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." - John 14:27

Ernest Holmes

"Because God is *Peace* and because God is in you, the *Peace* of God must also be in you. You should no longer go in search of *Peace*, for this is confusion... *Peace* is brought about through a conscious unity of our personal being with the inner principle of our life — that underlying current, flowing from a divine center is pressing ever outward into expression in our lives."

The Buddha

"*Peace* comes from within you Do not seek it outside of yourself."

William Gladstone

"We look forward to the time when the Power of Love will replace the Love of Power. Then will our world know the blessings of *peace*."

Walt Whitman

"*Peace* is always beautiful."

The Peace Song

Let there be *peace* on earth... and let it begin with me."

Mark Twain

"From the cradle to the grave a person never does a single thing which has any first and foremost objective, save one — to secure *peace* of mind, spiritual comfort for themselves."

Isaiah

"The Lord will keep us in perfect *peace*, when our mind is stayed on Him." -Isaiah 26:3

Albert Einstein

"*Peace* cannot be kept by force. It can only be achieved by understanding."

Emma Curtis Hopkins

"You are a radiator of health, harmony and *peace* if you love this law: *God is the strength of my heart*."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

"Nothing can bring you lasting *peace* but the triumph of Principles."

Lao Tse

"If there is to be *peace* in the world... there must be *peace* in the heart."

Lloyd Strom

"Heaven is not a place where we go when we die, it is the *peace* we receive when we choose to love."

Charles Fillmore

"*Peace* is the harmony and tranquility derived from an awareness of the Christ consciousness. Steadfast affirmation of *peace* will harmonize the whole body structure and open the way to attainment of health conditions in mind and body."

Bhagavad Gita (12:12)

"Better indeed is knowledge than unconscious action. Better than knowledge is meditation. But better still is the surrender of attachment to results, because what follows is immediate *peace*."

Mother Theresa

"The fruit of Silence is ...Prayer;
The fruit of Prayer is ...Faith;
The fruit of Faith is ...Love;
The fruit of Love is ...Service;
The fruit of Service is ...*Peace*."

Following are a number of 'frequently asked questions' (FAQ's) about Spiritual Practice.

What is 'daily dedicated spiritual practice'?

'Daily dedicated spiritual practice' is the time that is spent each day exclusively devoted to developing a greater awareness of God in your life. It is the time spent in meditation, prayer and *spiritual study*. Although it is desirable to bring a spiritual perspective into every activity that you engage in, dedicated practice has no other activity mixed in with it. Don't delude yourself with rationalizations such as, "I kind of meditate while I'm mowing the lawn." While that may be true, it is not 'dedicated spiritual practice.'

Why do I need to study?

Ideally meditation and prayer should be all that you need for a successful dedicated spiritual practice. However, when you study the Principles of Truth, your prayer and meditation will become more productive. This is because the essence of productivity is to apply knowledge to whatever it is that you are doing. Spiritual Practice is no exception to this principle. Additionally, whenever you read 'sacred scriptures' or the teachings of enlightened masters, you mysteriously connect with a universal transmission of Truth emanating from higher spiritual sources.

How much time should I spend each day?

Whatever amount of time that you are willing to spend on a daily basis is the right amount. It is better to start with a few minutes a day on a regular and consistent basis than to attempt to spend a large amount of time that will be difficult to sustain. The ideal would be to spend 10% of your day in dedicated spiritual practice. However, if you are willing to begin with a few minutes a day on a regular and consistent basis, your practice will grow naturally over time into a longer session that will be easy to sustain.

Does it all have to be at the same time?

Your total daily practice can be broken up into two or three sessions throughout the day. An early morning and an evening session would be highly desirable. However, all sessions should be scheduled at fairly regular and consistent times. Additionally, it is advisable to designate one of those sessions as your 'anchor practice' that you never miss without fail.

Where's the best place to practice?

Any place that is quiet, comfortable and relatively free of distractions. The actual location is not as important as the fact that you consistently go to the same place. It would be best if you could set a place aside that is used for no other purpose. What you will find is that, after a time, simply going to that place will immediately draw you into a higher state of consciousness. It is generally recommended that you do not attempt to perform spiritual practice in your bed, which is place of *sleep*. The purpose of spiritual practice is to 'wake up.'

Do I need any special materials or apparatus?

Not really, although you may find it beneficial to furnish you sacred space with various '*forms of remembrance*' of the Divine, such as sacred images, flowers, candles, incense, etc. However, it is important to remember that these objects have no power in and of themselves, except to remind you of the '*divinity that is within you.*'

Are there any special techniques involved?

There is no one perfect technique or practice that is right for everyone. A wide variety of specific techniques are available through the many excellent spiritual texts that are currently available to us in almost any bookstore. Ask your 'Higher Wisdom Self' for guidance and select those practices that *feel* right for you. Never do anything that seems bizarre or unusual. Look for ways to practice that are both challenging and productive. Be prepared to modify your practice as you spiritually evolve and mature.

Is Spiritual Practice hard to do?

All spiritual practice is inherently *pleasurable*. The only thing difficult about it is overcoming the resistance to doing it. Your greatest obstacle will always be the need to occasionally face your inner fears. However, it is much easier to face those fears in your '*prayer chair*' than out on the street in your day-to-day life. Either way, your hidden fears will continue to come upon you until they are resolved.

What's the most important aspect of practice?

The single most important thing is to just '*show up*' each day. This demonstrates your willingness to be changed. God will do the rest.

The Golden Key of Self-Transformation

The dissolution of my problems occurs when I stop thinking about my problems, and start thinking about God instead.

My Affirmation of Intention (Read aloud)

If ever I have a problem, it is my intention to think about God instead of my problem by doing the following things:

1. *I will*

2. *I will*

3. *I will*

4. *I will*

5. *I will*

6. *I will*

7. *I will*

8. *I will*

9. *I will*

10. *I will*

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