



## Peace - What Does it Mean to You?

What does *Peace* mean to you? No war? A positive bank balance? Time with your family, away from work?

For many people in the world, Peace seems an impossible dream. But we are the lucky ones. We can choose to be at Peace. By “Peace” I don’t mean anything passive. Rather, the choice to be at Peace is a conscious action involving getting to know what is really, really important to your well-being, and making conscious, ethical choices to defend that against all attackers.

An article sent to me by a friend told of “Heart as a Weapon,” how some people use their feelings to wound or destroy the Peace of others. They use words like “You hurt my feelings” when others stand up for their own rights. Next time this happens to you, I invite you to step back from the situation for a moment, and consider your choices. Will you respond by thinking “Oh dear. I’d better not say what I feel. I might upset her more”? Or “I’ll show him. No one’s going to manipulate ME!”?

Could there be a third way to respond?

Recently, I was walking along a beach beside low sand dunes, pondering on this possibility for my response to someone who was using her heart as a weapon against me. Looking up, I spied a clump of marram grass perched on the top of one of the dunes. Its leaves glistened in the sunlight. As it rustled in the wind the grass seemed to invite closer inspection. Plunging my feet into the warm sand of the dune, one after the other, I climbed to the top and sank down to rest beside it.

The grass was anchored firmly in the shifting dune, not one plant but many. It must have been there for a long time. I wondered how this clump of plants could thrive in such a harsh, shifting environment. Then it dawned on me that this plant must have claimed its patch and put down deep roots before it grew and divided. Those roots held the plant safe in the storms that rage across from the sea and shift these dunes. So the plant could grow and create new plants while still being nourished by the earth.

When I applied this analogy to my question, I could see that I, too, could put down deep roots by being clear about what was important to me and to the direction that my life was taking at the time. Imagining myself standing firmly in this “root” I could see what the third way would be.

It was so simple.

All I had to do was to speak from my heart, speak of what was true to me. It didn’t matter if the other person misunderstood or manipulated what I said. I would be at Peace, knowing that I had been true to myself and to my life’s direction.

Reaching out I patted the sharp leaves of the marram grass; the only way I could think of to show my gratitude for this revelation. Then I stood up, brushed the sand off my legs and ran down the soft sand of the dune.

As I walked back along the beach, the waves washing my feet with briny kisses, I knew what my response would be. A well of ... quiet seemed to fill my chest.

So this was what it was like to be at Peace