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THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR CLIENTS AND FRIENDS OF

**N E W V E N T U R E S W E S T**

## Peace In Our Time

by James Flaherty

In the States we are in the fourth year of a foreign war that each week takes the lives of 15 US soldiers, wounds 150 and costs \$500 million dollars—and that, of course, is just one of the many sides in one of many current wars. Our human engagement with (some would say our fascination with or our business strategy based upon) war is not ending soon. Violence and abuse also appear many other places: in our homes, schools, religious shrines, places of business, on our streets and highways, restaurants—nearly everywhere, it seems.

And peace, the subject of this article, is not merely the absence of abuse and violence; it's our chance as humans to deeply embrace the moment and each other with joy, trust and equanimity. We have, it seems then, a long way to go before we can have peace; and maybe it's impossible. Well, that conclusion would make this article very short (which might be a good thing) but it would leave us where we started, probably: believing that peace is not possible, or at least not very realistic. Maybe there's a different way to come at this situation? Perhaps there's a way forward?

If you and I were talking now I'd ask you what you see, have to say, think about the chance for peace—but we're speaking in this different way—so maybe you can stop for a moment and listen to yourself. How could you bring peace? How could I? How could we?

Here's my view today. I/we cannot base our experience of peace upon events in our life or in the community or in the world at large. This is an odd thing to say in a way. Isn't peace the experience that appears automatically in response to particular events? How can I be at peace when the world around me isn't? Wouldn't that just be selfish, and a cruel way to ignore the torments of others? Maybe so.

But what if peace were not an automatic experience that only comes when events are right (where are the right events, and do they last?) but was instead a natural way for us to be in the face of varying events? What if peace, as described above, were our normal state: a constitutive part of us (which means it's always available to us, no matter the surrounding circumstances, and not because we manipulated ourselves so as to not care, or succeeded somehow in keeping the world away)? Well, if we began with that premise then we could get very curious about how we are blocking this home-base state from being present.

All of what I'm saying may be sounding quite strange, but please do not dismiss it without testing it for yourself; because in the end, who cares how things sound or seem if they work? (Some ways to check are coming up soon.) So I'm going into all this because I keep finding that our bringing peace to difficult circumstances is a tremendous help to all involved (see the quote in the next section for more on this). Instead of waiting for good things to happen so we can feel peaceful, let's instead settle into peacefulness and bring it to unsettling events. This may sound daunting—and I, for one, often fail at it—but nonetheless it's totally worth addressing, and the world sure needs it.

OK; first some ways to see if peace is our “natural” state. By this I mean we do not have to do something to have it be present, but rather, it's present when we connect to life around us—when we stop doing particular behaviors.

- When you are released from worry and self-concern, do you feel peaceful?
- When you release from obsession with winning and instead work to harmonize with what's happening, do you feel peaceful?
- When you stop fantasizing about what may happen and what that will mean, then, to what you care about, do you feel peaceful?
- When else do you feel peaceful? How did that happen?

Now a bit on how to cultivate peacefulness. I just pointed to some ways: by releasing ourselves from those behaviors we can be more in peace. Here are some practices you could take on:

- Stop each day no matter what is happening and be still, inside and out, for 5-60 minutes.
- Five times each day stop and find yourself—who you are, what it feels like to be you just then—remember what you are up to with your life.
- Keep a notepad with you and write down whatever thoughts are going around and around.
- Each week make a list of what you are grateful for. Within a day of writing the list, spend 15-30 minutes letting yourself feel the gratitude in your body.
- Every ten days make a list of what/who you are resenting. Within a day of making the list, begin to take action, make requests, forgive—to let go of as much of the resentment as possible.

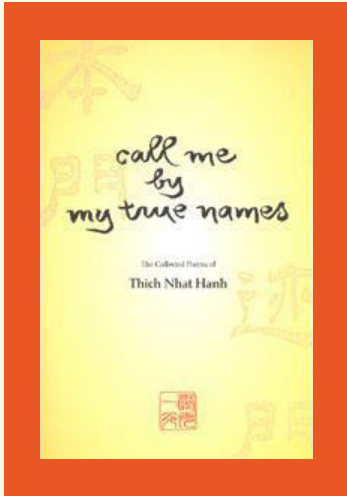
That's a start. I could not go into what to do, how to proceed, when you have breakdowns in taking on what I presented. That would be particular to you and is probably best addressed with someone skillful who knows you well—say, an Integral Coach.

A big part of what I wanted to say here is that peace is something we can bring to events, and not something for us to get from them. Peace is a quality of us that we can settle into and cultivate, and in that sense, we can have peace in our time. Please take this on.

There's more on this in the Practice of the Quarter and in the quote and poem that follow.

Take care of yourself.

QUOTE OF THE QUARTER



From *Call Me By My True Names*  
by **Thich Nhat Hanh**

The boat people said that every time their small boats were caught in a storm, their life was in great danger. They also said that if it happens that there is one person on the boat who keeps calm and does not panic, that would be a great help because the personality of such a person would inspire faith, confidence. People would listen to him, keep serene, and there is a chance for the whole boat to come out of the danger.

I have said before that our Earth is somehow like a small boat. Yes, compared to other big things in the cosmos, it is a very small boat, and it is in danger of sinking. We need such a person to inspire us with calm confidence, to tell us what to do. And who is that person? The Mahayana Buddhist Sutras tell you one thing: you are that person. If you are yourself, if you are your best, then you are that person. And it is only with such a person, calm, lucid, aware, solid, that our situation could be avoided.

POEM OF THE QUARTER



from *Poems New and Collected 1957–1997*

**NO TITLE REQUIRED**  
by **Wisława Szymborska**

It has come to this: I'm sitting under a tree  
beside a river  
on a sunny morning.  
It's an insignificant event  
and won't go down in history.  
It's not battles and pacts,  
where motives are scrutinized,  
or noteworthy tyrannicides.

And yet I'm sitting by this river, that's a fact.  
And since I'm here  
I must have come from somewhere,  
and before that  
I must have turned up in many other places,  
exactly like the conquerors of nations  
before setting sail.

Even a passing moment has its fertile past,  
its Friday before Saturday,  
its May before June.  
Its horizons are no less real  
than those that a marshal's field glasses might scan.

This tree is a poplar that's been rooted here for years.  
The river is the Raba; it didn't spring up yesterday.  
The path leading through the bushes  
wasn't beaten last week.  
The wind had to blow the clouds here  
before it could blow them away.

And though nothing much is going on nearby,  
the world is no poorer in details for that.  
It's just as grounded, just as definite  
as when migrating races held it captive.

*(continued)*

POEM OF THE QUARTER



*(continued from page 4)*

Conspiracies aren't the only things shrouded in silence.  
 Retinues of reasons don't trail coronations alone.  
 Anniversaries of revolutions may roll around,  
 but so do oval pebbles encircling the bay.

The tapestry of circumstance is intricate and dense.  
 Ants stitching in the grass.  
 The grass sewn into the ground.  
 The pattern of a wave being needled by a twig.

So it happens that I am and look.  
 Above me a white butterfly is fluttering through the air  
 on wings that are its alone,  
 and a shadow skims through my hands  
 that is none other than itself, no one else's but its own.

When I see such things, I'm no longer sure  
 that what's important  
 is more important than what's not.



PRACTICE OF THE QUARTER

**Peace is Our Natural State**

Please do this practice daily for 30–60 days.

Stop yourself 3 times each day, say at noon, 6 pm, and at the end of your day, and write out your answers to the following questions. On the following day take what you learned from the previous day into action.

During this period of time:

1. What interpretation/reaction of mine disturbed my peacefulness? Write down exactly what interpretation you made.
2. What state of mind, somatic state, mood was the background for this disturbance? How am I living that brought about this background state?
3. What brought me back to peacefulness? What effect did my lack of peacefulness have on others? On my relationship with them?
4. What did I learn about how I can live more peacefully from this exercise?

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**Master Class: Autumn 2006  
with Sarita Chawla  
Composing Our Lives through Language And Narrative**

“We are between stories. The old story, the account of how the world came to be and how we fit into it, is no longer effective. Yet we have not learned the new story.” —Thomas Berry, *The Dream of the Earth*

Life often unfolds through conditioning, forces of culture, or being confused and lost. This Master Class will empower us to craft our lives considering language, conversations, commitment, listening and narrative, so that who we truly are can compose and conduct the symphony of our lives.

We will engage in exercises and practices of deeply listening to and seeing the patterns of our lives in a way that frees us from stories that “have us,” to an emergent design that dances with life itself.

**Washington DC: October 1**  
**San Francisco: October 10 and October 11** (two separate classes)  
**Tuition: \$375**

The Master Class is for graduates of the *Professional Coaching Course* only. It counts for one year of recertification for certified Integral Coaches.

To register, call 800.332.4618 or email Ellen King at [grads@newventureswest.com](mailto:grads@newventureswest.com)

BOOK OF THE QUARTER

***Twilight of the Superheroes***  
 by Deborah Eisenberg  
 Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 2006  
 Hardcover, 225 pages

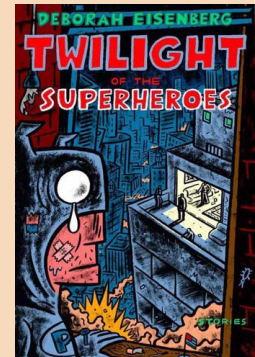
Artists distill for us the emotions, values and interpretations we live in so we can see them, feel them, meet them. Strange as it may seem, we do not—for the most part—detect the tone of our times. We get swept up in events, our personal concerns, and miss the mist through which we are seeing the world. Odd, isn't it, when the apple in a Dutch still life seems more real than the one on the table next to us? Or when the sadness in a Faulkner novel touches us more deeply than the sadness of faces we pass on the street? Artists show us what we have been looking at (encountering) and not seeing (experiencing). We need them desperately to be our full selves.

This quarter's book, a collection of short stories, is by a wondrous contemporary artist, Deborah Eisenberg. Each story draws the reader inexorably into a fully realized world whose light illuminates our own, showing us what we have overlooked. Each ends with a strong emotional charge that brings us more alive, makes us more sensitive, more in wonder, and moved and touched in mysterious ways. Visit these places and meet yourself in fresh ways.

Like a Vermeer painting: small, gem-like, beautifully made and infinitely deep.

—James Flaherty

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Summary

Scale 0-5



Usefulness



Accessibility



Rigor



Potential to Change Reader

COURSE SCHEDULE

**Coaching Roundtables**

*One-day free seminars for graduates and guests.*

**San Francisco** June 10  
September 9

**Cost:** Free

**Coaching to Excellence**

*Two interactive days on the foundations of coaching.*

**Boston** TBA  
**San Francisco** June 28–29  
July 26–27  
September 20–21

**Chicago** June 27–28

**Cost:** \$595

**Integral Coaching Principles**

*Three days for experienced coaches from other schools and disciplines.*

**San Francisco** August 29–31  
**Washington D.C.** January 23–25

**Cost:** \$850

**Professional Coaching Course**

*Certification program for independent and corporate coaches.*

Year-long programs begin:

**San Francisco** August 2006  
November 2006

**Cost:** \$7600

**Study Group with James**

*Monthly conference calls with guest authors applying current texts to coaching cases.*

Quarters begin January, April, July, October.

**Cost:** \$375/Quarter

**Master Classes**

*A day of continuing education for PCC graduates.*

**San Francisco** October 10  
October 11

**Washington D.C.** October 1

**Cost:** \$375

For further information or to register, call our office at 415.221.4618 or 800.332.4618.

STUDY GROUP

**Great Authors for Summer Study Group**

We invite you to join us for the Book Study Group with James Flaherty for the Summer Quarter. As usual, we've got some very exciting authors and texts lined up for the series. You'll receive the book at the beginning of the month along with study questions to think about as you read. The author joins the second hour of the monthly conference call to discuss the book and to field questions from the group. Here are the texts for this quarter:

*Solving Tough Problems* by Adam Kahane

*Shadows of the Sacred: Seeing through Spiritual Illusions* by Frances Vaughan

*This is Real and You Are Completely Unprepared*, by Rabbi Alan Lew

**Summer Call Dates: July 25, August 22, September 26**

Conference calls take place from 5 to 7 pm Pacific time (8 to 10 pm Eastern). If you miss a call, you can listen to the recording at any time within 14 days following the date of the call.

**Register by June 15** by calling 800.332.4618 and giving us your payment for the tuition of \$375. Participants must have completed *Coaching to Excellence* or the equivalent.

