

## Happiness vs. Peace

It's a new year; traditionally, a time for reflecting on the past and preparing and planning for the upcoming year. Although, I have learned from reading *The Power of Now* by Eckhart Tolle, that nothing is more important than the present moment.

Tolle says that *“True salvation is fulfillment, peace, life in all its fullness. It is to be who you are, to feel within you the good that has no opposite, the joy of Being that depends on nothing outside itself. It is felt not as a passing experience but as an abiding presence. In theistic language it is to ‘know God’-not as something outside you but as your own innermost essence. True salvation is to know yourself as an inseparable part of the timeless and formless One Life from which all that exists derives its being.”*

Tolle says that all suffering is caused by resistance to what is. He further states that fear and suffering come from either looking at the past, or from nervously anticipating the future. He poses a powerful question for each and every one of us to ask, which is, “Is anything lacking at this very moment?”

What will you and I do with this moment? Right here, Right now, at the brink of 2003.

Happy New Year! Everyone says it. Yet, Tolle teaches us that happiness is based on external circumstances, while Peace is not.

I know I have spent most of my life trying to be happy. I would buy this or that to make me happy. I would get in this or that relationship to be happy. I would move to this or that location to make me happy.

When the relationship I was in no longer made me happy, I would move on. When the location no longer made me happy, I would move. When the items I bought no longer made me happy, I would buy new things. All of this was based on outside circumstances.

Gandhi said that *“peace to be real must be unaffected by outside circumstances.”* This has been so true for me.

When you are experiencing lack or limitation in the moment, you cannot feel happy. If you have been confronted with an illness or loss, there is nothing in that experience that can make you happy. Yet you can experience Peace in the middle of loss, illness or any other situation that causes you distress. There is the Peace of God that is unshaken and at the very core of whatever you are experiencing.

The question then becomes, how do you experience peace during any situation? For me, the answer was in the teaching of Tolle, when he clarified the difference between your Life Situation and your Life.

Tolle says that your Life Situation is all that exists at the level of form. It is our human experiences, or our human circumstances. Yet, our Life, is the Ultimate Truth of us. It is unchangeable, ever available. Our Life is our Divine Energy, Our Source and Supply, Our Goodness, Our Love. All that is what many of us call “God.” Our Life is that sense of Presence or Consciousness, that place of “Being,” or “centeredness.”

Tolle says that you cannot bring healing to your Life, because it is already whole and perfect. You cannot bring peace to your Life, because it IS Peace. Yet you can bring healing or peace to your Life Situation.

This to me was a profound “A-HA.” Several months ago, I had an experience in a relationship that caused me great pain. I could not find peace in the situation. I could not feel happiness. I just felt pain. I didn’t know what to do with that pain, and there was nothing I could do to fix that pain. Yet, there was this immense power in surrendering to the pain, just sitting with it, and feeling the peace beyond the pain.

I realized that while the pain was part of my Life Situation, that it was not my Life. It was not the ultimate truth of me, and in that realization the presence of peace existed.

To me this distinction is relevant even in the things we “see” going on outside ourselves. We may turn on the television or read the newspaper and see war and violence going on. That is our Life Situation, but that is not our Life. The Ultimate Truth of the situation is that we are all one, we are all connected, and peace and love exist within each and every one of us.

Tolle says that anytime you shine the realization of the Truth, or what he calls “consciousness” or “presence” into any situation that appears to look not so peaceful or loving, that the illusion will dissolve. The presence of darkness dissolves in the power of light. The emotion of hatred or anger dissolve in the Presence of Love.

How will each and every one of us use this enormous Divine Energy that we have? Will we use it to shine light into a dark corner, or will we use it to electrocute someone?

I know that the Presence of Peace exists within each and every one of us. This New Year, instead of making resolutions and focusing on “making” the year what we want it to be, let’s instead try “being” that presence of Peace. Let’s remember to shine our God light out into the world. The power of Good, the power of God is omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent.

I would like to end this article with a prayer for you and all our fellow beings on this planet. May we all have a PEACEFUL New Year!

Infinite Presence and Divine Energy,

The energy that created the stars, the moon, the sun, the planets and the Universe. That same energy that is in me and in each and every one of us. We are all unique expressions of the Divine filled with infinite potential

I know the Truth for each and every one of us. While we may experience situations in this human level of form that appear to be non-peaceful or non-loving, I know that that is our Life Situation and not our Life. It is not the Ultimate Truth of us. By shining the Presence of our Divine Energy into that Life Situation, it is transmuted into Peace. We are the Alchemists, transforming any situation that appears non-peaceful into Peace. Because we know at this human level of form that peace is not the absence of conflict, but the Presence of God, no matter what the conflict. The light of our Presence transforms all situations. While we may not be able to experience happiness at every moment, we can experience the peace of God that is within.

We enter into this New Year, knowing that the Peace of God is in each and every one of us. We enter into this New Year with a declaration of the Truth. We give thanks for the past, and bless it and release it. We release the future, by affirming that the present is our greatest moment. This is the moment to love, this is the moment to experience peace.

As I release this prayer into the Universe, I know with full confidence and faith, that each and everyone of us have created a vortex for peace and love that spreads out to each and every person we meet or have relationship with. And I know that as each and every one of us shines our light into every situation, that world peace is a reality.

And so it is!!!

**About the Author:** Lisa Hepner is an author/ speaker telling stories that speak to the soul. She is the author of *Peaceful Earth: Spiritual Perspectives on Inner Peace and World Peace* which contains perspectives on peace from famous spiritual authors like Neale Donald Walsch, Marianne Williamson, Dan Millman, Mark Victor Hansen and more... The book also includes an entire section on Practical Peace and a section with Parables of Peace. She is also the author of an ebook titled "10 Things you can do to maintain inner peace and manifest world peace." More Info: [www.peacefulearth.org](http://www.peacefulearth.org).