

How Can I Help Bring People Together?

In the May 15th World Tribune there is a Q&A. How Can I Bring People Together When They Seem so Divided?

This is such an important question for today. And it's a question for countries around the world.

As we know from history Mahatma Gandhi and later Martin Luther King believed and used love and non-violence as a powerful and effective social force for collective transformation. Gandhi led the successful campaign for India's independence from British rule. Gandhi said there should be no impatience, no barbarity, no insolence no undue pressure. He used non-violence, passive resistance, non-cooperation and the willingness to endure suffering as a means to an end. He demonstrated that refusing to fight arms the individual with moral power. The hope is to win the opponent to friendship in this manner.

Dr Martin Luther King Jr. picked up Gandhi's teachings and used non-violence, passive resistance, and the willingness to endure suffering to address the basic racial inequalities in the United States. Through refusing to fight back he clearly exposed for the world to see the racist attitudes of the southern communities, which were acted out violently by the police to try to squash the peaceful demonstrations. I saw that hatred when I went to Selma Alabama to start the march from Selma to Montgomery.

We are seeing this again today in the mostly peaceful protests against the violence perpetrated against George Floyd. Once again we have seen the power structure come out with guns, tear gas and the military to try to stop the protests. I think one of the most moving moments was when the protesters in Washington DC sang to President Trump, "We are all in this together."

But moral authority cannot be achieved when we have groups of people who want to loot and destroy. That undercuts the message the peaceful protesters are trying to send. We are seeing that when enough people protest, there is a possibility of change. We will see how far these changes can go.

But what about each of us. How do we use our Buddhist practice, which teaches non-violence, that every living being has a Buddha nature, and that we are all one in the depths of life. So how do we respond when we are faced with the inequalities of our time.

Vincent Harding, a leading historian and confidant to Martin Luther King Jr quoted King in a dialogue with President Ikeda. “We are not called upon to like the enemy We’re called upon to love the enemy.”

How can we do that when every instinct says to fight the enemy. Bodhisattva Never Disparaging demonstrated a way of doing it for this time. He just recognized the divinity in each person, in their Buddha nature, teaching the people of his time that they all possessed the Buddha nature.

Harding went on to say that love is seeking the best for the other, helping them to discover who he or she is mean’t to be. This may end up showing them their wrong thoughts and actions to prevent future misfortune for them. Passive resistance and non-violence are ways of demonstrating these to the enemy and to the world. This is a form of compassion and hopefully it would create a situation in which enemies can become brothers and sisters and new kinds of relationships can be established. Ikeda would say that “Non-violent action is the struggle to elicit virtue and an awakening in the heart of the adversary.” When we transform our spiritual state, then we can transform our opponent through human revolution.

Ghandi and Dr King and Bodhisattva Never Disparaging all used non-violence to address the issues of their times. Now it is our time.

I think we are all called upon to examine how we will respond. Through deep reflection in front of the Gohonzon, we might answer these questions.

- Do I remain silent or do I stand up when I see racism or mistreatment of another?
- How do I handle myself in my personal relationships, in political discussions with an opponent, as an employer, as a parent? Do I try to create unity or do I create disunity?
- Am I trying to control my significant others, trying to get something from them, or am I seeking the best for them.
- How do I treat others. Do I respect their Buddha nature or do I do things that would denigrate it?
- What can I do in my area of influence to support the dignity of human life?
- Do I seek personal happiness at the exclusion and expense of others or by compassion that is concerned with both my own and others’ welfare? Do I refuse to build my happiness on the misfortune of others?
- Do I see that what is done to one can be done to all, or do I see other people as unconnected to me?

These are difficult questions but I think we each need to determine to the best of our ability whether we are contributing to the problem or are part of the solution?

Summary:

Looking at the events going on in the United States we looked at how Ghandi and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr and Bodhisattva Never Disparaging were each a stand for human rights in their time. Human rights are under siege in many countries around the world in our time.

Now it is our time, and we must ask ourselves am I using my Buddhist practice to self-reflect on whether I am a stand for human rights or whether there's room for improvement.

URL's

Did You Know Your Life Is Your Curriculum? <https://wp.me/p3V1J9-1bl>

Know How to Use Troubles to Nourish Your Growth <https://wp.me/p3V1J9-ZX>

Faith Slipped? 6 Ways to Get Back on Track <https://wp.me/p3V1J9-UA>

Comments:

I want to tell you what is going on in my personal life.

I have loved doing this vlog and interacting with all of you. I've done a great deal of study in our Buddhist tradition about what helps and what hinders goal outcomes.

I discovered the literature gives hints in certain directions but doesn't really develop the discussion. Because I am fascinated by what helps and hinders people from being successful in their lives, I wanted to explore the topic further, outside the Buddhist tradition.

This has led me to become certified as a DreamBuilder life coach and I have now started a business as a life coach working with people to help them create lives they would truly love living. Due to this additional responsibility, I am going to reduce this vlog to one a month on the first Thursday of the month.

I hope to remain in contact with all of you and continue to hear from you, your questions comments and what you want to hear about. I'll see you on the first Thursday of the month.