

THE LITTLE BOOK OF

# PEACE



A PEACEFUL WORLD IS POSSIBLE

by Wendy Ellyatt

# THE LITTLE BOOK OF PEACE

“THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC IMPACT OF VIOLENCE WAS \$14.1 TRILLION PPP IN 2018, EQUIVALENT TO 11.2 PER CENT OF GLOBAL GDP OR \$1,853 PER PERSON.

IN THE TEN COUNTRIES MOST AFFECTED BY VIOLENCE, THE AVERAGE ECONOMIC COST WAS EQUIVALENT TO 35% OF GDP, COMPARED TO 3.3% IN THE TEN LEAST AFFECTED.

THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF VIOLENCE MODEL INCLUDED DATA ON SUICIDE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE 2019 GPI. THE REPORT FINDS THAT THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF SUICIDE IS HIGHER THAN THAT OF ARMED CONFLICT, AMOUNTING TO \$737 BILLION IN 2018”.

2019 GLOBAL PEACE INDEX



# 2020 IS A TIME OF GREAT OPPORTUNITY FOR THE CREATION OF A MORE PEACEFUL WORLD. BECAUSE WE ARE ALREADY UNITED

*“Some might say: ‘Fragmentation of cities, religions, political systems, conflict in the form of wars, general violence, fratricide, etc. are the reality. Wholeness is only an ideal, toward which we should perhaps strive.’ But this is not what is being said here. Rather, what should be said is that wholeness is what is real, and that fragmentation is the response of this whole to man’s action, guided by illusory perception, which is shaped by fragmentary thought.” - David Bohm, Wholeness and the Implicate Order*

When we are babies, we have no sense of separation from others, nor have we developed the values or mindsets that make us feel different from others.

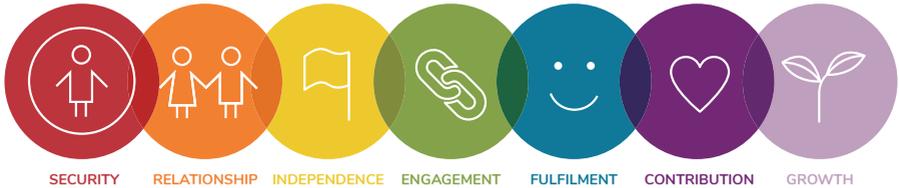
The unified nature of reality is something that has been recognised by faith and wisdom traditions throughout the world, and has now been confirmed by science as a fundamental, integrated, informational property of the universe.

As human beings this is what we arise from and return to – just like the waves on an ocean.

Spirituality can therefore be understood as an innate human quality, that pre-exists cultural or religious differences, that stems from a unified reality and that is grounded in connection and love.

As such, it is an essential element of human flourishing.

Overlaying the understanding of a unified field of awareness, is the fact that every child is born with seven core human developmental needs and these are:



### The Seven Core Human Needs

No matter where we live in the world, these needs are the same. As we grow and develop, we will each seek to fulfil these needs in ways that have meaning for us and whether or not they are met will then shape the values, beliefs and behaviours that then become our personalities.

We are genetically unique, as we each carry the DNA

traces of our ancestors, so the personalities that we develop are a combination of the biological patterns and dispositions that have gone before, overlaid with the unique patterns created by our own experiences in the world.

Only 50% of who we are is shaped by our genes - with the other 50% coming from the environment.

“BECAUSE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF AND WORLD IS RECIPROCAL, IT IS NOT A MATTER OF FIRST GETTING ENLIGHTENED OR SAVED AND THEN ACTING. AS WE WORK TO HEAL THE EARTH, THE EARTH HEALS US. NO NEED TO WAIT. AS WE CARE ENOUGH TO TAKE RISKS, WE LOOSEN THE GRIP OF EGO AND BEGIN TO COME HOME TO OUR TRUE NATURE.”

JOANNA MACY

“NO ONE IS BORN HATING ANOTHER PERSON BECAUSE OF THE COLOR OF HIS SKIN, OR HIS BACKGROUND, OR HIS RELIGION. PEOPLE MUST LEARN TO HATE, AND IF THEY CAN LEARN TO HATE, THEY CAN BE TAUGHT TO LOVE, FOR LOVE COMES MORE NATURALLY TO THE HUMAN HEART THAN ITS OPPOSITE.”

NELSON MANDELA

This means that the worlds that we experience as young children literally shape our biology and who we will become. Our parents and early caregivers effectively act on us as genetic engineers. Our mental maps of the world are made up of all the internal images, sounds, tactile awareness, internal sensations, tastes and smells that form as result of how our brains process the incoming information.

**Neurons that fire together, wire together, so the emotional responses that are connected to our lived experiences become fused into our memory of that experience.**

### Balancing the Inner with the Outer

Our inner need for connection and wholeness is always in a state of dynamic flux as we deal with external challenges

from the environment. We are naturally curious learners and we achieve a state of flow when our desire to explore and test out our knowledge and abilities has personal meaning for us and is balanced with the demands of the external world.

At first, both in the womb and as young babies, we simply absorb information from the environment into our sense of self, with the information stored in our subconscious. If stressful situations occurred as we were absorbing this information our emotional responses are stored alongside the original experiences. Each experience lays down a neurological track within our brains and if we experience the same thing again and again this track becomes reinforced along with the emotional response.

JUST AS WE TAKE FOR GRANTED THE NEED TO ACQUIRE PROFICIENCY IN THE BASIC ACADEMIC SUBJECTS, I AM HOPEFUL THAT A TIME WILL COME WHEN WE CAN TAKE IT FOR GRANTED THAT CHILDREN WILL LEARN, AS PART OF THE CURRICULUM, THE INDISPENSABILITY OF INNER VALUES: LOVE, COMPASSION, JUSTICE, AND FORGIVENESS.”

DALAI LAMA

So our memories are really the encoded neurological responses that accompany our experiences and we relive these when similar things happen again. Over time we start to assign personal meaning to the information being received from the world outside and increasingly connect language to the internal images, sounds and feelings, tastes and smells, thus forming everyday conscious awareness.

That's why two people can have very different (and equally true) memories of the same experience. Each one of us is shaped by the environment, but underneath it all we share a common connection.

By understanding 'why we are the way we are we' we can let go of old patterns and conditioning and, instead, recognise that we share one common humanity.

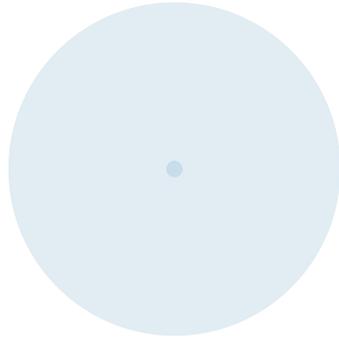


All children deserve to  
live in worlds that  
enable them to flourish

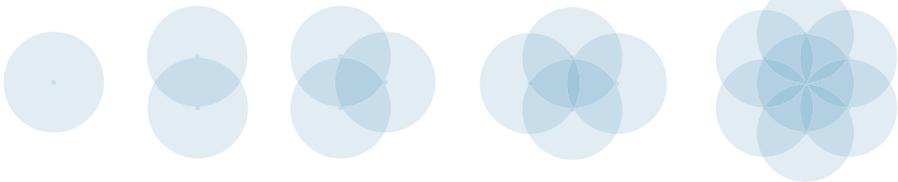
## Many centres, one whole

As human beings we live in social worlds. We need, rely on, and are shaped by, our interaction with others. Our sense of self is co-created through relationship, and we are also constantly connecting with and influencing the lived experiences of others. We are a co-operative species, living in a dynamically interconnected social world.

## Isolated self (illusory)



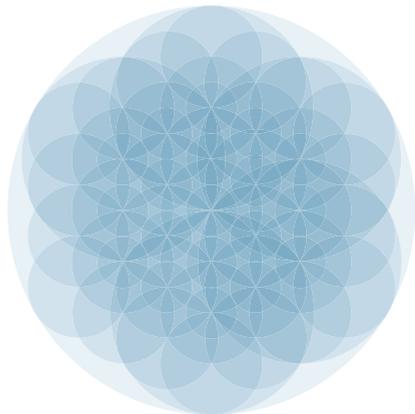
## Connected self



*"The conceit that we are 'self-made' individuals is a delusion. There is no such thing as an isolated 'I'...each of us is really a Nested-I...We are not only embedded in relationships; our very identities are created through relationships. The Nested-I concept helps us to deal more honestly with the encompassing reality of human identity and development. We humans truly are the 'cooperative species.'"*  
David Bollier and Silke Helfrich,  
The Insurgent Power of the Commons

## Social self

An ocean of circles,  
all interconnecting and  
influencing each other



## What this means for peace

*"That immense reality cannot be found through any organisation, through any church, through any book, through any person or teacher. One has to find it for oneself – which means that one has to be completely alone, uninfluenced. But we are all the result of so many influences, so many pressures, known and unknown; and that is why it is very important to understand these many pressures, influences, and be dissociated from them all, so that the mind becomes extraordinarily simple, clear. Then perhaps it will be possible to experience that which cannot be put into words."* Krishnamurti, Hamburg Talk, 1956, Talk 2

## Free Will: the ability to choose differently

One of the most wonderful things about human beings is that we all have the freedom and ability to stand back from our previous patterns and conditioning, to gain an understanding of what has influenced our own values beliefs and behaviours - and to commit to choose different (and better). In doing so, we also have the ability to understand

why other people's perspectives are different to our own. We know that, to feel secure and connected, we will initially have adopted the values, beliefs and behaviours of the adults in our worlds, but that underneath we all share the same core needs.

By understanding other people's worldviews, we can seek to move into a shared space of dialogue.

Recent scientific evidence indicates that a common ability of brains is to choose among different behavioural options and to perform genuinely novel acts. Free will can therefore to be said to have both a spiritual and biological underpinning that leads us towards wholeness and growth.

**Our innate nature is, therefore, constantly reaching out into novelty, but always with the aim of balancing inner and outer energies in the quest to return to a state of wholeness.**

Ironically it is our personalities (who we think we are and constantly struggle to protect and maintain) that keep us from returning to the deep sense of peace and connection that is actually our birthright.

# THE HUMAN JOURNEY IS ONE THAT MOVES FROM UNITY TO SELF-IDENTIFICATION AND THEN BACK AGAIN TO UNITY

## The Roots of Violence

Human beings have a capacity for violence and aggression, but also display a clear propensity for co-operation and compassion. What seems to matter most is the quality of relationship that we experience in our earliest years. If we experience security, trust and loving attention, then it is likely that this is what we will later bring to the world. If, instead, we experience fear, distrust and aggression, then this is the pattern that will have been set down for us.

We are born full of both possibilities and it is the world that decides which way we will go. As social beings, we are also predisposed to mimic and normalise the values and behaviours that we see going on around us - especially those modelled by the adults in our worlds and the social groups that we need to achieve a sense of belonging.

If children and young people do not have strong family and community relationships to give

them a sense of self-worth and value, they will ultimately seek them elsewhere - which is where contemporary gang culture comes from. They are also impacted by the messages they receive, both consciously and unconsciously, from the media

*“Heavy childhood exposure to media violence predicts higher levels of aggression in young adults of both sexes (“aggression” ranging from behaviour in an experimental setting to violent criminality). The effect typically remains after controlling for total media watching time, maltreatment or neglect, socio-economic status, levels of neighbourhood violence, parental education, psychiatric illness, and IQ. This is a reliable finding of large magnitude. The link between exposure to childhood media violence and increased adult aggression is stronger than the link between lead exposure and IQ, calcium intake and bone mass, or asbestos and laryngeal cancer.”*  
- Robert Sapolsky 'Behave'

## The economic benefits of a more peaceful world are profound

*“Humanity is now facing a combination of challenges unparalleled in history. The most urgent of these are global in nature, such as climate change, decreasing biodiversity, overpopulation and forced displacement of persons.*

*These global challenges call for global solutions and these solutions require cooperation on an unprecedented scale. The sources of many of these challenges are multidimensional, increasingly complex and cross-national borders. For this reason, finding solutions to these unprecedented challenges requires fundamentally new ways of thinking”.* - 2019 Global Peace Index, Institute for Economics and Peace

According to the Institute for Economics and Peace, as peacefulness increases, so does satisfaction with life, freedom, and feelings of respect. In 2018, all very high peace countries had over 60 per cent satisfaction in all three areas, followed by 61 per cent of high peace states, 50 per cent of medium peace

states, 39 per cent of low peace states and 33 per cent of very low peace states.

*“Positive Peace is much more than the mere absence of violence. It represents a state where societies can thrive and develop materially, culturally and intellectually in a harmonious and stable manner. Absence of crime and conflict is not an indicator of true and sustainable peace in the same way that absence of disease is not an indicator of an individual’s happiness. The study of pathology has led to numerous breakthroughs in our understanding of how to treat and cure disease. However, it was only when medical science turned its focus to the study of healthy, happy human beings that we understood what is needed for personal fulfilment: physical exercise, balanced diet, good work environment, leisure, a sense of purpose, a good mental disposition and other factors.”*

*“The message our culture is giving us about how to have a decent and satisfying life, virtually all the time, is not true... 22 different studies have, in the*

*years since, found that the more materialistic and extrinsically motivated you become, the more depressed you will be. 12 different studies found that the more materialistic and extrinsically motivated you become, the more anxious you will be... just as we have shifted en-masse from eating food to eating junk food,... We have shifted from having meaningful values to having junk values.*

*All these materialistic values, telling us to spend our way to happiness, look like real values; they appeal to the part of us that has evolved to need some basic principles to guide us through life; they don't give us what we need from values - a pass to a satisfying life. Instead, they fill us with psychological toxins. Junk food is distorting our bodies. Junk values are distorting our minds. Materialism is KFC for the soul" - Johann Hari, Lost Connections.*

*"What is the use of war? It brings destruction, more suffering, and pain. I believe that humans have common sense, and that human basic nature is more compassionate. Please inform people how serious war and the killing of human beings is. Please also share that the use of this weaponry creates tremendous destruction. It is a total waste of money... This has been one of my dreams for a number of years ...*

*Every religion persists in cultivating that which divides us, instead of uniting us around what brings us together. None has succeeded in creating a better human being, or a better world. That is why I have no qualms about telling you that there is an urgent need to go beyond religion. It is possible to live without religion, but can one live without love and compassion? The answer is no. As science has proved, the need for compassion is a fundamental biological human imperative". - Dalai Lama, The Call for Revolution*

**"WITH VIOLENCE, AS WITH SO MANY OTHER CONCERNS, HUMAN NATURE IS THE PROBLEM, BUT HUMAN NATURE IS ALSO THE SOLUTION."**

STEVEN PINKER

“ESTABLISHING LASTING PEACE  
IS THE WORK OF EDUCATION; ALL  
POLITICS CAN DO IS TO KEEP US OUT  
OF WAR. WITHIN THE CHILD LIES  
THE FATE OF THE FUTURE.”

MARIA MONTESSORI



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