



It's time to enable the futures we want

By David Wick, February 8, 2021

There is no question that our community, this country and our world are going through very difficult and challenging experiences. Some people see this as the time of the apocalypse, while others see it as a time of great transformation from dysfunctional, unsustainable and unequal ways of life to a new era of greater equality and well-being.

The Ashland Culture of Peace Commission has always focused on the evolution of personal and systemic change that is all about choice — making the choice between destructive thoughts and behaviors and thoughts and behaviors of positive creation and care. The following Native American parable is an example of making this choice.

An old Cherokee is teaching his grandson about life. "A fight is going on inside me," he said to the boy. "It is a terrible fight, and it is between two wolves. One is evil — he is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority and ego."

He continued, "The other is good — he is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith. The same fight is going on inside you, and inside every other person, too."

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather, "Which wolf will win?"

The old Cherokee replied, "The one you feed."

This is an important reminder of the power we have over our experiences, emotions and choices.

Madison Sink is an Ashland Middle School student, and she served as a pre-COVID flame keeper caring for and refueling the World Peace Flame in the Thalden Pavilion on Walker Ave across from Ashland Middle School.

Reflecting on her experience of being a flame keeper, she recently wrote, "Being given the chance to be a flame keeper has really influenced how I see the world, and how I see myself. I used to not really think much of it, more like, 'Hey, this is the world I live in, so what? I'm just a kid. What can I do?' I can do as much as I put my mind to. Goodbye earlier version of myself! I think more about what I can do with my life to influence others and make the world better for wildlife and ourselves. So what if I'm only 14? I want to make an impact on the world. An impact for the better.

"Since I was flame keeper, I have gotten the chance to see the world as it really is. A place of hate, annoyance and unfair, but also as a place of love and compassion and open to opportunities. We can change the world we live in. I now think about things I can do to make the world better, what I can do to better myself, what can I do to help others. I am 14. I am in eighth grade. I can influence the world just as well as anyone, and I will try my best to do so. Make someone smile, make a friend laugh. Ask them how their day is going. Do something to make someone's day better."

The preamble to the Constitution of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) declares that "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed."

At age 14 Madison has taken an important step in that direction so she can enable the future she wants.

"Peace begins with a smile," said Mother Teresa.

There is growing empirical and scientific evidence, as well as anecdotal and ancient wisdom tradition information that underscores how we create our realities by way of different frequencies and emotional levels through our thoughts and choices.

"As we think, so we become" is a well-known aphorism. Let us plant the seeds of our intentions to create our relationships and our daily lives to be the best they can be, and think outside the box as we move forward. Now is the time to enable the future we want.

David Wick is co-founder and executive director of the Ashland Culture of Peace Commission and president-elect 2021-2022 of the Rotary E-Club of World Peace.