



How to add peace in your life in 2020

by Barbara Gaughen-Muller, January 26th 2020

Now that the calendar has flipped to 2020, we have a new year filled with promise and resolutions. If you are like most of us, your plate is filled to overflowing. Do you ever say to yourself, “I wish I could just find a little peace?”

In our very busy lives with to-do lists and global unrest, you may feel peace is just impossible. My goal is not to give you one more should, like “you should be peaceful,” or one more item to add to your lists. I just want to show you how small steps can help you add peace to your daily life. The following five tips and tricks are easy and enjoyable ways to impact your — and others’ — lives for the better this new year, a new decade.

Create a Peace Corner in your home

A Peace Corner is a neutral zone. It is a nurturing, calm place where you can carve out a quiet moment to use for meditation, to think about peace, to read a book or simply to be alone. It might be in a corner of a room, containing anything that calms and grounds you. You might have artwork or photos that inspire you, a chair and a lamp for reading, or your Gratitude Journal (see below). Or it can be super simple. My Peace Corner, a tiny sign, is in the kitchen, to remind me to be peaceful at meals. I might be busy fixing dinner after a long day, feeling a little harried, but when my eye falls on this sign and its quiet reminder — Peace Corner — I slow down, smile at how frantically I’m rushing around, and take a big, deep breath. In that moment I feel the peace that is right there, available to me, if only I am present to it: in the warmth of my home, with the aromas of my dinner, and seeing how good it feels to be alive with a roof over my head and food on my table.

Start a gratitude jar or Gratitude Journal

On a slip of paper, write down one positive thing that happened or that made you happy today and put it in the jar. Whenever you are feeling upset or stressed, take one out and read it. I keep a Gratitude Journal, where I write short thoughts anytime I want to remember or review why I am grateful. It takes only a few minutes, and it lifts my mood every time. My friend uses her iPhone for her daily gratitude.

Use 'smile meditation'

Spend one uninterrupted minute a day smiling. This will lift your spirits as well as work to dispel any negative feelings. I have found a smile is contagious. I smile at fellow shoppers in Trader Joe's, and I usually get smiles in return. What if you don't feel like smiling? Remember the old saying, "Fake it till you make it." A smile, just for yourself, can help you turn your whole day around.

Perform small acts of kindness

It's amazing how much brightening someone else's day can brighten our own. Kindnesses don't have to be expensive or elaborate. Let someone go ahead of you in the checkout line. Tell the parent with the fussy child how beautiful their little one is. Say "good morning" to all you meet. At a four-way stop, let another driver take your turn. Open the door for the person entering a building after you. Or just say a simple, sincere thank you on the phone, in the store, at home, or at work to those who are near — and even those who are not so dear. You never know just how meaningful your simple kindness may be to someone else.

Come alongside

When speaking with someone who has ideas that are different than yours, take the time to learn and appreciate their point of view rather than debating with them. Life with our fellow humans is not a debate; it's a dialogue. Coming alongside doesn't mean giving up your values or giving in. It's simply recognizing that others have their own perceptions and ideas, just as we do.

Peace is a journey, not a destination, and it begins with each of us. Small steps can lead to big changes. Look for opportunities to practice peace and watch how peace grows and expands to other aspects of your life. These are simple ways we all can contribute to a culture of peace.

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