



Satya

thoughtfulness in
thought, speech, and action

Yes! We Can Peace Builders Newsletter - March 2022

We must strive to be moved by a generosity of spirit that will enable us to outgrow the hatred and conflicts of the past. . . . Resentment is like drinking poison and then hoping it will kill your enemies."

—Nelson Mandela

Yes We Can Peacebuilders is dedicated to promote and teach nonviolence, inspire and engage people to create a nonviolent community, nation and world.

Life is Fleeting by Ruth Ann Angus



I saved a life today. It certainly wasn't something I had planned but the circumstance came upon me when I went to my mailbox outside to mail a bill. There confronting me, perched on top near where I needed to raise the red flag that would notify the mail carrier that there was a letter to go in the mail was a beautiful Monarch butterfly. Its wings were standing upright but twitching in the 20 mile an hour blowing wind. I realized immediately it was a prisoner of that wind.

The tiny colorful insect could not raise out its wings to take off from its perch. This posed two problems for me. One, I needed to place my letter inside the box without knocking the box to cause the butterfly to be swept away. Two, if I raised the red flag all the way up the side of the mailbox the creature's wings would continuously bat against it as the wind was relentlessly pushing them in that direction.

Butterfly wings are fragile and at the end of a butterfly's life they are often torn and ragged. I could tell this butterfly was in its prime and an injury would shorten its life span. Then I realized that the life of this tiny creature was literally in my hands. Once the wind gets started at this time of day it doesn't let up until evening hours. It's not often that a life rests in one's hands.

Lately loss of life is all I've heard of as many prominent spiritual leaders have died. Then just a few days ago I knew of the loss of life of a woman who has been a guide and mentor for many of us doing nonviolence

education. On the day I heard of it, I wrote to friends who knew her. I said it seems to be the season of loss.

I've often wondered why I am still here since more than once the bell that tolls for us all was ringing for me. But I am still here. Thus, I awake each day and say quietly to myself, "Well, another day."

This morning at 6 AM I heard the unmistakable song of a mockingbird. He returns every year to trill his song. Of course, it may a different bird each year because inevitably the neighborhood cats will one day bring to my yard a lifeless body of a mockingbird. Some say cats should be indoors, but their nature is to roam, and why should we deny them this joy of living even though we know a life will likely be lost because of their existence? It is the cycle of life. I accept loss knowing there is more than one kind of loss, not just the absence of life. All loss is painful and sad.

I spoke softly to the Monarch and then gently took hold of its tiny wings between the tips of two of my fingers and lifted him away from the mailbox out of the wind placing him down near the ground on the side of a bush. He stirred and quickly flexed his wings a few times, turned to face me, and then lifted off to sail away to a better place to wait out the wind.

"Well, another day."

We sit in grief for Veronica Pelicarić, Director of Education at Pace e Bene/Campaign Nonviolence, Dr. Paul Farmer, medical pioneer, and co-founder of the nonprofit health organization "Partners in Health," Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh, and all those now losing their lives as we once again endure war in the world.



Choose Freedom by Paula Hulet

There is a new sign along the highway, located on a rancher's land says "Choose Freedom." The words are splashed against a background of a stylized version of the US flag. Every time I drive by that sign I wonder – what exactly is this rancher trying to tell us? My husband, being the skeptic he is, believes that the sign means freedom to own a gun and use it. But I think it means much more – but exactly what?

By choosing freedom does that mean one gets to do whatever they want whenever they want? Is freedom about having the world function according to my rules and not yours? Is freedom about me only regardless of the costs to others? Is freedom the ability to acquire whatever you want regardless of who or what is stepped on or denied so that personal goals are achieved? By choosing freedom does that mean we ignore mandates (like vaccines or masks), even though the mandates are designed to protect individuals? Is choosing freedom following a mandate? And with recent events, does freedom mean the right to invade another country or the right to protect your home from an invading force? Freedom can be so confusing.

But when I am in a kinder, gentler frame of mind I think the rancher is telling us that freedom is meant for everyone - choosing freedom is being free from oppression, to be able to rise-up against those who would belittle others or see others as less than in some way. Such freedom includes responsibility, a caring for, a speaking up for, seeking justice, equity, and parity for all people, and not just for a few. I like this version of freedom.

I have a hunch that choosing freedom for me means something different than choosing freedom for that rancher. But I can't and won't give up hope. I hope and pray that peace will prevail – peace in the heart of each person so peace will be a reality in the world. I hope that we will all come to see the spark of the divine or the universe, in each other. I continue to hope that we will realize we need each other, working together, so all will thrive in this world. Let us stand together in hope, working to make a peace a reality, freedom a reality for all.

“Nonviolence means avoiding injury to anything on earth in thought, word or deed.” –Mohandas Gandhi

On September 11, 2018, Yes We Can Peacebuilders accepted a proclamation of peace and nonviolence from the mayor and city council of Morro Bay, California establishing Morro Bay as a Nonviolent City.

The Nonviolent City Project is a grassroots movement that organizes strategy for activists to work for the transformation of their community into a peaceful, nonviolent city. This is a shift in consciousness to work holistically with every sector of the city to establish a culture of peace.

Yes We Can Peacebuilders offers workshops and training for adults and youth on ways nonviolence is fostered, defining nonviolence to aid in the development of nonviolent communication and strategies for change within ourselves and our community. You can learn more at www.yeswecanpeacebuilders.org or email us at yeswecanpeacebuilders1@gmail.com.

