



REDEFINING PURPOSE OF EDUCATION — DEVELOPING A CURRICULUM FOR PEACE

Ambika Talwar *

EDITOR'S NOTE

Ambika Talwar is an educator, published author and artist, who has written poetry since her teen years. Her style is ecstatic making her poetry a “bridge to other worlds.” She has also won an award for a short film at a festival in Belgium. She practices IE: Intuition-Energetics™, a fusion of modalities, goddess lore, sacred geometry and creative principles for wellness and wholeness. “Both poetry and holistic practices work beautifully together, for language is intricately coded in us. In resonance with our authentic self, we experience wholeness & wellness,” she notes. In this paper, she shares her experience of developing a curriculum for Peace education.

Keywords: Authenticity, co-creation, creativity, essence, genius, innerstanding, justice, Peace, Peace Pole, wholeness, zazen.

INTRODUCTION

This paper is a result of my direct and multi-layered experience of teaching two peace-themed writing courses at a community college in the suburbs of Los Angeles, California. Pondering on what I really wanted to say, I asked myself these questions: What did this yearlong experience teach me about myself and about peace? What did I accomplish? What do I do next?

Firstly, I can say seeds were planted. And even though teaching these classes was a rocky romance but because our young feel a sense of anomie and ennui stemming from lack of real purpose, I make a case for peace-themed curriculum in spite of diverse objections to the impossibility of peace (as people know it). Peace is much more than we all realize, so its teaching and practice ought to be a natural part of all levels of schooling, for it requires a deep paradigm shift, truly a dynamic process.

Steps towards creating the course...

In December 2010, I met Uran Snyder, a peace messenger and member of the Japan-based World Peace Prayer Society, originally birthed as a religious community. To strengthen their peace work, they divided the organization and one took on the active work of peace making by designing and selling peace poles. In the last few years, the number of peace poles in the world has topped about 500,000. These poles are made of material that can handle the weather and stand as inspirers of the message of peace. A good number of these poles silently convey a simple message: *May Peace Prevail on Earth* (and its variations in diverse languages). At a seminar we both attended, Uran led a flag ceremony, which involved waving of flags of countries and calling out: *May peace prevail in....* (we added name of country whose flag we each held); I wondered if we could bring this ceremony to the college where I work.

*Professor Ambika Talwar teaches at a community college in California, USA. Correspondence E-mail: mygoldenmatrix@gmail.com

Uran said softly, “We can do it.” Softness, as you know, is dangerous. Two weeks later, we met in my office and planned a 3-day peace event at the college to include film screenings with discussion, yoga for peace, and presentations by speakers on defining human purpose and values. I had set myself up.

I booked rooms for the presentations. I contacted speakers including Elza Malouf, Spiral Dynamics master teacher and founding director of the Center for Human Emergence; Mick Quinn, integral educator in Guatemala; Erika Faith, yoga teacher and others. Uran Snyder and I would present as well. Moreover, Uran had promised me two peace poles for the college. Naturally, I was moved with greater zeal to do what I could to bring something new to this campus, otherwise afraid of new ideas and challenged by diversity and difference! I thought an event such as *Creative Action 4 Peace* would instill a desire for creative change. I had truly set myself up.

Feeling like a missionary with a purpose to excite people about peace and its practice, I thought it would be wonderful to offer such an event at the college where I have taught all my adult life. However, wherever I turned I was met with resistance and apathy—may be even hostility. I was nonplussed—this is an educational institution, a place for learning and broadening horizons. Ought it not to desire opportunities for dialogue? Growth? Change?

But the college is set in a conservative middle-income town; some of our students are on financial aid, some are simply in transition, some in search. The strength of community colleges is to serve local community with opportunities to complete general education classes, explore diverse classes, and focus on a major, supposedly to keep things “normal.” Real diversity does not flourish; what does is that which fits into the shoes of “multicultural,” and if diverse, it is a narrow spectrum of acceptability.

Campus student clubs and committees turned down my request for support, including the Planning and Budget Committee, whose veteran members belong to every other important committee. Two days of wondering left me with one choice—*Go ahead, make it happen!* My speakers agreed to share their expertise ex gratis.

So I announced to the committee that we were indeed powered by Human Spirit. We were. So it happened. Fliers we created and plastered on campus announced: ***Creative Action 4 Peace—Powered by Human Spirit.*** Though attendance was low, it excited my students and we installed a peace pole, which reads: *May Peace Prevail on Earth.*

Small shift—One step. One step at a time!

Lessons of invoking peace...

Peace is certainly not a foreign concept, but its very idea instilled fear in college faculty and the veteran committees. Was it that ghosts of 1960’s or 70’s America would awake to take over the campus? What would happen then? *Nothing.* The architecture of the campus is such that a gathering would be effectively controlled. Furthermore, it is not a place easily excited by affairs of the world even though they are affected by it. It is somewhat insular and students are in deep stress these days with rising unemployment and “normal” family conflict—Life!

I learned a few things. One is to garner the support of some faculty (really?), of student clubs and committees (double really?). But, more importantly, I learned the following:

A - Peace is controversial. Some faculty were scared that Mick Quinn would raise controversy on campus. Mick and his wife, Debora Prieto, run a school in Guatemala for underprivileged indigenous children who have scant or no opportunities. He was going to speak on Skype from Guatemala. To a staff development committee, this was controversial. It is not that there are no Christian missionaries doing charity in poor lands. Mick and Debora together founded the Integral Heart Foundation in Antigua, Guatemala.

Mick spoke about how to follow your passion and offer your gifts to uplift others. My students were greatly inspired, not only because we had Mick speak from Guatemala, but also because his story was an adventure. An Irishman, who left Ireland, lived and worked in the US, studied integral philosophy, drove to Guatemala with Debora Prieto, and now runs a school based on integral principles to transform how the youth there create their lives.

The key word is “create.” *Creativity motivates new experience in human development.* I might add making peace is a creative process of understanding many layers of one’s own realities and how we can clarify and re-envision and merge our wants, needs, and desires so together we create systems where we can all live in dignity.

B - People are scared of peace more than of war. This might be perhaps because people have become so used to war economies and societies, they would not know what to do in the absence of war. After all, war keeps everyone in anxiety and budget cuts get steeper so everyone has to work harder and live wondering when the next pay cut would be imposed and watch prices of commodities go up.

Anxiety takes away your years and keeps you busy, so you can panic and be unwell and visit doctors to keep the pharma kings happy. Keep some part of the economy active. This is the neurosis that binds society. Elza Maalouf also commented on this when she arrived. Her presentation titled “*Science of Peace*” showed how to evaluate people based on their value memes and assist them in negotiating with groups with which they are in conflict. An internationally known spiral dynamics teacher, Elza meets leaders in Middle Eastern nations to negotiate understanding and dialogue.

C - People’s apathy stems from them not really knowing what to do. It is confusing for many people to know how to shape a new reality. Apathy is easy, especially when you are not at the center of bombs and scarcity of a kind that exists in “other” places. Furthermore, dealing with budget shortfalls, job cuts, and hunger affects everyone and has certainly affected our students, most of whom need work and lack direction. But they are also influenced by a kind of late adolescent sleep. Walk into a classroom of pupils with glazed eyes and slouched spines, and you will see this.

D - People are also naturally skeptical. Maybe skepticism is a good sounding board, for it guides us on what is practical and possible. Goodness is more practical than its opposite.

Even though new thought systems have been active for decades being derived from ancient wisdom, systems of universality and preciousness of life and authentic experience, many schools shun such wisdom in favor of the old ways based on a rigid model of exclusion.

Open discussion and natural learning can inspire great success, but some systems stick to what they know perhaps weakening the learning process. Smart classrooms cannot make “smart” students; these are mere tools and now we learn that all lessons must meet accessibility requirements. Such rules limit possibilities and weaken structures and real matters get left out of the picture. Add to this news of wars and terror and the reality people live with is a narrow one. Naturally, people become skeptical about change, and peace becomes a value seen fit only for people in colorful tie-dyed T-shirts or in eastern garb on the fringes of society. The suited ones laugh at images of peace as someone sitting *zazen* saying “**Aum.**”

Such divisions suggest in our systems an inherent lack of “*innerstanding*” of our full human capacity and potential. Schools serve structures laid out by departments of education, on budgets based on some strange math to prepare students for phantom jobs.

Perhaps, if the system were to change to invite greater creative expression, we could create new ways of financial equity and sovereignty. Perhaps, this would enliven school systems. Perhaps, this would invite a better understanding of what it means to be human and we would all learn what success truly means. Perhaps, this is how peace, a dynamic process, can flower.

But, now, fear of scarcity is writ large in the faces of our youth who already experience a lack of purpose and direction in life. Perhaps, because structures become rigid after a while, schools seem slowest to change. People fear change, and we educators are becoming data entry workers.

The state of education is in peril. Everywhere. We need to re-envision the purpose of education somehow. *Everywhere.*

What is the purpose of education?

So I am led to ask: what is the purpose of education, other than to prepare people for self-knowledge through creative-critical thinking, gain employment, and contribute to communal enhancement? What is the purpose of Peace? Aren’t the two related?

Firstly, I posit here that the purpose of education and of peace is for human beings to practice authenticity and wholeness, and to create a life built from this wholeness, a dynamic process.

Yet schooling processes take one away from one’s authentic self by its methods of testing, which do not always engender creativity or originality, hence it limits one’s potential. When students are overburdened, they cannot be

creative, and they cannot think critically.

We know that creativity and critical thinking are related for they invite the development of imagination and intuition. *Isn't creativity a higher form of critical thinking?* Note this experience from a class I taught 3-4 years ago. Discovering that all students in a writing class lacked an imagination by their own admission left me stunned for some moments. How could such a thing be, I wondered? Collecting myself, I offered an exercise, a simple visualization to clear blocks. Literally, in 3-5 minutes there was a change; the class became receptive not only to the learning process but also to writing. Most wonderfully, they felt connected again to that core vital to the growth of a human being: *the imagination*.

Without an imagination, a person is but less of him/herself. Isn't it through imagination and play that a person connects with his/her genius (the ability to generate). "Genius" suggests to give birth; to invite the birthing of, as it is rooted in "gene" or "genesis"; and a real "genius" is one who is at play. Play is here seen in its cosmic sense of dynamic engagement in an activity that generates surprise, wonder, original expression, and wholeness of being; it is a process whereby human beings learn they are part of all that is.

When children are discouraged from their natural genius and thrown into rigid systems (cultural, religious or corporate), they lose touch with their innate genius. Innovators and inventors are renegades who live on their terms once they have recovered from social systems of control. Unfortunately, there are people of great ability who use their skills towards destructive ends. What would it take for these people to cultivate an ethic of harmony principles so they can be constructive not destructive?

Yes, it is idealistic, and it would seem more so in these times that have continued to be bloody. But we do what we came to do, so we persevere...what else shall we do but? And why not with an invitation to be better than when we began!

This experience made me question again weaknesses in the education system that curbs expression of uniqueness, favoring homogenization as though each person must become a tool to an environment that is being controlled more and more.

So what is the purpose of education? Would it not be to co-create systems that arise in harmony and strength for we are so interconnected that we are essentially one or better yet oneness in its diverse myriad forms.

My first peace course...

On Aug. 16, 2011, I met my Critical Reasoning & Writing course students for the first time. I went over the course description with them, and they were excited, delighted, skeptical, and curious. They noted they had never before had a class of this kind.

We began by discussing what peace felt like, what were their images of peace. From them, I learned that peace felt like safety, like having jobs, like having enough to eat, like being loved, like knowing they are cared for, like compassionate listening, like life has a purpose, like they can do what they truly love, like they have a future, like they can be whole and well...the list was endless. I made sure to say that I did not (and do not) have the answers, but that we would discover them together. At best, the purpose would be to review our life conditions and how we make choices.

So we covered topics to do with defining peace, reviewing the work of various peace activists, peace as defined by various religions (very briefly), and we explored that peace is not absence of war, for conflicts occur and will continue. *Absence of war is but negative peace.*

Peace is not static but a dynamic process of continual negotiating with oneself and with others. This is so in personal or intimate relationships, in parenting styles, in education, in communities, for nations at war. Peace is not something just for "hippies" nor is it an image of serenity only, but it surely is hip. Truly. I was gratified to find how many people and organizations (at least 100,000) are in the field of peace building in the world. Making peace is a far more challenging path, for it requires discipline, a different walk. In a time, when people are continually being asked to raise their capacities and awareness of our relatedness and their ability to change is excited by possibilities, peace is a natural source of concern and of inspiration. When the world is being torn apart by greed and confusion, we might remember that the Native Americans organized their lives and social systems keeping in mind seven generations in the future.

Life is a prism and there are more perspectives than the one with which one is most familiar. Most of my students are Protestant, Catholic, born again, Jewish; some are Muslim, agnostic, Hindu, Buddhist, animist, atheist; some surely

are unsure, ecstatic, agnostic, spiritualists, wiccan, and even rapturists...(the list is lovely and long)! The idea here was to dispel biases, reconsider our perspectives, and suggest a way of reviewing issues from a values-based perspective. Towards this end, we discussed principles of social development based on understanding cultural value memes in us that influence our choices and decisions. (I am no expert in Spiral Dynamics, but even a taste of it proves effective in better understanding our interactions.) The students were excited about what was occurring in the class.

We discussed war as aggression, war as cultural creation for there are communities that have never waged war, marketing of war through images of heroism and sentimentality, industrial progress making weapons the biggest business, breaking up of lands, and also god bartered in the process of justifying war. In addition, of course we discussed assumptions, beliefs, facts, warrants, etc, aspects we need to review for critical thinking.

Admittedly, the warrant behind this course was that we are here as evolving human beings and the only way we can truly grow is to remove falsities from our lives. One way to do so is to question how we make conclusions, how we react and respond to issues. Instead of merely taking things at face value, we ask “Is this true?” and “How do I know this is true?” and whether the answers they get make sense or not.

Surely, about 50 -60% of individual, social, communal, global issues, confusions, illnesses result from people’s beliefs in falsehood, incorrect perception, and blindly following others who whet their appetite for stories that may be torrid and horrid. Delving into fallacies can be quite humorous when we find that so much of our daily conversations are also peppered with fallacious statements. We know it always rains after we have washed our car. And if you don’t agree with the war, you are not patriotic. And your happiness depends on a visit to Cosmic Hair Saloon...and so on.

I think we covered quite a bit. We also laughed a lot.

We read about Bishop Tutu’s work on forgiveness as a process of healing. Perhaps you are aware that much work is being done through the process of “*restorative justice*,” for, in order to bring about healing, one needs to understand the dynamic of violation and illness, then move to forgiveness and then to recreation as a healing process. There is also the process of NVC (*non-violent communication*), which is the practicing & expressing your needs and concerns without attacking the other person or communities, and a powerful process known as radical forgiveness.

The list goes on as the field of peace making includes various kinds of work being done by practitioners, activists, interventionists making inroads in healing diverse communities that have been damaged, and also in teaching people how to negotiate their livelihood. We are of course speaking of areas that are damaged by war, genocide, and mass rapes, understanding that we do not have the luxury of isolation—what happens 5,000 miles away or next door affects us.

So what is the relevance of this information to a group of 19-35 year olds and returning adults? They each said without a doubt that their lives were now different, that they had become more thoughtful and aware of the relevance of their lives and their connection to the world that they did not know existed.

A key point is to be reminded of the relevance of each of our lives. Somewhere I am about to say that students matter; I am adding here that studentship must be seen differently by teachers, institutions, and by students themselves. We must all participate as integral parts of each other as we re-co-create a future.

It was just another writing class, but this group of students was remarkable in that any assignment I created for them, they did without grumbling. They outdid themselves in their last project, which was to make a 5-min cell phone video describing their progress (I had given an outline to follow). On the day of the final, we shared their videos and Powerpoint presentations. It was the most gratifying final I had ever experienced.

These are comments from the written portion of the final

(Names changed for privacy)

Anira wrote: The purpose of critical thinking is to unlearn old habits while receiving new ones.... Discovering my greatest vision/essence/gift took time because I needed to fully understand who I was myself before I could find my new reality....My action for peace is that I want to continue to fight for peace and justice in the world against discrimination and prejudice towards those that are in need of help and love and compassion.

Axel wrote: Through clear thinking one can envision the future better through a pattern of reasonable actions and

even stronger words. All things considered I have greatly benefitted myself by taking English 103 and would highly recommend it to anyone seeking an emotional and spiritual revitalization regardless of your religious beliefs. It is not a religion to critically think, it is simply a way to help better the world starting with your self.

Icaria, who titled her final journal “Enlightenment,” wrote: To share love, compassion, comfort and encouragement, one does not need a formal education. What one does need is time, and a genuine love for mankind....it is my belief that knowledge is never wasted, especially if it is shared.

Nadia wrote: Before I began Eng. 103 with Prof Talwar, my mind was open but lazy....While there were moments of extreme frustration during the course of this semester, I am walking away...with a great sense of accomplishment and growth as an individual. In reading about all of these incredibly inspirational people, I found myself becoming aware of my own inner humanitarian....I am leaving reflecting on people like Gandhi, Suu Kyi, Bishop Tutu, and Thich Nhat Hanh, who have inspired me to be influential in the change that this planet needs in order to flourish.

Jusuph wrote: I have been wandering for a long time in search of meaning, and through all of my experiences I believe I have found my purpose....I started...the fall semester with curiosity at what this English course would entail. To my surprise it was a great deal of work, but I enjoyed every moment of it. The curriculum challenged many preconceived notions.... War, peace, forgiveness...made me ponder what I could do to make a difference.

Mike wrote: I am truly grateful and honored to have been able to take this class and...learn more about other civilizations than the one I live in.... I need to be more open minded and take into account other people’s feelings and thoughts on issues and not automatically assume that mine is the only way and that many before me have ideas and know how to do things much better and more maturely than I.

ChukAmeka wrote: I have this false image of myself as mostly a human being (human body). I did not know what it is to be truly a human being-spirit being.... New Reality: I am spirit being. I am infinite light, infinite peace, infinite love, and infinite justice.... I will gain knowledge and wisdom so that I can teach, educate and expose false beliefs and ideas in the world.... I will be a peace maker in my family. I will show forgiveness no matter how hard it is.

Dahma wrote: As I can recall since we...started this course I had some pretty negative feelings about peace, I didn’t think it was possible in the world we live in today...this class...completely changed my point of view on not just peace but life in general. I have come to understand that peace does not mean not engaging in war but it is far more complex than that, it is also an active process that must be maintained rather than something we can take for granted once we have it.

Ilianane explored in great detail her experience of the class and based her answers on specific statements I had made; I now know some people pay particular attention. So I chose this point from her paper. She wrote: I began to see that upon my understanding of material and peace studies..., my innate ability in successful conflict resolution was not to be overlooked or undermined (sic), but something to embrace as a gift I can offer to others. Perhaps, what I’ve admired and grown deeply fond of in Buddhism and ... Mahatma Gandhi is the emphasis of compassion and understanding in order to bring change....

Nalin wrote: Many adults told me I couldn’t graduate, get a job, be respectful or even be a good son. All I did was look into their eyes with disgust, not at them but at myself because of my irresponsible actions....it took me a long road to get where I am now but it was worth the hardships and struggles.... As a result I created my vision of peace, which is for everyone in this world to co-exist without any major problems for everyone to depend on each other from time to time. Also my action for peace is simple: contribute my art to society in order to open people’s minds and to see another perspective of life in the same manner as Banksy does

Chelsea wrote: My changes for the world is to take care of the strong women from all over and bring peace through health in society... it is what I believe I can do and what I would enjoy doing.

Hina wrote: There is more to photography than glamorous and glossy portraiture or moving documentary work that captures historical moments in time, and there is more to peace than protesting war and violence. I learned that peace is a complex science, which involves critical thinking, and especially thinking for ourselves in order to find new solutions to conflict which will benefit everyone. Coming to peace takes loyal actions of civil disobedience...as taught by Gandhi, to counter violence and destruction....My actions begin with photographing ordinary people who are making a difference in their community.... My vision for peace is to photograph other fellow Bodhisattvas and inspire others to become one

as well.

Aladine wrote: Luckily I was able to learn what the true meaning of peace is and what it is not. Peace is not a mythical place where everyone lives in perfect harmony, content with what and where they are. Peace is dynamic, a struggle towards achieving an understanding where everyone can coexist. During the course of this class I learned that peace often comes from the most unlikely of sources, from children addressing the UN to mothers in markets looking for a safe place to conduct their business; from warring tribes, to political activists. The common thread in each scenario is the drive to be free of oppression.

Metta wrote: I have recently declared my Bodhisattva as one that is out in the trenches fighting for what's right, teaching those that need to know, and providing for those in need. I am a peaceful man, so it will be in the form of servitude and with an open heart. As a citizen of this community, I have a responsibility and a duty to help others in need and live in a manner that doesn't take away from others' happiness. This is me, this is my life and what I live for...I live for others, some of us have to.

Gounay wrote: I realized that the actions of one individual can be the start of a whole new era. That it is possible to make changes to a society that would dare to rob the human rights that all living people are born with. I also learned that it was possible for people from two completely different cultures to get along with each other given the right environment, and that it is not impossible to break the culture barrier.

So the celebration came to an end.

My second experience was not as glorious, but it challenged me in a different way. Here was a class that was not open to these ideas, so I met with great resistance and even disrespect. Most students came to class unprepared, did their assignments with half-heartedness, and some challenged basic ideas, and their reading level was less sharp than of the previous class. There were days when I felt unsafe going to the classroom. I had figured out who was the source of the unkind dynamic in the class—a male with a strict upbringing who did not have much of a voice in his family so the class became his arena of projections.

One day I decided to let go of results I had desired. I shared with them that I was there to do my work, and they could do theirs or not, and I was fine with their choice. I would not share more information as I had done the previous semester. After all, as they are adults, it would be their choice and responsibility. This approach magically eased the situation.

When I handed them the final assignment, there was some grumbling, but even they surprised me on the day they presented these projects. Even here transformation had occurred. The male in question said there had not been any change in his thinking—a statement he had not realized would be seen as an admission of his own limitation and making trouble in class. But another student got it after a one-on-one dialogue with him when I shared my insights about his potential; I revealed a message in his heart. He could build a business that would also open doors to young children in need, and I expressed that it is quite all right to make money.

Seeds found a place in the ground of being. What happens later I cannot say or know, but I can envision and desire. I know that people follow the destiny and karmic pattern they create.

Why Students matter...

We can each make a difference if we are true to our greater purpose. And we know how we nurture our students and their vision of and for life matters most deeply. Students matter and we must invite their best while we also share out best. It is our responsibility and purpose to enliven and raise the bar, so that students can more readily come in touch with their innermost passion and authenticity and reveal their unique capacities—only then can we stay inspired by our work, by ourselves, and by each other.

When we tap into our greatness and see the greatness of others, we are illumined by each other's illumined presence. Let us wonder then if learning isn't about illumining this richness, for "*educare*" means to draw out. And for this to come about, learning systems and environments cannot be founded purely on objective analysis and testing, but they must be creative, global, and cosmic. Let's draw out the light in each other.

It is time to form networks of learning communities made of 8-12 people who meet over issues that matter. At a peace potluck on the UN International Peace Day, 21st September, 2011, I had students work in groups of three. Each was

to speak to the other two what peace meant to them and how they would make it happen in their lives. They were teaching each other. This is a way to empower them. This was just a taste of what a learning community ought to be: peer groups run by peer groups who might network with other peer groups over related or diverse themes.

What if we encouraged creative ways to invite students to be active participants in their own learning so they are validated, become responsible and excited about their richness and strengths? Lack of such validation corrodes our understanding, which is at the core of becoming (realized) human beings. Imagine our potential to determine our collective unfolding, one that engenders joy rather than the stupidity of violence and cruelty.

When Elza Maalouf presented at my college, she asked each of us what peace meant to us. While some people noted peace is about getting along with each other, about developing compassion, about protecting and guarding our environment, my answer was simply that peace was about fulfilling my human destiny and purpose. This point triggers the question: what is our destiny and purpose? Of course, no one has just one purpose, for it continually unfolds and redefines itself. We make the mistake of thinking it is just one.

To change the world, we must re-inform education at all levels, whose purpose is to invite our greatest potential and creative capacities. This is the purpose of peace, a dynamic not a static process of building harmony and reverence for life at all ages of learning in all communities, for us to create together a paradigm that is already emerging and seeks its own space. It has to be birthed in us, so we may claim our wholeness and authentic experience. Let us be reminded of this in the words of Jiddu Krishnamurti: *“No leader is going to give us peace, no government, no army, no country. What will bring peace is inward transformation, which will lead to outward action. Inward transformation is not isolation, is not a withdrawal from outward action. On the contrary, there can be right action only when there is right thinking and there is no right thinking when there is no self-knowledge. Without knowing yourself, there is no peace.”*

Let me present to you Jake, hero of the film Avatar. Jake finds his wholeness among the Navi, the Blue people, in nature and in sacred ways, leaving his rigidly controlled military identity behind. Now this hero is you. How will you break your bondage to violence, confusion, betrayal and limitation? How will you become that principle of Love, which we understand is our destination?

If the purpose of peace is singularly significant: to bring us to wholeness, to Essence, to Love, then you decide how we must transform so we become free of inner and outer strictures and can self-knowingly act in accord with the greatness which is inherent in us.

Imagine yourself as dynamic, whole, radiant in Essence! Would you not conclude that peace is truly seductive? That peace is generative! And you, too, might be!

Think about it.

Peace into Flowers

May this morning's peace
blow in all the right directions;
not away from but into hearts.
May the curve of question
be a cowl of protection;
from wind's cold dust today.
May its legs walk always
in beauty's wonder so world's
grace spring up like flowers.

– Ambika Talwar

COURSE MATERIALS

TEXTS

1. Barash, David P. (2010). *Approaches to Peace: A Reader in Peace Studies*. New York: Oxford University Press.
2. Hunt, Scott A. (2002). *The Future of Peace*. San Francisco: HarperCollins (Excerpts).
3. Lederach, John(2004). *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace*. New York: OUP (Excerpts)
4. Mayfield, Marlys.(2010). *Thinking for Yourself*. Boston: Cengage.

FILMS

Grave of the Fireflies. Dir: Isao Takahata. © 1988

Emerald Forest. Dir: John Boorman. © 1985

Milarepa. Dir: Neten Chokling. © 2006

PRESENTERS

Elza Malouf ~ <http://che-mideast.org>

Mick Quinn ~ <http://integralheartfoundation.org>

Ambika Talwar ~ <http://www.goldenmatrixvisions.com>

<http://www.intuition2wellness.com>

<http://www.creativeinfinities.com>