

Let peace in the world begin with you today

It is only by all of us working to get more peace in our own lives that the world can be a better place, writes **Arvind Devalia**



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Jeremy Gilley is an actor-turned-filmmaker, who in the late 1990s became preoccupied with questions about the fundamental nature of humanity and the issue of peace. He decided to explore these through the medium of film, and specifically, to create a documentary following his campaign

to establish an annual day of ceasefire and non-violence.

In 1999, Jeremy founded Peace One Day, a non-profit organisation, and in 2001 Peace One Day's efforts were rewarded when the member states of the United Nations unanimously adopted the first ever annual day of global ceasefire and non-violence on September 21 – Peace Day.

In theory, there should be no fighting and warfare on Peace Day but sadly we all know that in practice there will be the usual killings in war zones around the world.

Today there is more angst in the world than ever before. The world seems to be a more dangerous place and we are all more vulnerable to attack, uncertainty and upheaval. At the same time, the world struggles with growing inequality, poverty, recession and global warming challenges. Even nature is more unforgiving nowadays with a string of natural catastrophes.

The tragic part of it all is that mankind seems to be no nearer to resolving any of the disputes and grievances that make daily life such a struggle and misery for so many around the world. We need to recognise that multiculturalism does not lead to disintegration – we need to celebrate and embrace our differences, not criticise them.

In our hearts, we are all people with the same aspirations, hopes and ambitions. We all strive to better ourselves and create a better and secure future for our children. The majority of the people in the world just want to live “normal”, fulfilling and happy lives in peace, with enough for their daily needs.

We need to see people as people, rather than judge them on the basis of their religion. Ultimately peace can only come if we put our selfish motives to one side and think about the future of our children.

So you can do your bit every day beginning with Peace Day (September 21) by firstly being more caring towards all the people around you, while respecting our own needs and boundaries.

At the same time, searching for peace is also not about becoming a tree-hugging hippy. Though there is nothing wrong with this, and each to their own path, the majority of the people in the world just want to live “normal” fulfilling, happy lives in peace with enough for their daily needs.

We also need to begin doing this from today and continue the practice daily, rather than waiting for one day, some day. Rather than just focussing on bringing about peace in the world just on Peace Day – it has to be an everyday, life-long practice. It is even more important to bring more peace into our lives first – then the world will become more peaceful anyway.

So the question to ask yourself on this special day of peace is, “How can I bring more peace into my life today?”

In practical terms, you can start behaving in more peaceful ways, no matter where you are. For example no petty arguments, no road rage, no shouting and definitely no backbiting or gossiping.

To get you started, here are some ideas:

- Make peace with someone you have fallen out with.
- Bring your family and friends together for a meal.
- Send peace cards and emails.
- Organise some lunch boxes for homeless people.
- Make peace with yourself.
- Light a candle for peace.
- Hold a few minutes of silence and meditate.
- Write a prayer for world peace.
- While resolving problems, choose solutions that create peace.
- Give love to everyone you meet, and spread joy.

The key is to make peace with yourself and everyone that you have ever fallen out with. And of course, to continue practicing these activities every day and not just today.

You may wonder just how effective Peace Day can be in reducing all the conflict, violence and fighting around the world. The cynics may even argue about the futility of such a day but I say that no matter how effective or not such a day has been, it is vital in bringing about more awareness and understanding of the challenges we face today.



Even if just for one day, some child has had a more joyous day or some mother has heaved a sigh of relief over the safety of her child soldier, then today has been worthwhile. Even if just two quarrelling neighbours have made up today, then the world is a better place today than yesterday. And even if just one person's life has been positively impacted by the kindness shown by a stranger, then there are at least two happier people in the world tonight.

The challenge now is for all of us to make the world a better and more peaceful place day by day, and not just wait for Peace Day to come around once a year. It is up to us to make every day more peaceful than yesterday and make tomorrow even better than today.

Let today be the first day of true peace in your life every day. And be assured, it will get better day by day. ✨

Check out the Peace One Day website at www.peaceoneday.org to learn more about this special day of peace.