

NATIONAL PEACE ACADEMY

The National Peace Academy: Modeling the Principles and Processes of Peace

The National Peace Academy supports, advances and nurtures cultures of peace by conducting research and facilitating learning toward the development of peace systems – local to global – and the development of the full spectrum of the peacebuilder – inner and outer, personal and professional.

In fulfilling this purpose, the National Peace Academy is a principle-based, learning institution that strives to embody and reflect the principles and processes of peace that are shaped by the definition contained in the Earth Charter:

“...peace is the wholeness created by right relationships with oneself, other persons, other cultures, other life, Earth, and the larger whole of which all are a part.”

Right relationships, the principle at the core of this definition, is embedded in nearly all faith, spiritual and ethical traditions. In the Christian faith it is represented by the Golden Rule “do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” This ethic of reciprocity is a foundational tenet of all the world’s major religions. From a more secular, human rights perspective, the principle of right relationships is expressed in terms of human dignity. The preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights begins by recognizing “the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family (as) the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.”

Shared responsibility/shared leadership is the core process and expression of the principle of right relationship within the National Peace Academy. Shared leadership/shared responsibility fosters a peace-based system that recognizes and honors the value and unique contribution and skill set of every individual. Decisions are made in a spirit of trust and respect, aligned with the purpose of the National Peace Academy, and taking into consideration the well-being of the entire community. The system is characterized by honesty, clarity and kindness, with an awareness of interconnectedness and interdependence throughout.

This definition of peace as “right relationships,” agreed upon by the international community, also promotes a very active conception of peace. It illuminates at least four spheres of peace and corresponding principles, processes and responsibilities necessary for the achievement of peace within and among these spheres: the personal, the social, the political and the ecological.

Personal peace requires establishing right relationship with oneself. In living personal peace we are responsible to examine how we handle our own internal conflicts, our emotions, and live with integrity. We practice personal peace through commitment to self-reflection and self-awareness and by embodying the qualities of humility, balance, courage and inner listening.

- Core principles of the personal sphere include: integrity, authenticity, and responsibility
- Core processes of the personal sphere include: self-reflection, self-awareness, courage, listening, humility, commitment, balance, and initiative

Social peace requires establishing right relationships with others. In living social peace we are responsible to examine how we manage our interpersonal conflicts and differences, and how we give to and receive from others the qualities and conditions that comprise human dignity. We practice

social peace through dialogue, inclusivity, nurturing trusting relationships, valuing individual contributions and deep listening skills.

- **Core principles of the social sphere include:** human dignity, respect, non-violence, cooperation, trust, compassion and empathy
- **Core processes of the social sphere include:** dialogue, inclusivity, deep listening, valuing, and trust

Political peace requires establishing right relationships with and within groups, organizations and communities of people supported by just, nonviolent procedures for making and implementing policy and planning decisions in government, business, and civil society. In living political peace we are responsible to examine how we engage in decision-making processes and to review and assess our attitudes, intentions, and actions regarding existing institutions and mechanisms as well as those we strive to establish for assuring peace and justice. We practice political peace through democratic and consent decision-making with transparency and inclusivity.

- **Core principles of the political sphere include:** justice, cooperation, and trust
- **Core processes of the political sphere include:** democracy, transparency, inclusivity, transformation

Ecological peace requires establishing right relationships with Earth and the ecosystems of which we are a part and on which our survival and quality of life depend. Indeed, human systems are not separate from but integral to all living systems and as such, human organization affects and is affected by all other ecological systems. Ecosystems are both resilient and fragile, and human life depends upon our respect for and careful stewardship of the entire planet. We must take responsibility to shift our relationship to the natural environment from one based on *control over*, to one based on *interdependence* and *living with* or *within*. We practice ecological peace through striving to operate as stewards in communion with all living things and Earth as a whole.

- **Core principles of the ecological sphere include:** interdependence, interconnectedness, wholeness, holism, harmony and reverence
- **Core processes of the ecological sphere include:** stewardship, regeneration, communion, system integration and transformation