



Contagious Love Experiment

BEGINNING: To practice outward peace, we must pursue peace within ourselves. If vengeance or power is the root of our action, more of the same will be recreated.

-Spend time developing inward tranquility that it may produce bold, compassionate love. Make time for prayer, meditation, yoga, nature, etc.

-Consider the positive effects of a vegetarian diet. Not only is there the personal compassion for animals treated as products and existing for the profit from their death, but the resources it takes to sustain a vegetarian diet as opposed to a meat-eating diet are enormously less, thus having implications on world poverty and hunger.

LEARNING: Inform yourself on the issues at hand. Our day to day lives affect people all over the world. You may have to dig beyond the normally shown information, but knowledge is power.

<http://www.storyofstuff.com/> -visual explanation of economic system

<http://www.newdream.org/cc/index.php> -alternative consumer resources

<http://www.democracynow.org/> -refreshingly thorough and relevant news source

<http://www.ivaw.org/wintersoldier> -firsthand testimony of veterans and witnesses to the Global War on Terror

BUILD: Start with what's around you. A proactive care for the communities and lives around us moves beyond an attitude of paranoia and waiting for the worst-case-scenario. Violence is an expression of previous failures.

-Make use of free resources through programs and practices like Urban Foraging/Dumpstering, www.foodnotbombs.net, Squatting/Wild Foraging, <http://www.freecycle.org/>, ride sharing (craigslist rideshare, <http://www.spaceshare.com/>), community gardens, bike collectives, etc.

-List and links can be found at http://freegan.info/?page_id=47

Reach Out: Our local dedication and personal growth can reach across great distances.

-International volunteer organizations

-Using programs like <http://www.anysoldier.com/> or <http://www.adoptaussoldier.org/>, consider writing letters of respect to soldiers for their dedication, but also explain a different point of view on war, one that they very easily may never be accurately presented with. Also encourage them to practice compassion for the local populations they are living near.

-I am in contact with an Afghani peace activist who is putting together a conference in Afghanistan to teach non-violence. Whatever your opinions on the war, you can't deny that mistakes have been made. Following the idea of taking the log out of your own eye before you take the speck out of your brother's, consider writing a letter of empathy to be shared with this Afghani group. Send your note to contact@ourjourneytosmile.com, and learn more about this inspiring project at: <http://ourjourneytosmile.com/>