

Author's Prologue

THIRD EDITION

The Peace Book was first published in June 2001. Since that time, we have experienced the tragedy of September 11, the war in Afghanistan, the threats of North Korea, and the invasion of Iraq. These events have had a huge impact on our society.

Now, the world is a scarier place. We live with a new awareness that we are vulnerable at any moment to those who would give their own lives to make us suffer. The possible use of chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons is suddenly more than the subject of arcane treaties. A color-coded system of national alert keeps us on the edge, wondering when and where and how the next terrorist attack will come. Our defense budget – and our deficits – grow at an alarming pace, while our people struggle to find jobs and affordable health care.

At home, our civil liberties are threatened; dissent from official policy is seen as unpatriotic at best, traitorous at worst. Our young men and women in the Armed Forces are, once again, returning from wars in foreign lands in body bags. Abroad, thousands of people have died or been injured through our military campaigns; the infrastructure of community life - homes, roads, schools, hospitals, utilities, cultural treasures - has been destroyed in two different countries, in our search for 'the enemy.' Our government postures and bullies belligerently on the world stage. Anti-American feeling is a significant force around the globe.

The picture is not a pretty one for those of us who are seeking to create a more peaceful world. And yet – there are heartening aspects we can point to as well. We are more knowledgeable now about other places in the world – about how other people live and think, including how they think about us. We are waking up to our individual responsibility for our government's actions, and making our voices heard in spite of attempts to quiet us. We are asking important questions about who benefits from war, and who suffers – politically, physically and financially. We are exploring alternatives.

Most encouraging for me is the massive and spontaneous growth of the anti-war movement, which brought millions of people into the streets and onto their fax machines, emails, and Internet sites to speak out against our government's policy

of pre-emptive war. I see this as a huge awakening process, with citizens emerging from their complacent cocoons and actively engaging in efforts to shape our collective reality toward peace. While not yet a full-fledge peace revolution, this movement does indicate a rising tide of peace consciousness, and could potentially provide just the momentum we need to make the shift to a culture of peace.

As we turn from thinking about what we are against to thinking about what we are for, we find an ever-stronger desire to be part of the solution and not the problem. People are yearning for ways to make a difference, to contribute to greater justice, tolerance, and peace in their lives and in the world. And they are looking for tools and pathways to help them accomplish this.

The Peace Book is one such tool. Our readership has grown exponentially since September 11. Nearly 50,000 copies of the book are in circulation, as we go into this Third Edition. It's being used in classrooms, study group, nursing homes, faith congregations, and even in businesses to focus attention on personal responsibility for building peace. Anne Yeomans, who has used the book in a discussion forum with a women's group, shares her experience:

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As an author, I am always delighted when a reader reports that the book has had the exact effect that was intended. The whole purpose of *The Peace Book* is to invite its readers to think of themselves as peacebuilders. In the crush of dramatic world events, we can easily overlook the fact that it is our small, everyday, individual and collective actions that shape our shared reality. When enough of us are pro-actively applying the Four Principles of Peace discussed in this book (Community, Cooperation, Nonviolence, and Witness), we will lay the ground for a world in which war becomes unthinkable, and terrorism unnecessary.

The secret to the success of *The Peace Book* is, I believe, the gift element. Our readers report that the act of giving the book as a gift of peace, and the act of receiving that gift, are deeply meaningful. People feel honored and delighted to have such a beautiful and powerful book given to them with love. "A gift?" they ask incredulously, "For me? Really? Thank you!"

With this Third Edition of *The Peace Book*, we are inaugurating a new era in our efforts to share this gift of peace as widely as possible. The 'we' is those of us at

The Peace Company (formerly known as PeaceTech). The Peace Company is taking its rightful place as the publisher of the book, with great gratitude to Conari Press, which kindly put its name on the first editions to give us time to grow into our true corporate mission of making peace popular, practical and profitable – which we have now done.

We are committed to making this book and other similar tools available to ever-greater numbers of people who want to step out and make a difference in their world. With this Edition, we want to grow that 50,000 readership by a factor of 10, to 500,000 or more. Parents, teachers, concerned citizens, activists, business and religious leaders, individuals of all ages want desperately in these troubled times to find ways to walk the peace path. This book, and other products of The Peace Company, exist to serve that need. (You can find out more about The Peace Company in the final section of this book, or at www.thepeacecompany.com.)

During the lifetime of this Third Edition the world may well see more acts of terror and violence. Our hearts may well break once again at the senseless destruction of human life and treasure. And yet, in our quiet way, one book, one gift, one discussion, one action at a time, we will continue creating a new world; laying brick upon brick to build a society based on the knowledge that we are all in this together, that we belong to each other, that love is the medicine that can heal our wounds, and that we are all peacebuilders in every moment, shaping our shared reality with every thought, word, and deed.

I believe that one day soon we will reach that critical mass, that tipping point, and we will look around us and see that the peace revolution has already succeeded. I draw great inspiration from the successful shift we have seen recently in our society regarding the use of tobacco. Just a few short years ago, smoking was an unquestioned (though admittedly unhealthy) part of our communal environment. Now smoking has largely disappeared from our public spaces. The tobacco industry is being held responsible for the harm it causes. Norms around advertising, selling, and using cigarettes have changed profoundly.

What we have done about tobacco we can do about violence as normative in our lives. We can change the culture. I offer *The Peace Book* as one small vehicle in our great quest for that shift to a culture of peace. I salute each and every one of you, dear Readers, for your efforts on this journey as well. I encourage you to use this book to cultivate peace in your own life and in the world around you. I

invite you to recognize yourself as a peacebuilder – one who, by their thought and action serves the cause of peace as a way of life in our society.

Buckminster Fuller says, “You never change things by fighting against the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the old model obsolete.” If it takes a village to raise a child, surely it takes a whole community of committed peacebuilders to build that new model of a peace culture. Those who use violence to impose their beliefs and to wreak their vengeance on others will likely continue to play out their sad dramas upon the world screen. Meanwhile, those of us for whom peace *is* the way will be writing a new script for the human family – one word, one sentence, one chapter at a time.

My friends, I give you the gift of peace. Enjoy it, and pass it on.