

# The Peace that Passeth Understanding

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**Dale Goldstein**

Life is full of strange and wonderful paradoxes. Perhaps the strangest – and most wonderful – is the fact that the peace we all long for lies in the very center of the place we most desperately avoid looking into/ being with/ fully experiencing.

Peace is our Natural State. We become separated from our True Nature because of things that happen to us that are too painful or frightening for us to fully experience at the time, so that we wall them off from our consciousness and bury them in our unconscious. This is precisely how we split form ourselves.

When we are born, we are whole and complete. We do not feel separate from any part of ourselves or the world. Then, at some point early on in our development, we get this idea that we are separate from the world, that who/ what we are ends at our skin. Now there is an inside and an outside – the creation of “space.” And, because the “outside” will go on forever, but the “inside” (self) will not, there is suddenly “time.” This split is so excruciatingly painful (because it means that we will, at some point, cease to exist, we split once again and tell ourselves that, while the body will certainly die, there is something – a mind, a soul, a spirit, a consciousness, a something – that will not die, that will live forever. And so we now become split from our bodies – “disembodied spirits,” if you will.

Then, to make matters worse, there are parts of this human mind/ soul/ spirit that are socially unacceptable. For example, on the level of feelings, in this culture, we are only “allowed” to feel happy. Feelings of anger, fear, and pain are not acceptable. Nobody wants to see/ feel them. So we cut off  $\frac{3}{4}$  of our feeling nature and bury these parts in our unconscious. Everything we bury, we put into a “bag” that Carl Jung termed “the Shadow,” because it follows us wherever we go, but only others can see it. We have individual shadows, familial shadows, national shadows, etc. And all that we’re left with is what Jung called “the Persona,” that shell of a being that we walk around believing and trying to convince others is who/ what we really are. It’s no wonder there’s so little real connection in our lives!



I see this process of splitting from oneself as a funnel-shaped affair: at the bottom of the funnel is our True Nature – that single point where we are whole/ undivided. As we split further and further away from our True Nature, we move higher and higher up on the funnel until we arrive at the upper lip, which is where we live most of our lives.

One of the three unanswered questions I have is, “Why do some people at some point in their lives realize they are suffering and turn inwards to come back home to themselves?” – to begin the journey back down the funnel towards their True Home. While I may never have an answer to this question that I truly understand, I do know that some people at some point do turn around and look deeply inside themselves to try to find out Who/ What they really are. And some discover a path that leads them Home.

The tool that I like best – that in 33 years of searching for The Way I have found to be most direct (and, consequently, effective) in getting to the “heart of the matter,” I call Heartwork. I have described the Heartwork process in detail on the “Heartworksheets” page in the “Nourishment,” “Do-It-Yourself” section of our website at [www.heartwork-institute.com](http://www.heartwork-institute.com).

Very briefly, Heartwork is a process of starting by acknowledging the suffering in one’s life – what one is currently experiencing on the “surface of the funnel” – and then looking increasingly deeply into the place in the body where the dis-ease lives, consciously descending through layer after layer of the “false self,” until one arrives at the “point” where the journey began – one’s True Home. Here, one experiences one’s Undivided Nature – the “Peace that Passeth Understanding” – and from this place, one can look back out at the surface of the funnel and see how one created the suffering, thereby disempowering the pattern forever.

The Heartwork process is beautifully described in the following poem, written by Maribeth Price, a participant in the first Heartwork Intensive at the Omega Institute in July 1982. It not only describes the process she went through to finally – after 25 years of psychotherapy – resolve the trauma of having been killed in an automobile accident, but it also conveys the spirit and potential power of Heartwork.

#### The Descent

Life's spectator no longer could I be  
And so myself did plunge  
Through fear's dark sea:  
Falling, drowning in despairing tears,  
Ocean inhaling, sinking to unknown depths,  
Imploding anguished cries I disappear into darkness  
And am lost.

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Then struggles cease,  
Too tired to fight,  
My being starts to yield,  
Begins to pulse in rhythmic union  
With all that once seemed foe,  
Feeling with each heartbeat  
Feared enemy becoming friend.

Then waves embrace and cradle,  
Like loving arms enfolding,  
As they lift their host up slowly,  
In gentle reverent Hands,  
Upward through shining rainbow hues,  
Until, in one bright blinding flash,  
I breathe the sun and hear earth sing  
As I begin to dance.

More examples of how individuals have used this process to find inner peace can be found in the “About Heartwork,” “How It Works,” “Transformational Stories” section of our website.

I’ve been teaching stress reduction for 26 years now, and I repeatedly run into people – both participants in my workshops and other professionals in the field – who believe that one must have stress in one’s life, and that all one can do is choose between what they call “positive stress” and “negative stress.” Obviously, these people have never taken the journey home to themselves and experienced the place beyond stress, the Peace that Passeth Understanding.

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