

Parenting Teens Just Got Easier! is a free monthly eZine
for parents of pre-teens and teens From Saso Seminars
by Patt and Steve Saso
December 2008
Creating Peace on Earth

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December 2008 Featured Article
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Creating Peace on Earth
By Patt Saso
www.SasoSeminars.com

Since marrying more than two decades ago, Steve and I have put up our Christmas tree the Saturday after Thanksgiving.

It was the same this year. We listened to the soundtrack from The Muppet Christmas Carol and holiday music by Kenny Rogers. Each ornament we placed on the tree seemed to flood us with memories from our past.

There is always a wave of nostalgia and vulnerability that settles in at this time of year when the day's light grows shorter.

Darkness is a time that invites reflection.

There is an office building in San Jose, on Highway 17 that lights up a giant "Peace on Earth" sign every year. That's a big order to fill, but I wonder what would happen if every person took responsibility to live a life of peace.

Peace starts within.

Over the weekend, sitting quietly under the twinkling glow of our tree, I contemplated this concept. I went deep within, exploring my own darkness and looking at myself more truthfully. This was not easy.

I like to think of myself as somewhat spiritual, but in my reflections I saw how I harbor resentment. In seventh grade my older sister wrote me a note letting me know how selfish my behavior was. At the time, I had no idea what she was talking about. I'm not saying I wasn't self absorbed, at that age most kids are. It is a normal part of development. I'm just saying there was no awareness. I was so stunned and hurt by her comments that I have to honestly admit that there are still remnants of resentment.

Continuing on this theme of self absorption, it is shameful for me to acknowledge my jealousy of others or my impatience with wanting things to go my way. These thoughts, created in my own mind, prevent me from experiencing inner peace. Without inner peace, there cannot be peace on earth.

The art of forgiveness

How do we develop peace within so we might contribute to Peace on Earth? One answer is by initiating forgiveness.

Just as athletes have to practice to perfect their skill-sets, so we too must practice pardoning others and ourselves.

The following is adapted from "*The Art of Forgiveness, Lovingkindness, and Peace*," by Jack Kornfield. This exercise is three-fold.

First of all, I need to stress that forgiveness is not for the weak. It demands courage and honesty. So if you want to experience inner peace follow these three steps.

1. Start with those you have hurt.

First, reflect on the ways you have harmed others, either deliberately or not. Sometimes we hurt others without realizing it. We didn't set out to cause pain, but we do.

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For me, I think about the ways I have hurt my kids and husband, deliberately or by accident. I consider the times I caused pain because of my yelling, or making irrational decisions out of fear. Sometimes my anger is turned into blame and this causes harm to my family members.

And in the silence of my mind and open heart I ask each to forgive me for my ignorance and arrogance.

2. Forgive yourself.

Secondly, reflect on the ways you may have turned on yourself. There are many ways we betray ourselves without realizing what we are doing.

Just as I have caused suffering to others, in the same ways I harm myself with my internal negative self-talk. An example of deserting my true self is by causing more pain by harmful thoughts, such as "I am unlovable."

A young woman I work with is unable to look at herself in the mirror. She is working hard at healing the toxic messages about herself that she received as a child from her father. His contaminated words have been ingrained in her psyche. Self loathing is painful and harmful and exoneration is essential for a future of happiness and joy.

Forgiveness allows us to release all the many ways we have wronged ourselves and helps move us toward radical self-acceptance.

3. Practice forgiveness of those who have hurt you.

Many others have caused us pain and suffering. Not always with the intention of hurting. The last step is to open your heart to these people.

This, of course, is more challenging. I think of my teenager yelling at me. Or my husband not supporting me in the way I expect. I think of my own mother and what I didn't get, but wanted and needed. What about my older sister and her letter? I've held on to that one a long, long time. It is time to let go.

My internal dialogue sounds something like this: "For a long time I have carried hurt and resentment for the ways I was treated by you, both the real and imagined mistreatment. I no longer want to hold within me this negativity because these feelings are not helpful. I want to experience joy. Therefore, I am letting go and release you from the ways you have caused me harm. I forgive you."

Create peace on earth by releasing old drudges.

During this holiday season remember to give yourself the gift of presence. Practice the art of forgiveness.

Transform hurt into healing and experience the blessings of love. You'll be a better parent and help create Peace on Earth.

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!

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For More Parenting Tips

<http://www.sasoseminars.com/tools.html>

We are exciting to announce that in January 2009 we'll be releasing 5 new parenting CDs. Stay tuned for more info.

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Parent Coaching

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Until next time,

Patt & Steve Saso

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an unsolicited email from a stranger as a result of joining our list.

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Patt Saso assists people back into harmony in their relationships. She is a Parenting Coach and Marriage & Family therapist in Milpitas, CA. Patt & Steve Saso are authors of ***10 Best Gifts for Your Teen*** and ***Parenting Your Teen with TLC***. For more parenting tools visit their web at www.SasoSeminars.com and sign up for their free eNewsletter, ***Parenting Teens Just Got Easier***. Or call 408.262.6837