

Innate Conscience and World Peace

Jeanne Carroll
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As a young child, my friends next door had their grandmother living with them. She was a plump white-haired lady who spoke with a lilting Irish brogue. I so enjoyed listening to her speak.

One day my mom let me know that I shouldn't talk to her anymore because we didn't like her.

Shortly afterward, I broke a lamp. When asked by my infuriated mother if I did it, I simply said, "No." I learned that by going against my inner voice and lying, I deflected punishment.

In summer 1964, I was eight years old. I happened to walk by a TV and saw men fighting on the streets with police officers. There were riots in New York and that scene sent a shudder of fear up my spine that I never had felt before. I knew someplace deep inside that this should not be happening.

On September 11, 2001, after watching the plumes of black smoke rise from the buildings of lower Manhattan from my window, I was sickened by the thought I would someday have to forgive the people who were responsible for that terrible devastation. Like all people, I wrestle with my conscience.



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In a world where technology is king, it is easy to see how the tools that humans are born with could be overlooked. As a long-forgotten super power, our conscience patiently waits to be used to its full potential.

Some consider "innate conscience" to be the basis of a philosophical debate, that conscience is formed only as an individual is introduced to family, society and culture. I maintain that innate conscience is a birthright bestowed on all humans equally. It is recorded in the Bible that after God completed each day of creation, God saw that it was good. Therefore, all creation is the embodiment of God from birth or from the beginning, not only after maturity, religious ceremony or some other stipulation.

"Internal nature and external form refer to corresponding inner and outer aspects of the same entity" (*Exposition of the Divine Principle*, p. 17) which are in place at the time of birth. God desperately wanted an object partner in the form of children to love and to be loved by, embodying goodness. God, just as any parent, could take delight in them from birth. All people were born equipped with an inner knowing of their personalized innate conscience.

Yet, in order for each individual to recognize and attain their full potential, they need to be in touch with "that still, small voice" of their conscience, the inner sense of what is right or wrong in one's conduct or motives. In order to be the physical reflection of God each person must emulate that Being in a divinely unique and personal way. "The inner quality, though invisible, possesses a certain structure which is manifested visibly in the particular outer form." (*EDP*, p. 17)

Even though each individual is equipped with this conscience from birth, throughout history state structures, dictators and religions, have sought to influence this natural component of the human condition. Through governance, tradition and the orchestrating behaviors and beliefs of others influencing us, the individual is groomed to rely less on themselves and to defer to a greater administrative body. Throughout history, the vision, ambition and metaphysical experience of a few have gained power and influence over the masses.

As a result, our birthright is neglected. Historically, central dominating thought systems, which were inspired and effective for a time, have been used to oversee societies for centuries. Dietary law seeking to protect individuals from illness and death were necessary for survival and growth. Behavior and laws governing groups living and depending on each other for protection, trade and a peaceful day to day life are needed as well. By and large, laws and traditions regarding marriage have long served to secure strong family units.

How much stronger would a society be if the innate conscience of each individual was fostered in loving, caring families, supportive nurturing societies and ethical, wise educational systems as well? If each person were strongly supported to value their own inner awareness of right and wrong, good and evil,

there would be less of a chance for the individual to fall quietly into line with popular trends of thought and behavior which may not resonate with their own inner voice. They would be more aware of the fact that God resides within them and is guiding to them toward goodness through their innate conscience.

Children raised in conditions that offer genuine love and support from their family and larger community are nurtured and learn how to embody the ethics of that environment. Given the healthy balance of love, intellectual stimulation and meeting emotional-physical needs, the innate conscience of each child is designed to thrive and strengthen. However, as they grow towards maturity, one child may view his or her parents as concerned and caring while a sibling may consider them callous and authoritarian. As children mature they may initially forget the constant love and support which surrounded them in their childhood. Instead, they may look back on their upbringing and focus on controlling beliefs which they now see as narrow and unforgiving.

Since the child's innate conscience was initially nurtured and supported with love, "the force of his/her conscience, which impels her/him toward a virtuous life, is always active within his/her inner self. This is true for all people of all ages and places. No one can quell the force of conscience, which is powerfully at work even without one's conscious awareness." (*EDP*, p. 23) No one was raised in an idyllic environment. There is no formula within the family that is infallible since all families constantly grow and change vastly day by day, experience by experience. In addition, each individual has a distinct nature which requires specific guidance though the benefits may not be obvious until years later. The only constant is our inner self or innate conscience which pushes us toward becoming whole and is uniquely personalized for each individual.

Mature adults are able to become whole through resonating and constantly aligning with their conscience. Life experience, love, trauma, and other relationships are constantly testing our relationship with our conscience. We are often led to challenging situations over and over until we are able to quietly listen to our inner voice and do what is sometimes the hardest thing.

Through strengthening our relationship with the inner self all things are possible; forgiving the unforgivable and loving the unlovable become conceivable as a result of the inner strength which each one possesses. "Since all forces are produced by give and take action the conscience cannot generate the force needed for its operation all by itself. That is to say, the conscience can operate only when it forms a common base with some subject partner ... the ultimate subject partner of our conscience is God." (*EDP*, p. 23)

Since our understanding of God can be somewhat elusive, it is not fair to limit God to prayer and religious reading only. This quote from "A Growing Concept of God," the *NA Just For Today Daily Meditation* for September 24, 2018, states: "as we grow ... so will our understanding. We'll begin to see that the only limits to God's love and grace are those we impose by refusing to step out of the way..."

It should be common knowledge in all cultures that the "inner quality, though invisible, possesses a certain structure which is manifested visibly in the particular outer form" in the person of each very different and highly valuable human being. This is our birthright and in it we each carry a unique aspect of God. The struggle to "know thyself" could be so much easier if each individual were taught to love and respect themselves and to honor their own quiet inspiration through fanning the glowing embers of their own conscience.



It is unfortunate there is not an app for that, to recognize and strengthen one's conscience. People young and old are picking up electronic devices all day long looking for something, validation or inspiration. While there are billions of terabytes of useful information available to enrich the individual regardless of their interest, many sulk in depression from comparison and judgment stemming from images on their screen. Could this be one of the causes of depression and suicide being at an all-time high?

According to the *New York Times* (April 22, 2016), "Suicide in the United States has surged to the highest levels in nearly 30 years... with increases in every age group except older adults." For depression, psychotropic medications are given freely while nurturing healthy relationships seem at a premium and one-on-one counseling is harder to come by and usually more expensive and not covered by insurance.

Could it be possible that the reason for one's depression may simply be caused by not knowing their true inner value? In this respect the values in which children are raised have left countless individuals wanting because, apparently, they are out of touch with their value and not aware of their hidden power of following their conscience. We do children a disservice by not educating them to be acutely aware of and

in touch with their inner self.

If an individual has, beyond the shadow of doubt, a consistent and reliable relationship with their internal self they are in touch with God and "they become God's beloved... sharing all the feelings of God as their own." (*EDP*, p. 34) How could such a person intentionally cause harm to another, place their needs and desires over the welfare of others, wage war, abuse others? Wouldn't they seek out like-minded individuals to align with?

Our children were raised in the fertile soil of our faith and ethics. They have that goodness in their cells, influencing every decision they make. Families and communities can and are reaching for that reality as well. Throughout the world there are movements which promote mindfulness and self-knowledge as a path to world peace.

Currently there are thousands of organizations which promote peace throughout the world. By looking over their websites and mission statements it is clear most are not promoting the strengthening of each individual's relationship with their inner self from childhood as a path to peace. Yet a majority of parents throughout the world want their children to be good, healthy and productive members of society. Each child is then tasked with determining how to go about successfully fulfilling those goals. Unfortunately we fail to provide the tools.

It is the innate conscience that, if listened to, is able to guide all people toward goodness, thought by thought, moment by moment. Just as a bodybuilder gains strength and power from repetitive movements, we can strengthen our connection to our innate conscience through habitually checking how we stand with our conscience. As Disney's Jiminy Cricket famously told Pinocchio, "Always let your conscience be your guide."

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