

Unposted letter

Peace
is
Possible

Dear Club President,

Peace is as elusive as Scarlet Pimpernel, the hero of a famous story. Peace is difficult to conquer, that we tend to lose hope. I request you to remember that though the odds are heavy, winning is not impossible. Mount Everest resisted conquest for many years and was touted as an impossible obstacle to conquer. Many a mountaineer had perished or returned dejected. But one day, in 1953 Edmund Hillary and Tensing Norgay reached the summit. Commented an addicted mountaineer “Mount Everest, you defeated us once, twice, many times but you can’t get taller or bigger but we can and one day, we will conquer you.”

Failure comes only when we give up. If we rise and restart our journey, we can become big enough to win.

“Consider the postage stamp,” a mountaineer said “The usefulness of the stamp is in its ability to stick to one thing till it gets there.” That is perseverance. Our fight against war needs our ability to stick till we reach the goal.

Robert Kennedy once said “Only those who dare to fail greatly will ever achieve greatly.” The quest for peace must begin with us. Strife and war are an impediment not only to the prosperity of a nation but also for personal advancements and achievements. All religions were formed on the basis of peace and yet today, so many wars are fought on religion.

Every Rotarian — every individual — can take a step towards peace. Interaction with people of different countries, castes, creeds, religions and races can generate a seed of better understanding, more tolerance and more love. If religious leaders and politicians are an immensely influential lot, Rotarians should not consider themselves to be less influential.

The community we serve, the men and women with whom we develop closeness and the families of all Rotarians within the club — Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Parsis, Sikhs and others can ignite a spark of peaceful co-existence and ultimately this spark can kindle a fire of desire to be peaceful and tolerant.

Let us light the fire today. Take that bold step through your club and make the beginning — you can do it.



*Rtn. Ashok Mahajan
Trustee, The Rotary Foundation 2009–2013
Director, Rotary International 2007–2009*