

Dear Club Presidents,

Peace is not as illusive as believed. True, the path is riddled with obstructions and at some places there is no path at all and we have to create a path. Once on the path, you will find many roads going in different directions, but no matter which path you choose, you will ultimately reach your goal.

Before you embark on the path to peace, you must first dare to believe in peace. If you believe in peace, you will live it daily. Your actions will speak loud and clear. Therefore, if you want peace, promote peace. Firstly, be at peace, promulgate peace and spread peace. The greatest blessings the human heart can know is world peace and the world will never become better unless we ourselves become better and set an example before others.

Achieving peace is no easy matter. You will fail at times but perseverance is the need of the time. It took over three decades to reach the summit of Mount Everest. It took years and hundreds of experiments to invent a light bulb. Many success stories have many failures at its base. The winners don't give up. They win finally. Peace also has many failure stories, but if we persist, if we persevere, if we doggedly pursue — peace will not be so elusive.

Peace results from like-minded aspirations. Every one wants peace. Why is it that we fail to achieve it? The reason is not far to seek. We want peace on 'our terms.' We want peace as we dictate. We do not want to listen to the other side. The best remedy, therefore, will be to 'listen' to the other side. This can be achieved by a person-to-person interaction. If we are ready for some give and take, the task would be simpler. Rotary has many programmes under The Rotary Foundation and International Service that promote this inter-personal dialogue. Once people meet, talk, interact and sincerely wish for peace, the task would be easier. One of the most important trips a person ever takes is "to meet someone halfway." If we don't meet halfway, peace will be lost. If we are ready, there is a chance for Peace. Paul Harris had rightly said "the best attribute of Rotary is 'toleration.'" We have to re-cultivate the art of toleration.

Let the Club Leadership give its whole-hearted contribution and enthusiastic support to every good idea or initiative towards anything that may help even in the smallest way, in fostering peace in this world full of conflicts. To establish this feeling amongst Rotarians, the Club leadership must put extra efforts to (a) keep Rotary simple (b) put more Rotary in Rotarians (c) make Rotarians know each other better.

As leaders of your respective Clubs, as the respected members of the community, let Rotary spread the message of peace, love, co-existence, harmony and tolerance.

A wise oriental philosopher has said "when planning for a year — plant rice; when planning for ten years — plant trees; when planning for hundred years — plant people." I may add plant Rotarians.

Rotarians are in a unique position of understanding others.

Let us start the process of peace immediately.



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