

Peace Pilgrim Talk on Spiritual Growth - 1979
California State University, Los Angeles, CA
Transcript

Peace Pilgrim is speaking to college classes at Cal State in 1979 by invitation of Prof. Webster Cotton. In this hour she describes stages of her spiritual growth.

I am a pilgrim, a wanderer. And a pilgrim is a wanderer with a purpose. A pilgrimage can be to a place or for a thing. And my pilgrimage is for a thing. My pilgrimage is for peace. Now there's lots of facets of peace, and it covers all of them. Peace among nations, peace among groups, peace with our environment. But also peace among individuals, and the very important inner peace, which is what I talk about the most. Traditionally a pilgrim is on foot. I started January 1 of 1953. I've been walking now 26 years. It is what I'm doing with my retirement years. Back in - the end really of 1964 I had finished counting 25,000 miles, and I thought that's enough - no more counting. So at that point I did not stop walking but I did stop counting. Also I changed priorities. You see I have had priorities in my life since I was a child. I established when I was in grammar school my rule of first things first and began at that time to set priorities in my life and I've done it of course throughout my lifetime. So when I started my pilgrimage my priorities were walking first, then speaking, then answering mail, but as soon as I stopped counting I switched priorities and my priorities became speaking first, then answering mail and then walking. Those are my priorities today.

Now a pilgrim has no visible means of support, and so I have no money and I don't accept any money. And I belong to no organization. There is no organizational backing behind me, and all I own is what I wear and the few things I carry in my little pockets. I until given shelter, fast until given food. I don't even ask. It must be given. And it is. People are good. There is a spark of good in everybody no matter how deeply it may be buried, it is always there.

Now one thing that I have always wanted to do was to contact people. And so I began to wear my short tunic with peace pilgrim on the front and 25,000 miles on foot for peace on the back. It makes my contacts for me in the kindest way, in the most effective way. You're in a much better position to talk to people when they approach you, then when you approach them. And I notice that those who come are worthwhile people. They either are genuinely interested in peace for they have a good lively curiosity.

One more thing - a pilgrim usually has message. This one certainly does. It says in one sentence "This is the way of peace, overcome evil with good, falsehood with truth, and hatred with love. Now there's nothing new about that except the practice of it, but I consider it the lesson for today, and so it becomes the message of my peace pilgrimage.

Now let me answer the most common question that I am asked: How in the world did you ever get started on a thing like that? I came from a very quiet life. I was born on a small farm on the outskirts of a small town. I had a woods to play in and a creek to swim in and room to grow. And I would wish for all children a situation where they had room to grow, because I look at plants growing up too crowded together and I realized that they never obtain maximum growth. And we humans are a little like that too.

Now I began to make some good choices when I was still quite young for instance my rule of first things first. And the golden rule influenced my life when I was quite young. I read it in history - do unto others as you would have others do unto you, expressed in a lot of different ways. It was really pointing out that every culture had one. Well it was different from anything I had ever read because it received an inner confirmation from me and affected my entire life. I carried it into high school with my little saying, if you want to make friends you must be friendly. And that's an offshoot of the golden rule, a recognition that people react according to the influences brought to bear upon them. I still have it in my life today with my little saying if you want to make peace you must be peaceful. And that works too.

I started to make other good choices. When I was still in what they would call Junior High today I was offered real cigarettes from a package which I did not smoke but my friends did. In high school I was offered all kinds of alcohol which I did not drink but my friends did.

Now the test came after my student days. All my friends at that time used both alcohol and tobacco and there was such a push toward conformity in those days. These days they call it peer pressure. That they actually looked down upon me because I didn't. And gathered in someone's living room I said to them look, life is a series of choices. Nobody can stop you from making your choices, but I have a right to make my choices too. And I have chosen freedom.

And then I went right on to choose freedom from other enslaving things. I chose freedom from negative thinking. Why you can absolutely destroy yourself from negative thinking. Because every moment of your life you're creating through thought. You're creating your inner conditions and you're helping create the conditions around you. I just think about the best that could happen and all the good things I would like to see happen. Those are the things I would like to emphasize. And if someone were to do the meanest thing to me why I would just feel the deepest compassion for this out of harmony person who is capable of doing mean things and I certainly wouldn't hurt myself by a wrong reaction or bitterness or anger. And then about 41 years ago now, 15 years before the pilgrimage started I chose freedom from unnecessary possessions and meaningless activities. I came out of my empty life of money and things and started to live to give instead of to get. Well, my life just blossomed out. Three things happened. I attained the great blessing of good health. I haven't had an ache or pain or a cold or a headache for 41 years. I knew my life work was going to be work for peace and the whole peace picture. And long after I had finished the physical growing up and I had finished the mental growing up. I had enough knowledge to get along, I could make my own decisions and I had finished the emotional growing up. I could get along with people and with myself, I started the psychological growing up which takes you from the self centered life into the life that sees you in proper perspective as a part of the whole and works for the food of the whole. You see that every human being is of equal importance. Every one of them has a job to do. Every one of them has equal potential. But we're in very varied stages of growth. Because we choose as to whether we will even finish the mental and emotional growing up and as to whether we will begin the psychological growing. And there are so many people who choose never to begin that. But it was doing the psychological growing up and finding inner peace that prepared me for the pilgrimage that I walk today.

When I started out my hair had turned to silver. I looked essentially the way I look today. And I remember when I told my friends I was about to walk across the country they thought I had taken leave of my senses. But what I walk on is not the energy of youth. When you have found inner peace you feel plugged into the source of universal energy, right there waiting for people to plug in. And that's what I walk on.

Let me give you an example of this amazing energy from someone else's experience. Because sometimes under special circumstances this [PAGE 4] endless energy becomes available for just a little while. I was walking out of a town and truck driver stopped to with me. He said, "I heard you say over television something about that endless energy and I just wanted to tell you I had it one time." Yes, he said, "I was marooned in a town by a flood, and I got so bored that I finally offered to help. And I got interested in getting people out. Why, he said, "I worked without eating, I worked without sleeping, and I wasn't tired. But, he said, "I don't have it anymore." I said, "well, what are you working for now"? He said, "Money". I said, "that should be quite incidental. You have that endless energy only insofar as you are working for the good of the whole. As soon as you start working for your selfish little self, it's gone." That's the secret of it. In this world you are given as you give.

And when I realized that human potential really was. What people really are capable of, I looked around me and I said, "how sad that most people only scratch the surface of their real potential." No wonder they have problems, no wonder society has problems. And I started talking about human potential and society's potential. Because of course the situation in the world around us is always a reflection of the collective inner situation.

And so I would like to draw for a graph illustrating human potential. Now first I will draw the life stubbornly governed by the self-centered nature. Then the life which a struggle between the self-centered nature and the nature centered in the good of the whole, which is the psychological growing up and then the life which is stably governed by the nature which is centered in the good of the whole.

So I will begin by drawing a straight line representing the life governed by the self-centered nature. Now, there is struggle in the area of life, because you see body, mind and emotions are instruments. Now they can be used by the self-centered nature or by the nature centered in the good of the whole, but the self-centered nature never fully controls body, mind and emotions. In fact it is itself controlled by the wishes for comfort and convenience on the

part of the body, by the demands of the mind, by the outbursts of the emotions. So here you have the struggle between body, mind, and emotions. And the self-centered nature which uses them to a certain extent without being fully able to control them. In this area of life you can do the physical mental and emotional growing up. Not only that, you can get an occasional confirmation from the higher nature when you touch some truth from the outside as I did on the Golden Rule when I was still in grammar school.

You can also get an occasional direct perception from the higher nature as I did when I was 16 and a senior in high school. At that time I went around asking everyone who mentioned God in my presence. "What is God?", because I was anxious to find out something about the nature of God. But I got no answer. I didn't give up because I knew intellectually that originally it must have meant something. So I pondered deeply upon it. I went to bed and slept over it and in the morning from the inside I had my answer.

Now, I realize that your life is very much governed by your early training at this point in your life by there are still some times when you can get either confirmations from the higher nature or direct perceptions from the higher nature.

Now, if you're going to begin the psychological growing up, you come to the point when you're completely willing any reservations to leave that self-centered life, which I accept. Then you go into a direct struggle between the two natures with the different viewpoints.

So, now there are hills and valleys in your life, lots of hills and valleys. This struggle can be more or less stormy. Mine was about medium. And some think of it as an ascending experience with each hilltop becoming a little bit higher than the last hilltop. Let me express this struggle in the words of a college student. She pointed to this struggle I had drawn here and she said I know exactly what you mean by it because I'm in it. One time all I think about is "I want a new dress". I want a new pair of shoes." And the next world have no shoes. Why should I be thinking about such superficial things?" One's self centered and one's centered in the good of the whole is what that struggle is really all about.

Then if you keep on going you come to the point where you rise high enough in consciousness to look at the entire universe through the eyes of the higher nature, which I accent. That's a wonderful experience. It's called the peak experience by some of the scientists. Some of the religious people call it the illumination experience. It's a feeling of complete of complete and absolute oneness with all creation. Now I knew I was one with all fellow human beings before I got there. But now I felt the kinship with the rest of creation. The creatures that walk the earth, the growing things of the earth, the air, the water, the earth itself. You would never be a polluter after that. You have a different attitude toward your environment. And most wonderful of all a oneness with that which permeates all and binds all together and gives life to all. Well, you still slip in and out of this wonderful experience. And then you get on to the plateau. Now you are in harmony most of the time. Yet there are times when you do slip out of harmony. And finally you succeed in changing your life of bringing your life into harmony of finding inner peace which I also accent. Now you have come through the inner growth pattern. You discover now that learning and growing does not cease. The struggle is over, but the learning and growing continues harmoniously without struggle. And it was at this point in my life that my pilgrimage began. I would not have been ready for it before.

Now, coming through this inner growth pattern means not only bringing your life into harmony with the laws which govern this universe, which are the same for all of us. It also means finding and fitting into your special place in the life pattern which is unique for every human being. This is the self-centered nature. This does not know your job in the life pattern. This is the nature centered in the good of the whole. This does know your job in the life pattern. It just needs to be awakened.

Now, the self-centered nature is partly conscious and partly subconscious. And into the subconscious part of the self-centered nature go all of your training from little child on and it's usually a hodge-podge of things which will lead to harmony and things which will not lead to harmony and even in some cases sets of opposites, and yet these things govern your life unless they are uprooted which is a difficult thing to do, but of course it can be done. Now, the sets of opposites which seem to confuse us the most in this culture at least are still the same two sets of opposites

that confused the people of my generation, although I think the training in this direction at least in the direction of the first one is not as severe as it was when I was young.

On the one hand I was trained to believe that I should be kind and loving and never hurt anybody. And wouldn't it be wonderful if the people of the world lived that way, but on the other hand I was trained to believe that if so ordered it is indeed honorable to maim and kill people in war. They used to give medals for it. Now this confused most of the people of my time. It is confusing fewer people today. But it did not confuse me. I was very fortunate, I never believed there was any time under any circumstances when it might be right for me to hurt anybody. So I'm pointing out to you that occasionally these things just don't take. That one didn't take with me. The other one did.

On the one hand I was trained to believe that I should be kind, that I should be generous, that I should be unselfish, and of course what a wonderful world if we lived that way. But on the other hand I was trained to believe that if I want to be successful I must get out there and grab more than my share of this world's goods. That one confused me up until 41 years ago at which time I uprooted it. It can be done but it's a difficult thing to do.

Now, I would like to point out to you that in our larger culture there are few smaller cultures where these confusing training do not take place, at least the first one. No one has ever been harmed by a Hopi Indian. I have known people who lived among them. No one has ever been harmed by an Amish person. There is no violence in their streets. Now why is this true? Because they learn from a little child on, that it would be unthinkable to harm a human being, and therefore they never do it. But in the larger culture the small child watches the hero shoot the villain on some film training the small child to believe that shooting people is heroic. The hero just did it. Effective - it seemed to work. Acceptable - he was well thought of afterward. I'd like to see an altogether different hero image, where the hero does something significant to serve fellow human beings. But this will only happen when enough of us do enough of this inner growing to make it happen. Because of course the outer situation is always a reflection of the collective inner situation.

Now, perhaps we can talk together for a little. I would like to hear your comments, answer your questions, anything about the pilgrimage or about any part of the peace picture. Let's talk together now.

Q: I'd like an opinion of yours concerning what a lot of people have thought of as like the self centeredness of culture, a new narcissism focused on self. Do you see that as really negative you seem to be totally oriented towards the whole society, putting down of the individual so to speak? Do you feel that is negative. Do you think that is really positive?

PP: I wasn't putting down the individual at all. In a sense I was glorifying the individual. I said that every individual is of equal importance. You see one of my problems was to realize this, because I was always quite forgiving toward the other fellow. But when I did something that wasn't the highest, I would say to myself, "you ought to know better." I was very hard on myself. And one day I remember I was just standing there and combing my hair at the mirror and I looked at myself and I said, "you vain thing, why should you think you should know better when you forgive everyone else for not knowing better. You're just as - well, the same as everyone else. You must forgive yourself as easily as you forgive the others. And then take a further step. Use all that energy you've been using condemning yourself on improving yourself. And after that I really started to get somewhere because you know doing this psychological growing up and finding inner peace is really a do it yourself project. Nobody can do it for you but you can do it for yourself.

So I would say what you must do is to put yourself in proper perspective. No one is more important than you are. No one is less important than you are. You see, you're just as important as everyone else and you too have a right to be here and you too have a right to be here and you too have a reason to be here. You have a job to do in the total scheme of things.

Q: Do you see yourself as effective? You've been now walking for 25 years.

PP: Yes, 26 years now. I would never ask to see results. You see, I know that is the wonderful total scheme of things in this orderly universe all good effort bears good fruit, whether you see the results or not. Because I realize that

often results are not manifest in your lifetime, but eventually they will become manifested. Now, I have seen results. I have seen a lot of letters from people indicating that they had been inspired to do something for peace in their own way. They do a wide variety of things. Some of them for instance write their congressman about some constructive suggestion or they might join some peace groups so they have some guidance in working for peace. However they might get rid of some worry habit or anger habit or fear habit that is keeping their own life from coming into harmony. Or they might make peace with some friend or relation.

A lady wrote and said, since talking with you I have resolved an unpeaceful situation between myself and my sister-in-law. And a high school girl wrote and said since talking with you I have made peace with my girl friend. And this is wonderful because you see really peace begins with the individual. The more peace you have in your own life the more you can reflect into your surroundings and ultimately into your world. And every time you succeed in bringing harmony into any inharmonious situation right where you are you make a contribution to the total peace picture. So although I have never asked to see results I have certainly seen results beyond my fondest dreams. [PAGE 9]

Q: Could you give a picture or sense of the words what the experience is of that cosmic sense of unity you talked about before? How would one experience it?

PP: How, you mean when we have reached this point?

Q: You talked about being at one with your fellow man, all persons. You talked about being at one with the cosmos, animals and plants, etc.

PP: Well now that was in this experience and I knew even before this experience that I was one with all fellow human beings. This graph I might analysis. It isn't my analysis, but it's the analysis of the head of the psychology department at a large university. He pointed to the various phases and related them to some psychologists that had talked about them. And I can't actually talk much about this except to give you the names of the psychologist because this is his analysis.

Q: I'm not asking so much for that. If you could provide a personal view of what that experience is like.

PP: Yes, of course. I will be glad to. But let me give you the name of the psychologist in case there might be some interest. Freud, Adler, Maslow, Maslow's peak experience. Rogers must have talked about the plateaus, Jung, Eric, From. Now, let me tell you, well he was pointing out that if you're studying just Freud you're studying only back here. And it may be valuable, but remember where it is. Now, let me talk about it from my own experience. In this experience for instance, I gave you the essential part of it. The feeling of complete and absolute oneness with all creation. I gave you that. Now, beside giving you that I can tell you there is usually some phenomena connected with it. For instance, I felt lightness as though I were not walking on the earth. You've heard of walking on air or walking on clouds. I knew timelessness and spacelessness. I can never tell you how long it took or how much ground I covered. I was on my feet. I was walking. And then there was another thing connected with it. You see, there is often a light experience. If it is at night. A burst of light sometimes. But this was in the day time. There were no people there, not even any animals. But every flower, every shrub, every tree seemed to... well, there was a light emanation around it. It seemed to wear a halo, and flecks of gold fell like slanted rain through the air. However, this is just the tinsel, the window dressing. This is not really important, which is why I often omit it. The important thing is the feeling of complete and absolute oneness with all creation.

Now, at this point actually I'll tell you how my pilgrimage began. I had slipped out of harmony for the last time it turned out and as I went to bed that night I thought it seems to me if I just remain in harmony I could be of much greater usefulness because every time I slipped out of harmony it impairs my usefulness. And when I woke up in the morning I was back again on the mountain top with a wonderful inner knowing that I would never need to descend again into the valley. And with that wonderful feeling I went out for my time apart, my inspirational time and I was back with my friends in less than an hour. And while I was out you might say a thought just struck my mind. I felt this strong inner motivation toward this next way of witnessing for peace.

Now there was a little more than that to it. I saw in my mind's eye, myself walking along and wearing the garb of my mission. I just needed to duplicate it. I saw in my mind's eye a map of the United States with the large cities marked in and it looked as though someone had taken a colored crayon and marked a route across from Los Angeles to New York City, coast to coast and border to border, which was my first pilgrimage route.

Now this was of course something which no one could dissuade me from doing. Everyone tried, everyone I knew tried to dissuade me. They thought I would probably kill myself the first year walking across the country. But, you see these higher receivings, either the thing you touch from the outside and get the confirmation on, or the direct perception, and this of course was a direct perception, these things get to a very deep level where this is no doubt. There is complete clarity of understanding. You can explain these things. You can discuss things. Your own higher nature is actually a drop from the ocean of truth around you and it has access to the ocean. From that source came all inspired writing in the first place and somebody wrote it down. And you, yourself can reach out directly into that source.

Now, one more thing. I might mention of course that you keep on learning lessons of receiving. I had been on the giving side for so many years and now it was necessary for me to learn to receive as gracefully as I was able to give, in order to give the other fellow the joy and the blessing of giving. But the way you feel after you have gotten over this hump. There is an unshakeableness within, which takes you through any situation you may need to face. There is a calmness, a serenity, and an unhurriedness, and you know that although certainly you are not perfect, you don't know everything that is to be known, you can't do everything that is to be done, but you know that you will be [PAGE 11] able to do the thing that is right for you to do, that is your job in the total scheme of things. And therefore you would have the faith and courage to step out as I stepped out January 1st of 1953, against the advice of all my friends.

I remember I was speaking at a college that first year and a professor had prepared a questionnaire to be answered after I spoke and the first question was what in our society calls forth a peace pilgrim? Well, don't forget, the Korean war was on, the McCarthy era was at its height, there was great fear at that time, therefore great apathy, because the safest thing to do nothing. At any time, in any culture where there is great apathy in the face of a crisis situation, a pilgrim is apt to step forth. And a pilgrim's job is to arouse people from their apathy and make them think. Or they're doing more thinking now, but I'm still trying to make them think about their own potential and living according to their highest potential. In fact I would say the situation overall is better now whereas people used to accept war as a necessary part of life, now I'm on the popular side. Whereas at that time there was very little interest in the inner search, now there is almost universal interest in the inner search, which to me is the most hopeful sign of all.

Q: Could you tell us your experience descending from the higher planes. Could you say what precipitated that? What caused that to happen, or what events went to it and then you went back?

PP: You mean, descending into the valley again? Uhuh. Yes, well of course I can say in general when I descended into the valley because I was thinking again in self-centered terms, you see. Now, when I was back here at this point, the valley was never deeper than my whole life had been before. So there when I was on a hilltop I said life was wonderful. There are hilltops now, and when I was in the valley I used to that. This isn't where I missed harmony the most. And of course even after you reached here you do a little slipping in and out. But it was after I had gotten on the plateaus and then was in harmony a lot of time then slipped out, then was when I missed it the most. And it was always when I started again to think of some self-centered wish you see that I descended into the valley.

Q: Did it ever happen when maybe you were disappointed in how other people treated you or thought of you or anything like that? Was it related to other's behavior or you think it was your own self-centeredness when you were thinking about things you wanted?

PP: I really can't say it was due to the behavior of others, when I slipped out of harmony. But it was rather due to the fact that again for a little while I had allowed the self-centered nature to govern my life. You see, some people have difficulty relating to others. But I was always very forgiving toward others. I had rather to learn to have a more lenient attitude toward myself, because there was time when I really expected too much of myself. So I had to put myself into my proper place. Actually I couldn't even point to people that have very much aided me along this path,

because you see remember from the time when I was 16 and a senior in high school I took the inner way. Therefore, the, well of course, I call them spiritual things. I always looked to the inside rather than to the outside. Now, it isn't I don't relate well to people. It isn't that I do not love and appreciate people, cause I certainly do. In fact, I see people as often more beautiful than they see themselves, because what I see when I look at people it's not their self-centered nature. I see their higher nature to see. That's what I see. People to me look beautiful, they look like shining lights, whether they're acting that way or not. They still are capable of acting that way. And of course actually what I see within the person is the reality within the person. Because really you are this nature-centered in the good of the whole. You're wearing the self-centered nature, and wearing the body, and then the body wears the shirt. But these things also must always be put into proper perspective. So what I see within people is really what is... well... unchangeable within people, because nothing is unchangeable in this world except that wonderful spark within you and of course the source from which it comes. Everything else is changeable. And when you love people and see the good in them you reach it. The world is like a mirror, if you at it - it smiles at you.

Q: There, you're describing your process of spiritual growth. Do you prescribe a game plan for man in general and is this possible to meet your basis needs when there's world hunger and other such problems in the world?

PP: The basic cause of all our difficulties is immaturity. It's the fact that not enough of us have done enough of that growing. You see as soon as enough of us do enough of that growing we will be able to affect for the better our institutions and then bettered institutions will in turn through better example affect for the better those who are still immature.

Now, our immaturity of course leads to problems. There are symptoms of our immaturity. Greed is one of the symptoms of our immaturity. Another symptom of our immaturity is fear. In our greed we grab more than our share. In our fear we build up armaments against one another.

Now, there are also symptoms of symptoms, like war and starvation. And you know you talk about people who are in need, and of course I'm concerned about them. But I realize that in the first place if the greed did not exist there would be plenty in the world to share. For instance Howard Hughes amassed [2-1/2 billion dollars. Can any human being use [2-1/2 billion dollars? And did it make him happy? Those who write about him say he was the most miserable fear-ridden creature one would well imagine. In fact, I've know quite a few millionaires. I've never known a happy one. Those who haven't enough money to feed their children of course are not happy. But neither are those who have too much, because although they're far removed from the starving people there is something within them that bothers them and keeps them from being happy. It's those who have enough but not too much who are the happy people. And then you don't even need to be good at arithmetic to figure out that if the nations of the world were to stop manufacturing implements of mass destruction they would have the wherewithal to provide the basis for a very good life for all the people who live in the world. So you see when I talked about attaining more maturity I'm really talking about the cause of all our difficulties, and I have just chosen, although I certainly appreciate those who work on the symptoms or the symptoms of the symptoms. It is my calling to work on the cause.

Q: Do you think it's necessary to experience greed and fear, and all the other negative attributes that you are talking about in order to work through them to meet this self-actualization?

PP: I wouldn't say it's actually necessary. I would say that usually it is the case. Because there are some of these that I certainly had no experienced, at least not in any severe form. And yet, I have been able of course to transcend these things. It is usually the way by which we come. You see there are two ways in which we can learn and grow. Certainly one way is we can learn by our own mistakes. For instance, I learned by my own mistakes that money and things would never make me happy. But the other way is o simply be willing to do the harmonious thing without being pushed into it.

For instance, I personally practice prevention. All things known to be bad for your health I have quit long ago before I got sick. Most people of course get very sick before they adopt sensible living habits. Sensible eating, rest and exercise, etc. But I was willing to do this without being pushed into it by some illness. So there's always two ways to learn and I think really the easiest way to learn is to simply do the harmoniously thing without being pushed into it.

I started and that was way back when I was beginning to go through my psychology growing up. I started by undertaking a very simple project. If I could think of something I was doing that I knew I shouldn't be doing - I quit. And I had the good sense to make a quick relinquishment which is the easy way. You see, the tapering off is long and hard and usually never accomplished. And if I could think of something I wasn't doing that I knew I should be doing - I got busy on that. And it took the living quite awhile to catch up with the believing but it finally did and when it did a process began which has never ended. As I lived up to the higher light I had, higher and higher light came to me. And I would suggest this living all the good things you believe for any of the seekers because that will take you into really the easiest way of learning and growing.

Q: I noticed, I think I noticed that you have made a conspicuous attempt to divorce yourself, your background, who you are from your message, from your pilgrim so you save very little details about your own personal life.

PP: I gave all the important ones.

Q: Do you feel that answering the personal or revealing yourself in your personal sense rather than in your philosophical sense detracts from your message? Do you think that sense of personal ambiguity is useful for your message?

PP: Well, I feel that people can only remember so many things and I would much rather they remember the important things instead of the very unimportant things. So of course usually I have just a limited time to talk to them and therefore I try to talk to them just about the important things. Now I have to evaluate what I believe to be important, naturally. But I talk to them about the things that I feel are important and also helpful to someone else, may inspire someone else, to want to do more growing.

Q: Could I ask you about letter that a high school girl sent to you. Can you tell us a little bit about what she wrote? in her letter? You said she said it was about something between her and her friend. But can you go into detail about what she wrote?

PP: Well, I just remember that the gist of the letter was what I said that since talking with me she had made peace with one of her girl friends. And she did say how much better she felt, now that she had made peace with her girl friend. I'll tell you I believe possibly she was motivated toward it was when I told a story of how when I was just beyond my student days I had been given a job that one of my girl friends wanted. I had been elected to an office in the community club that she wanted. And she thought she hated me. And she said all kinds of mean things about me. And I remember I hauled out the golden rule and thought now what should I do in this situation because it was a very unhealthy situation. I said only kind things about her. I thought of every possible kind thing that could truthfully be said about her. And I said it many times and I tried to do her a favor. And it fell to my lot to do her a significant favor. And to make a long story short, when she was married a year later, I was maid of honor at her wedding. Now I believe it was really that story that motivated this high school girl to make peace with her girl friend. I can't recite the letter. I just remember the gist of it.

Q: I have a statement to make in terms of the growth you're talking about, the psychological growth, in terms of one of the peak experiences. On a very simple level, if you go into a personnel office asking for a job. Now the director can tell whether you are inwardly directed or outwardly directed. This is whether you need to take care of your kids, whether you need to go and take them on the job or whatever, as opposed to asking you direct question in certain situations what would you do in a situation like this? What would you do in a situation like that? For example I can understand how a person, that ego spirit, that self confidence, if you will comes out when you are talking to a person for a job.

PP: Yes this is true. I used to work with people who had problems. Specially in this area of my life. And I remember of course that I had to spend quite a little time talking to them. Now, one of the things however that I talked to them about was their job in the total scheme of things. You see, aptitude test may tell you what you will be good at doing. But they don't always tell you what you are really motivated to do. For instance, I test as being good at doing many things that are not my job to do. You see, so I would ask them what do you really like to do. Because if it is your job you will do it as easily and joyously as I walk my pilgrimage. And this worked out very well.

I'll give you one example. This woman was in her early forties. And single and needed to earn her living. She hated her work to the extent that it made her sick. So obviously that was not the job for her. I asked her what she like to do. And I talked to her. I remember for two hours before we came up with three things she really liked to do. She like to play the piano but she wasn't good enough to earn her living at that. She like to swim, but she wasn't good enough to be a swimming instructor, and she like to work with flowers.

I got her a job in a flower shop so she could earn her living working with flowers, but we used the other things too. Remember there are a lot of things in a human life. It's not only a means of livelihood if you are the bread winner and in addition to this although she didn't have this in her life at that time, most people are motivated toward the family pattern by this thing referred to as falling in love. Then they would be guided as a family unit. But beside that there are other things. Sensible living habits, sensible eating, rest and exercise. Swimming became her exercise.

Now something inspiration, or a number of inspirational things are important. Things that will lift you up, but all three of those things were highly inspirational to her. The piano playing became her path of service. She went to the retirement homes, played the old songs - got them to sing. She was good at that. Everybody needs a path of service. Out of those three things a beautiful life was built for her that when she married a year or so later she stayed right in that life pattern.

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The following is a present experience that Peace Pilgrim shared with many audiences.

Now I believe every experience that comes to me has a purpose in my life. It might inspire me. It might educate me. It might give me a chance to be of service.

I had a prison experience once. I was being investigated to discover if I was a vagrant or a religious pilgrim. And they booked my at the desk for vagrancy. That doesn't mean I was convicted. I was suspected of being a vagrant. And then I went through the regular routine - the finger printing. And I remember I just spoke to the man who was finger printing me because I had never been finger printed before or since. And I remember he just responded so well to being treated like a human being. He gave me a lecture on finger printing. He showed me the charts, while people were waiting in line. And they photographed me.

I remember they hung a number around my neck. And they photographed me from the front and from the side. And you've seen those pictures in the post office, remember how mad they all looked. And so I thought, LET ME BE DIFFERENT and I smiled as sweetly as I could, so there's one smiling face somewhere in the rogues gallery. And then they questioned me. Two men questioned me. And I remember they asked my if I would answer questions. Most certainly I would answer your questions. Not because you are law enforcement officers, but because you are fellow human beings. I answer the questions of all my fellow human beings. And I said, "You know whatever you are in your official capacity, you're ALSO first and foremost a human being. And if we were to talk human being to human being we would really get much farther much faster. And we ended up that way - talking person to person about the purposes of the pilgrimage. But they first used a kind of a confusing technique. One would fire a question at me, before I could answer another would fire a question at me. And I had to keep saying, "pardon me just a moment while I answer your question, then I will answer your question." And you know that wasn't terribly meaningful. But then they got into other things like asking me about the nature of God and the nature of pray. And oh, the nature of good and bad - questions like the college students ask me. I warmed to the subject. And then they began to relate this to the core of peace. I am peace pilgrim you see. And they said, "Would you any circumstances use or sanction the use of physical violence." "No." "Why." This is contrary to God's laws and I'd rather have God on my side then any power on Earth. I told them about the time I was hit by the disturbed teenage boy. And then they said well suppose to defend a loved one it was necessary. I do not believe I could defend a loved one by disobeying divine law. Then I would lose the protection of the law for my loved one and for myself and I told them about the time I was called upon to defend the frail eight-year-old girl. And then they said, if you had to choose between killing and being killed which would you choose. Oh I said, I don't think I need to make such a choice as long as my life remains in harmony with divine purpose. But not only that, if it were my calling to be a martyr (now that's a really rare calling and it's a very high calling) I don't believe it's my calling. Although I'm ready if it is (the

world learns and grows through its martyrs). I said, if I had to make such a choice, I would choose being killed rather than killing. In any case where it was necessary to choose harming and being harmed I would choose being harmed rather than harming. And they said, could you give a logical explanation for such an attitude? Yes I said in my frame of reference I could. In my frame of reference I am not the body - I am only wearing the body. I am that which activates the body - that's the reality. Now if I am killed it destroys merely the body, which is transient anyway. But if I kill it injures the reality, which can only be injured by my own wrong act.

They put me down as having a religious basis for my peace witness. But suppose I said, well after all you've heard of self defense. Even the law recognizes self defense. This might of been considered legal, but NOT religious.

And then they put me in with the girls. Great big inner rooms surrounded by cell blocks into which they locked the women four to a cell block each night. And as I walked in, I said you have dedicated your life to service. Behold your wonderful new field of service. And they said to me, your a funny one, your the first one ever came in smiling. Most of them come in crying or cursing.

And I said girls we had a day off. Now suppose you had a day off at home wouldn't you do something worthwhile with that day. Yeah, let's! What'll we do. So we sang some songs. I showed them a simple little energizer exercise. I talk to them about bringing their lives into harmony. I said, look you live in a community here. You could take the steps toward inner the peace in your community right here. And they were interested they asked questions. It was a beautiful, beautiful time with them.

And then that afternoon they changed matrons. And the girls said, that's a horrible person that's coming here. Don't even speak to her. But I know there's good in everybody. That woman was actually... she was a widow. She was a supporting her children with that job. Now she didn't always feel well at times. But she thought she had to work. And that's why she was a bit cross at times. And that night I said to her, I know you have a full house here. Never mind I'm quite used to such things. I can sleep here on this wooden bench. She had them bring in a cot with clean bed clothes. I had a warm shower with a clean towel - the comforts of home.

And the next morning she they took me down into court. It was one of these perfectly beautiful days. And I wasn't handcuffed, the young man walking beside me wasn't even holding on to me. And he had a great big gun at his side. And I said to him, if I were to run away would you shoot me. "NO," he said, "I NEVER shoot anything I can catch." I thought that was so cute.

And then he got me into the anti[spelling] room of the courthouse and there was one of the big fellows that had questioned me the day before. And I was feeling real good and looking forward to another day with the girls. And I said to him very brightly, "GOOD morning," and he looked at me in some surprise. And said well you don't seem to be any the worst for your day in prison. I said, oh you can imprison the BODY but NOT the SPIRIT. And you know that's true. And then of course when I went before the judge, they said that they had discovered that I had a religious basis for my peace witness. And the case was dismissed. And they took me right back to the highway where they had picked me up.