



Stopping The War, by Jack Kornfield

The purpose of a spiritual discipline is to give us a way to stop the war, not by our force of will, but organically, throughÂ understanding and gradual training. Ongoing spiritual practice can help us cultivate a new way of relating to life in which we let go of our battles.

When we step out of the battle, we see anew, as the _Tao Te Ching _says, "with eyes unclouded by longing." We see how each of us creates conflict. We see our constant likes and dislikes, the fight to resist all that frightens us. We see our own prejudice, greed, and territoriality. All this is hard for us to look at, but it is really there. Then underneath these ongoing battles, we see pervasive feelings of incompleteness and fear. We see how much our struggle with life has kept our heart closed. [...]

This is a task for all of us. Individually and as a society, we must move from the pain of our speed, our addictions, and our denial to stop the war. The greatest of transformations can come from this simple act. Even Napoleon Bonaparte understood this when, at the end of his life, he stated, "Do you know what astonished me most in the world? The inability of force to create anything. In the long run, the sword is always beaten by the spirit."

Compassion and a greatness of heart arise whenever we stop the war. The deepest desire we have for our human heart is to discover how to do this. We all share a longing to go beyond the confines of our own fear or anger or addiction, to connect with something greater than "I," "me," and "mine," greater than our small story and our small self. It is possible to stop the war and come into the timeless present-to touch a great ground of being that contains all things. This is the purpose of a spiritual discipline and of choosing a path with heart -- to discover peace and connectedness in ourselves and to stop the war in us and around us.