

# Summer Of Peace 2012

## Neale Donald Walsch

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Stephen: So welcome back to the Summer of Peace, everyone. This is Stephen Dinan, the founder of The Shift Network. I just want to say what a delight and honor it is to be interviewing our guest here today. His name is Neale Donald Walsch.

We're just talking in the green room beforehand about how many lives he's touched. It's a really significant thing to think about how many lives teach of us touch and we when we show up with a lot of depth and sincerity and really giving our heart and soul to what we're here to do, the kind of impact that we can have.

Neale, you probably know him as the author of the Conversations with God series which has had numerous New York Times bestsellers, and what's interesting about it is it's actually sold about 15 million books and been translated into 37 languages which means it covers almost the entire world. He was saying just in the green room that it just got an addition of the new revelation out in Chinese.

So to think about the breadth and depth of the impact that Neale has had in his heartfelt inquiry into the nature of God, the universe, into our condition right now, what do we need to do to wake up, to transform humanity, I just want to honor him, all of us for a moment for the breadth of this impact and the catalyzing of people moving towards a higher vision of themselves, a more whole vision of God, a more beautiful vision of our planet.

So Neale, welcome and thank you.

Neale: Thank you, Stephen. That's a very lovely words to say and I appreciate your saying them. I want to say however that honestly and I know this is going to sound entirely predictable and beyond syrupy, but truly and really in my heart and soul I experienced this as an expression of the divine that is I'm very clear that God had a plan here with which I had very little to do. I was simply a ascribe. I simply took down what was given to me.

I was told in the very first book, it's said about one-third of the way through book one -- this is now 15 years ago -- this will one day become a book. I thought of that times, Steve, I thought, oh, yes, of course, of

course, I'm going to send this to a publisher who's going to in the middle of the night mental meanderings and the publisher is going to say, "We've going to get this out at once."

But in fact, improbable as that might seem, that's about what happened. I send it to a publisher merely to test, simply as a test to see what I was receiving if it had any validity at all. My golly, against all odds, a man who sent a book to a publisher claiming to have had a conversation with God wound up getting published and the rest is, as they say, publishing history. The book hit the New York Times at least within eight weeks. It stayed there for two and a half years straight, 137 weeks and continues to be a very extraordinary book to this very day.

I'm not bragging about that. I'm only saying that to let people know that when you have an indication that the Divine is after something, you can bet that it's going to happen. It doesn't take a great deal of input from you at all, just the willingness to go along with the game.

Stephen: When God knocks, at least open the door.

Neale: Yes, exactly.

Stephen: Yes. Yes. Well, let's turn our attention to peace. This is the subject to The Summer of Peace, and it's been a theme that's woven throughout your many books and something that you've dedicate your life to things like humanities theme 0:03:42 which is created a world oneness day . I'd love for you to just maybe start with the reflection on we're at this critical moment for humanity where in order to evolve to the next level we really have to let go of some of the violence that has been running the show on planet earth. What do you really see as some of the essential shifts that are needed for us to shift towards a culture of peace?

Neale: Well, Steve, frankly, I think there's only one shift that's needed, and I don't think it's a shift away from our old cultural story and a shift into a new cultural story that is a new idea that we tell ourselves about ourselves, about who we are, about where we are, about why we are where we are, and about what we intend to do about that.

I think we have to shift our fundamental belief system about the nature of life, the nature of humanity, the nature of what some of us call God, and the reason and purpose from the whole experience that we're having on the earth. Those are not small items. Those are huge items. But I can tell you that patron war violence and those aspects of life are nothing more and this is going to sound **revolutionary I suppose to some ears, but those are nothing more than distorted expressions** of love, that is if a person who is committing violence did not love something enough to be

angry that he didn't have it or angry that he lost I, one or the other, there would be no violence on the earth. There would be no hatred and there would be no war.

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So what the divine understands is that even those who are perpetrating violence, anger, and war are doing so as a wildly distorted, no question about that, for the wildly distorted expression of love. All we need to do then is to shift humanity's understanding of how love most beneficially expresses itself. That is not possible to do from my observation and from what I was told in the Conversations with God, that's not possible to do until humanity clearly understands that the true nature of life, the reason that we're all here are real relationship with each other and with, as I said, that aspect of life that some of us call God, Yahweh, Jehovah, Allah, Brahman or whatever other name it pleases us to refer to that ineffable essence that is the divine.

So what we are calling for here is a shift in our basic beliefs about life itself, and the most fundamental belief, Steve, that we need to shift is the first belief that we have which is the belief in our separation. The very first message that I received in conversations with God, five pages in to a 3,000-page dialog, on the fifth page of that 3,000-page exposition came the only message we really need. We are all one.

If humanity understood that, if humanity decided to overlay that truth, that message, to overlay it on our political systems, on our economic systems, on our social conventions, on our educational programs, to overlay it over the whole of humanity's interaction with itself, everything would change in 24 hours.

Stephen: I absolutely agree with you. I'm curious, what do you see as the necessary requirement to make that shift a reality for someone? I think most people can hear that and think yes, but then in the heat of an argument or polarization against another political party we tend to forget that prior sense of oneness. What do you think is most foundational for making that shift real and grounded and permanent?

Neale: An agreement with the self and then a personal process that each of us developed in our own individual way of connecting with the soul. The answer to your question from my experience is when I am agreeing with myself with that (a) I have a soul which means that I'm a three-part being, body, mind and soul; (b) that I agree that not only do I have a soul, but that the soul of me has a direct function that is an actual purpose in my daily life; (c) that the soul that I have is connected directly with the divine, that it is my direct connection with God.

What I'm willing then to find a way that works for me and with everybody it's different. With some people, it's meditation. With some people, it's deep contemplation. With some people, it's prayer. With some people, it's Sufi dancing, whatever it is but to find a way that's personal to me, that allows me on a daily basis, maybe even hourly basis at the beginning, to get in touch with and bring the considerations and the wisdom of the soul into my daily encounters.

So how it works for me, Steve, I've got two things in front of me it all times. One, across the top of my computer screen actually I've got a standing ribbon, a blue and white ribbon that runs across the top of my computer screen so that whenever I am on the internet writing a letter, doing a blog, answering an email, whatever, across the top of my computer screen it says, how does this advance the agenda of your soul?

Stephen: That's great.

Neale: That's the same question that I have. I have that taped to my dashboard in my car, I have it taped to my refrigerator actually in my kitchen, and I have it written in soap across the mirror in my vanity when I get up in the morning in the bathroom. So wherever I look I see that message, how does this, meaning what you're doing and thinking right now, how does this advance the agenda of my soul? If I can't think of a way that it does or if in fact it doesn't, I try very hard not to do it.

Now, that's the question I bring into my mind in the moments that you described -- something is happening in life, I get upset, I get reactive, I find negativity invading my space, or whatever it might be. I try very hard to bring that question into the fore of my consciousness. How does this, this argument I'm now having, this defensiveness I'm now feeling, how does this advance the agenda of my soul?

**[0:10:05]**

I'm not going to sit here and try to pretend with anybody that I'm successful every time I bring that question to my consciousness, that I'm successful in stepping into the answer, and suddenly I turn into Mahatma Gandhi because I don't. I fail more often than I succeed, but I succeed more often than I ever did.

Stephen: It's a beautiful question, guiding question for people. What do you find is the best way to discover that agenda of the soul?

Neale: I think it's to listen and to be quiet and then to create. I think the agenda of the soul is very clear, and I think that what we are invited to do is

create ways in which we can follow the agenda but not to create the agenda itself. There is a thought out there that the basic instinct of humanity is survival. What I have been told, if you could please by my soul, is that survival is not the basic instinct. The basic instinct is divinity.

I'll give you one example, if I could give you one striking example from my life. All of us have had experiences like this. In my case, I was driving down the road one night a few years ago and I saw -- it was a country road, very dark or no street lights, very dark country road at night and I saw flames. I just saw flames. I didn't understand what it was until I got closer and closer and realized, my goodness, there were flames shooting out of the hood from under the hood of a car on the other side of the road.

Of course, I stopped immediately and I saw there was a man inside the car. His car caught fire and he was paralyzed. He was panicked. He was sitting in the car white-knuckled, his hands on the steering wheel, and he just did not know what to do. He was a very large man, and I am a very small person relatively speaking, very thin and wiry. I had a lady in the car with me at the time. It was a date that I was on, and I pulled off to the side of the road. I said to her, "Lean on the horn." She said, "Where are you going?" I said, "I'm going to get the guy out of the car. The car is going to blow up any minute." She said, "You're going to get killed." I said, "Just lean on the horn."

By the way, I'm not telling you this story to make me sound good. There is a reason I'm telling you this story. I ran across the street, opened the door of the guy's car. I couldn't budge him. He's a huge guy. He was stuck there. I slapped him on the face to get him out of his panic, his shock, and he looked at me and I said, "Get out of here." I grabbed him. I pulled him out. In moments that we have super human strength, I got him and I dragged him away from the car. He didn't want to leave. He said, "My car, my car. It's the only car I got." I said, "Jesus, get out of here." We got out of there and then the firemen came and they put the thing out.

Now, I told you that story for a reason. We all have moments like that in our lives, maybe not traumatically, but we have moments like that, moments when if the basic human instinct was survival, there is no way in the world we'd run into the flames. We'd, of course, run the other way. But people do extraordinary things at extraordinary moments, and in those moments we demonstrate the basic fundamental instinct. We demonstrate the true identity of who we are.

Survival isn't even a thought in our mind, divinity is. We don't even ask. We don't even think about it. It's not even like, "Let's see." It's not an intellectual process. You don't walk down the street and think about "Do

you think I should run into that burning building?" You simply do because that's who you really are. So when the chips are down, divinity shows up.

Stephen: That's a great story. I really appreciate that. So I'm thinking like taking this into the interpersonal as you're saying is we have a whole history of a lot of destructive conflicts in the world and a lot of old wounds that are wrapped up around that whether you look at from the Palestinians and Israelis, people and religions had been pitted against each other. What have you found has really been most helpful in bringing this understanding of evolving our vision of the divine and the deeper purpose for being here? How do you see that really come into situations where there is a lot of entrenched polarization and wounds and begin to shift the dynamic?

Neale: A simple question, it's the most profound question I've ever heard and it was given to me by God. I was instructed by God to ask this question wherever I go in situations like that, and the question is what hurts you so much that you feel you have to hurt me in order to heal it?

Stephen: Wow!

**[0:14:51]**

Neale: I've asked that question across the dinner table, I've asked that question at cocktail parties, I've asked that question at **political conventions, and** I have asked that question in fact sitting in a room with Israelis and Arabs, with Muslims and Christians, with people from every religion and every political affiliation in the middle of a conference in Southwest Africa where I began to see, although it was very civil at that conference, nobody was physically being violent, but the dialogue was getting deeper and deeper into those old wounds.

I said, "May I please have the floor for just a moment?" And the moderator of the conference said, "Yes, Mr. Walsch. What do you want to say?" I said, "I don't have anything to say. I merely have a question to ask." And I asked those. I said, "To the Arabs present, to the Muslims present, to the Christians present, may I ask you to respond to the following question please. What hurts you so bad that you feel you have to hurt me in order to heal it?"

The tears began to flow around the room. When you look in people's eyes and get in touch with them at the soul levels -- the eyes of course are the windows of the soul -- you can sit across from an Arab, from an Israeli, from a Muslim, from a Christian, from a Jew, it doesn't matter, from a Black or White, a gay or straight, it doesn't matter. You sit across from another human being and stare into the eyes for 10 seconds

without speaking, and woe to the experience of their soul where they and you are one and you will experience that. And then gently say, “How may I help you to not hurt so much?” I’ve done that. I’ve done that in rooms of people. While it hasn’t ended, changed things in a large sense, it had ended the conflict in that moment in that room.

We had a wonderful experience in South Korea when Dr. Ilchi Lee and I created The New Millennium Peace Foundation. The New Millennium Peace Foundation had at its goal the ending of the division and the separation between North and South Korea. As you may know, North Korea closed its border and would not even allow train traffic, bus traffic, plane traffic, not even telephone traffic; that is, those in the South had gone over 50 years without any contact with their relatives in the North who happen to live in the north side of the border when the border was closed.

Ilchi Lee and I worked for three years on The New Millennium Peace Foundation and the day came when Korea at the Olympics ran their flag into the stadium under one flag, with the North Korean on one hand and the South Koreans holding the other side of the flag and they ran under a single flag, Korea. In that very same week, North Korea opened its borders for the first time in a half century, allowed train and bus and car traffic between the two countries, opened their telephone lines and made one quick simple step toward reunification.

We haven’t gotten there completely yet, but it happened because when I went to North Korea, Americans get to go to North Korea but they did receive me. When I went North Korea, I sat down with -- I didn’t sit down with the head of the government, of course, you couldn’t get that close, but I did sit down with some officials. I said, “Please take this question to your leader. What hurt you so much that you feel you have to hurt others in order to heal it? And tell him, I mean the question sincerely, not sarcastically, not pejoratively. I truly and really want to know.”

Stephen:

Wow. It’s really striking me. I’m getting on a deeper level. The importance in your life of the profound question that really peels back the layers of the onion that opens to the soul, you’ve done so much of your work. You’ve led with questions. I’m just getting from what you’re sharing how important that is to help us drop the illusions because if we challenge the illusions with another counter truth, then that’s not necessarily going to allow the softening into the soul underneath. I’m getting your methodology in a deeper way here, Neale.

Neale:

I think that I was told in Conversations with God, there's a wonderful statement in book 3 or book 4, I forgot which one, but it says -- if I could

recall the words vividly -- it said, "The question, the question, the answer is always in the question."

Stephen: Nice. Nice. Do you think that everybody has their own unique questions that they should discover or have you found that when other people use some of the core questions that you've been guided to use that it has the same profound effect?

Neale: I don't think it's an either/or situation. I think that both are true. I think it's both and. So I think that there are some powerful questions that can be placed before humanity with benefit and wonderful openings as well, I think that each individual will find the question that move them closer to their own inner reality inside of them as well. So even both things are true.

[0:20:15]

***[Overlapping Conversation]***

Stephen: Go ahead.

Neale: Forgive me. I was going to say, I have placed before humanity in my most recent book a series of questions that I have invited people to ask of themselves and of each other in a global conversation. The invitation in my most recent book is for people to actually form what I call Seven Questions discussion groups, global conversation discussion groups in cities, towns and villages around the world where they would sit down with six or seven or eight other people at once every two weeks or so and simply ponder because the question is changed, by the way, from hour to hour and from week to week, but they would ponder the seven simple questions over and over. And then they would invite others to answer and others and others and others until we had a rolling mass of questions and answers because here is the problem, Steve, as I see it.

People are simply unwilling to question the prior assumption. There's one thing that we have not been willing to do in our politics and in our religions in particular. We do it in science. The first thing that the scientist does when he comes up with an answer to a riddle or a problem or an experiment immediately after here with solution, he begins to question the prior assumption, he asks the daring question "What if?"

What if there's more to know about this? What if this is not the final answer? And because scientists have been willing to question their own results, sciences advanced beyond anything we could have imagined. The same is true in medicine, the same is true in technology; that people in medicine and technology and science are willing at all moments of the



process to continue to question the prior assumption and to ask the great "What if?"

However, in politics and even more so in religion, those kinds of questions are not asked. You are not to question the prior assumption. To question the prior assumption is to engage in blasphemy, apostasy, and heresy. Yet, if we don't question the prior assumption about the most important aspect of life that there is, our relationship with life itself and with God and with each other, then what are we to question?

So the problem in the world today is that we keep trying to solve the problem in the world today at every level except the level at which the problem exists. We keep trying to solve the problem as if it was a political problem. It's not a political problem. We keep trying to solve the problem as if it was an economic problem. We throw money at it or we withhold money from it in the form of sanctions. It's an economic problem. Then we say, "Okay, it's a military problem," so we try to throw bombs at it, but it's not a military problem either.

The problem in the world today is that we keep trying to solve the problem at every level except the level at which the problem exist. Of course, the problem is a spiritual problem. It has to do with what we believe to be true about ourselves and about each other.

Stephen: It's really very illuminating what you're sharing and it strikes me that the question is the tool of the spiritual activist because it's taking us back before those constructed illusions or falsehood or prior assumptions or constructing our world to a deeper truth. It's a beautiful insight that I think you're sharing here.

Maybe we can go a bit deeper into the Seven Questions now that you have offered as the focal point for our discussion in humanity and what are those questions and perhaps some of the answers that you've explored in relation to them.

Neale: The first question, Steve, that I was invited to ask the world is a rather simple question. I've broken down the seven simple questions into two groups. The first are what I call the three persistent questions; that is they will not go away. They simply will not go away. And the next four are what I call the four fundamental questions of life.

The three persistent questions are these: number one, how is it possible for 6.9 billion people to all claim they want the same thing and to be unable to get it? How is it possible for nearly seven billion of us claiming to be sentient beings, claiming to be evolved to all say we want peace, health, prosperity, security, understanding, joy, opportunity, fairness,

and, of course, love that we all essentially -- the bottom line, our list of things we want is the same among all human beings. That's not like, well, we don't all want the same thing.

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Of course, **we all want the same thing** at the bottom line. We all crave the exact same outcomes. Now, how can an entire species of seven billion of us simultaneously yearn for the same thing and yet be unable to produce it? And not only be unable to produce it for a week or two or a month or two, but if you listen carefully, for thousands of years, how can that be possible?

The second question of the three persistent questions, is it possible, just possible that there's something we don't fully understand here about God and about life, the understanding of which would change everything? And the third question is is it possible that there's something we don't understand fully about who we are, the understanding of which with all through our lives forever for the better?

The answers that I have -- there are no right answers to these questions, by the way. And God said to me, "Don't go around starting to preach and starting to give your answers and you'll become just one of them who has the right answer." So be very clear, God said to me, "Do not start putting out the Right Answer," capital R, capital A. "Then you'll just become another one with another dogma and another doctrine. But you may offer your answers, the answers that feel true to you as a starting point for global conversation."

So the answer that I offer is a starting point for global conversation. How is it possible that all of us can want the same thing and be unable to get it even after thousands of years of trying? If these were a science experiment, we would have given up long ago. We would have said, "Okay, okay, wait a minute, there's obviously some missing data. There must be some missing data." We can't be all trying to produce the same outcome for several thousand years and be unable to produce the outcome. Clearly, there's some data out.

So the answer is there's something we don't know. We're not stupid. We're not dumb. We are highly intelligent evolved species actually. But if we don't have all the data in front of us, we can't possibly produce the outcome.

So the answer to the first question is very simple. There's some data missing. What would the missing data be that which leads us to the answer to question number two: is it possible, there's something we

don't fully understand here about God and about life, the understanding of which would change everything?

Steve, that's not a small question because most religions, most political parties, for that matter, and many philosophers as well would say, "No. Actually, no, it's not possible that there's something we don't understand. Neale, it's all right there in the book. Just read the book." The problem isn't that we don't understand. The problem is we're not reading the book except that there are about 247 known religions on the planet as we speak and 247 Holy Scriptures for that matter.

So when people say, "Just read the book, it's all in the book." I have to ask, "Which book are you talking about, the Pāli Canon, Bhagavad Gita, the Book of Mormon, the Upanishads, the Bible, the Old Testament, the New Testament? What, the Talmud? The Quran? Would you please tell me which book it is you're referring to?"

Well, people say, "My book, the book that belongs to my religion. That's where the real answers are. Your religion has the false answers. And if you listen to your religion, you're going straight to hell." Wow, what an interesting point of view.

So is there something? Is it possible there's something we don't fully understand about God and about life, the understanding of which would change everything? Yes, I think it is. And humility demands that humanity responds to that question, "Yes, it is possible. Maybe there's something we don't fully understand."

I was asked by Matt Lauer of The Today Show a few years ago. He had me on the show and he said, "Neale, you purport to have talked to God without getting into the merits of whether you really talked to God or not. Since you say you've talked to God, what do you think is God's message to the world? I'm sorry to ask you this question at the end of our interview when we have about 30 seconds. Can you give it to me fast? We've got 30 seconds. Give it to me in one paragraph, God's message to the world."

I said, "Man, I can give it to you in five words." He said, "You can? Fair enough. Ladies and gentlemen, God's message to the world in five words. Neale." "You've got me all wrong."

Stephen: That's a great answer. That's a great answer.

Neale: Because it leads to the next obvious move for humanity, if we have God all wrong, the next question becomes, obviously, then what would be right? which starts us again on an investigation that we gave up

thousands of years ago because we think we already know the answers. Now, there are certain countries on this planet, Steve, where if you even question the answers we've been given, they kill you. They sentence you to death for the **sin of apostasy**. You may not question the prior assumption under pain of death.

**[0:30:06]**

Well, no wonder we can't make any progress because we're not even allowed to investigate the efficacy of the prior answer. Is there something that we do not understand fully about ourselves, is the third question, about who we are, the understanding of which would change our lives forever for the better? The answer is obviously yes. And my answer to the question is what we don't understand about ourselves is that there is no separation between us and that which we call God nor is there any separation between us and that which we call each other nor for that matter is there any true intrinsic separation between us and anything at all and in fact we are all one.

There's only thing and there's no more thing than that one thing. There is only one thing. That's the only thing there is. All we would have to do to shift our lives forever for the better is to change our political, our economic, our social, our sexual, our educational, our religious, all of our constructions, the wonderful constructions that humanity is put into place by means of which it runs its lives and to shift those constructions to embrace the notion that there's no separation between us. What I do for you, I do for me. What I fail to do for you, I fail to do for me because there is nobody else in the room.

Sadly, this is not even a new idea. Every spiritual teacher from the beginning of time in every spiritual tradition -- in the Christian tradition, in the Buddhist tradition which is not even a religion, it's a philosophy, in the Jewish religion, in the Islamic religion, and in every other faith construction on the planet -- the fundamental message is the same. The foundational message is identical from religion to religion.

Life is sacred. We are all part of that which is sacred. We are all part of that which is life. Religions announce and declare it and articulate it each in their own way but the fundamental truth remains identical from religion to religion. Why then can't we live it? Why then can't we get it?

The four basic fundamental questions of life are these: Who am I? Where am I? Why am I where I am? And what do I intend to do about that? My answers which are nobody's answers but mine, just conversation starters, my answers, who am I? I'm an individuation. I'm a singularization. I am an

aspect of divinity itself. I am one with you or, as someone else put it, I and the Father are one and we are brothers.

Where am I? I'm in the realm of the physical. I'm in the experience of physicalization currently residing on the planet that we call earth, the third rock from the sun, if you please. I'm in the realm of the physical. I did not come from this realm nor will I remain in this realm, but that is the realm I am in right now. Why am I where I am? I am where I am that I might know who I really am in my experience for in the realm of the absolute I can know myself absolutely. But I cannot experience myself as what I know myself to be because in the realm of the absolute there's nothing else except absolutely that, but in the realm of the physical which is the realm that God created as part of the overall experience that we call heaven, the kingdom of God, have I not said that in my kingdom, there are many mansions?

So God has created the realm of the physical that we might move into relativity that things could exist relative to other things that we might know who we are in the contextual field that contains that with we imagine we are not so that we have up and down, here and there, before and after, fast and slow, male and female created them that they might know who they really are.

Yet if you imagine that you are the light, see if I am the light, I must perforce, admit and embrace the existence of what I will call the darkness for in the absence of that which I am not, that which I am is not experienceable. Therefore, I will not curse the darkness but rather bless it. Every single spiritual teacher from the beginning of time has said the exact same thing, "Bless, bless, bless those who persecute you."

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When a man asks you for your coat, give him your shirt as well. When a man asks you to walk one mile with him, go with him to win and be a light unto the darkness and curse the darkness not that you might know who you really are. All those whose lives you touched will know who they are as well. These are simple truths. These are not new age aphorisms. Every spiritual teacher has articulated these truths across the span of time. The question is not what is the truth? The question is what stops us from living it?

Stephen:

Beautiful. I think you're speaking such deep truth. I'm just soaking it in, and you're also illuminating the core of where really is important to begin with peacebuilding is when we're polarizing and cursing what we see is the darkness outside of ourselves it's always going to be a separation

between us and the a separation from God. So the very active judging or cursing others is in itself the root. It's part of the root of the problem.

I'm just curious other practices that you've found to unwind that habit since so much of us when we've been hurt, as you pointed out earlier, that there's often a deep hurt and that leads us to lash out thinking that if we hurt others or judge others or condemn others that somehow going to address or alleviate the root condition in us that other practices that help to really unwind that tendency towards polarizing against the other.

Neale:

I think, Stephen, that's a risk of repeating myself. I think the practice that I would suggest and that I try to utilize is seeing myself over there. It's a practice of blinking twice and then seeing what part of me exists over there. Not just in relationship with the person I'm having a current conflict with but in fact everybody. Let me tell you a little anecdote.

I was walking down the street about 12 years ago. This is early in the days of my spiritual awakening, maybe more than 12 years ago now. Time flies faster than I think. I was walking down the street with this wonderful, spiritual master who happened to be in the city that I was in, and I was assigned to be his driver actually for this volunteer organization. So I was driving this guy round. We were out of the car walking down the street.

We were passing a wino, a guy who was sitting on the ground leaning up against the building with a bottle of wine in his hand. He was just lying there, not smelling very good, not looking very nice, and drinking his bottle of wine at 9:30 in the morning. I walked by this guy and I thought I was going to be really elevated. I was standing next to this master, this spiritual guy, and I looked at the man and I said, thinking that I was being very elevated, "For the grace of God go I" because I wanted the master to know that I was acknowledging that I could very easily be there to work for the grace of God.

"There but for the grace of God go I." The master held my arm and he said, "No, no, there but for the grace of God I go because of the grace of God. There because of the grace of God I go." I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "There I go being a wino again. There I go being a drunk again. There I go being a criminal again. There I go being a rapist again. There I go being a spiritual master again. There I go being a star pitcher of the New York Yankees. There I go being this. There I go being that." He said, "Do you see anything else but you out here?"

When anything you see at all you just simply say to yourself "There I go. I am that." In that moment, I understood something I never understood before, Stephen. When I was a child, I heard in parochial school, I heard this wonderful phrase from the Bible. God said, "I am that I am." I said to

the teacher at the time, "What does that statement means? I am that I am, what does that mean?"

The teacher I recall vividly to this day was unable to explain the statement. "I am that I am," he didn't get it. His wise statement, "I am that I am." When that master said that to me, he said, "Here's your practice meal. This is your daily practice. I want you to look at everything you see -- a butterfly, a flower, a bum on the side of the road -- whatever you see and I want you to say in your mind's ear silently to yourself, "I am that."

When you argue with yourself, when you say, "No, I'm not that? I'm not that. I'm this. I'm not that," then I want you to repeat it so that you can solve the argument with yourself by saying, "I am that, I am." I looked at him and I said, "Oh, my God. That's what the statement meant. They just left the comma out." I am that, I am.

**[0:40:14]**

So that's my practice, my practice when I'm facing someone who is arguing with me, when I'm facing someone who is having a hard time and making my life difficult, or when I'm facing something in my exterior world that is simply and plainly unpleasant. I look into the heart of it and my practice is to say, "I am that, I am." There I go being a wino again, and there I go for that matter being an elevated teacher again.

Stephen: It's bringing oneness right into action in the moment. It's so easy to forget. We can get caught in the lofty sentiment of oneness but then to remember each moment that I am that. It's beautiful.

Neale: Especially when we don't see ourselves as that, especially when we see their behaviors as being other than ours. I would never do anything like that.

Stephen: Right.

Neale: I've done it all, Steve. Across the 70 years of my life, I've done it all. The high and the mighty and the elevated and the glorious and I claim it and I have done those things and the sad and the bad and the black and the desperatest things, the worst things, I've done those things too. I have done it all. I forgive it all, and I condemn none of it.

Stephen: Beautiful. You've reference several times in the courses called the rewiring of our society, our politics, our institutions, our schools based upon principles of oneness. I'd love for you to share, if the roots shift to living from oneness is at the foundation of peace, and then rewiring our

institutions in a way to reflect that, how do you see us creating a new kind of society that is peaceful and co-creative and rooted in this root principle of oneness?

Neale:

I think, first of all, we need to begin talking to each other, and we need to begin having conversations, very simple conversations with each other, and we need to begin being willing to be vulnerable with each other again, and then we need to begin to, as I said a minute ago, question the prior assumption again all of our own assumptions and the assumptions of others. We need to begin listening to each other again. How I see us doing that is to become involved again, to become participatory again.

The process that I see occurring on the earth is twofold. I'm seeing more and more people falling away and saying, "There is no point. I'm just done with it. I'm done with this all. I wash my hands off of it." They recede, and they retreat to their own hovels, their own homes, to their own personal lives. They close the circle. They circle the wagon, and then they decide that the best way to survive is just to honker down and make the best of it because the world outside of me is crazy.

At the same time that I'm seeing an increasing tendency toward that, an increasing polarization and isolation of society simultaneous with that, I'm seeing also just exactly the opposite, an increasingly tendency of large numbers of other people to expand outward to not circle the wagons but quite the opposite, to widen the circle, to include more and more and more of humanity and more and more and more of the differences between us. To demonstrate the differences do not have to create divisions that contrast, do not have to produce conflicts.

So I'm seeing now a large willingness on the part of the people to become engaged, to engage with each other and to engage in the interior sense with themselves to produce a larger and larger and more glorious outcomes and a greater experience of our own oneness. However, here is what I'm noticing. As I see this and I travel the world, I'm all over the planet with the message that I'm sharing with you and wherever I go, from the Great Wall of China to Machu Picchu and places in between, I find people asking the same question.

Those who are among what my lovely friend, Barbara Marx Hubbard, wants to call the cultural creatives, those who are truly ready now to produce a new culture on the planet and to create it ask a single question, what can I do? What can one person do? So the answer that I would give to your question is we need to look around us for opportunities where we can coalesce and join together. Wherever two or more are gathered, there is great power.



That's what's extraordinary about The Shift Network and the work that you're doing, not to throw roses at you, but in fact it's true. The truth of it is that the world now is in desperate search, a desperate yearning search for a platform that they can stand on together and by that means to leverage their individual dedication, their individual commitment, their individual awareness, and to leverage it against the collective awareness of the remainder of society, such that society itself will ultimately change.

[0:45:21]

So people are looking, searching for a way to gather together and to leverage what it is that they know and understand to be true about life. The Shift Network which creates an opportunity for people to literally do that, to literally shift the prevailing notion and the prevailing reality on the planet before it's too late, before the shift shifts us so that's what The Shift Network and other outreach as well by people all over the globe give individuals an opportunity to do.

So when you ask me a question, I'm sure you didn't expect me to give this particular answer because this is not scripted, but my unscripted answer would be people need to wake up, look around, and find ways that they can gather together and join together, and come together to create common cause. That's what's so exciting about The Shift Network because it provides us really for the first time an opportunity to use this extraordinary technology that the world has put into place now, the internet and the World Wide Web, to take that extraordinary technology and put it to use.

We have a technology now that we've never had before. The average 15-year-old has more data at his fingertips than the president of the United States 20 years ago, and that's a fact. So with the extraordinary power and insight, the question is how can we take that power and put it to some kind of constructive and valuable use? The Shift Network is doing precisely and actually that. So the answer to your question is we need to find a way to maximize our individual commitment to produce global outcomes.

Stephen:

Well, thank you for that beautiful mirroring. It strikes me, you have a unique gift of really being able to help us see with new eyes. As you're talking about our function, I was seeing The Shift Network with new eyes through yours. I think that is one of your real gifts, and I think it connects also to this deeper impulsive, the questioning. It's to always continue to peel back the layers of prior assumptions and to be able to reveal something that's new that's connected to a higher source.

It's quite a gift, and it really strikes me that that is at the essence of the peacebuilding processes, this continued revelation, the continued

shedding of the old ideas, continued shedding of the old assumptions so we can stand in the nakedness of who we are in a different kind of way. I just want to honor you for that. I feel like you're very masterful with that. It's a real love offering to help us see the world with fresh eyes.

Neale: Thank you. One of the first questions that people I think have an opportunity to ask at this juncture of humanity's evolutionary process is in fact what is peace? What in fact is peace? How do we define peace? Is peace merely the absence of war, merely the absence of violence? I mean, that's sufficient. That's wonderful. But is it possible that there is something that we don't fully understand about peace, the understanding of which would change everything. See? What if peace was more than simply the absence of violence and the absence of war? What if peace was the presence of something even greater, of something more profound, of something more ecstatic, of something more important?

Stephen: I think that positive aspirational vision for peace is so central because if we are just trying to escape the problem, it's ultimately demotivating for people. We're aspiring and evolving towards something not just trying to get away from the old or the past. So I would put that back to you. What is your positive vision for what peace really means in an aspirational sense?

Neale: I think peace means the embracing and the demonstration, the expression and the experience of who we really are. Every person has experienced that kind of peace at particular moments in their life. There have been times when all of us have had that incredible, incredible sense of inner peace where they have felt not a single shred of inner conflict between what they're saying, doing, and what they are being in a particular moment. All of us have had that experience fleetingly in our life where we walk away from **the moment and we say**, "Wow! Now, that's who I really am. Who I just was right there, that really is me."

**[0:50:07]**

And then we ask, "Why can't I be like that all the time? What stops me from all this expressing that which I really am in that way?" And then those questions lead to further inquiry and ultimately to further answers. But peace to me is the full embracing of, the full expression, and the full experience of the fullness of our identity that is who we really are.

Now, we can't express who we really are until we decide who we really are. That is the step that most human beings from my observation have yet to make that the average person has not actually asked him or herself the question, "Who am I?" I mean really, who am I? What is my true

identity? God put it to me in a light-hearted way. He said, "Those people are walking through life living a case of mistaken identity." That is they simply don't know who they really are.

I asked God, "What is the purpose of life? In one sentence, can you give me the purpose of life?" He said, "Of course, I can. I can give you one sentence. Here it is. The purpose of life is to recreate yourself anew in the next grandest version of the greatest vision ever you held about who you are." But of course if you don't hold a vision about who you are, the entire process becomes impossible. It falls apart, can't be done. Therefore, the first step in the process of recreating yourself anew in the next grandest version of the greatest vision ever you held about who you is to in fact hold such a vision.

I've gone around the world and where I talk to people individually, I say to them, "What is your vision of who you are? What is your vision for yourself?" They have all sorts of answers to questions like that. I am a peacemaker or I'm a mediator. Some of them will give you rather plebeian kinds of answers. I'm a butcher, a baker, a candlestick maker. I'm the best stockbroker in New York, and I am in fact the best first baseman of the New York Yankees.

But often I look at them and I say, "Is that it?" Not to be pejorative but just to be inquisitive. "Is that it? Is that the extent of it? You're the best first baseman for the New York Yankees or for that matter you're a peacemaker on the planet? Is that it? Is there anything more that you might imagine yourself to be?" That causes people to probe into the deeper places of their psyche? Psyche, by the way, is an interesting word. The psyche comes from the Greek "psyche" The word "psyche" in Greek it means the soul. The psyche means the soul.

I say to them at the deepest level of your psyche, if there was something more than that that you are in your vision, what might it be? And then they begin searching what in fact would that be. Peace to me is the answering of that question. When we do it collectively, we produce collective peace on the planet.

So the question that the human race is now being invited to ask of itself is, who do you imagine yourself to be as a species and individuals within that species? Who in fact do you imagine and envision yourself to be? The answer that I offer humanity as a possibility is divinity itself that we are in fact an expression, an out-picturing and individuation and a singularization of the singularity. We are divinity itself.

What would it mean to walk into that? Somebody asked me at a lecture a few weeks ago, what does it mean to step into that? I said, obviously, it's

going to be very difficult. I want to put it in very simple human words and we can argue about the meaning of those words and get semantical about it all. But if you'll just take the word at face value as what most people mean by the words, here's what it looks to me like. Here's what it looks like to step into that.

I dare you to act for the next 24 hours as if you were holy. I dare you. And I dare you to act for the next 24 hours as if everyone else whose life you touch is holy as well. Treat them as a holy man and a holy woman, as a saint and a sage and a guru, and I want you to act in that way yourself as well. How would you move through the world in the next 24 hours if you thought you were the guru and the saint for whom the world has been waiting?

Just for the intellectual exercise of it, do that for 24 hours and see if there's any shift, even the slightest shift in your ground of being, in the way you speak, in the way you move, in the things you say, in the things you do, just for one day. People have done that with me and for me in my extended retreats and they come back and they say, "That's one of the most incredible days of my life." I said, "Isn't that interesting? How do you think it would be if you live that way all the time?"

**[0:55:10]**

And they say to me, "Yes, but how would I get others to do it? It's about getting the whole world to act that way?" I said, "No, no, you can't get the world to act that way, but you can show the world what it would be if they acted that way. Therefore, be a model onto the world and be a light onto the darkness that others might know who they really are by the light of your example as that's what every single master has done." Masters are not ones who say, "Follow me." Masters are those who say, "I'll go first."

Stephen: Nice. Beautiful, Neale. Well, we're nearing the end here and I wanted to -- actually, we're getting some questions on the webcast just about the five steps to peace. I think what we've done is we've actually covered the territory, but we haven't really enumerated them. I think it would be good for me -- I know you don't have them in front of you right now so perhaps I could read them out and we can just as a way to summarize a lot of what we've explored here today.

Neale: Yes, I'd loved to. Yeah, wonderful for the audience to hear those. I was told in the new revelations, if humanity simply took these five steps, we could create peace on the planet.

Stephen: So number one is you can choose to acknowledge that some of your old beliefs about God and about life are no longer working which we explored a lot in the question form.

Neale: Not a small thing because most people with old beliefs say, "No, no, no, those beliefs are working. What is not working is that we're not following them." But in fact people who follow the beliefs also find that they're not working. So we can choose to notice and to admit and to acknowledge that some of our old beliefs are no longer working. The world is replete with examples of that.

For instance, just one simple striking example, a belief that God says that all homosexuals are going straight to hell. God says so. That's a belief. It's got to be true. It's right there in scriptures, right there in the Holy Scriptures that homosexuality is an abomination. It's right there in the Holy Book, Neale.

Is it really? Is it on the same page that says that if your son is a **[0:57:36] [Indiscernible]** and disobeys you that you should take him to the town gates and stone him to death? Is it on the same page where the Bible says and the Bible says this that if a woman is caught to be adulterer, she should be likewise dragged to the town gates and stoned to death? Is it on the same page as that? Or is it possible that scripture has been misinterpreted to suit the needs of time and place and culture and belief systems that existed in those places?

Stephen: Very true. Let me read the other four so that people can have them because they really do essentialize everything you've been sharing today.

Number two is you can choose to acknowledge that there is something you do not understand about God and about life, the understanding of which will change everything.

Number three, you can choose to be willing for a new understanding of God and life to now be brought forth, an understanding that can produce a new way of life on your planet.

Number four, you can choose to be courageous enough to explore and examine the new understanding and making sure that it aligns with your inner truth and knowing to enlarge your belief system to include it.

Number five, you can choose to live your lives as demonstrations of your highest and grandest beliefs rather than as denials of them.

It's really the foundation is questioning, releasing, opening to vaster picture in exploring the inner truth and how that connects to our highest

and grandest possibilities. It's a beautiful ark that you've offered to these five steps of being a peacemaker and creating peace on earth.

Neale: And the last step, the most important, to step into it and to demonstrate it rather than to deny it, to live your life as a demonstration rather than a denial. That's the other question, the other process that I offer people. As a practice, people could ask themselves as they watch themselves, as they watch themselves argue with another, as they watch themselves loving another, as they watch themselves smiling or frowning, crying or laughing, as they watch themselves in their life to ask themselves, is this is a demonstration or a denial of who I really am?

**[0:59:57]**

Stephen: Beautiful. That's a perfect way to close. Thank you so much for your time, for your wisdom, your deep inquiry, your heartfelt inquiry that has lead you to such profound questions that have touched so many.

For folks who would like to be in contact with Neale, the best place is [ndwhome.com](http://ndwhome.com) or [theglobalconversation.com](http://theglobalconversation.com). Both of those are great places to stay connected with Neale.

Anything on the horizon you want to mention, Neale, about upcoming appearances, workshops?

Neale: No, not really. They can get all the information of my retreats in the websites, but I would invite them to follow very closely the extraordinary activities that are now upcoming on The Shift Network because if we have a chance to change the world, much of it lies in the work that is being done there.

Stephen: Thank you. Thank you for partnering with us especially in the Birth 2012 work which is really at the foundation and your recognition of Barbara as such an important mother of invention, a prophetess for our day to help to have this coming together on a planetary scale of all of the people who are committed to birthing the new world. So thank you for recognizing her, empowering her, and partnering with us in this work.

Neale: You're very welcome, my friend. It's lovely to be with you and thank you for having me on this program today.

Stephen: Thank you, Neale. Have a beautiful day.

I thank everyone who has joined us as well. Tonight we are going to have a great blessing of a second session on the Summer of Peace. We're going to be talking with Oscar Miro-Quesada who is also part of the welcoming

committee and part of the Birth 2012 work. He is a Peruvian shaman, scholar, and really beautiful medicine man.

So join us tonight. That's at 5:00 p.m. Pacific, and we look forward to continuing our journey throughout the summer and having everybody share what you are creating as well to create more peace in your life and the world. Thank you.

**[1:01:57]**

**End of Audio**