

Summer Of Peace 2012

Rita Marie Johnson & Amr Abdallah

[0:00:02]

Philip: Hello everyone and welcome back to the Summer of Peace. This is Philip Hellmich, the Director of Peace with The Shift Network. I just have to say I am having such a great time with this summit. I mean just the range of speakers each week covering a different theme. In this week, we're covering education. Yesterday, I had just an incredible honor of interviewing Dr. Bernard LaFayette who was mentored by Martin Luther King and his stories were just powerfully moving, including being with Dr. King the morning of his assassination and Dr. King saying, "You must internationalize and institutionalize this work," and then Dr. LaFayette went on and has been doing that ever since.

And so we're just – I'm just thrilled with the content, the quality, the people, the commitment, the heartwarming stories and today, we continue with a session called Creating the New Story for Humanity with Dr. Amr Abdalla and Rita Marie Johnson and in this one, this session here, I've been really looking forward to because I've been wanting to learn so much more about this work that connects you with Costa Rica. And Amr and I had the pleasure of working together a few years ago when I was at Search for Common Ground and Amr was helping us evaluate the impact of media in West Africa. And Amr is a real pioneer in many ways and now he's a Professor and Vice Rector at the United Nations-mandated University for Peace. Before UPEACE, he was a Senior Fellow with the Peace Operations Policy Program, School of Public Policy, at George Mason University, in Virginia. He was also a Professor of Conflict Analysis and Resolution at the Graduate School of Islamic and Social Sciences in Leesburg, Virginia

His academic and professional careers are multidisciplinary. He obtained a law degree in Egypt in 1977. He practiced law, was prosecuting attorney then immigrated to the US to obtain a Master's in Sociology and then PhD in Conflict Analysis Resolution and it goes on and on. And Amr just has a wide range of experience in several countries in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Europe and the Americas.

Now Rita Marie Johnson is the Founding Director of Rasur Foundation International and the creator of the BePeace Practice. BePeace combines a scientifically tested technique for feeling peace with a method for speaking peace that creates an honest, empathetic connection. This practice helps people access their natural wisdom and compassion.

Now, Rita Marie teaches the BePeace Foundations Course at the UN University for Peace in Costa Rica, where international graduate students receive two

credits for the course. She initiated a Ministry for Peace bill in Costa Rica that passed in 2009, which is a huge accomplishment. She established the Academy for Peace there to teach BePeace in public schools, impacting almost 18,000 children and it goes on and on and we will be hearing more.

So Amr and Rita Marie, thank you so much for being with us.

Amr: Thank you, Phil.

Rita Marie: Yes, thank you.

Philip: Yes. Well let's start off with a personal question and Rita Marie, we will start off with you first. How and why did you get started in this adventure of peace?

Rita Marie: Well, Philip, I've known since I was two years old that I would work for peace because I had an experience on our country road where my voice clearly said, "You will work for peace," and I didn't feel like I was on track with that mission for many years and then one day somebody told me Costa Rica didn't have an army. This was as an adult and when I heard those words, it was just as if a light came on in my heart that has never gone out and I'm not opposed to armies. In my work, we're not against anything. So I'm not opposed to armies because we realize there's times when the protective use of force is necessary but with this news that Costa Rica didn't have an army, for the first time I could imagine a national model of peace and I was just enamored with that idea.

So I moved to Costa Rica to learn from their culture and to see if I could contribute in some way to strengthening the model of peace they had already created.

Philip: Beautiful, **[0:05:00]** beautiful, beautiful, Rita Marie. Thank you. We're going to hear more about this and I love hearing something in your early childhood because we've been hearing that theme from other speakers including Dr. LaFayette. He was the age of seven when he decided to make a commitment. And now, Amr, how about yourself?

Amr: Well, actually – yes. Well thank you Philip. You mentioned that I did practice law in Egypt as a prosecuting attorney and as a matter of fact, it was that practice that led me later on to decide that I want to commit my career to the field of peace and conflict resolution and this particularly happened in the 1980s when I was of course a tutor in Egypt and I was prosecuting or I was a member of the prosecution team working on the case of the assassination of President Anwar Sadat in 1981 and working through the interrogations with the people who were part of the Islamic Jihad Movement or organization and to listen and to understand where terrorists are coming from in what they do and how they justify and rationalize their actions really alerted me to the fact that when we

deal with issues like terrorism and the like, we are not only dealing with the legal aspects.

There are social, cultural, religious, psychological elements that go deep into what creates such major national issues and international issues later. And it was by a stroke of luck that three years later and around the year 1984, I was in the US for a fellowship at George Mason University and it was at that time that George Mason University was starting the first Master's Degree in Conflict Analysis and Resolution in the world and they were so proud about that program and they were advertising it in terms of how it looks at conflicts from all those angles that I just mentioned. And so for me, I was ready professionally and personally to get into a deeper understanding of conflict beyond the legal elements.

So I felt that I was in the right time and the right place. I decided that that's what I wanted to do for the rest of my life and the rest is history.

Philip: Yeah. Beautiful, Amr. Beautiful. This is delightful. Now Rita Marie – and I must, on a personal note, just admit that this is inspiring to hear this type of lifetime commitment in how the story unfolds. And Rita Marie, what is the BePeace practice?

Rita Marie: Well, it's a synergistic skill set for building social, emotional intelligence for peace. Many years ago, I realized that my own social and emotional intelligence was highly dependent on my ability to access my best wisdom in any situation and my compassion. So I began to look for methods that could lead me directly to my wisdom and compassion and in that search, I discovered the Institute of HeartMath and their research on heart-brain coherence and their methods for tapping heart intelligence which is to me another way of saying wisdom.

And from them, I learned how to achieve heart-brain coherence and that led me to a feeling of peace and the clear direct path to my wisdom. So that discovery more than any other has changed my life and changed my own ability to embody peace but then there was still this missing piece for me and that was the how-to of compassion. I heard about Dr. Marshall Rosenberg and his method called nonviolent communication.

So I took a course from Marshall and that's where I came to realize that our universal needs are what connect us as human beings and that by naming these needs in our language, we can really actualize that connection, especially important to do during conflicts.

So, when we do that, when we use our language to connect around universal needs, then our hearts tend to open and suddenly we find ourselves more compassionate and so I found that this language of universal needs was the how-to of compassion that I've been seeking. So after learning how to achieve heart-

brain coherence from the Institute of HeartMath and how to connect to universal needs through language from Marshall Rosenberg, I put these two methods together and I found there was a synergy between them. They each enhance the other **[0:10:00]** in a way that made it possible for me to more reliably access my wisdom or my compassion at will.

And so using coherence and connection together, I can now move through any issues with greater ease and efficiency. So when I made that discovery, I named the synergistic combo BePeace. You read the formal definition, Philip, earlier in my introduction there so I won't repeat that. But what I have found is that for me, BePeace is the clearest how-to for embodying peace. It's clear and succinct and that's why it's able to be passed on to others. Our foundation, the Rasur Foundation, is especially motivated to teach BePeace to guidance counselors and teachers in schools, so that they can use it with their students. We want to get it to the children so that they can pass it on and we will have generational peace.

Philip: Beautiful. Beautiful, Rita Marie, and brilliant too. Now Amr, how can a peace practice be applied to what is happening in Egypt today?

Amr: OK. Well, Egypt obviously is going through an amazing type of transition. I will say that – or let me put it this way. I will dare say that the transitions we are seeing in Egypt is not a simple transition to democracy from dictatorship. This is one level of the transition we are seeing but I think that there is a civilizational change that is happening and that was inevitable, which now finally has taken place and by this, I mean that Egypt is just like all the other Arab countries. They have gone through a very similar history for many years, for centuries actually, and more particularly in the last 200 years, the entire Arab world has faced a situation of being invaded militarily, but more important, scientifically and culturally by a superior West. And that begged a question immediately about what has gone wrong with Arab and Muslim civilizations to the point that they have decayed and now, the superior West is coming in and taking over. And this question has been a big struggle in the mind of Arabs and Muslims for 200 years.

And as you know, there have been different movements that emerged. Some of them reflected adherence to the new models of modernity and westernization and others were trying to insist on reformulating an Islamic response to that challenge and I think finally we are seeing these courses at coming face to face. For the longest time, dictatorships in the Arab and the Muslim world have forced these courses to be silent or to be shot under – in the prisons actually. But now, they are coming to almost a confrontation and this is where I think the **[0:13:21]** **[Indiscernible]** can be important.

I am on one hand very optimistic with what I am seeing because we need to have these courses confronting each other and creating something new. This is what's happening now. This is why I say we are seeing a civilizational change. At the same time, obviously members of both camps, you call it the liberal camp and

the religious camp. They are not well-equipped with the tools that Rita Marie described, the nonviolent communication, the connection of the heart and mind and how to be able to present your issues in a peaceful manner.

Instead, we are seeing a lot of violence in the way they are addressing each other all the way from Facebook to the Tahrir Square and I think that we can use a lot of those tools that were described by Rita Marie to enhance their ability to interact with each other and again to develop something *[Indiscernible]*.

Philip: Beautiful, Amr. Thank you. I love how we're covering such a range here and we're weaving it together. So I understand that both of you want to see a new story for humanity. Rita Marie, what story are you imagining?

Rita Marie: Well, Philip, Gandhi said, "If we're to teach real peace in this world, we have to begin with the children." So for me, any new story for humanity must have its beginning with this kind of awareness. That we **[0:15:00]** have to teach peace to the children and when I moved to Costa Rica 18 years ago, I discovered an epic poem and it tells a story of a mysterious teacher who teaches the children of a small village how to find peace in their hearts and as the children share with their parents what they've learned, the whole community discovers a more creative way of life and their community thrives in peace.

So in our time, this story is being replicated by teachers who are teaching BePeace in their classrooms. When the teachers pass it on in the classroom, then the kids pass it on to their parents and the parents pass it on to their community. So we're already seeing this. We have a new video out from our pilot project in Houston at Oakley Elementary School and in this video, the kids are saying things like, "You know, gee, I wish my parents knew this. I need this form, to take this home and teach to my parents because my parents have customers that are mean to them and they don't know how to handle it."

And so we're seeing already in Houston, from our first pilot, that the kids automatically take it home to their parents. So in my mind, this is the way that authentic peace can be achieved by teaching it in schools one heart at a time so that in that way, world peace becomes realistic.

And that's the story for humanity that Rasur Foundation is creating everyday. That's – I know that's not the whole story. We're not saying that BePeace is the only answer. Not at all. Developing our peace skills and making peace in the world is a much bigger story than that but the story that we want to focus on, our thread in that story, is to teach children peace in a very effective way that they can know what to do and do it in the moment that they need it. So that's the story we want to see on planet earth.

Philip: Beautiful, Rita Marie. Beautiful. Now Amr, what story for humanity would you like to see?

Amr: Well, it's consistent with what I just mentioned about the changes we see in Egypt. I think that – as you see, the wave of change is happening in the entire Arab world and I think we're going to see the effects of this stretching out to even more countries in the Muslim world and I think what again we are seeing here is a new challenge to these courses. I think that the typical and dominant Western secular – this course that has dominated for centuries now. I will not say that it is necessarily being challenged now as much as I am seeing the Arab revolutions and what will follow in the next decade or two in the entire Muslim world will start to present a model that is trying to introduce a religious version into our understanding of modernity. And I think that the story of humanity that I would love to see is the one that will know how to reconcile the two and how to mix space and that's a big challenge as you can imagine. How can we reconcile a liberal secularism with all its institutions and beliefs and values with an **[0:18:36] [Indiscernible]** of religion that can be not necessarily contradictory and can actually absorb each other in a positive way?

I think this is a challenge that we will be facing right now and I am again optimistic. I am seeing some good signs in Egypt and in the rest of the Arab world about how people are trying to incorporate some of the elements coming from their history of the glorious time of Islam which is a very important part of the Muslim consciousness all over the world and they are trying to bring back elements that are positive and to see how to implement the things that are related to rule of law, governance, good governance. Examples that people can really adhere to and their respect in the Arab and Islam civilizations and they are very consistent with the same principles of rule of law and governance coming from the Western liberal civilization and I think that bringing those two together and making more people realize that there's no contradiction and as a matter of fact, we are all about doing the best for all humans. It's going to be a big step for humanity.

Philip: Nice. Nice, Amr. These are beautiful visions. Rita Marie, back to – how has the Rasur Foundation – or both of you. **[0:20:00]** How has the Rasur Foundation and University for Peace come together in Costa Rica? Rita Marie, do you want to start?

Rita Marie: Sure. Well, three years ago, Amr asked me to teach the BePeace Foundations course as a credit course at the University for Peace and so I'm delighted to offer it to their international students each year now and I also donated my property in Costa Rica to the university to serve as their second campus there and I did that with the aim of also creating long term sustainability for the BePeace school program that I started in 2004 in Costa Rica. And although I'm focused on bringing BePeace to US schools now, I'm still working in Costa Rica. I travel there frequently to continue to work and I'm just delighted with my partnership with Amr. He has been a friend for many years now. Some of his students interned in

our Academy for Peace there in Costa Rica. That's how it all began and I'm just so grateful that our stories are interwoven.

Philip: Nice, nice. Amr, would you like to pick up on this?

Amr: Yes, absolutely. I will say that I think the relationship between Rasur and UPEACE has started even **[0:21:19] [Indiscernible]** maybe ten years ago or even before I joined UPEACE because Rita Marie's relationship to UPEACE has existed for quite some time and because of – as what Rita Marie said, we've been discussing it for several years about how to bring the BePeace project into UPEACE. I remember trying. It was just a workshop for one day and it worked very well and that was encouraging and then we've got actually as a full course, full credit and it has been receiving excellent evaluations year after year and that's why we keep inviting them to come back.

But then on top of it, as Rita Marie said, that she decided last year to actually donate her property which is being used as a guest house and the training center and now, this is part of the UPEACE property. And I want to say that the way Rita Marie did it has been really an example of what she stands up for and if you allow me Rita Marie, I just want to mention that in the celebration when – of donating this property to UPEACE, I shared with everybody how Rita Marie at one point was concerned that if we split the property in one way or something, that it will affect the beauty of the place even though that had serious financial implications for her and she says to me clearly that beauty was more important to her than money and that's why she wanted to keep the property intact as one piece.

That really touched me and I shared that in front of the audience in that celebration because I think this is the kind of lesson that I think I see coming from a person like Rita Marie and her organization. That it is not about material items. It is not about who is winning. It is about what is beautiful in all the depths of the world and I think that's what we're trying to bring together from UPEACE and Rasur is to offer something for the students that we know are going to touch their life forever. And this is what is happening, whether by the entire UPEACE experience or also with the BePeace experience. It is a life-transforming experience and this happened not by coincidence. It happened by design and by having dedicated people working for the cause of peace and particularly for BePeace.

Philip: Beautiful. I'm just reminded Amr of our work together around evaluation and program planning, the strategies. And I'm touched, Rita Marie, of just by the vision of a ten-year-old wanting to work for peace and how you brought together the heart and the mind. This sounds, Amr, as you said, just very methodical. Rita Marie, could you speak a little bit about how the BePeace is applicable both to young people and then also to graduate students. That's quite

a range for a curriculum. Do you adapt it or do you find that there's a universal aspect to the work?

Rita Marie: Well, we have found that it is very universal. Many people have called BePeace Human Being 101 because what we do is we help people just know how to access their inner lives and manage their inner lives, their emotions and their needs and their wisdom and compassion in a way that's so much more conscious.

So in getting conscious, **[0:25:00]** that works for people of all ages obviously. We've worked with kindergarteners and we had a 95-year-old in one of our courses and at the University for Peace, we have international students of many different cultures and belief systems and because BePeace is not belief-based, we don't run into any of those issues. There's no conflict because what we're talking about is the universal human being and how we can all best access our wisdom and compassion so that we can embody peace on a moment to moment basis. And our evaluations from the students have been consistently positive and they have written to me and told me how they're applying it in their lives, to how it has transformed things with their families and how they can also use it professionally.

So it is very universal and that's why we see that it can move out into the world in a bigger way that we are starting with the children. That's where our focus is but we teach adults all the time. We teach public courses and we teach teachers. So we're hoping to get into prisons eventually. We've had many invitations to different audiences but we're actually not able to respond to all of them right now without losing our focus.

So as we grow and have more infrastructure, we will be able to reach out to all of these different audiences that are yearning to know how to embody peace.

Philip: Beautiful. I love the idea of kindergarten and 95. Instead of K12, you can have K95.

Rita Marie: Yeah.

Philip: Amr ...

Rita Marie: That's right.

Amr: Yes.

Philip: Amr, my friend, I really have to ask you this question knowing our work together previously. Talk with us a little bit about the impact and the evaluations and so forth because you're a master at integrating evaluations into program designs.

Amr:

Oh, thank you, thank you. Definitely the word “impact” keeps chasing me out wherever I go. Now let me tell you talking about impact, it may be – I don’t know if Rita Marie knows that but it was as a matter of fact – among the students of UPEACE who have taken her course outside of UPEACE several years ago were the catalysts, the ones who came to UPEACE and said, “We must have this course on campus. It is a course that we have to have it for our students here.”

And like Rita Marie said and like you’re saying, it was the impact that the BePeace workshop and courses have had on their participants that allowed and encouraged us at UPEACE to actually make it part of our curriculum and then I am seeing the impact worldwide because our students are coming from 60 plus countries and each one who goes through the BePeace workshop, I know they come out as different people and I know that they go into their own countries and they try to see how to implement what they have learned. And I really hope that between BePeace and UPEACE, we will find a way to reach out to some of those graduates who have taken the BePeace workshop and use Rita Marie’s model to train them and make them appropriate facilitators because I am sure that they can apply this in different places.

So the way we see it is Costa Rica in general and UPEACE are a springboard and the BePeace is among one of the elements that we use that will help to transform people in a positive way and then send them out to the world, to the real world and they have them apply this. And I like what Rita Marie said earlier I think before we opened the discussion informally. She said that peace is a process and I truly believe in this. I think it was Gandhi who said that there is no road to peace. Peace is the road. In other words, we just have to keep going with the attitude of peace and we struggle. Sometimes we will fall. Sometimes we will make mistakes but there’s no way other than to come back on that road of peace. And in terms of how do we assist the impact, as you know, this is the most elusive question in evaluations in general but I think that if I look at the impact even on a few people, how they have gone through the BePeace workshop or came to UPEACE and what kind of changes are happening in their lives, what kind of impact they are having on other people, I think that as a matter of fact, this **[Indiscernible]** a very scientific study to try to pinpoint some of the positive examples.

[0:30:00] I mean having said this, I mean I can’t help but to remember a story that came from our evaluation work you and I started. If you remember in Sierra Leone in 2002 – I remember that. When we conducted the evaluation of the work of Search for Common Ground and **[Indiscernible]** and we came across the story of the young man – young boy actually. He was a child soldier at one point and then he managed to come out of the bushes and the fighting and then Search for Common Ground put him on a ready program called Golden Kids and he had – and he impacted with that program so many other children and helped them to come out of being child soldiers and to reintegrate into their society.

I use that example often in my teaching about impact research and impact evaluation to highlight that the impact on that one person was so significant and what he has done to several other people was so significant. This is a kind of impact that you cannot necessarily measure quantitatively but we need to measure in terms of the quality of what happened to this one young boy and how his program affected so many other kids and I think what we're doing with UPEACE and what we're doing with the BePeace workshop is something very similar but we need to go and trace some of those stories. See some of the people who had been changed and transformed by being in a place like University for Peace in Costa Rica and being through a workshop like BePeace and what this has done for them.

I know for sure that you're going to find very positive results but it is worth it to actually find a way to go and do a good research on it.

Philip: Sure. Wonderful. And Amr, I just want to acknowledge you again, you and the late Ed Palmer and others who have been really pioneers at looking at how to really analyze and study something as – how do you document the impact of peace building and that's a whole new frontier of exploration.

Rita Marie, let me come back to you and just – if you can step in to that ten-year-old girl who heard a voice and you could look at the transformations you've seen of people going through BePeace, what would that young girl say about – what would she just say about what she witnessed, the transformations?

Rita Marie: Well, I think first of all, she would say, "I understand my guidance differently now." The guidance was you will work for peace and one of the things that I understand about that now is how I've had to work for peace within myself. I've had to work at it. It took me years to get the clarity of the how-to and then even when I had the how-to, I worked my BePeace practice every morning. So I never realized that peace was work and so I will work for peace. Yes, in my own heart, and then in seeing the people that have been touched by BePeace, those that have found a way. So that they are no longer feeling confused and they're feeling hopeful in their own lives and hopeful for our world.

When I see that kind of hope emerge, I'm just – I'm filled with gratitude. I guess that's gratitude and really awe, that this is coming to be that we have enough knowledge now to be able to practice peace in a consistent way, that it's not something that's airy-fairy. If you remember, there are the movies like the movie that Sandra Bullock starred where she was asked, "What is the most important thing that can happen in the world today?" And she said, "Well, that would be a stricter parole, a stricter punishment for parole violators," and so when she said that, everybody kind of looked distressed and then she said, "And world peace," and everybody laughed. Everybody laughed because it's just kind of a joke, world peace.

But since discovering this for myself and seeing how it has transformed people's lives, I have solid hope. There's nothing airy-fairy about my hope. I see the transformation in the lives and in the eyes of the people that we've taught and so I know that world peace is possible. I am absolutely confident that we are moving beyond the dark ages of killing each other, that we can be more intelligent and **[0:35:00]** be able to make peace because we have the knowledge right now in how to do it.

So I just everyday imagine a world where every person practices peace and passes this gift on to the next generation. That's the world I'm aiming for and that I put my heart and mind and money behind everyday and so I think that ten-year-old would be surprised in how it has all turned out. But really the same heart that got that guidance is the same heart that I'm living with today that knows that this is possible, that we have very solid reasons to hope for a better world and create a better world right now.

Philip: Beautiful, Rita Marie. Beautiful. Thank you. Amr, my friend, how about that young prosecutor in Egypt who – you could see that there's more to what's going on than just prosecuting people and wanted to look at the bigger picture. What would that young person say now with all you've been through?

Amr: Well, several things actually **[Indiscernible]** maybe say and what he does. In terms of saying, I have to say that if I am given the choice today between going back to be a prosecutor and to continue with what I am doing with teaching and working in the field of peace and conflict resolution, I think my response on my choices directly are that I am very blessed to be where I am now and I would continue to do this for the rest of my life if I can. That's one. Second is actually I'm very happy that also – I remember when I left Egypt 25, 26 years ago, my goal was very clear, that I wanted to come back to Egypt with a curriculum on peace and conflict resolution and to find a way to apply.

At that time, I started within the **[0:37:00] [Indiscernible]** because this is where I was working at the time but well, I am fortunate enough to have been able in the last five, six years to bring back this curriculum of peace and conflict resolution to Egypt. I have worked with so many young people in the last five years. I have a **[Indiscernible]** I would say more than 200 young people of the age of 25, 26 to 30, 40 years old. They trained in peace and conflict resolution and they have done a lot of great work on them. For example, a workshop on the prevention and early monitoring and early warning models for religious violence and sectarian violence in Egypt.

We have also worked with – even I got some of my former colleagues who are now like Supreme Court judges and very distinguished judges in Egypt. I have been bringing them to my workshops and to my courses in Alexandria and they have been given **[Indiscernible]** within this model. So I have to say that it seems like my dream has come true to a great extent and it keeps unfolding in front of

me and we have a new generation of well-educated Egyptians who have come to UPEACE and received their master's degree and now they are themselves teaching courses and doing workshops on peace and conflict resolution.

So I will say that right now of course after the revolution in Egypt and in the Arab world, the challenge is bigger and I hope that to myself and my young generation that I have been working with in Egypt would be able to actually do more to contribute to that civilizational vision that I mentioned earlier.

Philip: Beautiful, beautiful. This is quite inspiring. I mean I'm inspired and I just think about people listening around the world. I also think, Rita Marie, about my young niece who's doing an internship with you and I'm just so delighted that she's being exposed to the work that you are doing together.

I would like to open up for questions and so if anyone is on the phone and would like to ask a question, please hit star 2 and if you're on the webcast, please go ahead and type in your question and we can read it. We've got one right here. Michelle from Shelburne, Vermont. It says, "Rita Marie, the only question, 'What could be more wonderful than being in the world with you?'" So clearly, you have a fan in Vermont, Rita Marie.

Rita Marie: Yes, I have some friends in Vermont and I'm so grateful for them. Yes, thank you.

Philip: And here's another question from **Ruka** [Phonetic] in Hot Springs. She says, "How to bring peace when people are angry, hungry, jobless and the society is in [0:40:00] chaos?" Who would like to start first with that one?

Amr: OK. Well, I will be happy to start. Of course there is no easy recipe or a formula that we can say that it is one, two, three, four but I think that we can talk about – in addition to of course having some form of understanding of what is causing this. Why the hunger, why the frustration, why the world is unjust and then to try to put together the right models up there and encompass all levels of how we as human beings are.

From the inner peace and the – but also to address the real basic needs of people at the same time. To get people to realize and to see that with all this frustrations and with the violation of the basic needs, there are certain ways to go about satisfying them. It is not necessarily going to be satisfied if they're using violence or using the attitudes that are closed and not reaching out to others. I know that's much easier said than done but again, the question is, "What is the alternative?" and maybe shifting the whole model, taking the example of how things can work better.

I find that the – back to the example of this young boy who was once upon a time a child soldier and he came around. Using people who have been there, done that, people who can be good role models for others, who can show them

the way and they come from the same experience of those who are suffering. They rely on the spiritual elements of where human beings are. It touched people on the deeper level of their humanity and I think that's what BePeace tries to do and at the same time, not to ignore or to forget about the structure, the factors that influence them.

I mean the question and the assumption that was put in it is so huge and I think again it requires a holistic type of work that recognizes all levels of who we are as human beings.

Philip: OK. All right. We've got some other questions. Rita Marie, do you want to answer that one too or would you like to take another question here?

Rita Marie: I would like to add just a little bit, not much, to Amr's wonderful answer there. In approaching people in chaos and in conflict, obviously the most important thing is to get their basic needs met first. It's really hard to want to be peaceful when you're starving. So to find ways to get support from other people in the world to meet those basic needs and then in trying to find resolution to conflict, to use the ways that we know will connect people heart to heart and not just at the head level.

Not that we should do away with our intellect or only approach it from the heart level but what we know is that when people get connected at the heart level by speaking the language of universal needs, then they're much less likely to have another conflict tomorrow. That when we get bonded at that level, then a lot of it tends to melt away. It may take some time, a lot of talking, and connecting at the heart level but then all of the negativity starts to be released, to melt away.

So in addition to getting connected though, heart to heart, one of the things that I think is really an evolutionary step is to apply intuition to conflict resolution. The Institute of HeartMath has done a lot of research on this and this is why we use their methodology for achieving heart-brain coherence because when our hearts and our brains are in alignment with each other, that is when we are most intuitive and that our intuition can raise up our perspective so that we get out of the victim perpetrator roles and see a higher way, see a third way that's beyond just you and me.

So I think there's so much to be learned about how we can engage large groups of people in using their intuition, their heart intelligence, their wisdom to resolve conflicts and I'm excited about this whole field and want to see a lot more **[0:45:00]** research about this. But in our BePeace courses, we see it everyday where we apply not only this universal need approach. We apply intuition and it works.

Philip: Beautiful. Beautiful. Thank you, Rita Marie and Amr. We have a live call here from Maine. Tobin?

Participant: Yeah, right here. Just wanted to ask if one of you would be willing to share a personal conflict that you resolved, what it was before and then after the experience of what you did when you resolved it.

Philip: Amr or Rita ...

Amr: Very good. OK. Well, there are many of them because like Rita Marie said, that we learn the process of peace but it doesn't mean that conflicts will ever end. So we need to – and let me – I would be happy to think of an example while Rita Marie also is thinking of one, unless you have one ready, Rita Marie.

Rita Marie: I have one. Yes, I do. There is a woman that I worked with in Costa Rica. I had hired her to work for us after she had been a volunteer for some time and then right after I hired her, it seemed that she was unhappy and was not being cooperative and was blaming me. And I felt judged and I just was so confused because this woman had been a friend and a volunteer. It was like night and day after I hired her.

So anyway, because I hired her into the Academy for Peace, we used BePeace to work this conflict through and as it turned out, this particular woman had a big core need for autonomy because her father had been very militaristic in her family, that she never felt like she had her own choices, that she was controlled all the time by her father.

So in discovering that she had a big need for autonomy and actually had not successfully worked for any boss, then when she shared that and when I connected with her need for autonomy, what we decided together to do was for her to return to being a volunteer where she felt like she had complete autonomy, that every single thing that she said yes to that she could also say no to, which was essentially true also as an employee. It didn't really have to do with how I was being as her boss. It had to do with her past.

So as a result, this person is one of my dearest friends today and one of our very best professional level volunteers.

Philip: Beautiful.

Amr: I have one now I can share. Actually I remember now about a few months ago. There was like an ongoing tension happening between myself and a colleague at work and it was just getting more and more complicated and at the same time, we were all heading towards an important – like a council meeting, the university council coming together to – for the annual meeting and I remember that that colleague was going to be under some fire in that meeting.

And I remember this was the morning of that meeting. I was thinking that – I knew that I would anyway just stand by that person in the meeting but I kind of thought for a second that – how he would be feeling that morning heading to that meeting and knowing that we have this tension and I know that I am an important person for that whole meeting. And I have to say that we're talking about intuition. I just intuitively went to his office which was very unexpected and just said to him, "I wish you good luck today and I want you to know that you can count on me."

And I cannot tell you how this transformed everything in the way we dealt with the meeting and the positive outcome and the positive connection that happened between the two of us and other people among our staff because of making that gesture that put the university above everybody else and I felt like I was able – and just an intuitive spontaneous action to overcome a lot of the tension. I made it clear to the colleague that that didn't mean that everything is resolved. We still have issues to discuss and to deal with but for now, we need to stand together.

And that was just really amazing in how it set the right tone. Sometimes setting up the right atmosphere for people to work together is really the key to put **[0:50:00]** them with the right attitude to address conflict and specific issues in a conflict that otherwise would be very difficult to deal with.

So setting up that nice frame of mind and that doesn't come from scientific methods. It comes from again intuition and recognizing what relationships are about, putting a common goal above what you want and what somebody else wants and then within that, start to work on your differences.

Philip: Beautiful, beautiful. Thank you, Amr. It's always a challenge to walk the talk and I appreciate both of you taking on that question. We got a ...

Amr: Yeah. May I add something else there, Philip? I really like that question. I appreciate the person from Maine. Tobin, I think his name was. I would say that we share this everyday. I would say that there is not a day that passes where I am receiving emails or dealing with situations especially in my workplace that can make you so upset, so angry, so hurt and the first reaction usually or instinct is to react in a way that is either attacking the other or retaliating or teaching the lessons. We think that those are the ways to deal with conflict but the restraint that you have to exercise on yourself everyday to make sure that your response to someone and especially at the time of conflict is not going to be about your anger or your frustration but it is more about your specific need and issues in a situation and how to write or respond in a way that doesn't include any form of insult or attack on the other.

For me, I mean to use the Islamic terminology, this is the real jihad. This is the real struggle with yourself to try everyday, moment in and moment out, not to

let your anger take over you, not to let your frustration take over you and instead just stay focused and to stay calm and patient. For me, this is just an ongoing thing that I deal with every single moment, every single day.

Again, do I succeed every time? Absolutely not. But I know now that there is no better course of action than to stay the course that I described.

Philip: Beautiful. Beautiful. Thank you, Amr. Well, we have just a few minutes here so I would like to do two things. One is we have someone from Massachusetts, someone from the Netherlands and another person asking more about the BePeace and the HeartMath work that you're doing. Is there a website? I would like to learn how to bring this into my community. How can I take the BePeace training and then volunteer my life to your foundation? Ruth, that's pretty ...

Amr: Wow.

[Crosstalk]

Philip: ... Rita Marie and then Amr, I will ask you about UPEACE. Rita Marie?

Rita Marie: Yes. Well, you can go to our website which is RasurInternational.org and there you will find upcoming courses. Actually we just lined up a lot of new courses in the last week and they're not all posted yet. So if you go today, be sure to return in a few days and there will be more posted. So you can go to the website and sign up for a course and also make a donation. One of the things that we're always working on is funding peace. There seems to be a gap between people wanting peace and being willing to fund it.

So you can go and make a donation and we would love to get involved with you in taking a course and also on our training track. We train BePeace teachers and they start that process by taking their first course and then they facilitate a small group in the course and then they take a teacher certification. So we now have 46 BePeace teachers certified in the United States. So those are some ways to get involved.

Philip: Than you, Rita Marie. And Amr, my friend, tell us how people learn more about the University for Peace.

Amr: OK. Well of course the best way is via our website which is www.UPEACE.org and of course one way of also getting to know about UPEACE is talk to someone who has been to UPEACE. I think our graduates are the best ambassadors and they can tell you about the amazing experience that they have at UPEACE. But definitely if you don't know someone who has been to UPEACE, please visit our website and there is a lot of information about how to apply for our different programs. Our programs are not only about receiving a master's degree. You can come for a semester of a study or just one course. We have an online master's

[0:55:00] degree as well. So we have many products related to peace and conflict resolution designed to match the needs of different audiences, from professionals to recent graduates who are seeking a graduate degree and everyone else. So, please visit our website. Again www.UPEACE.org.

Philip: Wonderful. Thank you. And let's not forget the beautiful Costa Rica. So if you're looking for ...

Amr: Yeah.

Philip: ... **[Indiscernible]** there you go. And I understand there's a BePeace program happening in January in Costa Rica. So get the best of both worlds. Well my friends, it's time to wrap up. So Rita Marie, would you like to leave us with a brief comment and then Amr, yourself?

Rita Marie: Sure. It seems to me that the thing that we need most in our world today is hope and what is hopeful to me is knowing how to practice peace but also joining in partnership with organizations like the University for Peace and like The Shift Network. That we're all joined in this work together and that although our work may not always be visible to the world, we don't always make the headline news, that there's this tremendous effort going on underground, you could say. That it's a movement that is sweeping our world and there are so many reasons to hope. So that would be my desire for our listeners today is to feel hope in their hearts.

Philip: Beautiful. Thank you, Rita Marie. Thank you. Amr?

Amr: Yeah, and I will just second Rita Marie in what she said and I would also like to add that the work that you are doing at The Shift Network and your work for that has really taken the work that we are doing to the next level. When you are using the new media, the new forms of communication, especially that are relevant to the young people, and making sure that our word is spreading not only to those who come for a course at UPEACE or to BePeace but you are spreading it to millions and millions of people and this is precisely what we need.

So we want to work together. We want to see how to even work on developing more modalities, building on your efficient use of technology and networking and the substance of what we have been developing for years.

Philip: Beautiful. Beautiful, Amr. Well, my friends, Amr and Rita Marie, thank you for being with us today. Thank you for your lifetime commitment. Thank you for your own unique exploration of peace in this larger wave of peace that's emerging around the world. So thank you both.

Amr: Thank you, Philip.

Rita Marie: Thank you, Philip. Yes, thank you so much.

Philip: And for people listening around the world, again, thank you for being with us, with the Summer of Peace and we continue tomorrow our journey with people associated with the Rotary Club International and Rotary has made its theme for the year as “Peace through Service” and so we will be visiting with David Newman and Noel DePape from Winnipeg, Canada and they’re looking at the grassroots peace building there.

So we look forward for you joining us tomorrow and so wherever you are in the world, whether it’s morning, afternoon, evening or night, please have a restful piece of your time. Thank you very much. Bye-bye.

Rita Marie: Bye-bye. **[0:58:46]**