

# WOMEN'S WEAPONS OF PEACE

BONNIE BALLIF-SPANVILL

Bonnie Ballif-Spanvill, then a professor emerita of psychology at Brigham Young University, presented this essay at “Blessed Are the Peacemakers’: Peace Is Possible,” the International Society’s twenty-sixth annual conference, April 2015, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

First, I want to acknowledge the contributions of my colleagues and research assistants who have contributed to this work from Fordham University Graduate School at Lincoln Center, New York City; the former Women’s Research Institute, Brigham Young University; the Women’s Research Institute of Utah, Salt Lake City; and the PEACEABILITIES board. Findings from this research have identified five major weapons women are using to increase peace throughout the world.

## WOMEN ARE WRITING ABOUT PEACE

*The first weapon of peace women are using is to write about peace. Their writings are providing vivid definitions of what peace is and what it would be like to live in a peaceful place—understandings that are essential to strategically accomplishing peace.*

Through women's writings, ideas of peace are spreading and giving hope to people everywhere who are tired of conflict and war and longing for the possibility of peace. Their writings are critical because it is impossible to increase peace if you do not know what peace is or believe that peace is possible. Although many definitions of peace exist, most have not included women's views, which are necessary in order to paint a robust definition that both women and men can embrace.

In one study done at the Stone Center at Wellesley College, wives and husbands were asked what would bring peace into their homes at the end of the day. Women generally said they would like to sit down and talk to their husbands about all the things they had been worrying about. Men were more likely to say they would like to sit down in front of the TV with control of the remote. Perhaps a plan that included a time to talk and a time to unwind, incorporating both female and male views, would most likely be successful in bringing harmony. Clearly, women's perspectives on peace are needed to complement men's definitions of peace in order to fully understand what peace is for all people.

Our first research question was "What are women writing about peace, and how are they defining it?" We wanted to include what women from all over the world were saying about peace. We wanted contemporary women living in the world as it is to tell us what they think about peace. We wanted to know what the most articulate women we could find were saying, women who would have the skills necessary to express the essence of peace. And we wanted women who were acknowledged in their own countries as having expressed thoughts that were important to their people. Only women poets fit all of these criteria.

My colleagues Marilyn Arnold and Kristen Tracy and I began reading hundreds of women's poems. The poems were about victims of war and oppression, bewildered and brutalized children, bereft wives and mothers, raped and mutilated women, and tormented prisoners and soldiers. But these poets also talked about peace. They declared that peace is a tangible power, a presence, something more than the absence of conflict. Some of them offered only a glimpse of hopefulness; some showed snatches of their dream of a peaceful society. Others offered a full-blown vision of peace and harmony among people, of a world in which forgiveness has replaced blame,

generosity has replaced greed, and healing has replaced pain. I would like to read two of these poems and invite you to not only listen to the words these poets use to describe the essence of peace but to also picture the scenes they paint that tell us how it would feel to live in a peaceful place. The first poem, “Springwater, Part 105,” comes from the Chinese poet Bing Xin:

Creator,  
 If in eternal life  
 Only one wish is granted,  
 I will plead in all sincerity:  
 Let me be in my mother's arms,  
 Let Mother be in a small boat,  
 Let the small boat be on a moonlit sea.

The second poem, “Rocking,” is by Chilean poet Gabriela Mistral:

The sea rocks her thousands of waves  
 The sea is divine.  
 Hearing the loving sea  
 I rock my son.  
 The wind wandering by night  
 Rocks the wheat.  
 Hearing the loving wind  
 I rock my son.  
 God, the Father, soundlessly rocks  
 His thousands of worlds.  
 Feeling His hand in the shadow  
 I rock my son.

These poems portray nature calmly surrounding gentle human relationships. A moonlit sea, wind rocking wheat, the Father rocking his thousands of worlds, a daughter in the arms of her mother, and a mother holding her son and feeling the presence of her God nearby. We published these poems in *A Chorus for Peace: A Global Anthology of Poetry by Women*.<sup>1</sup> Together, the collection constitutes a women's chorus of gifted, global voices blending in a heartbreaking plea for peace and telling us that it is our task as women to give birth to peace out of the ashes of war and violence.

## WOMEN ARE ORGANIZING FOR PEACE

*Armed with vivid definitions of peace, we next asked, “What are women doing to accomplish the peace they desire?” Here we found the second weapon that women are using to promote peace. Women are organizing. They are joining together with unique solidarity, specifically to bring about peace.*

Regardless of whether they are women of poverty or plenty; whether they are African, Chinese, or Chilean; whether they are well educated or barely literate; or whether they are old or young, women are demonstrating great unity as they work for a more peaceful place to raise their children.

The following is an example of how these organizations are being formed. It is the story of a Nigerian pastor, Esther Ibanga. Observe excerpts from her own words as she describes how she found a way to bring together an unlikely organization:

My life as a Christian preacher was rarely easy, but I enjoyed a good deal of comfort. . . .

That all changed when more than 500 Christians were massacred in a village near my house, in an explosion of violence involving our Muslim neighbors.

Armed with machetes, Islamic militants showed no mercy as they slaughtered women and children, including an infant only four days old.

I gathered with friends and we wept for days. We were used to periodic violence between Christians and Muslims, sometimes perpetrated by angry mobs. . . . But this time, violence had invaded women’s bedrooms, where they were roused from sleep and killed.

The atrocities shook us to the core. Witnessing our grief, my husband challenged us, “Is that all you women are going to do? Cry?” His challenge inspired me to lead a march to protest the violence—100,000 women in the streets, a real show of strength. We let our leaders know that we would no longer remain silent.

Then we learned that this massacre was a response to an attack by Christians against Muslims in another village. And after that brutal assault, Muslim women had also organized and poured into the streets to demonstrate. The men in power ignored both marches. And the killings continued.

I decided that the only hope was to forge an alliance between Christian and Muslim women. . . . This was no easy task. . . .

After lengthy prayers and hard work within my soul, I eventually was able to look Muslims in the eye, and truly forgive and love them. . . . I knew that peace had to begin with me, from within.

I reached out to my counterpart, Khadija Hawaja, who had led the Muslim women's march. Our first meetings were secret, and could not be held in either my community or hers because we would have risked attack. But we persevered and co-founded our nation's first organization of Muslim and Christian women, called Women Without Walls Initiative.

Together we engaged in a wide range of activities from caring for orphans to encouraging the voices of mothers as a force for moderation in families. . . .

We work in poor, volatile neighborhoods that are breeding grounds for foot soldiers and other young people prone to violence. We say to them: "Think of us as your mothers." No one else takes the time to engage with them, so they are receptive and open to changing their ways. That is how the cycle of violence is disrupted—one soul at a time. . . .

Violence between Muslims and Christians still rocks our nation. . . . But let there be no doubt. Both faiths embrace the principle of peace, as do all of the world's religions.<sup>2</sup>

Pastor Ibanga is recipient of the 2015 Niwano Peace Prize in recognition of her work promoting peaceful coexistence.

Inspired by such women, we began identifying other women's organizations for peace, organizations from all over the world. We wanted to find out who they were and what they were doing to increase peace. For each of the organizations, we sought information regarding how and when they were started, their mission statements and ideologies, and their membership, activities, and budgets. We included organizations that represented independent grassroots movements as well as organizations that were working for peace but that were part of a larger umbrella organization whose primary objective was not necessarily peace related.

After tracking down every lead, we obtained information from several hundred organizations. The information we obtained was spotty, with less than fifty women providing answers to all of the requested questions. Many responded simply with a request for money. Here is a summary of some of our findings about these women's organizations for peace: There were twenty-six ideologies represented by these organizations, giving rise to many approaches to working for peace. The majority of their goals were focused on political participation, information exchange, peaceful coexistence, and human rights. Other goals addressed a wide array of factors involved in establishing peace, including dealing with poverty, development, discrimination, domestic violence, education, economic issues, and more. The fact that these organizations are engaged in an array of approaches demonstrates women's awareness of the complexities of the issues that need attention to bring about peace and highlights the unique problems facing local communities as well as the areas of public life that allow access to women.

The next step was to determine what these women's peace organizations actually do. Once again, we found that they are engaged in a number of activities. Over half of the activities consist of collaborating and networking, publishing information, and conducting a range of education programs that cover skill training, participating in political systems, changing policy, lobbying, and the like.

Funding for the more established organizations ranged from \$100,000 to \$400,000, with financial resources coming from member dues and donations. The monies were used for activities and not management. It should also be noted that money absolutely determines the survival of these organizations, and lack of money prevents many from having much influence on the national or global level. The most frequently reported membership in these organizations was less than twenty-five thousand, with 25 percent having fewer than five hundred members. We also found evidence of many grassroots organizations that we could not contact directly, and we have obtained only secondhand fragmentary information about them. Hard evidence of the effectiveness of the activities of these organizations was impossible to obtain. At best, a few evaluative self-reports were available that indicated whether an activity was well attended or completed as planned. However, we did find that those organizations that used the

media and involved men in their cause were more likely to believe they were effective.<sup>3</sup>

Recently, the members of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom issued a 2015 manifesto on the centenary of their foundation. They paid tribute to the farsighted women who brought their movement into being amid the carnage of the First World War. They also renewed their commitment to eradicating war by addressing its root causes. Some of these root causes have been identified as the conditions in which women live.<sup>4</sup>

### WOMEN ARE IDENTIFYING SPECIFIC STEPS THAT IF TAKEN WOULD INCREASE PEACE

*The third weapon of peace women are using is identifying specific steps that, if taken, would improve the conditions in which they live and would increase peace. Women are encouraging efforts to implement these specific conditions from the top down in order to increase state security and peace.*

The creation of the WomanStats database allowed us to study the specific conditions in which women live and the relationship between those conditions and peaceful states. The database is currently the most comprehensive database on women available anywhere.<sup>5</sup> In our book *Sex and World Peace*, which I coauthored with Valerie Hudson, Mary Caprioli, and Chad Emmett, we demonstrate that societies with greater violence against women have greater incidence of conflict and war.<sup>6</sup> Thus, efforts to establish greater peace and security throughout the world would be more effective if governments worked on eliminating the violence that occurs against women.

Because we identified and had data on the exact variables that represent the conditions women experience, we used those variables to predict whether a state would be peaceful or not. Having a list of laws and practices is invaluable in working on improving the conditions of women. It is not enough to say we must make conditions for women better; we know what the specific laws and practices are that need to be changed. With knowledge of the steps that could be instrumental in improving chances for peace, women are encouraging states and large organizations who possess resources and capabilities that are simply not available to grassroots women's peace organizations to engage in top-down efforts, making progress faster and

far reaching. The specific conditions that need addressing are many. They include making national family law equitable, putting women's priorities on the state's list of priorities, enacting pro-women legislation, including women in decision making, and keeping caregiving economically rational.

The following examples illustrate the incredible influence of strategies when they come from the top down: Recognizing that conditions for women, including marriage laws, needed to be revised, King Mohammed VI of Morocco gave a historic speech in 1999 in which he asked how society can progress "while women, who represent half the nation, see their rights violated and suffer as a result of injustice, violence and marginalization."<sup>7</sup> During the next few years, he shepherded an overhaul of family law in Morocco, giving women extraordinary rights compared to their sisters in other Islamic societies. Among these specific reforms were those related to raising the legal age of marriage and virtually doing away with polygamy.

Another example of specific conditions in women's lives that have been addressed with effective top-down strategies comes from the work of Albert Bandura. He has applied his social learning theory around the world to encourage literacy and to raise the status of women in societies where they are marginalized. He does this through televised mini-dramas. These dramatic productions are not fanciful stories; they portray people's everyday lives and help them see a better future. These productions also provide people with strategies and incentives that enable them to take steps forward.<sup>8</sup> In Mexico, nearly one million people enrolled in a study program to learn to read after watching a drama that promoted national literacy. Another example comes from a Mexican television executive, Miguel Sabido, who created a drama centered on the lives of adults enrolled in a literacy class. The show drew large audiences, and new enrollments in adult literacy programs were nine times greater that year. After one of the shows mentioned that the national distribution center provided free literacy booklets, twenty-five thousand people showed up the next day to get their copies.<sup>9</sup> A major advantage of modeling through media is that it can reach vast populations simultaneously in widely dispersed areas. In a radio serial drama in India, with forty-five million listening, a female model resists restrictive cultural norms and pursues an education. This drama inspired teenage listeners to start a school of their own, which they held around a village water well.



Armed with knowledge of the specific conditions that need to be addressed, states and organizations and women and men can develop top-down strategies that have the potential to greatly improve conditions for women and hence contribute to greater peace.

## WOMEN ARE HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE REDUCE VIOLENCE

*The fourth women's weapon of peace is teaching. Women are using education to help young people prevent and reduce violence.*

While only 12 percent of the women's organizations for peace are involved in education, there are many educational programs designed to reduce violence throughout the world involving substantial numbers of women. Because so many women are involved, we turn now to a brief analysis of worldwide antiviolence education programs.

Many women believe the most critical education for the twenty-first century is for people to learn how to get along with each other. This is particularly important for women because they are disproportionately victims of much of the violence. Twenty years after the landmark Beijing conference on gender equality, a new UN report states that violence against women around the world persists at alarmingly high levels in many forms.<sup>10</sup> It is not surprising that women have gotten involved in developing educational programs to reduce violence. The experience of one woman illustrates how and why many women have taken on this challenge. Bushra Qadim Hyder is a woman who had a little school in the city of Peshawar, Pakistan, which borders Afghanistan and is one of the most dangerous and unstable regions in the world. Last year, militants attacked the Army Public School, killing 150 children. Close to fifty thousand civilians and security personnel died as a result of roadside bombs and drone attacks. Bushra talks about watching as the girls in her school tore the limbs off their dolls, acting out the mayhem they saw around them. Her youngest students experienced heartbreaking feelings they could not articulate and expressed them in the pictures they would draw of guns, ambulances, and dead bodies. Bushra said she felt like her students felt and that she herself was, and is, often afraid. She asked herself how she could destroy fear.

With that desire, she decided to teach two additional topics in her little school: diversity and tolerance. She also selected two students from each class to be “peace angels” to help resolve small conflicts as they arose between the children. With that beginning, her curriculum has evolved. Today she is hard at work advocating for the inclusion of peace education in the provincial school curriculums throughout Pakistan, but her educational program was begun, as many others have, by a woman concerned about the children she was teaching.<sup>11</sup>

In our research, we gathered information on hundreds of educational programs both within the United States and throughout the world. We limited our search to programs designed for teenagers and children. We organized them by their target populations, theoretical base, program goals, methods they used, and any evidence of the effectiveness of their efforts. We were particularly interested in programs that had a track record indicating they were making a difference, but of these, there were very few. Analyses of these programs found that they fell into three basic types of programs: the largest number were violence-prevention programs, followed by many conflict-resolution programs, and finally a few peace programs.<sup>12</sup>

The objectives of each of these types of programs differ, and they are effective in different ways. Violence-prevention programs are designed to help children tolerate one another without aggression. These programs focus on repressing violent and antisocial behaviors. Usually they use some form of an external constraint, punishment, or the intimidation of authorities to suppress violent behavior. When these external threats are removed, however, violent behavior usually returns. While suppressing violence is only a small step toward creating peaceful relationships, it can be a useful first step in preventing physical harm when children are having difficulty controlling their aggression, thus buying a little time for relationship skills to be taught.<sup>13</sup>

The following programs illustrate these approaches. Hand in Hand: Center for Jewish-Arab Education in Israel is one example of a violence-prevention program. Both Jews and Arabs attend these schools in Israel and are taught both in Hebrew and Arabic. The schools are run by Jewish and Arabic co-principals, and the students are taught by Jewish and Arabic teachers in each classroom. The presence of dual authority figures suppresses students’ tendencies to lash out against each other, making it

clear that living and working together without fighting is possible in a multicultural environment.

Conflict-resolution programs go a step beyond violence-prevention programs by actually teaching how to keep conflicts from escalating into violence. In these programs, students are trained on what to say and do when they find themselves in a conflict. Essentially, conflict-resolution programs help the young defuse conflicts once they have occurred through the use of memorized scripts and preprogrammed patterns of behavior. If the conflicts evolve in ways that deviate from the scripts that have been learned, however, it is difficult for youth to continue to defuse the conflict. The Seeds of Peace program was designed to help youth in the Middle East resolve conflicts by increasing their communication skills to work through conflicts. It sponsors camps and workshops where youth can learn how to respond in a variety of ways that are usually capable of defusing conflicts.<sup>14</sup>

In both violence-prevention and conflict-resolution programs, the focus is on conflict itself—first preventing conflict and then reducing it. The assumption behind both of these types of programs is that the absence of antisocial behavior guarantees that prosocial behavior will just appear. That is not so. Such programs do not develop the specific thinking patterns that will enable children to interact peacefully. Peace is much more than the absence of violence. Peaceful strategies, values, and feelings must be developed; they do not just emerge. A few peace-education programs are trying to encourage peace, but in general their objectives are broadly defined and often vague.

One example of a peace-education program is sponsored by the PeaceJam Foundation. It makes it possible for youth to study with Nobel Peace laureates, so they can become familiar with world leaders' views on how to create peace. The youth are then required to apply what they have learned in local community service-learning activities. More than five hundred thousand youth have participated in this program since 1996, and they have completed over three hundred thousand service projects.<sup>15</sup> Creating an atmosphere in which youth can understand and experience peace is an essential element of peace education; youth need good examples of nonviolent living to counter the prevalence of violent images all around them. Without awareness of the benefits peace brings and the belief that peace can be achieved, the young will not have the necessary motivation to seek after and practice

living peacefully with others. Although this program provides good models that can be imitated, it cannot guarantee that simply watching these models will be sufficient to ensure that their peaceful ways will be passed on, nor does it guarantee that the models will display the specific skills individuals need to build peaceful relationships. Desperately needed are programs that focus directly on developing the specific abilities in children that will help them get along with others, such as the ability to forgive, to be kind, to be just, and to treat others with respect and equity. So we created one.

### WOMEN ARE EMPOWERING CHILDREN WITH ABILITIES TO BE PEACEFUL

*This is the fifth weapon of peace being used by women. Women are empowering children by helping them develop internal abilities they need to live peacefully with each other. To do this, they are using the PEACEABILITIES program.*

After gleaning insights from all of the programs, we studied and searched through hundreds of books for stories and art that would teach children the principles that would enable them to govern themselves. We created the PEACEABILITIES program.<sup>16</sup> This program focuses on developing the internal strengths and understandings that empower children to prevent their own behavior from becoming violent, to resolve conflicts, and to create peaceful relationships. It is based on the belief that violence begins in individual minds long before weapons are fired or abuse is inflicted. Therefore, preventing violence and creating peace must also take place in individual minds. We believe that skills can be developed to repel aggressive thoughts and choose peaceful alternatives and to overcome ideas that fuel inequality and self-interest in favor of desires to be kind, forgive, and respect selves and others. We collected compelling stories and activities, including children's books, well-known art depicting peace, movie clips, and original music. We have already placed a large number of these materials on our website for all to use freely. We encourage everyone to use PEACEABILITIES for families, schools, neighborhoods, churches, villages, etc. It is also our hope that women all over the world will gather activities and stories of their own, perhaps using PEACEABILITIES as a model of those skills that are critical to establish peace. Once again, children will not mature into peacefulness if they do not have the opportunity

to cultivate kindness, respect, justice, and compassion. They will not become peaceful on their own, nor can they be forced to do so. PEACEABILITIES teaches children step-by-step how to care about each other.

Each of the eighteen chapters in PEACEABILITIES contains a number of activities and stories, with each chapter building upon the one before. The child progresses from controlling anger to learning to listen, getting the facts, trusting, caring, including others, winning with kindness, building friendships, loving, and finally, creating peace. Each of the activities and stories has been designed to precisely teach a specific skill. For example, by participating in the activity "Facts and Assumptions," children learn the precise skill required to not jump to assumptions about the actions of those around them. False conclusions can hurt feelings and increase contention and are avoided only by getting the facts. Here is one of the exercises to show the difference between facts and assumptions:

Samantha didn't meet Amy and Elise at the store. (Fact)

Amy and Elise think Samantha doesn't want to go shopping with them. (Assumption)

Samantha didn't get the message from Amy and Elise to meet at the store. (Fact)

Samantha thinks Amy and Elise left her out. (Assumption)

The children are then taught how to gather facts before making assumptions.

Because it is important for children to learn and benefit from wisdom that has accumulated over centuries of time, PEACEABILITIES includes compelling pieces of work from many ancient and modern sources, as well as material from different cultures. Here is an example of an Ethiopian story called "Lion's Whiskers":

Bizunesh, a woman of the African highlands, married a man of the lowlands. When she went to the house of her new husband she found that he had a son who was very sad because his mother had died of the fever. The woman and her new son were often alone together because her husband was a merchant and traveled with mule caravans to distant cities. Bizunesh would speak to her son

very kindly. “I have always wanted a small son. Now God has given me one. I love you very much.” But the boy would shout in a cross voice, “I do not love you. You are not my real mother. My mother is dead. I do not love you. I hate you.” When the woman cooked, her son would not eat. When she mended his robes, he would run through the thorn bushes and tear them. When she tried to kiss him, he would run away from her. Often she cried alone in her room.

One day Bizunesh went to the cave of a very famous wise man. She told the wise man about her new son who did not love her and asked for a magic love powder so that her son would love her. The wise man answered, “To make such a powder I must have the chin whiskers of an old and ferocious lion who walks in the black-rock desert beyond the river. Bring the whiskers to me.” The woman protested that the lion would kill her, but the wise man insisted that that was the only way.

Because she loved her son so much, she decided that she would try to get the whiskers and crossed the river to the black-rock desert and looked at the lion from afar. The lion was fierce and roared so loudly that she ran away. The next day she came from her house carrying food. She placed the food on a rock a mile away from the lion and ran. On the following day she brought food and left it only a half-mile from the lion, and the next day a quarter of a mile, and she stayed to watch the lion while he ate. Each day she continued to get a little closer, until finally Bizunesh left the food 100 yards away from the fierce lion, who saw her and growled in a friendly way. She stayed while the lion ate the food. And then one day she went right up to the lion and fed him. She watched the lion’s great jaw fly open and heard his teeth tearing through the meat. She was terrified, but she shut her eyes and snatched whiskers from the lion’s chin. She ran as fast as she could to the wise man’s cave and asked for the love powder so that her son would love her.

“I will not make you any love powder,” the wise man said. “You learned how to approach the lion—slowly. Do the same with your son, and he will surely learn to love you.”<sup>17</sup>

We also use fine arts in PEACEABILITIES because there is power in accumulated cultural expressions and different mediums make peaceful

ideas more accessible to children with different styles of learning. One example of art we have included is the painting *Dance of Youth*, by Picasso. In this painting, colorful figures are holding hands and dancing in a circle with a dove of peace in the center. This painting needs no extensive preparation to present it or lengthy discussions for the children to “get” the message. It, like the other stories and activities in PEACEABILITIES, speaks for itself. Children just need to hear the stories or participate in the activities as many times as possible.

In our further research, we found evidence that participating in PEACEABILITIES helps children see themselves as more peaceful. Before participating in the program, children with violent backgrounds saw themselves as doing everything they could do to be peaceful, but they did not know what to do, and they felt inferior and vulnerable to violence. As a result of participating in PEACEABILITIES, aggressive children made significant gains in becoming less violent. PEACEABILITIES helped all children see themselves as more peaceful.

We devised several instruments to evaluate the effectiveness of PEACEABILITIES in developing peaceful behavior. These were not pencil-and-paper tests. We used many little situations to see what the children would actually do. For example, to see how a child would act in a conflict situation in which there were limited resources, we put three paper plates on a table in an empty room along with five cookies. The child was told that they could keep one plate and the other two plates were for other children who would be coming in soon. The child was then left alone to divide the cookies between the three children. Some children broke the cookies up in tiny pieces in a desperate effort to ensure that each child had the exact same amount. Others gave two to each of the absent children, and kept one. A few gave one to each of the absent children, and kept three. And one kept all of the cookies. The children's actions were then scored on the Structure of Violence and Peace Scale—a twelve-point continuum from altruistic, forgiving, and compassionate behavior to behavior that is violent and vengeful and that expends others for gain. The exciting results came not only from scores on our scales but from the spontaneous peaceful activities the children initiated themselves. In a second-grade class that had completed the PEACEABILITIES program, the children, on their

own initiative, used their recesses to form a club they called Think Kind Thoughts, Do Kind Deeds. Members of the club were called Troubleshooters, and the rules for the club required that the members must always be on duty and never allow other children to cry, be left alone, or fight.

Today, I have briefly outlined five weapons of peace women are currently using:

1. Women are writing about peace.
2. Women are organizing for peace.
3. Women are identifying specific steps that if taken would increase peace.
4. Women are helping young people reduce violence.
5. Women are empowering children with abilities to be peaceful.

Help women use these weapons and develop new weapons. Use these weapons yourselves. Success is greater when women and men work together. The establishment of peace cannot be left to negotiations, treaties, and wars alone. While important, they only suppress violence; they do not teach the principles that create peace. Only when children of all ages learn to be peaceful from within will we break intergenerational cycles of violence.

Women are in a unique position to teach children to be peaceful before they become socialized into the culture of violence that exists around them. It is my dream that women everywhere will begin to tell stories that teach the principles of peace to their children. Remember the success of microcredit loans when placed in the hands of women—entire families benefited from their work. Educating women also benefited families. It is time to engage women in empowering their children to create peace. Together, women could give the next generation abilities to value themselves and one another equally, to respect the rights of others, and to share their resources, in this way fulfilling the dream of Richard Martin, the little boy killed in the Boston bombings, when he wrote, “No more hurting people. Peace.”



I would like to tell you about an experience I had some years ago. I lived in the middle of New York City for many years, one block west of Tiffany's and one block east of Carnegie Hall. The city never slept in midtown Manhattan. Lights were always flashing, cabs honking, and people laughing. One morning my husband and I awoke to total silence—no honking horns, talking people, sirens, or dogs barking. We were stunned. Not a sound could be heard. We got up and looked out our window at a city buried in deep snow. We went out. There were no cars moving on the street to obey the ever-faithful traffic lights turning red, yellow, and green again, and again. The department stores and restaurants were closed, Wall Street was closed, and schools and universities were closed. There was not a soul anywhere in sight. Snow had brought this enormous city to its knees. As we walked along the benches in Central Park, soaking in the quiet, I caught one little snowflake on my finger and watched it quickly melt before my eyes. I wondered how such a vulnerable little snowflake could have such power over this magnificent city. Then I realized it was not just one snowflake that humbled New York, there were millions of snowflakes that together had taken over this city.

It is not just one story told to one child that will establish peace, nor one game, nor one song that will help children care for each other. But if we can get dozens of women to tell stories and do the activities that will develop peace abilities in their children, then hundreds, thousands, and some day millions of women to empower their children to be peaceful, we can bring down the use of violence. And as we do, momentum will build and peace will ripple through families, villages, and even countries.

## NOTES

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