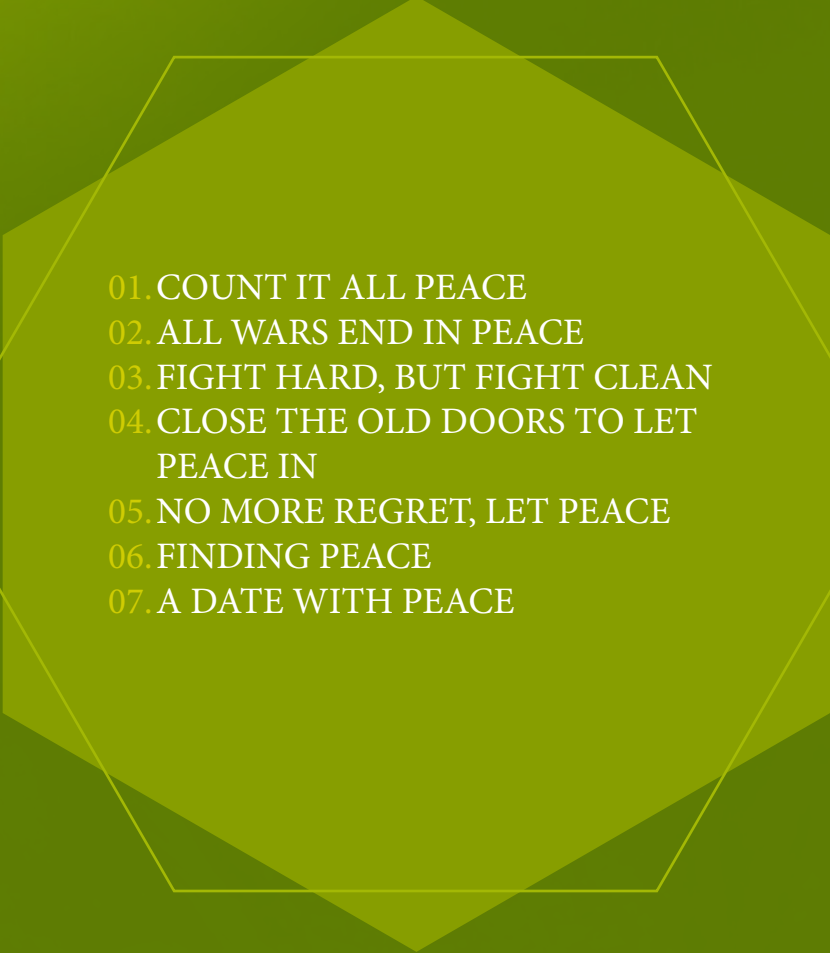


A close-up photograph of a butterfly with brown and gold patterned wings perched on a light purple flower. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green and yellow. The text "A DATE WITH Peace" is overlaid on the image.

A DATE WITH
Peace

THABISILE PHUMO

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Count it all Peace

“Peace be with you,” said the priest and “and also with you,” replied the congregation. For every Catholic, this statement is a blessing that connects everyone and is a takeaway between services. It was a significant aspect of my childhood at a point when words and actions had no correlation.

Today, I remember my late grandmother’s words: “Peace is the ultimate success.” In pursuit of that peace and the need to be successful, I reflect on my long and arduous journey towards peace; ‘work in progress’ as the experts call it.

It takes courage to put things down - something I don’t have in abundance. I am lucky to have people with enough courage to carry me through and keep it all together so that I can find peace in small and sometimes big things.

Peace is a lifestyle not a state of being. Embrace peace, befriend peace, encourage peace.

Love,
Thabi



A close-up photograph of a butterfly with brown wings featuring white spots and blue markings, feeding on a bright orange flower. A large, solid green hexagon is overlaid on the image, containing the text 'All wars end in Peace' in a white, elegant script font. The background is a soft-focus green.

*'All wars end in
Peace'*

'All wars end in Peace'

“All wars end in peace.” These are the words of my former boss that have stuck to me like glue. This was after we had exhausted ourselves with some struggle and she conceded that no matter how much we pushed and fought, we would need to appreciate that there would be a ceasefire brought about by victory or surrender. At some point the war will stop and there will be peace.

World War I and World War II ended with peace treaties, with all parties agreeing that peace was in everyone's interest. This confirms that unless you understand the devastation of war, you will never appreciate the gift of peace.

Recounting all the battles with people and things, it is a wonder how one brings it all together tied up with a ribbon of peace. How does one forgive and deal with monumental hurts or pain to arrive at peace? Why even arrive at peace when feuding is psychologically nurturing - strange but true. Sometimes we thrive in feuds because they fuel our will to win. In fact, for most of us, strife keeps us relevant and even supported. We sustain the 'wars' because we do not have the capability to live in calm. We cannot grasp a context where the whole puzzle is complete. We love scattered pieces, and we love picking and throwing our pain around.

Peace is something we all yearn for, but is not comfortable because it means giving in and coming down so that others or things can go up. It means us and our issues should go to the laundry or get washed away at the river bank of peace.

It is clear that much as we all want peace, the price of peace is too high and there is no crown at the stage of peace.

Therefore, there is a need to consider the incentive of peace. The energy and the reason that should get one to lay down their arms with hands raised and a white flag to declare a ceasefire. How does one declare a ceasefire and plead for peace with people and situations?

It is only when one gets the courage to count the casualties of one's war, by literally counting the bodies and the overwhelming stench of broken relationships; emotional trauma; psychological torment and the physical stress that one truly understands the value of peace. It is when the sight of that becomes unbearable that the offering of peace becomes appealing.

We all hate someone or something because of what they did and we have to show them that we are not a walk over. That we can fight or defend ourselves. To find peace is to surrender your right to be right. It is to accept that you temporarily need to lose to let off the steam for peace to arise. So what if you are a push over? Who is keeping score?

Peace is not exciting, it is the state of nothingness. While it is appealing, existing in peace is mundane. It is as exciting as taking out food from between one's teeth. It is such an anti-climax because it introduces a normalcy that is out of the spotlight. It makes everyone and everything lighter.

Peace is peace. Most times it is broken and in a wheel chair, but it is still peace. You know the situations; that aunt that causes upheaval at every family gathering, the relatives that destroyed your family, the man that showed your love has flames or that criminal that took your soul with them. All situations don't deserve peace but need you to find peace so you can survive, heal and stop the generational bleeding. Your sanity deserves peace and your next generation is owed peace that was stolen from the one before you and now needs you to release it from the slavery of feuds.

With all wars ending in peace, who and what are you prepared to take to the river bank of peace so you can experience the joy of the emptiness and the invisibility of a peaceful existence? No matter how hard and how long; your wars will end in peace.

White flag. Peace to all your people!



*Fight hard, but fight
clean*

Fight hard, but fight clean

Peaceful people love to fight. They understand that to settle things you have to fight about things. At first glance, it is a bit difficult to imagine how peaceful people fight and why they must fight.

Well, peace is like a seed that you find in the centre of the fruit. You have to peel and eat the fruit before you get to the seed in the centre. With that then we can agree that peace is the outcome of fighting. This means we have to reframe our relationship with fighting. There is absolutely nothing wrong with fighting. It is how you fight and why you fight that is the difference.

So why fight? We fight to get to the crux of issues, to let the poison out and to rebase relationships. We fight to establish boundaries and to destroy the heap of sand that continues to build and could potentially explode. We fight to realign people and things and at a basic level, teach people how to treat us and those we love better.

We fight hard but clean. A clean fight has rules. It is about dealing with issues and not destroying people. It is about fighting fair. Like boxing we have fighting categories; flyweight, bantamweight and heavyweight. So we have to fight people and issues our own size. We also have to fight according to our stamina level because that is the only way to have a good fight. If we fight below our weight it is nothing but bullying and if we fight above our weight, we are wasting energy and time.

While fighting, we must expect blood, hurt and pain. This is why we must make sure that we put the paramedics on standby and handkerchiefs at hand to wipe away the tears we cause. At the end of our fights, we must end up with emotional and spiritual hugs because fighting is about rebuilding relationships by removing the obstacles caused by issues and destructive people.

We fight to clear the path. Some people we fight with are the grass we need to remove and repurpose or the rocks we need to remove and place elsewhere where they are needed.

Someone said, “Just because your name is David does not mean you are destined to defeat the ‘Goliaths’ of your life. You might not have the right stone - you may just be David’s name sake.”

That said, don’t be afraid to fight. Fight fair, fight hard but fight clean.

A butterfly with vibrant orange wings and black markings is perched on a cluster of small purple flowers. The background is a soft-focus green. A large, solid green hexagon is overlaid on the image, containing the text in a white script font.

*Close the old doors
to let Peace in*

Close the old doors to let Peace in

Peace requires space, lots of space. Spiritual and psychological space so it can make its grand entrance. It requires a deliberate effort to shut all the doors of strife so that peace can settle in peace.

It asks of one to go through the old doors; assessing why they remain open and whether keeping them open creates a leak in the bucket of peace.

These doors offer safe passage and that is why we keep them open. We reckon that maybe there is something important behind them or perhaps our future is there. Once we decide on peace, we need to close old doors so we don't catch the draft. In fact, we have no business trying to keep the doors open or to reopen closed doors. Peace will deliver what one deserves because in all honesty those who expect you, will open new doors for you even before you knock. Besides, nothing good can ever come out of reopening old doors. Once you go back, you will get stuck at that door until you learn your lesson. If you want peace, learn to shut doors behind you.

One can only imagine every reason why peace cannot be given a chance; it is illogical and it lets people off the hook for the monumental and sometimes generational damage caused. Compare those people and those things as doors that you have to shut down to let peace in. Find the master key and melt it so you never get tempted to go back. With nails and a hammer, take an emotional and spiritual journey to make sure 'permanently closed' signs are hammered across all your old doors.



*No more regret..let
peace*

No more regret...let peace

The tape sealed the last box. As I sat on top of one of the many boxes that had been painstakingly but meticulously packed, I wondered what took so long. With a heavy sigh, I wrote in big and bold letters, 'REGRET' over the last box. While waiting for the Regret removal truck to arrive, I couldn't believe my relief.

This is the final emancipation from all the strife and the stress of feuding with everyone and everything. Lost time and lost relationships; the pain of regret finally being packed away.

Everyone, like at *Oprah's* show, has to look under their seat to find their forgiveness and peace gift. This is a point where the reason or content of the wars of the past does not matter. Everything has to be washed off and packed away because the war is over.

All of this is important because regret is like a pacifier. It is comforting and sits somewhere between penance, self pity and revenge in our consciousness. It somehow feels good to have regrets; makes one feel better as it justifies all the things that didn't work out in life and explains the baggage.

Regret is like a best friend. It is good company but an enemy of peace. Regret justifies why we should not have peace. It incentivises trauma paralysis because to its credit, peace does not make sense. Letting go is painful and confusing. It takes courage and a whole lot of pain to roll up one's sleeve for a shot of the regret vaccine; immunising one from a life wasted in regret and getting one's mind, heart and body to live in peace.

The courage to permanently seal the box of regret is the key to peace. It deals with past and potential regrets and gives one the opportunity to post the regret box to an unknown address with a "do not open or do not return back to sender."

There is nothing you could have done differently and there is nothing you can do to change anything or anyone that you have experienced. Acknowledge and resist the temptation to create nests over everyone and everything because those become the watch posts of war and strife. Let it go and let them go with a big NO REGRETS chain around your neck.

A close-up photograph of a butterfly with brown and yellow wings, perched on a green leaf. A large, solid green hexagon is overlaid on the image, containing the text "Finding Peace" in a white, cursive font. The background is a soft-focus green.

Finding Peace

Finding Peace

Peace is elusive. The dictionary defines peace as : “freedom from disturbance” or “state or period in which there is no war or war has ended” (Oxford Dictionary). The Bible in Philippians 4:7, discusses a peace that surpasses all understanding. But where does peace live? In our hearts? Our minds? Our soul? In heaven? On earth?

It is the destination that makes it elusive. We seek it but struggle to find it. We cannot just go to a place and find it stationed or packaged and take it home. Peace doesn't have a storage facility or a defined source. The fact is peace is not external, it is self made. We all have to build our own peace. Yes...crazy right?

Peace is 100% home made, self made and uniquely designed by you for you. No one can give you peace or be your peace. You create it for yourself in a shape or size that fits you.

Some of us find peace in small things and that is our limit, while others find peace in big things. Like the size of the house, you decide whether to live in a shack or a mansion of peace. The currency of peace is the same and we are all billionaires in the bank of peace. Some of us keep the ‘money’ that we can use to build our peace tied up in investments, waiting for rainy days. Others are living luxuriously in peace and spending it extravagantly across all aspects of their lives.

How then should we spend to build peace? Well, for one understand that your mouth is the biggest opponent of peace and instigator of war. Someone told me recently after witnessing an argument and what they term, the ‘violent chirping of an angry bird’, that all the person should have responded was ‘NOTED’. When people try to steal your peace by deliberately disrespecting you and provoking you to act against your values, NOTE it and at worst ask; “What would you like me to say?” and then walk away. They talk about the calm before the storm; keeping quiet means you never escalate to the storm, your mouth keeps you at the calm.

Some of us are experts at arguing, fighting and telling people off. Peace doesn't like noise, it loves silence.

For peace sake, note it...NOTED?



A date with peace

A date with peace

All dressed up to meet up Peace, do you wear white, walk tall or talk softly?

I don't know, but what I do know is that peace is not neat. It doesn't come in the form of a white dove - it only becomes a white dove once it has settled. It definitely doesn't come in the form of a white flag. The flag was historically a signal, and the colour was chosen for visibility to signal to the approaching enemy - that the other side is surrendering. It also doesn't embody the goodness it finally becomes. To attain peace you need to get muddy, fight, capture and grow tired of war - for you cannot know the value of peace unless you appreciate that you won't always enjoy your victories.

The thing is, we believe our opponents are external. All the opponents of peace live within us. Our ego, anger, arrogance, our need to be right, and our need for justice. All of these are within us.

What others do to you is merely triggers your inner strife. To save face, you pacify your ego and protect your esteem; you fight back. There is shame in peace. Peace is the failure to win a fight in which you have an advantage. It is about surrendering before the fight starts even if you have prepared the most and are tipped to win.

You can only survive in "Peace land" if your inner being is comfortable enough to walk in shame and loss with a battered exterior.

Peace needs you to show up despite or because of the circumstances that repel peace.



To meet peace, you have to end the wars within you.



To sustain peace, you have to kill the pride of winning.



To keep peace, you have to keep good emotional, spiritual and physical boundaries.



To love peace, you have to love silence.



To walk with peace, you have to surrender your need to understand everything.



To be at peace with others, you have to accept that they may not know how to be peaceful and it is your responsibility to model peace (in words and in actions).



To go out on regular dates with peace, you have to believe that the only way to one day rest in peace is for you to learn how to live in peace here and now. Today.

Peace out 

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A DATE WITH
Peace