

Finding Personal Peace in Prison



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“Peace needs to be in everyone’s life. It is not the world that needs peace; it is people. When people in the world are at peace within, the world will be at peace.”

This is a quote from [Prem Rawat](#), Global Ambassador for Peace and founder of the Prem Rawat Foundation (TPRF), an international charity that addresses fundamental human needs so that people everywhere can live their lives with dignity, peace and prosperity. I have heard Prem Rawat speak on several occasions and have always been struck by his passion, integrity and sense of humour in addressing an important message—that personal peace is a fundamental right of all. He speaks from the heart, bringing simplicity to important issues that people often find complex.

As well as developing a successful [“Food for People”](#) program, TPRF has developed an innovative [“Peace Education Program”](#) (PEP) to help people discover inner resources such as strength, choice, and hope and to explore the possibility of personal peace. I first heard about the PEP six

years ago when it was being piloted in prisons in the USA. The program was successful right from the start, and at the request of prison officials a structured curriculum was put together.

The PEP addresses the core of a human being, looking at the beauty and value of each person, not addressing what's good or bad, right or wrong or trying to 'fix' people. It focuses on developing a positive approach to life; bypassing negative thought processes that can undermine an individual's self-worth and behavior. It provides a space for people (attendees and facilitators alike) to relax and be reminded of the positive in life and in themselves—a welcome alternative to the news that bombards us on a daily basis. It can help people discover peace, contentment, and a new approach to life.

When the PEP was launched in the UK in 2014, I jumped at the chance of facilitating a course at Sutton College of Learning for Adults where I already worked as a complementary therapy lecturer. In my work as a therapist, teacher, and writer in the field of holistic health, I have observed how easy it is to feel overwhelmed in this fast-paced world—I have often felt it myself and I regularly see it in my clients. Throwaway phrases such as 'don't worry, be happy' are pretty useless, as not everyone lives in an environment where you can turn off worry like a light switch. The PEP directs us to discover and really experience our inner strengths. In my life it has helped me live more 'in the moment' and find a restorative state that allows me to put down my burdens and truly feel the joy of being alive every day, irrespective of my circumstances.

The PEP is non-religious and non-sectarian and the content of each theme is based on excerpts from Prem Rawat's international talks. The themes are: Peace, Appreciation, Inner Strength, Self-Awareness, Clarity, Understanding, Dignity, Choice, Hope, and Contentment. The media-based program provides clearly structured materials to support and strengthen the learning outcome of participants. It is about individual self-discovery, which is unique for each person and sessions include time where attendees can reflect, express or write their feelings in response to what they have heard. There are no tests or exams, and those who attend most of the sessions receive a certificate of completion and information about how to continue on this path of self-discovery if they so wish.



The PEP is now running in 81 countries and course materials have been translated into 36

languages with further translations underway. Written materials are also available in Braille along with DVDs subtitled for the hearing impaired. The PEP features in an award-winning documentary, "[Inside Peace](#)," which provides a window into the hearts and minds of prisoners who choose to break the cycle of negativity. With a supporting cast of fellow inmates, prison officials, experts and family members, the film takes the viewer into the lives of these men as they reintegrate with life on the outside relying on the personal peace, self-worth and dignity discovered through the PEP.

The PEP is based on universal human principles, such as equality, respect, dignity, and, as such, fits very well in a wide range of organizations. In the UK the PEP has been running successfully at Thameside Prison in London since 2015 and is now running in a further 8 UK prisons as well as community centers, veteran centers, educational establishments and other types of organizations. In response to the recent violent crime epidemic in London, Prem Rawat joined leaders and activists at Lambeth Community College in June 2018 to [discuss the rollout](#) of the Peace Education Program to UK schools.

The response to PEP from attendees and organization staff has been very positive – here is a small selection of the many comments received.



"It's a very powerful program—it speaks for itself, it brings peace." — Pastor Lorraine Jones, Brixton, UK

"PEP gives you the tools to sit and think, and be, and just act differently, and it just kind of ripples out. Until someone brings that to light, you might have it, but until someone shows you, you're really quite unaware." — Jacqueline, Angell Town, Brixton

"What I'm learning from this course is that I'm not a bad person; I'm a good person who has made bad choices." — PEP attendee, Thameside Prison

"I enjoyed learning about myself and that the small changes I can make will make the biggest

difference in my life.” — PEP attendee, Thameside Prison

“The PEP says that you write your own story. This inspires me—it gives me the motivation to go back on the wing and say, this is the way I want to live my life, this is the way I want to be. It helps me a lot.” — PEP attendee, Thameside Prison

“The test for me of the effectiveness of this program is in talking to the participants afterwards—not just in the classroom but back on the wing where they are putting it into practice.” — John Biggin OBE & Former UK Prison Director



In a specially prepared video for the Nordic Peace Conference in Oslo in 2012, Prem Rawat emphasized the very real possibility of peace in our lifetime. He said: “There are people who are very greedy; there are people who don’t care. But in my opinion, that is a minority. The majority of the people on the face of this earth want peace, and if this is true, then peace on earth is a very achievable objective. People say it’s not going to happen. Well, let this time belong to those who believe it can happen, not to the ones who say it cannot.”

As a volunteer PEP facilitator, it has been a real pleasure for me to witness the effects of this course and the joy that emanates when people start to get in touch with their true inner nature. I feel that personal development is a vital part of a person’s growth, maturity, success and fulfilment, and that when we strive to improve our patterns and behaviours, and work to develop our inner resources, not only does it benefit us personally, but everyone that we encounter benefits. I need joy in my life, and I suspect that underneath our differences, we are all very much alike and we all want to feel happy and at peace with ourselves.