

# *Lessons Learned from the Peacemakers*

I have been gathering the stories of Peacemakers for over twenty years. Over time, I have seen similar patterns in the work of these valuable citizens of our world. These are lessons about how their work comes to them, how they go about doing it, how they deal with obstacles, how they find sustenance, perseverance, and joy in the process. I share some of their patterns of wisdom below.

- 1. Be awake when the opportunity presents itself.*
- 2. Develop your service in response to people's expressed sense of need. When listening for this be sure you are listening to understand their needs rather than listening to validate your preconceived ideas of what is needed. \**
- 3. Never lose sight of your goal and never get attached to how you get there.*
- 4. Learn who the local peacemakers are and be respectful of their peacemaking traditions. \**
- 5. Every day, revisit the wisdom of and your willingness to continue this work.*
- 6. Operate from unconditional caring, not from sentimentality.*
- 7. Making a difference in the world might be your primary form of compensation, rather than financial compensation.*

*If you need money to do your work, be creative about sourcing it.*

8. *Work under the radar of oppressors when called for.*
9. *Work "with" not "for." Work alongside those who request your services.*
10. *Acknowledge, validate and nurture the strengths of those with whom you work.*
11. *Work simultaneously at both the individual and the system level.*
12. *Pace yourself: Make a little peace, make a little dinner. Know that your work might not be completed in your lifetime.*
13. *Be aware peacemaking may be, but does not have to be, dangerous. Provide for your safety.*
14. *Be willing to hang out on the margins of society without taking it personally.*
15. *Practice patience and persistence; employ them both simultaneously.*
16. *Most of your learning will be on-the-job training or osmosis from other peacemakers. Observe what your mentors do and don't do, and why.*
17. *First go small and deep with your work. Then think about the wisdom of going bigger. Many peacemakers stay small and deep.*
18. *Sometimes anger works as a good motivator, but it is an unwise and dangerous plan of action.*
19. *Rising up out of a depression can launch amazing acts of*

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*peacemaking. Likewise, doing an act of peacemaking can, but doesn't always, dispel depression. Provide for your mental healthiness.*

20. *Do not use violence of any kind, including to yourself.*

21. *When making choices, choose what keeps you in integrity with your goals and your conscience.*

21. *Pray.*

23. *The amount of outside pressure you may feel from those that disapprove of your work may be great. Meet it with a greater amount of inner resolve, integrity, and grit.*

24. *When overwhelmed by what you can't do, refocus on what you can do. Then proceed with the next right thing.*

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Items 2 and 4 come from the work of  
a beloved male peacemaker, Jon Paul Lederach.

The remaining items were gleaned  
from the women in this book.

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