

Newsletter "The Source"

Reflections: What is the cost of Freedom

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1994. What a year! The U.S passed the Global Agreement on Trade and Tariffs, a 6000 page document that goes far beyond the purpose of trade agreements as most people were led to believe. Europe is still trying to make a go with a single currency. Borders are changing everywhere, not just in the former states of the U.S.S.R. People are still killing in the name of religion. We can't seem to get along with each other in our local communities yet everything is moving toward a global community.

Life on this planet is full of changes and in many cases the man-made changes are just as devastating as the physical changes that happen with weather conditions and other natural disasters. The world we live in has always depended on our choices - from where we choose to build our houses (is it in a flood plain? on a known earthquake fault? too close to the sea when it storms? on the side of a volcano?) to what kind of government we choose to represent us (what is the extent of your participation? do you vote? do you let your representatives and congress know how you feel on key issues by writing them? do you attend school board meetings? do you run for office yourself? do you teach your children that their voices count and that they have a say in things or do you teach them to obey blindly, never to question authority?) People make choices with every action they take. Even deciding to make no choice is a choice though some don't seem to understand this basic fact of life. Our choices determine the extent of our freedom and our safety as well as our lack of both. Yet people put the blame outside themselves when bad things happen that rock their boats. They fail to make the connection that their choices had something to do with it all, that just a little of the responsibility lies with themselves and their choices. It's easier to put the blame elsewhere and expect to be taken care of by our overloaded government. Why not, every one else does. The problem is we've forgotten how to take care of ourselves, so what do we pass on to our children? When everyone is willing to do their share to take responsibility for themselves and their actions things run a lot smoother and there is plenty left over to share with those who truly can't take care of themselves and need help.

If I was given the power to change just one thing, just one little thing on this planet to make a difference, I know what it would be. It's very simple yet it would change the face of this world. It has to do with a very basic, very fundamental concept - respect.

If suddenly every single human being on this planet woke up in the morning and had total respect for life, starting with their own and then naturally extending to all others, think how the world would change. Immediately senseless killings would stop. The former would-be killers and abusers would have too much respect for themselves to throw their own lives away so easily, not to mention the lives of their victims. And the former victims would not be such easy victims, valuing their lives and taking steps to assure their ability to live in a safe, worthwhile manner.

With respect for all life comes the knowledge that we are all different , all unique. Respecting life would naturally extend to the other living things we share this planet with and we'd find a way to coexist in balance. People would definitely respect the earth as their means of sustenance, as their home, in fact as if their lives depended on it, because our lives do.

Life and death are part of nature but the quality of our lives while we live is up to us. And it all starts with a little respect.