

## **Blaming Never Helps**

**Thich Nhat Hanh\***

When you plant lettuce, if it does not grow well, you don't blame the lettuce. You look into the reasons it is not doing well. It may need fertilizer, or more water, or less sun. You never blame the lettuce. Yet if we have problems with our friends or our family, we blame the other person. But if we know how to take care of them, they will grow well, like lettuce. Blaming has no positive effect at all, nor does trying to persuade using reason and arguments. That is my experience. No blame, no reasoning, no argument, just understanding. If you understand, and you show that you understand, you can love, and the situation will change.

One day in Paris, I gave a lecture about not blaming the lettuce. After the talk, I was doing walking meditation by myself, and when I turned the corner of a building, I overheard an eight-year-old girl telling her mother, "Mommy, remember to water me. I am your lettuce." I was so pleased that she had understood my point completely. Then I heard her mother reply, "Yes, my daughter, and I am your lettuce also. So please don't forget to water me too." Mother and daughter practicing together, it was very beautiful.

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\*Excerpted from *Peace Is Every Step*, by Thich Nhat Hanh, Bantam Books, 1991, pp. 78-79.

## **Working for True Peace**

Millions of people follow sports. If you love to watch soccer, you probably root for one team and identify with them. You watch the games with despair and elation. Perhaps you give a little kick to help the ball along. If you do not take sides, the fun is missing. In wars we pick sides, usually the side which is being threatened. Peace movements are born of this feeling. We get angry, we shout, but rarely do we rise above all this to look at a conflict the way a mother would who is watching her two children fighting. She seeks only their reconciliation. Real efforts for reconciliation must arise from this heart of compassion which arises from meditating on the nature of interbeing and interpenetration of all beings.

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Excerpted from *The Sun My Heart*, by Thich Nhat Hanh, Parallax Press, 1988, p. 74

## **Peace Can Exist When...**

Peace can exist only in the present moment. It is ridiculous to say, "Wait until I finish this, then I will be free to live in peace." What is "this?" A diploma, a job, a house, the payment of a debt? If you think that way, peace will never come. There is always another "this" that will follow the present one. If you are not living in peace at this moment, you will never be able to. If you truly want to be at peace, you must be at peace right now. Otherwise, there is only "the hope of peace someday."

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Excerpted from *The Sun My Heart*, by Thich Nhat Hanh, Parallax Press, 1988, p. 125.