

Ask Dr. Angelia: Peace Maker vs. Peace Keeper

Dr. Angelia Bryant

Are you a Peace Maker or a Peace Keeper? Peace Keeping means in is in your personal relationships! I have hated conflict and for most of my life, and so, I must confess; I was a Peace Keeper. I did whatever it took to avoid conflict and I must confess, Peace Keepers operate out of fear. And trying to manage life through constant fear of conflict and trying not upset people is no way to live.

A few weeks ago, I wrote about being a Peace Maker. Jesus did not tell His followers to be Peace Keepers. He told them to be Peace Makers. "Blessed are the Peace Makers, for they will be called children of God. Matthew 5:9 A Peace Maker is defined as – one who makes peace through reconciliation, a collaboration or compromise.

Conversely, Peace Keepers believe in peace at all cost. Peace Keepers walk on eggshells as to not upset anyone. Peace Keepers hide their true feelings to prevent arguments. Peace Keepers work to avoid and prevent conflict. Peace Keepers can be vulnerable to people who will bully and abuse them. Do you see the difference? Peace Keepers keep peace out of fear through avoidance. Peace Makers restore peace out of strength through reconciliation. If fear is keeping you a Peace Keeper, possibly, I can help you become a Peace Maker.

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your heart be troubled and do not be afraid. John 14:27

First, make love your goal. Who do you keep the peace for – a spouse, a sibling, or children? Encourage and build each other up – so when conflict and confrontation become necessary your relationship is built on strength – not fear. You may need to have a conversation with someone that goes something like this, "I love you and sometimes I don't share my truth with you because I don't want to see you get upset. For our future, I will speak my truth – even when you don't like it that much. I'm going to be honest with you because we both deserve honesty in this relationship."

Be truthful and trustworthy. Live with integrity. Reconciliation and peace are more likely when there is trust and honesty in the relationship. If you believe a person cares about you and wants what is best for you, we are more likely to work together toward peace. Know when it's important to confront and when it's better to keep silent. That's not easy. Here are two questions to ask yourself: Does it hurt someone or Does it hurt our relationship?

Listen! Approach every conversation with a desire to understand the situation, not to respond harshly, rather, respond compassionately. This is not about being right or winning . . . it's the art of loving, helping and caring for one another. Choose your words carefully. Make every effort to communicate how much you value the person. When you talk, do not say harmful things, but say what people need—words that will help others become stronger. Then what you say will do good to those who listen to you. Ephesians 4:29

Life is too short and wonderful to live in fear. Have a reflective, insightful, joyous week! Love People and Love God- as God loves you! Amen.

Dr. Angelia S. Bryant, Licensed Professional Counselor and Supervisor
angelia.s.bryant@gmail.com

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