

Toward Appreciating our Law Enforcement Friends

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A REVOLUTIONARY SPIRITUAL APPROACH TO ENDING POLICE BRUTALITY

PEACE PRESIDENT UNITED



PREPARED BY
www.peacepresidentunited.org

image from: <https://www.connectsavannah.com/savannah/celebrating-amongst-neighbors/Content?oid=16840876>

*Appreciating our Law Enforcement Friends
and A Revolutionary Spiritual Approach to Ending Police Brutality*

by Peace President United

www.peacepresidentunited.org

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Behind the Badge

A Speech toward Appreciating our Law Enforcement Friends

Dear Friends, Fellow Citizens, Human Beings,

I feel compelled today to share with you a divisive trend appearing to be escalating locally, and even across the United States. I am referring to the rising energy of fear that both citizens and our law enforcement friends seem to have toward one another. What are we to do when virtually every news center and media source is showing primarily the worst case scenarios about our law enforcement friends? Not to mention the increasing popularity of video games glorifying the most destructive nature of human potential. Let us ask ourselves, “What are we to do when unnecessary racism, police brutality, and violence are practically the only images we get to see on the Television and Internet?” All of which seem to always include the unhelpful and hateful blame game that our law enforcement friends are continually victims of – because a few ‘unchained and deeply unconscious’ police officers lose their inner sense of humanity on the job – by murdering citizens. Yes...I said...in a way, the Police are being victimized, much like many citizens who find themselves being racially profiled for any reason, and unjustly targeted using unfounded and untrue assumptions and beliefs. There is a sacred mutual trust between citizens and police forces that must be welcomed, acknowledged, and nurtured, if we are to heal our societal wounds; which includes, opening to becoming aware how each of us may be contributing to the fundamental problem of unknowingly discriminating against one another, as citizens.

For instance, if a few police officers kill or murder a citizen for absolutely no legitimate reason, does that mean that ALL police officers are to blame? Are corrupt? Are part of the problem? In the same manner, if a few citizens who happen to look similar in appearance commit crimes, should we assume everyone of the same body type are dangerous and less than anyone else?

Moreover, if you are racially profiled by a specific police officer, does that mean that all of the police in the United States of America are doing the same thing? Really...take a moment and see how it feels to make a blanket statement about everyone in a specific group, when some of the group members do something horrific. In the same way, if I make a determination about ‘you’ based upon the color of your skin, THEN how is that not different from making a determination about every police officer who wears a uniform, when one of their colleagues breaks the law? Again...really...take a moment and ask yourself those questions with compassionate interest to understand our human condition – the same human condition we are manifesting together, both socially and innocently unconsciously.

Am I saying that racism and profiling of any type does not exist in our mass psychological collective, that we call society, and not a problem in law enforcement? No. Of course not. I am saying, or asking, however, how does the energy of blame and accusations solve anything? Has blaming any one individual, a small group of people, a large group of purple people, yellow people, pink people, or green people ever helped solve the underlying foundational issues of anything, ever?

Let us ask our deepest sacred wisdom this: What do we inherently understand about our human plight in trying to live and work together – that forgiveness and compassion yields inner peace and serenity, or does blaming and judging provide those sacred qualities of unity and inclusiveness we yearn for? Blaming and judging ourselves and others only blinds us from truly discovering the loving solutions and unifying possibilities to our ongoing mutually divisive endeavors. Doesn't it? Has the cycle of blaming and judging ever worked in the history of all humanity – to bring people together – or tear them apart? What is the answer? There must be alternative options. Another way to live. Another way to be, alive!

Let us pose this question to ourselves: Will appreciation and compassionate understanding, perhaps, by placing ourselves in someone else's shoes, help us come together and find mutual respect and honor for one another, or continue dividing us, like blaming and judging does? This is a law of life – that by somehow placing ourselves in someone else's shoes opens our sacred powers of empathy, oneness, and inclusion. That specific law of life works both ways, doesn't it. In other words, whether you are a citizen or a police officer, put yourself in the 'others' shoes. With the ever rising rates in mass murder, violence, and brutality – all at the hands of citizens – what would it feel like walking up to a strangers house or a car these days, as a police officer? Setting aside any macho bravado from some law enforcement professionals who say they are not afraid when approaching a car, citizens in the street, or a private residence, everyone in our law enforcement is fearful to some degree – whether they admit it or not – whether they know it or not. So, I guess I will just admit it for them.

Similarly, when a police officer approaches you, regardless of your skin color, isn't there at least a hint of fear; if we are deeply honest? Especially among those who have been racially profiled in the past based upon skin color, or those who are targeted due to having a police record, and other's caught up in the imperfect systems we use to govern ourselves?

A major theme of this speech is "Appreciating our Law Enforcement Friends." Can we do that? Can we set aside our biases, fears, and judgments, and blame, for just a moment, and appreciate a few aspects that we may be taking for granted? For instance, if someone is trying to break into your house in the middle of the night, who are you going to call? Why? What if you have a dispute with a neighbor and it continues escalating? Who are you going to call for help? What if someone gets a hold of an automatic rifle and begins shooting up a grocery store, school, church, or your fellow employees at your job, who are you going to call? Why? What if your husband is beating you? Who are you going to call?

At the forefront of our imperfect systems we use to govern ourselves, in attempt to live peacefully with one another, and safely, there are what we call first responders: Our paramedics, firemen and firewomen, and our police, all of whom provide us with immeasurable security. Could you imagine living in the society we are living in now – without them?

The time for blaming, judging, accusing one another, and criticizing ourselves and others has come to an end. It is time to stop taking each other for granted. It is time for genuinely appreciating one another and the roles we play in our lives. That is how we solve our problems of racism, violence, and hatred. Not through divisive measures such as blame and hate and fear, but through compassionate understanding, empathy, humility, and holding a sense of all inclusiveness in our

minds and hearts, always. That is the way. That is the way of love. That is the way of peaceful coexistence.

Finding the compassionate wisdom within – to acknowledge and appreciate we are all friends – doing the best that we can with the tools and systems we have – in a wildly loving and paradoxically violent world we have been born into – is the way. The way of mutual friendship, loving appreciation, and grace. Let us make this way the only way, starting here, now.

Yours Truly,

Peace President

A Revolutionary Spiritual Approach to Ending Police Brutality

by Peace President United

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Instead of panicking or returning to business as usual, commit to grounded compassion, pragmatic wisdom, and skillful action. Let awareness be your weapon... be there for those who have suffered more than we have. Step beyond yourself and be of use to someone. Be courage in uncertainty. Be love in chaos. — Richard Strozzi-Heckler, In Search of the Warrior Spirit

Introduction

As Mayors, Police Commissioners, Governors of States, Senators, Representatives, Local Councilmen and Councilwomen, Police Officers, and Citizens of the U.S.A, are we tired of implementing strategies to end police violence and lower crime that are proving to be ineffective in the long run? Are we willing to open our minds and hearts to alternative possibilities that will radiate compassion and understanding upwards through all levels of society, hence creating a ripple effect of loving kindness – a profound transformation that will stand the test of time? Or, do we think more hard-line rules, laws, and blaming one another is going to get the job done? I am speaking of moving from a political perspective to one highly practical, all inclusive, and spiritual. (And, not the spirituality you are probably thinking of.)

Are we open to genuinely long term all inclusive possibilities and solutions, versus our ongoing short term and divisive quick fix approaches that never last? Are we open to new possibilities that may require the participation of everyone in society, not merely one group or individual or institution? Liberating opportunities that will uplift all aspects of society which are struggling, confused, and fed up with societal trends no longer serving us? And, the approaches I am speaking of are low budget options.

Foundational Perspectives to Ending Police Brutality

Trust between private citizens and law enforcement is paramount for ending police brutality in the long term, regardless of crime statistics. Here is supporting evidence: A report offered by the U.S. District of Justice and created by the Community Policing Consortium back in 1994 state this, “Without trust between police and citizens, effective policing is impossible.”

<https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles/commp.pdf>

And, this, an *American Psychological Association* article from October 2020 stating, “We know that the policing model of using force to compel compliance lowers the crime rate but does not

build trust,” says Tyler, who has developed and studied models of ‘procedurally just’ policing. The crime rate has declined about 75% in the last 30 years, but public trust in the police hasn’t increased at all.” <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2020/10/cover-police-brutality>

Most everyone can relate to hearing that ‘trusting police officers’ has been decreasing for years; which is to say this: even if crime decreases, police brutality is increasing along with citizens mistrusting law enforcement officials. And, it appears that when trust is compromised, whether in ones self or with other authorities that are supposed to help us, then violence and unrest increases, both inwardly toward ourselves in the form of self hate and self punishment, then projected onto others in the external world, through violence, conquest, and aggression.

What is the Problem?

One might say that police brutality, like police officers killing innocent citizens, is the foundational problem with the loss of trust between civilians and police forces entrusted to protect us. However, trust is a two way street; or symbiotic relationship where there must be mutual trust among law enforcement and citizens. Violent crimes are escalating; especially relating to mass shootings at the hands of private citizens, and murders at the hands of police officers. The point is this: there is a deeper individual and collective issue that is much deeper than blaming citizens or police for our self defeating and self destructive societal trends no longer working for us – trends arising from collective unconsciousness that cannot be isolated to one group, one person, one governing system, or one organization.

Fundamentally, crime, violence, hate, and murder affects everyone, and can happen at the hand of anyone, anytime, especially when our primitive brain functions override our better judgment and compassionate centers of our body-mind-complex; and compromise our ability to regulate our nervous system. Relating to police brutality, the *American Police Beat* said this about the problem, “While experiencing trauma, acute stress or danger, the more primitive emotional part of our brain can override the more rational, contemplative aspects of the brain. This can cause an instinctive flight or fight reaction. When this happens, the officer becomes severely limited in their ability to think clearly, make rational decisions, exercise good judgment and control their responses. This can lead to overreactions, such as excessive uses of force, unprofessional behavior, unrestrained anger, aggression and poor decisions that can have significant repercussions for the officer, the agency and the community. With the daily practice of mindfulness and meditation, an officer can learn to control their reactions in stressful situations and determine a rational, reasonable response.”

<https://apbweb.com/2021/07/mindfulness-and-meditation-for-effective-policing/>

Rather than making Police Brutality the primary suspect, Peace President United is making clear that what the *American Police Beat* is saying about trauma, is not limited to only our law enforcement organizations. Merely seeing the rise in violence, mass shootings, and suicides on the news and in our schools and religious centers can have a traumatic affect on anyone – whether they know it or not. That means we must find a solution to the cycle of crime and violence – which suggests an all encompassing solution or approach for dealing with stress

and trauma is paramount, and of great relevance at all levels of society; especially the levels of leadership and governance.

Goal of Peace President United

To restore trust among citizens and police and governing officials while providing the opportunity to lower stress, enhance conscious clarity, and reduce crime, violence, police brutality, and minimizing overly reactive and aggressive emotional responses, that over the long term, will have a profoundly uplifting effect mentally, emotionally, and physically – for overall wellbeing; at both the individual level and in communities as a whole.

What is the Premise?

We need to change our foundational perspective on ending police brutality, and societal crime and violence from strictly a rules based and punitive approach to a comprehensive preventative strategy embracing a compassionate mindset toward spiritual solutions; such as implementing [Sacred Processes](#) like meditation into our police training, k-12 educational institutions, all levels of government, and in our communities. For instance, per this 2015 article from *The Atlantic*, “Apparently, police officers in Madison, Wisconsin are learning to meditate...We got a call from the police department in the city of Madison asking us to help them implement a program,” said Richard Davidson, a University of Wisconsin professor, at a session at the Aspen Ideas Festival. His research focuses on the benefits of meditation and “mindfulness exercises, which might include periods of focusing on physical sensations and the feelings of others. He says the potential benefits of these activities include better emotional control, improved health outcomes, and, importantly, reductions in implicit biases, or unconscious beliefs or stereotypes that affect people’s behavior.”

<https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2015/07/get-the-police-to-meditate/397580/>

If we can implement low cost and effective programs with a proven track record that lower emotional reactivity and aggression, enhance conscious clarity, reduce implicit biases in the mind, restore trust, along with bridging the social divide amongst ourselves and with the police, then let us open our minds and hearts to these practical solutions. Who wouldn’t want to be more consciously clear when making decisions, lower stress, and become less racially discriminating?

What is the Peace President United Plan?

Firstly, we must open to a new type of non religious Spirituality called [Practical Spirituality](#) that utilize Sacred Processes like Mindfulness meditation, which are already being used in the United States in various police organizations with great success; for instance, this article stating, “Mindfulness meditation has already made its way into certain portions of the American police force, as Hillsboro, Oregon Police Department began its own

[mindfulness-training program](#) in 2014, and has already seen substantial growth in the mental resiliency of the department's officers.”

<https://unbrandednews.com/can-mindfulness-meditation-reduce-police-brutality/>

Secondly, our plan is to create the opportunity, organizational tools, and resources for both police officers, governing officials at all levels, and private citizens to engage in mindfulness meditation practices together; as suggested by Richard Goerling, retired police officer and veteran, and founder of www.mindfulbadge.com. His website states, “Richard has developed a training specialization in first responders mindset, health, resiliency and human performance. Over the last decade, he spearheaded the introduction of mindfulness skills training into policing as part of a larger cultural transformation toward a compassionate, skillful and resilient humanitarian ethos.” <https://www.mindfulbadge.com/about>

Please note that Mindfulness training and practice can take place in open rooms at local community centers, churches, outside in nature, libraries, or in police station training rooms, at relatively low cost; and, the number of meditation facilitators are increasing nationally whom are willing to volunteer their time free of charge. Of course, training options can be discovered at www.mindfulbadge.com.

Understanding Practical Spirituality

Practical Spirituality is not your typical spirituality in the sense that most ideas of spirituality are founded in religious beliefs and religion based institutions. To quite the contrary, Practical Spirituality is not a religion or religious idea or belief system, yet more like a natural means of clarifying our minds and purifying our hearts through [Sacred Processes](#) like meditation. Practical Spirituality like yoga or meditation offers and provides life liberating and emotionally healing benefits directly affecting physical and mental health and overall wellbeing; and there is evidence to prove it.

Supporting Evidence for Mindfulness and Meditation

Peace President United's stance on whether or not meditation works is this: Try it and see for yourself. This is the best evidence there is for anything in life – to find out and discover in your direct experience if something works or not ([Peace President United](#)). Relating to scientific or solid evidence supporting the many benefits of meditation and mindfulness, here is a [short 4 minute video testimonial](#) from a Police Lieutenant about how Mindfulness elevated his self awareness, and enhanced his performance as a Police Officer.

And, the *Cleveland Clinic* shares, “Mental health: Optimization of mental health not only impacts one's sense of emotional well-being, but moderates most to all medical outcomes. Mindfulness may be a tool to enhance emotional health and reduce stress. A systematic review of more than 20 randomized controlled trials in 2011 successfully demonstrated improvements in overall mental health, as well as its benefit for reducing risk of relapse from

depression. Similarly, substantial evidence exists that mindfulness has a positive impact on anxiety disorders such as post-traumatic stress disorder.”

<https://consultqd.clevelandclinic.org/evidence-based-mindfulness-what-science-tells-us-about-mindfulness-meditation-and-its-benefits/>

Frontiers in Human Neuroscience claims, “Over the past few decades, a wealth of research has emerged in both academic journals and popular media on the benefits of mindfulness meditation for attention (Sedlmeier et al., 2012), negative mood (Goyal et al., 2014), mental health (Hofmann et al., 2010), addictions (Brewer et al., 2011a; Chiesa and Serretti, 2014; Bowen et al., 2014), and many other factors (e.g., creativity; Ding et al., 2014).”

<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fnhum.2018.00315/full>

Furthermore, to emphasize the relevance and growing popularity of Mindfulness in our communities, several colleges and universities have started programs and courses on Mindfulness; for example: Stanford’s [Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education](#), the course [Science for Wellbeing](#) developed by Yale University, and University of California San Diego’s [Center for Mindfulness](#).

Growing Popularity in Mindfulness and Meditation

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services through the National Center for Complimentary and Integrative Health (NIH) shares these statistics: “According to a 2017 U.S. survey, the percentage of adults who practiced some form of mantra-based meditation, mindfulness meditation, or spiritual meditation in the previous 12 months tripled between 2012 and 2017, from 4.1 percent to 14.2 percent. Among children aged 4 to 17 years, the percentage increased from 0.6 percent in 2012 to 5.4 percent in 2017...In a 2012 U.S. survey, 1.9 percent of 34,525 adults reported that they had practiced mindfulness meditation in the past 12 months. Among those responders who practiced mindfulness meditation exclusively, 73 percent reported that they meditated for their general wellness and to prevent diseases, and most of them (approximately 92 percent) reported that they meditated to relax or reduce stress. In more than half of the responses, a desire for better sleep was a reason for practicing mindfulness meditation”

<https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/meditation-and-mindfulness-what-you-need-to-know>

What is Mindfulness?

The *American Police Beat* writes, “Mindfulness is the practice of being fully invested in the present moment, completely aware of what you’re sensing, feeling and thinking in the moment at hand, without interpretation or judgment. Practicing mindfulness involves breathing

methods, guided imagery and other practices to relax the body and mind and help reduce stress.

Mindfulness involves the conscious intention to keep thoughts focused on the present, not on what has happened in the past and what could happen in the future — but on what is happening right now and thinking through ways to reasonably respond. It is the practice of striving to make the most of the present moment rather than merely getting through it. When we're not living mindfully in the present moment, then we're robbing ourselves of the opportunity to make the present moment both meaningful and productive of wellness...

...[Mindfulness] Meditation is concentrated thought upon something that evokes a positive emotion while being focused on slow, deep breathing. It is intended to encourage a heightened state of awareness and focused attention in the present. Meditation is also a consciousness-changing technique that has been shown to have a wide number of benefits on psychological well-being and has been practiced in a variety of cultures for thousands of years.” <https://apbweb.com/2021/07/mindfulness-and-meditation-for-effective-policing/>

Benefits of Mindfulness Meditation

Per the *American Psychological Association*, some profound benefits of Mindfulness Meditation are:

Decreased levels of the stress hormone cortisol, along with fatigue, and anxiety.

Sharpens focus of attention and suppresses acceptance of distracting information.

Less emotional reactivity, which is likely the key contributor to the instances of police brutality. If emotional reactivity can be curbed, the possibility of non-violent resolutions would hopefully be more likely.

More cognitive flexibility, another support parallel that would hopefully enable officers to be able to react intelligibly and logically, before resorting to physical force.

<https://unbrandednews.com/can-mindfulness-meditation-reduce-police-brutality/>

Case Study of Mindfulness Meditation for Law Enforcement

The *American Police Beat* reports this, “Mindfulness and meditation are ways of centering your thoughts on your breathing. As the body calms down as you focus on slow, deep breathing, it reduces your cortisol levels which reduces stress. A calm mind calms the body, and a calm body calms the mind.

The San Diego Police Department Wellness Unit has created a Mindfulness for Law Enforcement program where officers do mindfulness meditation for 10 minutes at line-up prior to breaking and going out into the field. This helps to mitigate the stress that the officers may

have brought from home as well as stress from being at work so that they go out into the community as better, more resilient police officers.

‘Mindfulness-based resiliency has helped me so much, as well as many other officers, with being present with everything that is going on and, therefore, more capable of responding in positive, effective ways. Mindfulness is being present in the moment, policing and living in the now while not worrying about what’s going to happen, what just happened or thinking about what can happen, but being present and ready to handle anything that comes your way.’”

<https://apbweb.com/2021/07/mindfulness-and-meditation-for-effective-policing/>

Deeply Profound aspects of Sacred Processes like Meditation

What most teachers and facilitators of yoga or meditation, as well as contemporary psychologists are not clearly pointing out regarding [Sacred Processes](#) and Practical Spirituality is this: there is a magically effortless clarification of the mind happening that dissolves a false sense of separation that keeps us feeling unwhole, lacking, fearful, unworthy, or disconnected from one another and life.

Among many other benefits that meditation provides for body and mind, when a sense of disconnection begins falling away through any number of sacred processes, one naturally begins perceiving others as part of the intrinsic whole of reality – as part of yourself – hence racially charged discrimination as implicit bias decreases. For instance, when you see your old high school friends after several years, there is a wonderful sense of inclusion and unity and friendship. Meditation, when welcomed with an open mind and heart, can allow our experience of all human beings to feel just like that – like our best friends – regardless of what they look like, personal opinion, bias, or circumstances.

Taking the Next Step

If you are moved by this article and interested in learning more about your options, or inviting someone to speak with you or your management team, you can take the following steps:

1. Visit www.MindfulBadge.com or www.PeacePresidentUnited.org
2. Complete the contact form. (someone will respond within 24 hours)

Basic Strategy

Mindfulness meditation can be a powerful tool to help individuals cultivate a greater sense of awareness and compassion. While it may not be a solution to end police brutality on its own, it can be a valuable component of a broader strategy aimed at fostering greater understanding and empathy between law enforcement and the communities they serve. Here is a potential strategy for using mindfulness meditation to end police brutality:

1. Watch this amazingly [informative video FIRExTALK](#) by Retired Veteran and Police Officer, who from the perspective of understanding first responders are warriors, discusses emotional resiliency, self awareness, meditation, brain neurobiology, reducing stress, healing trauma responses, mindfulness, and more! And, watch this [Policing the Bridge Ted Talk](#) – by Lieutenant Tim McMillan, Retired, who had a deeply awakened moment on a traffic stop.
2. Promote mindfulness training for police officers: Police officers are often placed in high-stress situations that can lead to overreaction or aggression. By promoting mindfulness training for police officers, we can help them develop greater self-awareness and emotional regulation, reducing the likelihood of excessive use of force.
3. Encourage mindfulness training for community members: Mindfulness meditation can also help community members develop greater empathy and understanding towards law enforcement. By providing mindfulness training to community members, we can help them cultivate the ability to approach police encounters with greater calm and compassion.
4. Facilitate dialogue between police and community members: Mindfulness meditation can serve as a common ground for police officers and community members to come together and engage in open and honest dialogue. By facilitating mindfulness meditation sessions that bring both groups together, we can help to foster greater understanding and communication.
5. Foster a culture of compassion: Ultimately, the goal of using mindfulness meditation to end police brutality is to create a culture of compassion. By promoting mindfulness training and dialogue between police and community members, we can create a shared understanding and a greater sense of empathy between these two groups.
6. Advocate for policy changes: While mindfulness meditation can be a powerful tool for changing attitudes and behavior, it is important to recognize that it cannot solve systemic problems on its own. Therefore, it is also important to advocate for policy changes that can address issues such as police accountability, training, and community oversight.

In summary, using mindfulness meditation to end police brutality requires a multifaceted approach that includes promoting mindfulness training for both police officers and community members, facilitating dialogue, fostering a culture of compassion, and advocating for policy changes. By working together, we can create a more just and equitable society for all.

Other Resources

<https://pausefirst.com/about/>

[Mindful Policing – The Future of Force Article](#)

[Policing the Bridge Ted Talk](#) – Lieutenant Tim McMillan, Retired

[Mending Broken Trust: Police and the Communities they Serve TEDxTalk](#) Charles Ramsey, Retired Police Chief Washington, DC

[Policing in America: The Road to Reconciliation TEDxPortland](#) by Danielle Outlaw, Police Chief Portland OR |

[How video games are desensitizing us Article](#) by the conversations