

## 700 Hundred Words About Peace

(Original)

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All people want peace but in all times they have had wars and nobody has believed in peaceful future. Can this situation ever be changed? – It can. Only if our generation gets different the world will be different. Only if all people change. Only if my brother and my classmates change... This is what I thought first.

When the war in the Ukraine began I asked my granddad what my brother and I can do to stop wars. He said: “Each time before you enter your brother’s room think: you want to make him happy or you come to hurt him. Respect the others’ territory and behave friendly on it. When you do anything, think if you can do it better. Ask your parents and grandparents to tell you about good, positive things from their lives. Learn from good things they have done. Start to play this game with your brother.”

***This is what we have learnt from this game.***

My brother wanted to start doing wrestling. Doing wrestling is a good thing we thought. But what could be better? A better wrestling, of course! - Not offensive but defensive. Do you want to attack and beat others or defend yourself and protect your friends? So we made the right choice. My brother chose judo. We learned to be non-aggressive.

When 2022 protests in Belarus started, an acquaintance of us used to say that peaceful demonstrations could not change anything. We started to play our game. We searched “peaceful revolutions” on Google and found information about successful peaceful changes in Poland, the GDR and other European countries. Hurrah! Non-violent protests were the right thing. We learnt to be patient and peaceful.

Many Orthodox priests teach that other believers do not go to Heaven. That was a challenge for us. We have many non-Orthodox friends. Our granddad recommended us to compare

the works of people during the war in the Ukraine. "Do not listen to words", he said. We saw – there are many other people in all religions who love God, people and peace. So we learnt to be **tolerant**.

When granddad was young he traveled with a song band and raised money for sick Chernobyl children. Their first concert was in Germany in a holiday house for gays. After the concert he spoke with some of them. One of the gays told though he was accepted by many friends, he knew, he was not like the majority of men and he was not happy. So we learned **to understand strange or different people and have mercy with them**.

A boy was bullying me at school and my granddad stopped it after speaking friendly with the parents of that boy. Later my younger brother experienced the same. My brother was a good judoka and I recommended him to fight the boy, to teach him a lesson. But my brother reminded me how our granddad had settled a similar situation with me. My brother taught me to **settle conflicts peacefully**.

When our mother was small she lived in Germany and met many Germans. They were friendly. They helped Chernobyl children. But in Belarus she heard bad propaganda-things about Germans in the kindergarten. She protested: "No, Germans are good people! They do not kill, they help." So **we learnt to forgive**.

We asked our granddad to tell what he did for peace. He was an officer. His task was to call enemy's soldiers to surrender. In 1982 they wanted to send him to the war in Afghanistan. He refused and was dismissed from the army. He could make his career but he did not. So we learnt to **not participate in unjust wars**.

We still continue playing our granddad's game. This game has taught me, that there won't be peace if not others but **I** become better, if my brother and I don't teach my future children and grandchildren to compete being more peaceful, tolerant, respectful, kinder. Probably we will not live in a peaceful world yet, but our children or grandchildren will. We want so much you to join our game. Compete and practice in doing good and peaceful things now for the future peace sake. Let's play and live this game together worldwide!

\*Note: The word limit for the Essay Contest is 700 words.