

Understand and Accept

(Original)

Michael Levie M. Alilio

(Age 17, Philippines)

Marinduque National High School

Peace. I never really understood what “peace” meant. To me, it was simply another foreign concept, another machination of the mind created to stave away the harsh reality of the world. My idea of peace before was naive, at best.

Being born to much older parents, I knew that this peaceful life would be short-lived. I always expected the worse to happen, all my doubts readied my heart for what may occur tomorrow. That constant anxiety, that was no peaceful way to live. I hated thinking that way, yet I could not help myself. I pitied the man I looked at in the mirror for a long, long time.

Peacefulness should be full of serenity! It should dictate a happy existence, void of any malice, any hatred, any hate towards others and himself! What else would be as beautiful as true peace?!

One time, my mother caught me crying in bed. I was in the middle of thinking about the negative scenarios again. It would steel my resolve, I thought. She asked me what I was thinking, and I answered accordingly. She said to me, "We all go there eventually. We have to understand that and accept that things happen for a reason. God has his plans, and it's up to us to trust him." I will never forget the words she said to me, but then, I never understood them.

Only recently did I realize my meaning of peace. I was skimming through an e-book website when I noticed the work of Marcus Aurelius, and I was compelled to read it. Now, I understood. Peace was never a destination like I hoped for all these years. Peace was not some silly idea that was pursued by hopeless dreamers. Peace was understanding and

accepting things the way they were.

Peace is not a new concept in humanity. For centuries we strived to find true peace. Many confided in religion to find it. Many confided in organizations yearning for change to achieve it. These institutions weren't the reason why we could never find peace; it was our instinct to pick apart and despise what we could not understand, what was innately different from us. We yearned for peace, yet we also hated others who yearned for it, not because they were evil, no. But because they did things not the same as us.

Many knew this and tried to achieve what others before them could not. It was simply a lack of resources, a lack of ability to get into the hearts and minds of many people at the exact same time. We were divided by our ideals and arrogance that we could not comprehend another's ideas, let alone many, many more. But that was all in the past. We live now in the 21st century. Things are different now. We possess that power now as youths. I assume you are either using one of them right now or are in close proximity to it. That's right, we have the internet. We can widen our grasp, widen our understanding of each other, and come to terms so that we do achieve that peaceful peace we strive for so long.

I get it now. I grew to strive to accept everything that came my way, all the positivity and negativity, and learned to accept myself and others as well. Our elders may fade, and our past may very well be relics, but their dreams, their will, and their ideas don't. The path to peace was never our cross to carry but a vehicle to drive us into tomorrow.

But we can't do it all alone. We are youths. We are the pinnacle of potential. We must band together and become the catalysts to achieving what centuries of dreamers and philosophers before us couldn't.

Let us harness the future for our peace.

Let us become understanding and accepting.

Let us carry the boats on our backs and learn to accept that which is given to us, as youths and as a united people. It is our duty now, and those next to us, to truly and wholeheartedly understand and accept.