

Living for the Sake of Others - A Core Ambassador for Peace Meeting

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'I have enjoyed myself very much and have a lot to say next time we meet', Peace Aryee said, grabbing my hand as I was saying farewell to people at the end of the event.

Last night was a very special, intimate, inspiring afternoon tea with Ambassadors For Peace (AFP). For the first time we had around ten young people who joined over thirty AFP. The evening started with people gathering in the Lancaster Gate Café discussing, chatting and having snacks. It felt like a big rendezvous and when the young people started coming in one by one, it didn't feel awkward as we were welcomed at their tables.

At around 6:30 we moved to the other room, where we could have more focused discussions on what the AFP have been doing the past month. It was very moving as everyone started speaking very openly about their projects. From the very many who spoke, William Nkata shared about a school project in Malawi, expressing how the type of values UPF represents of 'One Family Under God' and the spirit of inclusion were really evident and made a difference in a new school which allows students from different cultural & religious backgrounds to study together. There were loud cheers in response to his report. This was closely followed by Janet Baddeley, another Peace Ambassador, who shared about her most recent street fair in Watford and that it was so successful that they now have funding for any such events they are likely to do in future. So many people shared, that the spirit in the room was powerful.

We heard from Peace Aryee, who has a project in Ghana, that pays for the school fees of pupils from poor families. She explained that she could influence the bakers society to help fund her project and contribute more regularly. Seeing her dream beyond where she is at and still manage to accomplish something so important – education, while working with various organizations was beautiful. Then we had Prof. Ian Hall, who also explained something about his activities. He had taught music to the former President of Ghana. Having the former teacher of a President within our midst was also very much inspiring, for me and I guess for us young people. We could see how we are not different from that president, from the little stories we heard. We are not far from making a difference. We just need to know what it is that we feel called to do. It was very reviving. I also had the chance to present Youth UPF- UK and some of the core members, the projects we are doing and the recent Youth Achievement Award that was largely supported and driven by the people connected to the Universal Peace Federation- UK. I also explained about the Youth UPF – European Chapter project in Malta of which three of the participants of the UK Team were present.

The next part of the evening, was a presentation by Robin Marsh followed by Margaret Ali on the topic which brought everyone today exploring the idea of “Living For The Sake Of Others” - one of the UPF Founder's key principles. Robin Marsh gave a wonderful sound PowerPoint presentation, with quotes from different religious books, explaining how we feel or receive more satisfaction in giving because we inherited this characteristic from God, (It is hot-wired into our DNA.) who found joy in giving everything for the creation. Robin also drew from simple experiences like watching romantic comedies which have a positive or happy end, makes us happy because we have an original mind from the creator which is one to experience joy, to be happy and how the happiness the characters feel connects with our inner self that searches for and wants to be happy. Again, happiness does not come by a relationship with oneself but when you share with others, with God or with nature. We need to have a give and take, give and receive relationship with a subject or object partner to be happy.

Margaret Ali, spoke very enthusiastically about how we can become such people of character who live for the sake of the other and how living such a life actually helps us become a better person. She spoke in detail about how to achieve spiritual growth. She explained how we are both physical and spiritual beings, but as we live on this earth, we sometimes forget that and just focus on our physical self. As an example she described how we wake up, look at the clock, go for the fridge and find something to eat and rush out because we are late, to get to somewhere. However, she made it clear that it is just growing physically but not necessarily becoming mature. In order for our spirit self to grow so we can become a well- rounded, mature human being we need to love and do good deeds. We need to live for the sake of the other, to have others in mind and only then can we feed our spiritual body with the vitality elements which are given from our creator, the origin, God. We were given everything and have the capacity to become co-creators in God's image. We need to fulfil our responsibility which is very small compared to all that God has to do but requires our 100% effort in trying to do our best and to be sensitive to others needs.

Dr. Sheikh Ramzy, also spoke about living for the sake of others, sharing his experiences on how he devoted his life for God. He explained that it was a very personal moment. He shared when he was younger, he thought that Islam was right and others were wrong. He thought that the other religious believers went straight to hell. As he slowly devoted his life to God, he realised it is not the case. He came

to understand that if God had wanted to create everyone the same He would have made everyone with the same faith. God wanted us to be different and to learn from each other by practicing love with each other. He shared some thoughts from the Qur'an on living for the sake of the other.

When Dr. Ramzy finished, the floor was open for everyone and the most extraordinary things happened, everyone had such deep experiences to share about living for the sake of the other and being put to the test and funny enough just the day before too.

Dina Mandalia had to bring someone to the hospital, a new neighbour that knew no one else. She had made the effort to get to know her earlier, and she had come back to her for help. Dina agreed even though she was tired. William who had saved a friend by just turning up at the house after a random call he had received earlier. Even late after work, making the effort had paid off. His friend had taken an overdose and he could call an ambulance. Such stories were very moving and showed that their constant devotion to others had made them able to connect to their inner voice. There was so much to say, so many testimonies. Gloria, a 75 year old grandmother, who really looked 19, shared part of her story. She said that going the extra mile for others had made her who she is today. She has never lacked, is happy and feels safe. She said she was so glad to have met so many young people today. She gave a hug to most young people and thanked us for the energy in the room. The evening was such, there was closeness and people shared stories they never thought they would.

Everyone benefited from each other and could silently resolve to listen to their conscience when dealing with others. We all expressed the intention to live for the sake for others by being the best we can. The next meeting will be on Saturday August 31st when we will be celebrating the first anniversary of Father Moon's passing from 2:00 to 5:00 pm.