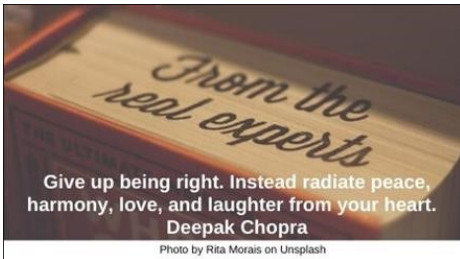




# EXPLORATION

## Harmony

### Readings



#### 1. *Why They Sing*

by Rev. Carie J. Johnsen

I sing because of the joy and camaraderie it brings into my life. Music expands my world.

My great pleasure in singing in the choir is the opportunity to bring the music I love to others. Because I can, and no one has run screaming from the building, yet, even if I don't quite always "sing in harmony!"

I sing because I love making music with UUs and other people I care about.

A raggle-taggle choir such as ours, with a good director, can realize the essence of the music. Individually, we're not much, but together, the sound we make is bordering on magnificent... by singing, my life is filled with the very best.

Making connections with the choir brings an even fuller sense of community with friends, with other UUs, and with the divine interconnected web of life.

I love the challenge of making the notes all come together and blend with other voices. Making music together is the ultimate expression of community harmony.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/reading/184730.shtml>

#### 2. *The Enlightened Path*

by Dr. Steven Mintz

The Eightfold Path is the means by which enlightenment can be realized.

The [eight steps of the] Enlightened Path can be grouped into three categories

- ◆ Morality—right speech, right action, right livelihood
- ◆ Meditation—right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration
- ◆ Wisdom—right understanding, right intent

An enlightened view of the self leads to compassion. The practice of love and compassion leads to wisdom. Wisdom leads one to surrender ego to be part of the larger self. Compassion is the natural outcome of enlightenment and wisdom.

The Eightfold Path includes what the ancient Greeks thought of as virtues, emphasizing the intellectual virtues as a pathway to compassion for others.

Buddhism has a different conception of human nature from Aristotle, but, like him, it believes that it is from our human nature that our virtues and vices arise. The Middle Way is the path between two extremes, close to Aristotle's idea of the "golden mean" whereby every virtue is a mean between two extremes, each of which is a vice. In Mahayana Buddhism, the search for happiness and meaning is through the middle path where moderation of behavior brings harmony to life.

The bottom line is we should avoid extreme behavior in life—neither be overly harsh with others or act meekly and not express our point of view. We should seek out morality and wisdom and act thoughtfully towards others—treat them like they are our brothers, sisters, parents and endearing friends. If all of us did that then perhaps the level of incivility in society would be reversed. The Buddhist "Middle Way" is a great place to start.

Source: <https://www.stevenmintzethics.com/single-post/2018/07/02/The-Buddhist-Enlightened-Path-to-Happiness-and-Meaning#>

#### 3. *Divided No More*

by Rev. Kirk Loadman-Copeland

The phrase "being broken, wanting wholeness" comes from Unitarian Universalist minister Marilyn Sewell. It is a statement about the human condition, which is not an either/or but a both/and. Not only can we be broken and want wholeness, but we can be broken and whole at the same time when our brokenness is incorporated into our wholeness. Parker Palmer sees brokenness in having to live a divided life. He writes, "Most of us know from experience what a divided life is.

Inwardly we feel one sort of imperative for our lives, but outwardly we respond to quite another. This is the human condition, of course; our inner and outer worlds will never be in perfect harmony. But there are extremes of dividedness that become intolerable..." and these undermine the possibility of wholeness.

Source: Touchstones

#### 4. *Teaching Children Ho'oponopono*

by Jeana Iwalani Naluai

...*Ho'oponopono* was always in the family. In my house growing up, we called it Family Meeting. My father was the *Haku*, the mediator. If we, as a family, were out of alignment this was our time for *Ho'oponopono*.

A time to ...get back to harmony with one another [by]...

- ◆ Learning how to communicate with one another
- ◆ Empathize with others
- ◆ Learning to be listeners
- ◆ Coming to working agreements with others

Oftentimes, children are not offered the opportunity to share how they're feeling. They need a message "it's OK to share".

...In our household, we have a practice to return to harmony when a conflict occurs. ...I allow each of them to

share what they experienced and how it made them feel.

It might sound ...like this, “Kala called me stupid,” or “La’au bumped into my lego project on purpose and didn’t say sorry,”

...If you’re not the one speaking, you’re not allowed to talk. No interrupting. No making faces. No noises. ...I let them know that if they interrupt in any way, they will lose their turn to share. Kids really don’t want to lose the opportunity to tell their side of the story.

Everyone else has the job of listening. This allows the Speaker to be heard and get to focus on sharing their experience. ...Each person gets a chance to speak and share how it made them feel.

Once everybody had been able to share, I follow up with questions like, “Oh, well, how would you like it if that happened to you?”

Normally I get a, “I wouldn’t like it very much.” Or something like this.

My job as *Haku*, mediator, is to support ...making sure there is understanding. Making sure everyone is heard, that what was felt is shared, and asking the kids to say sorry.

Source: <https://www.hoomanaspamaui.com/hooponopono-for-kids/>

## 5. *Deep Ecology and Harmony* by Stephan Harding

The word ‘ecology’ ...is used to refer to the ways in which living things interact with each other and with their surroundings. For Arne Naess, ecological science, ...cannot answer ethical questions about how we should live. ...Deep ecology ...focuses on deep experience, deep questioning and deep commitment. ...Ecosophy [is] an evolving but consistent philosophy of being, thinking, and acting in the world, that embodies ecological wisdom and harmony.

Deep experience is often what gets a person started along a deep ecological path. Aldo Leopold, in his book *A Sand County Almanac*, provides a striking example of this.

...As a wildlife manager..., Leopold adhered to the unquestioning belief that humans were superior to the rest of nature....

...Leopold was out with some friends ...in the mountains. Being hunt-

ers, they carried their rifles... in case they got a chance to kill some wolves. ...They saw what appeared to be some deer..., but ...realized that it was a pack of wolves. They ...began to shoot excitedly into the pack.... An old wolf was downed by the side of the river, and Leopold rushed down to gloat at her death. What met him was a fierce green fire dying in the wolf’s eyes. He writes in ...*Thinking Like a Mountain* that: “there was something new to me in those eyes, something known only to her and to the mountain. I thought that because fewer wolves meant more deer, that no wolves would mean hunter’s paradise. But after seeing the green fire die, I sensed that neither the wolf nor the mountain agreed with such a view.”

Source: <https://www.schumachercollege.org.uk/learning-resources/what-is-deep-ecology>

## 6. *Measuring Harmony in a Country* by Daniel Bell

That word—harmony—can be misleading in English because it hints at uniformity. In Chinese, it implies both peaceful order and respect for diversity. Every Chinese intellectual knows the Confucian saying that exemplary persons should value harmony but not uniformity.

In fact, the contrast between harmony and uniformity comes from an even earlier text that justifies harmony on the grounds that the ruler can only improve his policies if his advisers advocate diverse viewpoints. Diversity was also justified on aesthetic grounds: a diverse world is more pleasing to the senses. Diversity here means valuing difference, not simply toleration. But conflict arising out of differences should be dealt with peacefully. Harmony, in short, is the idea that social relations characterized by peaceful order and respect for diversity are essential.

But how can harmony serve as a guideline to evaluate a country’s political progress? Global indicators offer little guidance: not a single index, for example, measures family wellbeing as an indicator of human wellbeing. So, we made one – the Harmony Index. We began with the relatively uncontroversial assumption that four types of relation-

ships matter for human wellbeing: those within (1) families, (2) between citizens, (3) between countries, and (4) between humans and nature.

...The four relationships were broken down into a few indicators with corresponding measurements for

1. trust between family members and citizens,
2. diversity of civic life,
3. inclusion of minorities,
4. integration into diverse kinds of international organizations,
5. peace within society and between countries, and
6. environmental performance.

The higher the score on these measurements, the more harmonious the country.

Source: <https://www.ft.com/content/0aa0a360-5049-11e3-9f0d-00144feabdc0> and <http://www.miqols.org/howb/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Bell-Mo-2014-Harmony-in-the-world.pdf>

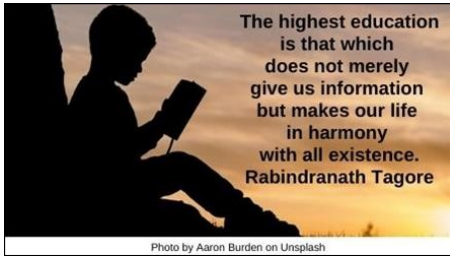
## 7. *Social Justice or Social Harmony?* by Gudjon Bergmann

...Social harmony seeks to improve relations between people who are at odds, while social justice reform is about changing policies and laws through the political system. ...

...Social harmony ...looks for potential bridge-building opportunities and attempts to find common ground before trying to solve difficult issues. The social justice approach seeks to highlight injustices in the public domain, draw attention to them in any way it can, and then solve them through legal reforms. In many cases, anger and outrage are used as catalysts.

...Some injustices are gut-wrenchingly-wrong and need to be fought against with great emotion. We applaud those who have chosen this path. Our only hope is that they practice self-care and don’t allow themselves to be devoured by the accompanying emotions.





At the same time, it is important to build bridges between people of different faiths and ideologies, especially people who think that they have less in common than they really do ...

In Contact Theory, sociologist Robert Putnam explains: “knowing someone within a particular group means a more positive assessment of that group in general—whether you have known that someone for a long time or not.”

...Nelson Mandela famously said that: “The best weapon is to sit down and talk.”

...If the forces of social harmony have done their job, some bridges will already have been built. ...

Conversely, if all the bridges have been burnt and people are shouting at each other in righteous rage from opposite ends of ideological chasms, then no minds will be changed and no peace will be found.

Source: <http://www.harmonyvii.org/blog/social-justice-or-social-harmony>

## Wisdom Story

### *The Wandering Teacher*

Once upon a time there was a Teacher who was known far and wide as one who had mastered all the great disciplines of a spiritual seeker. She wandered the country, and whenever people heard she was near, they traveled to seek her wisdom and her guidance.

“Great Teacher,” one would say, “I wish to get closer to God.” “By what path do you travel now?” she would ask. “I study the scriptures, diligently applying myself day and night to unlocking their mysteries,” might come the reply. “Then you should put down your books and walk in the woods—thinking nothing, but listening deeply.”

Another would say, “I do good to every person I meet, doing all that I can to serve their needs.” “Then for a time,”

the Teacher would reply, “consider yourself well met and strive to serve your own needs as you have so well served others.”

One day the Teacher noticed someone in the back of the crowd, someone not pushing his way to her as most of the others did. She went to him. “What is it I can do for you?” she asked.

“I do not know,” he relied. “I feel in need of something, but I do not believe in God and have nothing you could call a ‘practice.’” “When do you feel most alive?” the Teacher asked. “When I am playing with my children,” the man said without hesitation. “Then play with your children,” said the Teacher. “And you will find what you seek.”

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/adults/practice/workshop1/wandering-teacher>

## Snippets

“...I want first of all—in fact, as an end to these other desires—to be at peace with myself. I want a singleness of eye, a purity of intention, a central core to my life that will enable me to carry out these obligations and activities as well as I can. I want, in fact—to borrow from the language of the saints—to live ‘in grace’ as much of the time as possible. I am not using this term in a strictly theological sense. By grace I mean an inner harmony, essentially spiritual, which can be translated into outward harmony....”

*Anne Morrow Lindbergh*

“This business of *Hozho* [is complicated] ... I’ll use an example. Terrible drought, crops dead, sheep dying. Spring dried out. No water. The Hopi, or the Christian, maybe the Moslem, they pray for rain. The Navajo has the proper ceremony done to restore himself to harmony with the drought. You see what I mean. The system is designed to recognize what’s beyond human power to change, and then to change the human’s attitude to be content with the inevitable.”

*Jim Chee*, a fictional Navajo detective in *Sacred Clowns* by Tony Hillerman

“One heart is not connected to another through harmony alone. They are,

instead, linked deeply through their wounds. Pain linked to pain, fragility to fragility. There is no silence without a cry of grief, no forgiveness without bloodshed, no acceptance without a passage through acute loss. That is what lies at the root of true harmony.”

*Haruki Murakami*

“What makes this danger so terrible is that humans tip the balance of your world. No other species can make such a difference, for good or ill. If humans can live in harmony with other forms of life, the world rejoices. If not, the world suffers—and may not survive.”

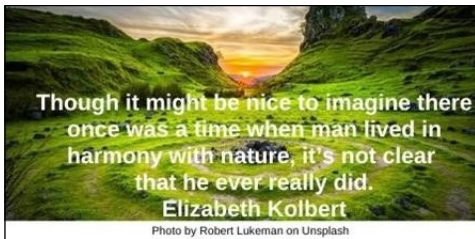
*T. A. Barron*

“To live content with small means; to seek elegance rather than luxury, and refinement rather than fashion; to be worthy, not respectable, and wealthy, not rich; to listen to stars and birds, babes and sages, with open heart; to study hard; to think quietly, act frankly, talk gently, await occasions, hurry never; in a word, to let the spiritual, unbidden and unconscious, grow up through the common. this is my symphony.”

*William Henry Channing*

“The scientist’s religious feeling takes the form of a rapturous amazement at the harmony of natural law, which reveals an intelligence of such superiority that, compared with it, all the systematic thinking and acting of human beings is utterly insignificant reflection. ...It is beyond question closely akin to that which has possessed the religious geniuses of all ages.” *Albert Einstein*

“True social harmony grows naturally out of solidarity of interests. In a society where those who always work never have anything, while those who never work enjoy everything, solidarity of interests is non-existent; hence social harmony is but a myth. The only way organized authority meets this grave situation is by extending still greater privileges to those who have already monopolized the earth, and by still further enslaving the disinherited masses. Thus, the entire arsenal of government—laws, police, soldiers, the courts, legislatures, prisons—is



strenuously engaged in ‘harmonizing’ the most antagonistic elements in society.” *Emma Goldman*

“Some cultures, for instance, are collectivist; others are individualistic. Collectivist cultures, like Japan and other Confucian nations, value social harmony more than any one person’s happiness. Individualistic cultures, like the United States, value personal satisfaction more than communal harmony. That’s why the Japanese have a well-known expression: ‘The nail that sticks out gets hammered down.’ In America, the nail that sticks out gets a promotion or a shot at American Idol. We are a nation of protruding nails.” *Eric Weiner*

“Gandhi was not talking about defeating or overthrowing anyone. Satyagraha—Gandhi’s nonviolent action—was not a way for one group to seize what it wanted from another. It was not a weapon of class struggle, or of any other kind of division. Satyagraha was instead an instrument of unity. It was a way to remove injustice and restore social harmony, to the benefit of both sides.” *Mark Shepard*

“I wish that I could put up yesterday’s evening sky for all posterity, could preserve a night of love, the sound of a mountain stream, a realization as it sets my mind afire, a dance, a day of harmony, ten thousand glorious days of clouds that will instead vanish and never be seen again, line them up in jars where they might be admired in the interim and tasted again as needed.” *Rebecca Solnit*

## Questions

**The following questions are for your consideration.**

1. In reading #1, Carrie Johnson writes about the feeling of harmony

when singing in a choir. She is not writing primarily about singing in harmony, but of the satisfaction of experiencing harmony in community. What efforts or communities have you been involved in where you experienced harmony? What synergy was there because of that harmony? By contrast, what efforts or communities have you been involved in where there was discord or conflict? How did that detract from the mission and goals? What needed to happen to overcome the discord or conflict? Based on these experiences, what value do you place on community harmony? Why?

2. Steven Mintz, in reading #2 writes about the Eightfold Path of Buddhism, which emphasizes the Middle Way as the means to harmony. Which of the eight steps of this path do you think are most important? Why? Which of these do you practice in the normal course of your life even if you do not practice Buddhism? Confucian teachings, Buddhism, and Native American spirituality emphasize harmony. In what ways did Jesus emphasize harmony, including social harmony?
3. Reading #3, equates harmony with wholeness. Does linking these two make sense to you? Why or why not? What are some of the characteristics of a divided life? How do these disrupt harmony? In your own life, what value do you place on harmony? Why? What actions or experiences contribute to your sense of inner harmony? What disrupts or detracts from your sense of inner harmony?
4. In reading #4, Jeana Iwalani Naluai describes the process and benefit of *Ho‘oponopono*. In your childhood, how was family harmony cultivated, ignored, or undermined? Would the practice of *Ho‘oponopono* have enriched your childhood? Why or why not? How? Were their rituals in your family as a child that promoted harmony? What were they? How did they do this? If you did not experience family harmony, how did that impact you? What role

could *Ho‘oponopono* play in creating and sustaining Beloved Community?

5. In reading #5, Stephan Harding writes about ecological wisdom and harmony. What is your relationship to, experience of nature? What role does your desire to be in harmony with nature play in your ethical decisions and actions? Have you ever experienced a revelation in nature similar to the one described about Aldo Leopold? If yes, what were the circumstances and impact on you? How does the belief that humans are superior to the rest of nature disrupt the possibility of harmony with the earth? What would it mean if our concept of Beloved Community expanded to all life on Earth, as well as Earth itself?
6. In reading #6, Daniel Bell writes about measuring harmony in a country. He suggests that the Confucian ideal of harmony valued diversity rather than uniformity in its pursuit of peaceful order. Key to this was the expectation that “conflict arising out of differences should be dealt with peacefully.” In looking at the degree of harmony within a society, he looks at four relationships and six indicators that affect harmony. Countries were only ranked once using their harmony index. This happened in 2013. Of 43 countries, Canada was ranked 12<sup>th</sup> and the United States was ranked 42<sup>nd</sup>. On which indicators do you think your country ranks well? Why? Poorly? Why? What could be done to improve your country’s ranking on the Harmony Index?
7. In reading #7, Gudjon Bergmann compares social justice and social harmony. How can social justice benefit from attending to social harmony? How can social harmony be enhanced through seeking to bring about more justice?

**The following questions are related to the Snippets.**

8. Anne Morrow Lindbergh defines inner harmony as being at peace, as a singleness of eye, a purity of



intention, and as having a central core. Does her definition resonate with you? Why or why not? What would you add or delete? She makes the further point that an inner harmony leads to an outward harmony. Do you agree? Why or why not? Finally, can people be in outward harmony with others if it is not grounded in an inner harmony? Why or why not?

9. Tony Hillerman wrote about *Hoozho* through the character Jim Chee, a fictional Navajo detective. While *Hoozho* can refer to walking in beauty, it also refers to seeking harmony. The harmony that Hillerman had in mind is not the Kumbaya kind. Rather it is restoring oneself with reality, no hoping for rain but becoming reconciled with, as an example, a drought. Have you ever sought to be in harmony with the inevitability of life, of trying to align yourself, as it were with the “bad things that can happen to good people?” If yes, what difficulties did you encounter? If no, what difficulties could you imagine in trying to do so?
10. Haruki Murakami writes that harmony is only one aspect of our deep connection with others. True harmony also arises out of shared wounds, pain, and fragility. How can experiences like these help to forge a truer, deeper harmony with others?
11. T.A. Barron laments the fact that humans in the industrialized world have not lived in harmony with nature. What are your concerns in this regard? What can be done to move toward harmony with the earth? (If this is of particular interest, you may want to explore Project Drawdown at <https://drawdown.org/solutions>)
12. Unitarian minister William Henry

Channing wrote the piece that he called *My Symphony*. It was a summary of how to live in harmony. Which aspects of his symphony are especially meaningful to you? What would you add to his list?

13. Albert Einstein writes about the harmony of the natural law, which, for him, was imbued with a superior intelligence far surpassing that of human beings. How does his sensibility impact your sense of the universe and the natural laws that humans have identified? What sense do you make of the grand harmony of reality?
14. Emma Goldman writes that “True social harmony grows naturally out of solidarity of interests.” While she may overstate the issue of working and not working, there often is little solidarity between the “haves” and the “have-nots.” If this diagnosis is correct, achieving any meaningful social harmony will be extremely difficult. Based on the Harmony Index referred to in question #6 above, the difference between Canada and the United States is vast. Given the example of Canada, what could the United States emulate to address the divide between the haves and have-nots?
15. Eric Weiner contrasts Japan’s value of social harmony with the United States value of personal satisfaction. Since each, taken to the extreme, can be problematic, how can they be harmonized in the East and in the West?
16. With respect to Emma Goldman’s and Eric Weiner’s perspectives,
17. Per Rebecca Solnit, how can we share our experiences of meaningful harmony with others? What role does/can art and science play in this endeavor?

Gandhi sought “to remove injustice and restore social harmony, to the benefit of both sides.” While we might doubt the possibility of success with this approach both Gandhi and later, Martin Luther King, Jr. achieved significant advancements. In essence, they were able to create enough social harmony to advance certain societal achievements. Given the worldwide protests over racism, what can be done to address this and create some social harmony?

