

# FROM FEAR TO PEACE

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Theoretical approach of the book of Thierry Janssen:  
"Vivre en paix" (Living in peace), published - in French - by  
Robert Laffont editions 2003, Marabout 2008.

The comments below were directly inspired by the book, in a theoretical way,  
but do not present truly a summary, nor reflect the spirit.  
Out of respect for the author, and for the sake of brevity,  
the testimonies, stories and examples of the book have not been used,  
even if it is they who gives the depth to the work.

## A) At the source of violence

### 1 / The fear

Thierry Janssen initiated the writing of his book in the aftermath of the events of September 11, 2001. Apart from the media coverage that was made, these events made a huge impact on everyone, by the extreme violence they represented. A natural reaction to such violence is anger, accompanied by the desire to make the perpetrators disappear as quickly as possible. However, in thinking about it, murdering an assassin, whether legally or not, only adds to the infernal cycle of violence.

This raises the question: why wanting to kill terrorists and then acting in mirror with them?

In fact, the anger behind this violence is generated by the fear we have of the perpetrators of this same violence. The fear of violence is therefore capable of generating an equally destructive and murderous violence. If we are capable of violence, of killing when we are afraid of those who kill, it is very likely that they, too, will kill because they are themselves in fear. Humans are struggling with the fears that lead them to violence, feeding a vicious cycle, terribly murderous.

Becoming aware of this way of functioning can be the beginning of a change, starting with our own awareness of our fears and violence, as well as the understanding and forgiveness of those of others.

Yet there is an alternative to fears, which is only possible if we become more conscious. And it's love. It starts with a love for ourselves first. Accepting ourselves as we are in all our reality in the harmony between our body, our emotions and our intellect. The confidence that we have in ourselves can then be widened on the trust in the others. It is the only way to lead to peace.

"If shadow can not exist without light, light can radiate without shadow ... it has only to flood the whole of space. Shadow is unconsciousness. Light is consciousness." The shadow is fear, consciousness is love.

Fear not only causes anger and violence, but it brings suffering. Love, in all its forms: forgiveness, indulgence, benevolence, generosity, sharing, ..., dissolves fear.

In front of complex conflicts, resulting from a thousand of causes and influenced by a thousand of others, it is difficult to understand the ins and outs. However, behind all the information, true or false, to which we have access, it is always the old wounds, and the fears of reliving them, which are at the root of all the conflicts, of whatever level they are. What people live on a large scale is the same thing as what each of us experiences in individual quarrels. Living them in a group amplifies the destructive force of these processes, which explains why human communities may have been responsible for the worst atrocities throughout the history of mankind.

For when fear is collective, individuals are ready for anything, acting on behalf of the community, releasing themselves from their own responsibility. As long as communities, peoples, nations, as well as individuals, live depending on their wounds of the past, they will remain unable to stop the vicious circle

of violence.

Our society is keen on war. We honor our warriors, and have military schools, but do not have a school of peace, where we would learn in a playful way to know each other, to respect each other, and to respect the other. This would require a profound transformation of our thought system. And it would be better for us to invest in inner progress than on the technological progress that can transport us to the moon.

## 2 / The repression (inhibition)

When studying the human brain, one can represent it in three levels:

the reptilian brain, responsible for all the vital functions and determined by instinct,

the limbic system (common to all mammals), responsible for emotions and feelings,

the neocortex, which manages all our intellectual functions, that is to say, roughly: thinking.

The three brains thus allow three levels of consciousness: instinctual, emotional and intellectual.

The collaboration between these three levels implies that when the neocortex is at the controls, it can stop the arrival of information from other levels, via repression (refoulement), that is to say that the secondary information from the instinctual and emotional levels, is sent back to the unconscious (for example, background noise, accelerating breathing, blink). The repression (refoulement) thus allows to use our intellectual potentials at the most of our capacities.

When our instincts and emotions are in contradiction with our reasonings, or when they are too painful to manage, we repress them too, and make them inoperative, unconscious. It then becomes possible to commit inhuman acts and to perpetrate atrocities with obvious rationality, but without feeling the slightest bit of emotion. Thierry Janssen does not hesitate to quote Hitler and Polpot, having ordered the death of hundreds of thousands of people. "The greatest tyrants are undoubtedly deeply wounded beings, whose means of survival was to repress their suffering so as never to feel it again, and this for the greatest misfortune of humanity. "

Yet, by ignoring this mechanism, we remain unable to draw lessons from history so as not to perpetuate misfortunes. And we all work that way, for example when we eat greedily as we watch the dead bodies of the television news. And this lack of knowledge makes us simply inhumane, while being unconscious of this.

A thought, a reasoning that ignores emotion, lies to us. Listening to our emotions can bring us back to the truth. Yet Western culture, by far, favors the thinking about the emotion. We live in our mental, disconnected from our body and our emotions, and are therefore all capable, not only of the best, but mostly of the worst.

By ignoring the emotional and physical signs, we create an imbalance in our functioning. First of all, it leaves us unable to meet our needs because we are unable to hear them; and in this way it leads us to manifest it by psychosomatic symptoms. Then the mind ends up running on its own. A purely mental reasoning can explain his own logic, but it can not explain the logic of life. The purely mental logics can thus lead to murderous follies, disconnected from all consciousness. If we identify with our own thinking, we no longer have access to the higher intelligence, to a spiritual consciousness, we are then able to find the most Cartesian arguments that will justify the logic of the worst horrors.

## 3 / The projection

In addition to the fears and the repression mechanism, we resort to a lot of often inappropriate behaviors, which will help the violence to be manifested.

We often conduct our relationships unconsciously using the mechanism of projection, which consists of interpreting the thoughts and emotions of the other, by unfounded assumption, according to our own, often unconscious, and not generalizable, mental and emotional attitudes. And so, what we project on

others, confirms what we already believe. We interpret the world with our glasses that do not have the color of reality. Yet we can not know what others really think. For, either, what they say does not necessarily stick to reality, or they just do not tell it to us.

We often think that others think the same thing as we do. Or we judge negatively in the other what we do not want to see inside us. We admire in the other the qualities we would like to have. And we confuse that with empathy, which is the true ability to understand others and to feel as they feel. To know and recognize this thought in mirror, can serve us to discover ourselves, and to make us evolve. Observing oneself and accepting oneself as we really are, makes it possible to be able to observe and accept others as they really are, and to avoid misunderstandings, judgments, conflicts. By refusing projection, we stop feeding our fears, and avoid creating situations that lead to violence.

#### 4 / The defensive attitude

Although the human being is gregarious, he lives permanently connected to fears: fear of being abandoned, rejected, betrayed, ignored. Fears engender all negative feelings: from anguish to mistrust, from anger to hatred, guilt and many more. These fears put us on the defensive and hinder our relationships, and that since our earliest childhood, and since the dawn of time. But these fears are, for the most part, in a way, the fruit of our intellect, which will develop all kinds of strategies to protect itself, but this will isolate us from others. These strategies range: from mask, to control, manipulation, rigidity and conformity. But we are not aware that these strategies lead us to suffer more than anything else. And our fears and our defensive attitudes lead us to consider others as enemies, and eventually lead us to wars of all kinds. And wars keep us in fear: a vicious circle.

And very often, these fears are unfounded, created by the intellect on the basis of its erroneous interpretations of reality (projection).

#### 5 / The masks we wear

One of the strategies to manage our fear and socialize in spite of it, is to hide it. It allows us to be recognized and loved ... for who we are not. But it also prevents us from living our true life, from feeling our true feelings, consciously. By controlling our masks, we will also try to control others. To maintain our mask, and magnify it, we always reject mistakes on others. We deceive others, but also ourselves, not allowing authenticity and honesty in the relationship. Above all, we do our best so that our fragility and our weaknesses can not become apparent! And in most cases, we are ready to fight fiercely to defend these appearances.

The moment when our tendency will be the strongest to put on a mask, is when we have to present ourselves publicly: to get a message across, or sell ourselves to strangers (to get a job for example). These are situations where fear can invade us. Yet, dissimulating our fear is rarely the most appropriate, especially since our emotions, through the signs of our body, may reveal us. Having the courage to welcome fear, to show ourselves as we are, and even to confess this fear, is the guarantee for us to be taken for who we are, and not for another: our mask. This is the path to confidence. And the state of mind that unveils gives an inner assurance. "Because we only receive according to what we ask and, showing a mask, consists in asking something that is for somebody else than us, namely our mask." With the risk, then, to accuse the one who gives, for what he has given to the mask.

#### 6 / Becoming conscious of our mistakes and acknowledge them

Our personality gropes in the darkness and fear, indulging in the habit and always repeating the same mistakes. Our essence, if we pay attention to it, lights the way, far from fear. We can let it guide us, and teach us, far from control, from struggle, in the understanding of things and their positivity.

It teaches us that: "Every cause entails a consequence, and in this game we often are the author of the causes and the victim of the consequences."

By living under the diktat of the personality, we take the path of fear, mistrust, negativity, through judgment, denigration, anxiety, victimization, until depression. Our walls of protection are our judgments and our beliefs, inherited from our education, which we often erect like bunkers. "Our negativity hides our fear. "

By observing ourselves and knowing ourselves better, we can become conscious and accept our limits and our needs, without projecting on others the responsibility for their non-respect. And this acceptance leads to recognizing and accepting the limits and needs of others. We recognize our humanity and that of all humans. And this is how we can find peace.

## **B) From violence to dialogue**

### **1 / The combat, the flight, or the dialogue**

In the animal world, faced with danger, there are two possibilities: flight or attack. The attack corresponds to the war, and the flight, we can consider it as a cold war, because there is no acceptance, neither of the other, nor of the situation. However, retreat can be an intermediate way, if it is only a step, in order to avoid the hot war, to soothe the emotions of fear and anger, and to open the consciousness to something else. However, the flight breaks the bond and the trust.

Often we limit ourselves between these two choices, while there is a third for the human being: that of dialogue.

Dialoging provides an opportunity to confront ourselves with reality, to listen and understand others, to be listened to and understood by others. This requires ignoring fear, and betting on trust, and this requires first and foremost to lay down arms.

### **2 / Learning to communicate**

Solving crises can only be done by communicating. Non-violent communication offers various avenues to achieve this in a positive, constructive way.

A communication towards peace implies the following points of reference:

- Everyone, behind all appearance, has basically a good heart whatever happens.
- Our differences are superficial, related to our personality. Essentially, we have the same needs.
- Dialogue requires to observe, to feel, to recognize our needs, to be able to ask.
- The dialogue consists of expression and listening, without judgment.

To get there, it is better to:

- limit ourselves to the expression of the observation, free from judgment;
- speak on our behalf ('I' and not 'you');
- be conscious, quite precisely, of our real feelings and needs;
- learn to know and manage our angers, to express them in a healthy way, and to remain personally responsible of them, which leads us to refuse any form of aggressiveness and violence (see also the articles of "Our own violence" :

<http://sechangersoi.be/EN/4EN-Articles/Ourownviolence.htm>,

and "From the opposition to non-violence" :

<http://sechangersoi.be/EN/4EN-Articles/Opposition%20EN.htm>,

on this subject), because it is destructive for the other as well as for ourselves. Anger can go through us: it is not us;

- express beyond our thoughts, our feelings, in order to avoid projecting on the other our fears and our sufferings in the form of reproaches;
- take responsibility for our actions;
- let others take theirs, and act independently of them according to our needs and not theirs;
- keep in mind that we all have the same needs, to respect ourselves, to respect those of others, and to

bring others to respect ours;

- be able to ask without requirements (which allows the refusal), in echo to our needs and feelings, in a positive way, and in respect of the other;
- respect the needs of the other;
- be able to really listen (with empathy, without judgment), even when we are judged or attacked, and without imposing our solutions;
- listen to ourselves while respecting our limits;
- dare to take the first step in a conflict situation.

### **C) The missing consciousness**

#### **1 / Clever but not very conscious**

The means to achieve peace have been known for millennia, but we have not yet been able to truly hear them. The human being shows a lot of intelligence in certain fields, but he is still very far from having reached the consciousness, to make a full use of it. The absence of consciousness with inability to manage our fears, leads us far too often to make a very bad use of our intelligence.

The current globalization could give a serious boost to this transformation, essential for the human to survive from it.

#### **2 / Intellectualization - ego**

However, the intellect is prodigious in the sense that it allows us to be aware of our body and our emotions, and so to make choices by directing our own evolution. The other side of the coin is the existence of the ego: the identification with our thinking (and our representation of ourselves). Self-sustaining thinking will also make us absent from our lives, continually projecting ourselves into the past or the future, preventing us from being rooted in reality, making all our projections subjective.

#### **3 / Observing our thinking and emotions in the present moment**

In general, we have a hard time defining ourselves in the present moment. We never stop fleeing in the past or projecting ourselves into the future, thus missing the only moment where we can act concretely: the present moment.

The present moment is the moment of consciousness and transformation. It does not give way to regrets or hopes, but to reality. It's our physical feelings, our emotions and feelings that can help us stay in touch with the present, sweeping the purring of thoughts. By becoming the observer of our thoughts and emotions, we meet our essence, preventing their hold on us. "Observing the intellect is taking energy away from it." It is taking away the energy of our fears, of the war, and giving a chance to peace. By observing our thoughts and feelings, we cease to give space to the observation of the other, and the interpretation of what he thinks: we stop "supposing". We stop building and believing in theories that are not rooted in any reality.

The present time is the time of intimacy with oneself, and the others, the time of peace, the time of love. Fears can only exist according to the past and the future, they have no place in the present, and this is a powerful antidepressant.

The evolution that awaits us could be summed up by the quote extracted from the Upanishad:

"He who is in ignorance writes his life in stone.

He who seeks the spirit writes his life in the water.

He who is released writes his life in the air. "

#### **4 / Interaction between internal peace and international peace**

When we hide behind our masks, when we judge harshly those who do not correspond to our

references and when we are indignant by wars and injustices that the television offers us, we are very far from ourselves, from the consciousness of our experiences, and we thus perpetuate the wars on our scale, with our entourage, ready to complain, to whinge, and to spread our poison concerning them. How then can we envisage peace in armed conflicts? "Whenever we agree to reconnect with ourselves, we help create a little more peace in the world." Our elevation of consciousness is far more powerful than any wars we might wage for peace.

#### **D) Towards attitudes of consciousness and peace**

A prior work on oneself is above all necessary, before one can envisage peace in the relations and between the communities.

##### **1 / From defense to letting go**

We are each torn in two directions: the first, separating, driven by fear, our masks and defenses, which leads us to the opposition, the fight, the search for survival, and the control of what surrounds us. It can be called separator, personality, ego, false self, product of the intellect.

The second tendency, unifying, is characterized by letting go, it lets itself be carried by the stream, in confidence with the life.

Our defenses lead us to live what we fear, thus confirming our beliefs "Whenever we are afraid of others betraying, manipulating or controlling us, our personality strives to control and manipulate by force or seduction. So, as an inevitable consequence, the others try to escape us and we conclude that we were right to want to control them. Finally, when we are afraid of not being up to what others are expecting from us, and we are then trying to hide what we consider to be our imperfections, we become so rigid that no one can see the beauty and the overflowing creativity that inhabit us. Thus, in seeking to be perfect, we become really flawed. "

Prisoners of our past who led us to this vicious circle, it is difficult for us to get out of it. Only consciousness, which implies self-acceptance in all its dimensions, can get us out of it. Wounded by the past, worried about the future, only the present can comfort us and put us in peace, and reveal to us our essence, leaving suffering in the letting go, and realize us fully. (see also the tale "The wolf you feed" : <http://sechangersoi.be/EN/5EN-Tales/Thewolfyoufeed.htm> ).

##### **2 / From dependence to confidence**

In what is said publicly about love, there is often confusion with the notion of attachment and dependence, two very distinct poles of true love. Attachment is the most common form of relationship. The most important difference between the two lies in fear or trust, in control or freedom.

In the beginning of a love relationship, it is more about needs, and lacks. True love is yet to be built. And the beginning of a love relationship is much more based on a deal between two egos, who sooner or later will be unmasked. The ego hopes in the relationship that the other will solve his own problems. So everything is in place for misunderstanding until we discover that the other does not meet our expectations, does not heal our wounds, that we are the only one in a position to heal them. Only then can we really build a relationship of love. It is a choice that can be made in conscience, a direction to take toward which there is no suffering.

##### **3 / Breathe**

To stay awake to our consciousness in an emotionally stormy situation, taking our breath into consideration can help us soothe the body's reactions and regain our calm by steering it towards depth and toward a steady rhythm. This "reduces the consequences of the negativity of our adversary, without using the same arguments and processes as him". In this sense, "breathing is a precious instrument of

peace. "

In certain situations, when we feel judged; we put ourselves on the defensive, or begin to justify ourselves, in search of recognition, whereas our interpretation of a judgment is not necessarily correct. And facing our attitude, our interlocutor can only respond in mirror, closing the trap on the situation. If we breathe, regain awareness of the real situation, we may be able to reverse the situation and avoid unnecessary wounds.

#### 4 / From self-lie to lucidity

The state of consciousness here and now, with a lucid look at reality, for those who reach it, is never a permanent state. Most of the time, our ego intellectualizes reality, making us leave the consciousness, manipulating ourselves, and causing us to lie to ourselves and lie to others, and thereby create the circumstances that are conducive to conflicts. The more we are able to be true, the more we will already improve our relationships, while stopping being fooled and participating in the farce that our system of society represents. "Nothing is more dangerous than a liar who does not know he's lying," and we're all lying.

#### 5 / forgiving oneself - forgiving others

"Forgiveness is without a doubt the greatest gift that one can offer to oneself and to others. "

To be able to forgive, it is often necessary to forgive oneself. Forgiving oneself and forgiving others can relieve a lot of tensions, repair or improve relationships. When we are able to forgive, we can then see that love is stronger than fear, it gives us peace.

It is not a question of forgiving the acts, but the people, in their entirety: what they are, their thoughts, their feelings, their acts. To forgive is a choice, the choice in the present to relieve ourselves from the past, from our suffering. Each one acts in every moment according to his level of consciousness, and our consciousness evolves, it is no longer that of the past. Forgiveness is the key to liberation and healing. Self-forgiveness is leading to forgive the other and allows him to forgive us.

Forgiving is a choice that allows us to forget about the sufferings of the past, to rely on trust in the other, by recognizing for him the right to make mistakes, because we recognize this right for ourselves. Forgiving soothes much more than revenge can do it for a time, it is a gift that we make to ourselves.

#### 6 / From competitiveness to collaboration

The concept of war is not just about armed conflicts. It is a mode of operation that occupies our lives at all times. This is reflected in our language, in all forms of competitions and opposition of life. We resist nature, life. Our fears lead us to want to control everything, thinking to do better than life, than nature, able to make war on ourselves, if necessary.

Society, by all means, requires performance from us, and in general, in a very specific context, ignoring our real capabilities, which are making our essence.

From generation to generation, we are educated in fear, by trying to get us into a box, and everyone simply retransmits what he has learned, unaware that there are other ways. To break this vicious circle, only the consciousness of being there, makes it possible to choose something else, to go from the path of our fears to the path of love.

Faced with the conditional love of those around us, we have only the choice to revolt or to submit to it. Submission under a mask or revolt in violence. Unconditional love is marked by acceptance of the other. And to accept the other, we must first accept ourselves, and show ourselves without a mask.

The register of the competition in which we live requires us to fight on all fronts in order to remain a

winner. But "in the eyes of love, there is no real winner if there is even one loser".

## 7 / Beyond actions: thoughts and intentions

Beyond the concrete acts towards peace, Thierry Janssen draws attention to the invisible nature of life, which invites us to nourish other thoughts, other emotions, other intentions. "The outside world is a reflection of what is happening within each of us, we attract to ourselves what we refuse to see in us, it is the magic of the Universe, because everything has a meaning."

Our thoughts and intentions, even if not followed by actions, have a concrete impact on reality.

There is also the theory of morphogenetic fields, illustrated by the legend of the hundredth monkey (see the article on this subject: <http://sechangersoi.be/EN/4EN-Articles/Sheldrake%20EN.htm>). This theory hypothesizes that the evolution of each has an impact on the evolution of all, apart from any communication between individuals.

### **E) Achieving peace and transmitting**

#### 1 / Stopping reproducing the past

By liberating ourselves from our present fears, by accepting to forgive now, by recognizing the other's place and his rights, now; we are giving peace the chance for now and for the future. Learning from past experiences means going beyond conflict, stopping old resentment, being more conscious of the issues, of our fears, of the impact of our thoughts, recognizing our emotions and our real needs. This is the only way to free ourselves from all conflicts, from all wars, on any scale.

As long as we do not draw lessons from our past in this light, we will not be able to build a more positive future. As long as we do not decide not to reproduce what has always been done; as long as we do not break the vicious circle, we will perpetuate the massacres, remain prisoners of power relations.

#### 2 / Lasting happiness does not come from the stable knowledge but from the perpetual change

If we base our happiness on the presence of people, situations, or objects in our life; as everything comes to an end, we are condemned then to not remaining happy. "All happiness contains in itself his share of suffering." Only change is immutable. The search for such lasting happiness is therefore doomed to failure. By identifying ourselves with our possessions, or to the fact of being loved, we make the same mistake as when we identify with our thoughts. All of these are just ways to be and evolve. Happiness coming from circumstances brings satisfaction and pleasure; happiness that we find and choose in us, brings joy and peace. It requires, in order to attain it, to trust life, and to let go, fully accepting what is, in the present moment.

#### 3 / Changing from the inside to transmit to future generations

According to Thierry Janssen, whatever the religion, the message remains the same: "The world is one, diversity is necessary for this unity, and love is expressed through it. ". And we will need therefore fundamentally to transform the teaching to our children, and it starts from the cradle. And this transmission is only possible if we embody what we are trying to bequeath. An education of punishment, of competition, can only prolong the outdated mentalities.

#### 4 / Starting from oneself, for all, with the help of life

While decadence on a global level is still growing, there are more and more individuals in parallel, who, through very different paths, are carrying out a work of important internal evolution. It involves a psychological and spiritual path but also a work at the physical level to release the oldest emotional blockages, imprinted in our cells.

Beginning with oneself is the only possible way, to recover our essence, to leave our hatreds, and to nourish benevolence and cooperation, and to find peace and serenity.

Unlike a political approach such as communism, it is a spiritual path, because it comes from the heart, from the individual and conscious process, and does not go through the authority of any power balance. "A message of peace can not be released by war, it can only be proposed." This is a progress in that the progresses achieved by our knowledge are then shared by all and for all. The satisfaction of needs is then done in confidence, for the satisfaction of all, and not for the selfish purpose of defending ourselves from our fears; instead of the illusion of freedom that this attitude gave us, we then discover the true freedom, where the consciousness allows us to leave our defensive attitudes, by accepting what is, our real motivations can then appear and carry us towards the harmony in diversity.

In such a perspective, it becomes difficult to deny the existence of a higher intelligence that surrounds us, which is deep within us: life.

When we are at war (whatever it is), we are at war with life. The task and the road are long to go towards peace, and if we succeed, we will make a real leap in evolution. It is from the intention that we can start, and this intention can take place here and now.

## 5 / Transmitting

By choosing a positive approach to life, we are able to practice this intention. The most direct way to make this is to recognize all that satisfies us, pleases us. Even the hardships of life, even our adversaries, are helping us by making us evolve far from our fears, closer to love. They offer us lessons of life indispensable to awaken us. The ego then becomes the tool that can help us. So those who have begun to tame their fears can help those whose path is still dictated by fears, in order to join together harmony, and to work for a profound mutation in the world.

Fear stimulates war, love engenders peace. This equation defies pure rationality because it integrates the dimension of feelings and emotions, which we will not be able to ignore if we want to evolve.

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page : <http://sechangersoi.be/EN/4EN-Articles/Fromfeartopeace.htm>

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