

For the Sake of Peace

1. In the book's preface, Dr. Ikeda tells the story of a Japanese soldier who describes his experience in war with the comment, "The Japanese army is too cruel or words." (hardcover: p. xvii, paperback: p. xix) Have people you've known experienced war firsthand? Were they able to share what they experienced? Although difficult for most to tell and to hear, discuss the importance of those stories to a society.
2. Since the end of the Cold War in 1989, a time when many felt hopeful for the future, more than fifty nations have been in violent conflicts and millions of lives have been claimed. What were your thoughts about the prospects for world peace at that time? Did they change after September 11? Have those thoughts changed after reading *For the Sake of Peace*?
3. Dr. Ikeda states, "Communist regimes toppled because for too long they sought enemies outside of themselves, not attempting to see the evils they harbored within." (p. 19) Discuss possible evils that may prevent your country from achieving its potential as it relates to global harmony.
4. Dialogue is one of the critical steps toward peace, according to Dr. Ikeda. Is there ever a case where dialogue should be halted as a peace-keeping strategy? Dr. Ikeda suggests that there are times when, "to break the grip of arrogance, speech must be like the breath of fire." (p. 60) How might your upbringing have influenced the kind of dialogue with which you feel most comfortable—or, most threatened?
5. Central to progress in achieving world peace is an understanding of some of the underlying causes of hate and violence. How conscious are your government officials of the need for understanding root causes of conflict? Based on your country's policies and actions, discuss how your government views its role as a world citizen. Does this view differ from that of the people themselves?
6. Dr. Ikeda says this is a time "to vie with one another not for power or money but for achievement of humanitarian goals" (p. 73). He states, "Although competition originally meant 'seeking together,' it has come to denote defeating or triumphing over others." (p. 74) Is the pendulum swinging back? How have your own views of competition vs. cooperation changed as you've grown older?
7. Do you agree with the theory that "a borderless economy results in homogenization and a standardized consumer culture?" (p. 78) Is it possible for countries to open their borders to corporations with a global

- “brand” and still retain their identity? Discuss what you've observed about the strength of cultural identity during your travels to different countries.
8. If, as the author suggests, “the United States represents global society in miniature and foreshadows, for better or worse, the humanity of tomorrow (p.80),” what changes in the U.S. can help the world achieve harmony?
 9. Some people suggest that public schools need to return to basics—reading, writing and arithmetic—and maintain the separation between church and state. Dr. Ikeda maintains that “learning to respect the dignity of the individual must be the cornerstone of education in relation to human rights.” Should such a position be taught in public schools? What would be some perceived threats—and benefits?
 10. Dr. Ikeda stresses that “We must resist the temptation to assign good exclusively to one side and evil to the other.” (p. 115) What role does the news media play in polarizing issues—and people?
 11. Many suggest that politicians create war and that if it were up to the people, we would avoid violent conflicts. What evidence supports this belief? What evidence disputes it? What is your personal belief?
 12. Seven guidelines by which communities prosper are noted on page 145. How does your culture rate? How would you rate your own beliefs?
 13. Challenging the motives of growth and the modern scientific-mechanistic worldview, Dr. Ikeda suggests that “modern humanity mistakes knowledge for wisdom and pleasure for happiness.” (p. 165) Has this been true for you personally? For your family? For your workplace? In what ways have you worked to place “advancement” in proper perspective?
 14. Dr. Ikeda presents various types of time—physical time, historical time and existential or life-time, living in the present. How is this distinction valuable to you?
 15. Review and discuss the preamble of the World Citizens Charter that is presented on page 179. If “a peaceful future can only be created gradually, through the accumulated results of many talks and the slow but steady realization of each agreement (p.191),” do you believe the people of the world can have the patience and fortitude needed? If it is up to the people to create lasting change, what steps can you take to be a part of this global effort?

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