

What If?

Imagine no possessions, I wonder if you can No need for greed or hunger, of brotherhood of man Imagine all the people, sharing all the worldJohn LennonIt was an experience that I'll remember for a long time to come. Not that it was overly energetic or ground breaking, but I'll remember it for what it created in me: a hunger to learn about others. A week or so ago, Judy and I decided that we'd like to have some friends over for dinner on Saturday evening. So, before planning what we'd cook, we decided on who we could cook for. We have been blessed with a lot of great friends, and we could have had 10 of them over and had a wonderful time, but we decided that we wanted to do something different. We wanted to have people over who would add an element to the conversation that we couldn't get every day. We wanted to have a conversation with people who could really give a different perspective on what we hold for granted living here in Canada. This being said, we decided to invite one couple from this area who are absolutely wonderful at making people feel comfortable, another couple who are friends of ours who hail from Jordan but now live in Saint John, another couple from Jamaica who is currently attending college here in Sussex, my daughter Shannan and her boyfriend and my 16 year old daughter Lauren.Well, the day went perfectly, but what stands out most for me was the conversation that we had with Majd, a stunningly beautiful and articulate young woman from Jordan. Just as we were having a short lull in the conversation, her husband Souraj said, "Majd, tell them about your experiences in Ramallah." She then told us a riveting story of what happened when she was going to college in Ramallah, Palestine. She told us of how one evening when they were in their dorms they heard the thunder of hundreds of tanks rolling into town, and how, for 21 days, they were prisoners in their own rooms, forced to sit in the dark and listen to the bullets and bombs outside as the city was virtually flattened by the tanks. They spent the time talking, praying, searching for food and just waiting. One person, after a week or so of being trapped inside his room, looked out his window to see what was happening, and he was shot.I'm glad the room was slightly dim and that I was on the other side of it, because everyone would have seen a tear or two from me, though, I'm sure I wasn't the only one. "How could this happen?" I thought. What is happening to the prime directive that was and is the cornerstone of each and every religion that I know of; Love your neighbour.Those visions stayed with me most of the evening and long into the night. As I lay in bed at three in the morning this morning, I started thinking:What if people put their hatred aside and actually listened to each others needs and wants, would that stop the wars?What if people respected the ideas and beliefs of other nations and religions, would that create dialogue?What if people actually got along and discovered that there was no need for borders any longer, would that stop the killing of innocent people?What if life wasn't about how much you can make or how high and how fast you can climb the corporate ladder, would that stop the poverty? What if people did one thing a day to help someone else without asking for something in return, would that help to create a sense of connectedness? What if instead of incarcerating people for crimes against others and locking them behind walls out of sight of people, we taught them how to get along, would that help stop crime?What if everyone did as we did last evening and shared a meal with people from other nations, customs and religions, would that build a world of understanding and friendship?What's your "what if"? Better yet, what are you willing to do to create peace in your communities or in your world? Are you waiting for the politicians to solve the world, country, provincial or local crises? If that's the case, you'll be waiting a long time, because it seems that if there's no political or personal gain in a process for someone, then there's a good chance that nothing will get done. Lately, politics seems to be all about ego than anything else. No, if something is to be done, it is us, you and me, who must do it. Look at what happened in the Ukraine when the people said "enough!"This week, why not do what Judy and I did. Get to know the people who are traveling in this world with you. Seek out different people from different cultures. Invite them into your home to share a meal and do what you can to make them feel at home. Just get to know and understand them: What you'll find is friendship, what you'll create is peace.Make this your best week ever!

About the Author

For industry leading personal training, sports therapy, and fitness education, Aegis Training is the company.

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