

Creating Personal Experience: The Catalyst for Individual and Societal Peace

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ABSTRACT: Experience being define as actions that structure human existence and experience emanating in time of existence, now, is necessary that man should know how to create his own personal experience and be at peace irrespective of the ugly experiences bedevilling the global world today. Both the global and man's immediate environment are filled with horror, that mere looking or paying attention to it will throw one's psychic into insanity. Men now living in an uncontrollable want, love for money and quest for power have grown above measure; the monster of competition and comparison has now become the tradition of everyday living. These have penetrated into all angles of the society starting from politics, economy, education and religion. Religion which is the last hope for the common man is now the mainstream of all these anomalies. Hence, man is left with no place for refuge! Pain and agony have today eaten deep into the fabrics of our global world. What then should man do to regain and maintain his sanity? Where will now be the place of refuge for this entity called man? Man, listen and get it right, you are the only refuge you have; your peace is within you; you are the one to create your experience of peace and disaster! Hence, this work is out to critically educate man on how to create his personal experiences which will lead to his inner peace and development that will also translate to societal peace and development.

KEYWORD: Experience, Peace, Society, Development, Individual, Philosophy.

Introduction

Let history record this day being 31st of May, 2021. Now, as am writing this work we are forced to stay at home for the reason being that the Igbos' community are agitating to be allowed to separate from Nigeria and be a country of her own. Firing bullets sporadically is the order of the day and the lives of both security officers and innocent citizens are being wasted. Dead bodies of vibrant young men and women are laying at different corners of the streets of Igbo lands! Tears filled the eyes of many and shouts of cry are uncontrollable in many families. Children both of the age of reason and those who have not come up to the age of reasoning are sunk into this dramatic traumatic experience. This is a reminder of what happened in Igbo land last 54 years ago, a civil war between Nigeria and Biafra that lasted for 3 years, 1967-1970, when handsome number of men and women, both young and old lives were wasted from both sides. This incident is not different from what is happening in other nations of the world. All over the world, it is the same story. What a world! Should I allow myself to be living in this traumatic situation all the days of my life? No! I must create my own experience which will serve as a catalyst for my personal peace and that of the society

Creation of Personal Experience

Time is filled with experiences and experiences are what restructure time. Therefore, experience then is actions that structures human existence. Man's life is a bundle of experiences. These experiences fill your past and structure your present and future. Your life is fulfilled or not based on your experiences. According to Okoroafor (2021), Martin Heidegger has this to say, "Many lives are filled with horror and agony because of past experiences."

Your experiences are what wire your subconscious mind and what goes on there determines the state of your conscious mind; this conditions the happiness of individual mind which truly is the end product of the life in the society. The question then is, "What kind of experiences are your time on earth filled with and how can good experiences be created which will in turn brings societal peace?" Hence, they following subthemes will best answer the above question:

1. Create your Personal Space

Until you discover your personal vision in life, know it that you have no space where you will function; have a wonderful experience and be at peace. When you got immersed into what you love doing and what you do at ease, life become interesting and you start experiencing heaven on earth. But when you have no space, you will be running helter-skelter on another man's space which may be horrific. After facing one horrific experience you will still enter another which likely will be more horrific. This, you will continue to face all through life till death. Not functioning in one's personal space produces societal chaos; anarchy and doom, hence, what fills the society are just hooligans running helter sketcher on the streets, causing one problem or the other.

According to Stumpf (1994), Socrates called seeking one's personal space the pursuit of truth and the foundation of good life which one must seek all through his life To discover your personal space is very easy, please, look around you, what problem are you noticing which you believe you have the gifts of bringing a solution to it and you would also love to commit your whole life to it till death? Get involved with all your whole being for there is your space and it will pay you big time. Here, you are the president of your company/vision and you will always be at peace for you are not afraid of anybody's threat of sacking you. You wake up in the morning and you are happy that you are going to do what you love doing! Whenever you are at work, you will not like to go home soon because your work is a game to you! If you are into what is not your place, either as an employee or an employer, it is always a nightmare to you whenever you remember that the day is about to break and you will be going to that job that gives you a horrific experience. At this place you are always complaining about everything, about your co-workers, about your boss and about the work. This is really tragic! Whether as an employee or an employer always try to be at a work you love doing and have the gift. Here, the experience you will be having is that of peace and happiness.

2. Marry a Colleague

Who is a colleague? A colleague is not only one who is a co-worker. A colleague in this context is one who is interested in what you are doing; who is ready to lend hands to you either by making a contribution materially, by ways of meaningful advice or by giving you peaceful atmosphere to go about your vision. If you marry or befriend one who is anti of your vision, what a horrible experience you are creating for yourself on this road. The outcome of this is that the family circle which is the bed rock of the societal peace, where the younger generation first got trained will be in shamble.

3. Live for the Moment

In the journey of life there is no destination. Life is a process, at any stage you are in life, decide to be happy and be at peace. Many have fallen by the sword; many have been beaten by the quest of getting it fast and

young because they thought there is a destination to reach and take the breath of “I have arrived,” but this is an illusion! In illustrating this further, Okoroafor (2022) has this to say, Man has wandered away from his real home to live in the dark of restlessness! Man has fallen from the throne! Man created to exist for only one purpose – happiness, has been blinded by the irrational part of his soul which is his appetite, hence, turning away from the rational part of his soul which is right reason. With this all his activities have no aim in mind, although have really kept man busy doing nothing from day to day, week to week and year to year. With this spirit of insatiability, man is harvesting the end products of restlessness, anarchy, greed, jealousy, comparison, competition, pain, stress, hatred, poverty, sickness and death.

Think of it this way, during your primary school days your thought is, “If I will only pass my first school leaving certificate exam, I will be at peace!” For this reason, you put yourself on the sorrowful journey of “If I did not get this, I am finish!” When you got it, what happened? You jumped up and down for five minutes and it was over and you continued your sorrowful journey of how to enter college. This your sorrowful journey you continued in all your actions in the College, University, Youth Service Program, getting job, marriage and training children and in even what you called “making sure your children are successful.” My dear, when will you have rest, be at peace and have a wonderful experience? In all these your sorrowful journey, is it not time you pause and ask yourself the question “When will I be at peace and be fulfilled?” This is because you do not understand that life has no destination, it is only a process. At this process, try and be at peace, be fulfilled and be at peace at any stage in life. At any stage you are in life see it as a gift given to you to be happy and turn the act into a game of happiness. Happiness and peace is the *end* of life and anything you are doing must be turned into an act of happiness. If this is true why then do you deprived yourself of happiness in your activities to reach a destination that is not there.

Let me remind you, you see this cat race I mentioned above, it is the race of a man of no vision. On the part of a man of vision, all these are not his priority, although they are necessary but he does not set his heart on them rather he is occupied with his vision experiences. These mundane things that men of no vision struggle for are just things that follow men of vision. “Seek you first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all other things shall follow you (Matthew 6:33).” in vision journey a man of vision is aware that vision has no destination but rather is a process. At any stage he is in the process, he is always fulfilled and at peace. He knows that there is no destination; that is the reason the priority in his vision plan is when and who to handover the mantle to continue from where he stopped.

Never ruin your life like Martha in the scripture that is always busy running helter-skelter for what is not necessary. “Martha Martha, you are worried and upset about many things. Only one thing is important. Mary has chosen the better thing and it will never be taken away from her.” (Luke 10:41-42) ... How can a man/woman just only preoccupy his/her life with the above busybody acts of getting this and that, going for this meeting and that meeting, joining this group and that group without any vision for his/her life. This is really energy sapping and the worst horrible experience anyone can live for, but unfortunately this is only what majority of people (95%) knew life to be! What a wasted existence! Where there is vision there the people rejoice and where there is no vision the society suffers!

Issues that Matter

A lot of things are seeking for your attention in this your existential life! Please, only few are necessary, for issues that matter is few and many issues don't matter. My dear, please, pay attention only to issues that matter for they have the only ingredients that will give you good memorable experiences. To know issues that matter, you must get a vision for yourself. It is the compass that points and selects for you issues that matter and those that don't matter. “For no one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian issues (2Timoty 2:4). With experience, I believe you understand the meaning of the above expressions.

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A man of no vision will attend all the gatherings in his vicinity and he is interested in occupying the leading positions in that gathering. He is faced with fighting and quarrelling all the time for every trivial matter. For every group in his state, church, and community, he is a member and with the quarrelling and fighting among them he will never have good memorable experience. He belongs to all these groups just to keep himself busy which if he had a vision it would have kept him busy and with a glorious experience attached. Vision will select for you the group, people, friends, action, parties, ceremonies etc to mingle yourself with. Birds of the same feather flock together and it gives a wonderful experience! Hence, when one understands the reason why he is on earth, only few things then matter and this will translate to personal and societal peace.

Be a Blessing

There is only one reason for being alive and that is being a blessing to humanity. Any goal you are pursuing without this aim in mind will definitely turn around to hunt you. It will definitely produce horrific experience that will turn your life into existential waste. Have you ever being unlucky to witness the death experience of the so called wealthy men who became rich as a result of embezzlement of public fund? It is full of regrets and horrific nightmares. To exemplify this Okoroafor (2017) has this to say about Alexander De Great:

Alexander the Great, who had conquered lands from Macedonia to Pakistan, died in 323 BC at the age of 33 in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar II has this to say, “Let people not be like me only to live their lives pursuing honour and wealth. I spent my whole life pursuing wealth, but I was wasting my time most of the time. I wish also to let people understand that I came to this world empty hands and I will leave this world also in empty hands.” He closed his eyes after finishing talking and stopped breathing.

My dear, you will not even wish your enemy this ugly encounter.

Whatever you have was given to you on trust for the sake of blessing others. You will only have glorious experience if you get and use it as required—for blessing others. Have you felt the blessedness that the soul does experience whenever one gives out something with selfless motive before? If you have, that is the peace and tranquillity that a man that lives for others gets all the time. In fact, he is full of peaceful experience all through life! He starts living his heaven on earth but a man that lives only for himself and is even ready to kill to have all he wants will face the agony of hell here on earth irrespective of his cover-ups. Hence, the experience of being a blessing to others is the sources and summit of personal and societal peace and development. Here, Fagothey (1959) sees it thus, “As we wish ourselves all good and no evil, we must wish the same to others.”

Peace with all Men

One of the heaviest loads you will carry on this pilgrimage road is malice. Malice is a product of unresolved misunderstanding. It is called misunderstanding because what leads to quarrel is not real and the two parties lack the understanding. Therefore, malice is a game of misunderstanding which is nothing but shadow. Because of this lack of understanding nations have been destroyed and genocide has always been recorded in every generation.

This lack of understanding is what has kept news media into good business for generations; for they must have one episode or the other to cover all the time on their television channel. Social media only trend because of this monster called misunderstanding. One may not believe it that misunderstanding (malice) is not real, for many have lived on it all through their lives. Many even inherited it from their grandfathers and fathers. Nation and nation are into age longed malice; tribe and tribe are also into this monster for centuries; families and families have suffered their children because of this lack of knowledge; husband and wife even live in this horrific situation and siblings are not left out from its pain too. What an ugly experience is this! Please, get over this ignorance for it is not real! How? Because nothing on earth is yours!

According to Ozumba (1997), “Everything on earth is a shadow” (Plato)! Only one thing is real and unchanging---that is happiness (Aristotle)! “Happiness is only what rightfully belongs to man on earth; seek to get it with all your might, with all your soul and with all your heart” (Socrates). This is to say that many are busy pursuing shadow and leaving the real thing which is happiness. We kill to get shadow (money and power) and deny ourselves the real thing which is happiness! All other things on earth are external to man except happiness. All these external things must one day either leave us or we leave them! One may say, “Money, power, vehicles, houses, etc bring happiness. Yes, you are right, but it brings happiness only if it has spiritual presence (gotten through the right means and are meant for blessing humanity). Outside this they are the breeding channel of pain and agony.

Meanwhile happiness is a decision that comes out of contentment. If happiness is the end of everything according to Aristotle, which is true because everything man seeks on earth is because he thought it will bring him happiness when he gets them. The question would be, “Why do you ferment malice when you did not get these shadows?” Listen, if you are contented with getting of these shadows, you will know that you have enough to be happy. You are looking to get the whole world because you thought getting them will give you happiness without knowing that happiness is a decision and if it has anything to do with acquiring of these shadows it must have spiritual presence (meant for humanity).

Don’t multiply your unhappiness because of your unrighteous getting and ambition. This is because the more you acquire this ill-gotten wealth, the more you disturb the peace of your soul which is built on the foundation of justice, love and mercy. Anything that goes contrary to the justice of the soul breeds unhappy experiences. Therefore, do not keep malice because you want to get what belongs to another or because one is trying to collect or has collected what belongs to you. He is only multiplying his unhappy experiences. I suggest you should have mercy on him for the harm he brings upon himself produces unbearable experiences. With the mind-set of “having peace with all men” individual and societal peace and development are assured.

Enjoy the Good of the Earth

According to Okoroafor (2021), the earth is filled with abundance; it is given to you for happy experience, use them for this purpose! Place good food on your table; have good cloths on your wardrobe; live in a clean, decent, decorated and affordable house; blessed your surroundings with good ornamented flowers; hangout with good friends and build a happy family. All these must be done in moderation if it is to give good and happy experience. Outside moderation is bad experience. The war going on today between siblings, communities and nations is as a result of lack of the spirit of contentment. Where there is contentment, the goods of the earth are really enough for all and peace is assured.

Solitude is Indispensable

For Fagothey (1959), solitude is the state of the mind where the spirit, the soul, and the body are in alignment. It is a state where man is in total communion with the universe (God). It is a state of total quietness and wholeness. Here, man is one with nature. This is a wonderful experience that has no word for explanation. If you must practise all that have been previously explained, you must first start this practice. Create time to be alone, no distraction whatsoever, both internal and external. At this moment visualize the unity of your oneness with the divine. At this state everything about life will be explained to you by the transcendence (God). The experience you get at this moment is enough to refresh your spirit, soul and body. At this moment the miracle of body and psyche healing occur. This is because everything in you is in total agreement with the Divine and is also in an unexplainable peace. At this moment you are likely to sleep off. Practise this daily and you will become a blessed soul radiating his peace to the larger society.

Step for Solitude:

- Move to a lonely place
- Take the posture you feel okay for you
- Feel yourself together with the divine by thinking of all the wonders of creation
- After this stop acts of thinking, both good and bad
- You will be taken to this state of nothingness and blessedness.

Conclusion

The wars ravaging all nations of the world start from the restlessness of the individual souls. When the microcosm (individual person) is at peace the macrocosm (larger society) will equally be at peace. Hence, the peace of the society begins from each individual person creating peaceful experiences for him/her through the above aforementioned steps such as:

1. Create your personal space
2. Marry a colleague
3. Live for the moment
4. Be a blessing
5. Be at peace with all men
6. Enjoy the good of the earth
7. Practise solitude

Having the knowledge of creating peaceful experience, one is meant to have a meaningful existence that will translate to the peace of the society at large.

Recommendations

- This work being a background recipe for societal peace and development, I, therefore, recommend that the government of every nation should make the peace of their individual citizen a priority in governance.
- The subthemes of this work are so insignificant that it has been an area of negligence in our academic curriculum development which in essence is the core areas for human development and societal peace. Hence, I recommend them to be the bedrock that curriculum developers should look upon as they do their work.
- Philosophical enterprise is not all about interpretations and exegesis of the works of ancient celebrated philosophers, but a rational presentation of individual and societal problems and giving a way forward on them. Therefore, I recommend that this work should form a paradigm for modern day philosophical enterprise.
- Self-awareness is a must for every individual if he must live peacefully in a society. Hence, this work should serve as a self-discovery and development handbook for every individual in the society.

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