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Interview With Nasser Zaghi



Nasser Zaghi, a civil engineer by profession, was born and raised in Shiraz, Iran, where he lived until the age of 34. As a civil engineer, he directed major building

efforts, including urban housing, and commercial development projects throughout the Middle East. His other interests and activities included involvement in nonprofit work, public relations, and being a champion volleyball player at the national level.

In 1977, he moved with his family to the United States to begin a new life; one focused on health and personal education. Zaghi, as he prefers to be called, says he still is working to understand human needs and to nurture his passion for achieving peace and happiness for all persons. He is devoted to the mission of peace education through the nonprofit organization he founded - Love Is the Solution.

His lifelong interest in conflict resolution led him to the conclusion that individual happiness and even world peace is possible through the practice of the principles described in this article and his forthcoming book, *Love Is the Solution*, scheduled for release this spring.

He believes there is an inherent goodness in everybody, despite the negatives that surround us. An ordained minister with the Association for the Integration of the Whole Person, Zaghi founded Love Is the Solution in 2002. He is devoted to peace and dedicated to sharing his message of peace with all the people of the world.

How did you come to create Love Is the Solution?

I had never really thought about getting involved in an undertaking as large as a peace project, but after experiencing several critical problems in my personal life, and spending time analyzing world conflict issues, I found I could actually resolve any problem by accepting it, by being fair and doing my best in every situation. It took years for me to come to the realization that I had, in my own experience, discovered a way to resolve all challenges, and that I could offer the solution to others.

In 1995, I met Melvin Suhd, founder and president of a spiritual nonprofit organization, The Association for the Integration of the Whole Person, and his associate, Kate Markham. They were both interested in my ideas and philosophy. I talked with Mel and Kate about love in a different way and they

liked that. They encouraged me to develop and share my message, so that I could make some positive changes in the community and the world. I gradually came to understand that fostering happiness in individuals and peace in the world community are important missions. I knew then that I wanted to dedicate myself to the cause of peace and happiness through Love Is the Solution.

What are the basic principles of your organization?

We believe that love is the solution to all the difficulties that surround us. Difficulties are a part of life; there is no way to avoid them. It is our responsibility to respond to them in a way that ultimately brings peace to our world, to our community, and to us. I have developed three basic principles to guide us in meeting each difficult opportunity with love and peace:

1. It is every person's responsibility to meet life's challenges with an attitude of loving acceptance.
2. Each person must act with a total commitment to fairness.
3. Each person must be dedicated to doing his or her best in every way.

What is the mission of Love Is the Solution?

It has been said that, "when the power of love is greater than the love of power, the world will be a better place." Our mission is to facilitate that transition, to arrive at the solution. The primary mission is to establish an international educational organization dedicated to achieving peace by stopping hatred, which is the fundamental source of conflict. Love is the Solution is about how to bring peace to the world and happiness to individuals.

What makes you think your peace plan will work?

We are not at peace now. Terrorism occurs almost everywhere. Terrorists are the product of hate -- the result of "wrong" knowledge or lack of both knowledge and understanding. Hatred has undoubtedly either been experienced or witnessed by practically every one for centuries. Consequently, an almost universal phenomenon has developed in which hatred has either affected or become part of everyone's mentality to some extent. Now we are all witnessing a world struggling to control hate and protect humanity from hate. This is not peace. So far, no private individual, politician, or religion has the precise key to achieving this goal.

I start with a practical plan. It is a proven, step-by-step approach to arriving at the solution. The initial step is to establish an international educational organization dedicated to stopping hatred. Here is my proposal: we wit-

ness huge budgetary deficits everywhere on every level, and we witness an increase in defense budgets every year. To reduce these defense budgets and deficits, I believe that every government with a defense budget must establish a peace budget, allocating one percent of its defense funds to the peace budget, thus creating adequate funding for peace education. I see Love is the Solution as the "matchmaker" for peace in the world and individual happiness. I have been trained as an engineer, developer, and builder. I never start a project unless I have visualized the final step and possibility to complete the project. Now, I have started a peace project. If we don't achieve peace, we are going to experience disaster; everyone on the planet will be affected.

What does Love Is the Solution mean to you?

Love Is the Solution is a multi-faceted concept. Love itself is difficult to define because it means many things to many people.

Love can be defined as a warm attachment, enthusiasm or devotion - an unselfish, loyal and benevolent concern for the good of another. When viewed with the goal of world peace in mind, this definition fits very well. So does the explanation that love is compassion, kindness, caring, politeness, listening, positive offering, allowing, understanding, accepting, giving, and smiling. In the final analysis, love is the reason for creation.

Love is one of the purest and most beautiful feelings, emotions, and experiences of life. What you experience creates your definition of love. When love is experienced, it is learned. It then can be expressed in our subsequent conduct in this world, thus becoming our own definition of love.

I am looking for the world to be free of hate and prejudice. So far, everyone says it sounds so wonderful, but it is not possible. My idea is that it IS possible, not only that, but I have developed a step-by-step plan to reach real peace, not just control. I have started this and I am financing it myself.

What is your step-by-step plan?

Publish my first book to communicate my concept and establish Love Is the Solution as a peace entity.

Carry out an outreach program (currently underway) to obtain endorsements in support of our mission from more than 200 countries, and 100 additional influential leaders from throughout the world, and publish a book in this regard.

My second book, Love Is the Solution - Path to Peace, will outline and explain details of the one-percent solution, setting aside one cent per defense dollar for the creation of peace budgets throughout the world. This book

will help to educate individuals and government leaders about the benefits of setting aside one cent per defense dollar for a peace budget.

Promote peace and understanding of past and present aspects of the causes of conflict and its resolution by making a docudrama film set 100 years in the future, showing the pathway to a world free of prejudice, in which hatred has been erased, and peace reigns.

Establish a museum and a library dedicated to art and love.

Compose a proposal package including all the above subjects, for presentation to prospective funding resources.

Up to this point, I personally finance all. Beyond this point, I am going to need help to raise funds for continuing the project, for the next step, which is gathering 300 world leaders, to form an international body of peace ambassadors, from all countries, the sole purpose of which is to be in service of peace research, development, and education.

In your opinion, what are the sources and causes of conflict?

It all boils down to a lack of knowledge, education and understanding. I see no other option for real solutions unless all parties have been exposed to my approach to conflict resolution. We all need to learn to be realistic.

Now that the book is ready to be released this spring, how is the rest of your plan progressing?

For the first phase, I am way ahead of the projections I had. I was expecting it to take 20 years to get this far, but it's only been seven. An advance copy of my book is already on the desk of the Dalai Lama, Desmond Tutu and Rabbi Solomon Schiff!

The bottom line is that for every problem, there is a solution. Regarding peace, the existing conflict involves everyone. So, I'm trying to find a solution that benefits everyone. I am going to act like a middleman between 6.5 billion people, and bring them under one roof to

solve their problem. I thought deeply about this for several years. I interviewed many people with many different beliefs and opinions. I discovered communicating this is difficult. That's why I decided to write *Love Is the Solution*. It is a simple book that explains exactly what we mean by Love Is the Solution.

Then I thought about having a peace ambassador from every country, to gather and study the source of the problem – hatred and prejudice, and then educate people to understand how to reduce hatred and hopefully reach peace. I know this sounds like a huge project. Some of my friends think it is too big, but it isn't. It might be if we had to tell everyone WHAT to do. But our task is easier. All we have to do is show them HOW to do it.

*Nasser Zaghi can be reached at
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