

**Seriously...
are you taking the**

Peace

Jim Parkes

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"Over The Rainbow", Words by E Y Harburg, Music by Harold Arlen.
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**All author royalties from the sale of
this book will be donated to ChildLine.**

The pace of life today can be relentless. This amusing fictitious novel gives an insight into how your life could be more peaceful. Check out what the main character finds between the CD and DVD shelves at the supermarket that changes his whole approach to life, love and everything in between.

This is dedicated to my wonderful four children Stephen, Katherine, Rachel and Elizabeth. You continue to be a source of pleasure and joy to me; I love you deeply and treasure each one of you. Kindred spirits reaching out to each other across the decades, outside of time itself, I will always hold you in my arms as I will also hold your children and your children's children.

Love, Dad x

PRAISE

"This book will show you how to get the most out of yourself, and others, for the rest, and the best, of your life."

Brian Tracy, Author, The Way To Wealth,
www.briantracyinternational.com

"This book is 'unputdownable!' I just couldn't stop reading. I read it on my birthday - sitting on the grass enjoying the glorious summer sunshine and looking out to sea, over sand dunes and green fields. What a gift - days later it's still popping into my mind. A great book packed full of great analogies, common sense, practical tips and fun - Jim's warmth and humour shine through every page. It's too good to keep to yourself - you'll want to pass it on. This is essential reading for all peace-takers everywhere - are you ready to take the peace?"

Mary Collin, Life MInstD, Founder President, Professional Speakers Association (Midlands), www.marycollin.co.uk

"Hi Jim, An interesting read, I took the decision to alter my life totally in 1998 and having come through some taut times, am now more relaxed, unstressed and 'at peace' than ever before. Cheers and all good things."

Bob Carolgees, British TV and cabaret entertainer for 25 years

"I love this book. It is easy to read, containing powerful messages. I would highly recommend this book to anyone interested in personal development."

Tony Burgess, Director, The Academy of High Achievers, www.aha-success.com

"A lovely story you do not want to put down, or finish, as it really makes you think. Cheers!"

Barry Phillips, owner and manager, www.knowledgeisking.co.uk

"The great teachers of this planet have told us that life is an illusion that we create. Quantum physics teaches us that if we observe something, we change it. We are all so busy dealing with the distractions of our illusion that we forget that we are human beings and not human doings. This book will remind you of your true nature and how to take the journey that leads you back to that which is within you. Follow the techniques in the book and find the peace that each one of us and humanity desperately needs. It is time for a change. It begins with YOU. Remember, you could be 'The Hundredth Monkey'!!!"

Ron Violet, Doctor of Naturopathy, Energy Worker and Student on the Planet for Slow Learners

"It is a really thought provoking story and easy to read. It also shows you how you can move on in your life. Fantastic!"

Paul and Sarah Barton, Business owners Sugars4life,
www.sugars4life.com

"An engaging story, and an inspiring reminder that positive personal action can create real and peaceful changes in our world."

Brian Carr, Chief Executive, BVSC: The Centre for Voluntary Action

"Written in the true spirit of a 'Beginners Mind', this book talks you through making first steps into the vast world of personal development. Food for body, mind and spirit."

Thera Tolner, Sky Coaching & Consulting Limited

"I finished the book! Its such a lovely look at life, perspective and priority. We all need more peace and Inner peace is the most challenging to achieve! Thank you for creating a glimpse of it for everyone! Shopping will never be the same! God bless all you do, your heart and your spirit are a joy! Lots of love."

Kimberley Gridley, Business Developer and Entrepreneur

Praise

Acknowledgements

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PROLOGUE

September is always a special time for me; it brings thoughts of "New Beginnings". A time when the lazy days of summer gracefully take a bow and move gently aside to let autumn take centre stage. A time for change, a reminder that life doesn't stand still. Children returning to school in new uniforms. Relieved parents, as the home becomes a place of peace again after the summer's excitement and activities. Or, a time to do the packing for a holiday now that the school term has started. Holiday resorts are more peaceful and life can be lived at a more leisurely pace. Whatever setting we are in the one thing we all want is some peace.

Many people campaign for World peace, a desire for peace in our times. How many of us are proactive about peace at an individual level. How much peace is in our lives - right now?

Before we can answer that question there is a need to give definition to this word, because, that's all it is, a word until we give it shape and function. The dictionary starts to give us a glimpse into this - period free from war, calmness, quietness, lack of anxiety. I wonder if these are the words that we would use to describe our lives at the moment.

A Period Free from War - personal war

Yes, we can look at this from a macro perspective, but what about from a personal level? Let's consider this from *our* world, not *the* world. Being in that heightened adrenalin state, having to constantly battle between the choice of fight or flight hour by hour, every day of our lives.

What would a period free from war mean to us right now?

What possibilities or opportunities would that bring our way, and how would life be different if that were possible? To stop being our own war correspondent, always reporting how it is from the front line.

What would it mean to us to be at peace right now?

A Period Free from War - with a partner

Our war may be mental, physical, sexual or emotional, or in some cases all of them. It's hard to accept, but every day we make choices to stay in that dark place. What if things could be different? There are many organisations set up to help someone in these situations. It is easy to think that we are the only person going through this pain. This could not be further from the truth, there are many people out there suffering. But there is hope. There are Professionals who are waiting to help you, all you need to do is ask.

What would it mean to you to be at peace right now?

A Period Free from War - with close family & friends

We all need people around us who are on our side, our support system when things go wrong. These are the people you know you can count on. So what happens when we are in a war zone with these special people? It's like being on a high wire and someone removes the safety net. We feel alone and very vulnerable.

What would it mean to you to be at peace with these people right now?

A Period Free from War - within your work environment

How different would work be without all the internal battles between staff? How much more efficient would we be without having to tread daily through a minefield? Would we like to work in a reduced stress environment where there was an excellent team spirit? A place where efforts were genuinely recognised and rewarded? What if such a place could exist, what if this could be reality, our reality?

What would it mean to us to be at peace with these people right now?

Calmness

A picture of a calm sea, just the gentleness of the natural rhythm of the waves of the ocean as it wraps around a boat like a mother lovingly rocking a baby. We use the expression "the calm before the storm" knowing that the power of the ocean is ever present. We are reminded of the constant danger that the sea holds, how many people have lost their lives and the lives of their loved ones over the centuries. What would it mean to you to be able to sail through life and not feel like you are just flotsam and jetsam being tossed about in a storm?

We all know the expression, "we are all in the same boat", actually we are not. We are all in our *own* boats and what makes the difference is the person who is steering.

I'm not saying that life can be all plain sailing, but the question needs to be asked whether you are enjoying or enduring your life's cruise. If it's the latter, maybe you need to brush up on your sailing techniques.

Quietness

Quietness - the opposite of noise. Our lives are full of noise, to the point that some people must have background noise all their waking hours. What noises are going on inside you? That voice you hear that says, "You're not good enough, you're not smart enough, you couldn't possibly do that ..." You know that voice; you've heard it many times. It attacks your self-confidence and leaves doubts wherever it goes.

If you are reading this and thinking, "what a load of rubbish, I don't think that", that's the voice I'm talking about. How about if you heard "Mirror, Mirror on the wall, who is the fairest of them all?" Is your immediate reaction - ME! - or do you think of someone else? There's that voice again!

Lack of Anxiety

A lack of fear and worry; these are two major players in the health of our nation in this millennium. What would life be like without being chained to these stresses?

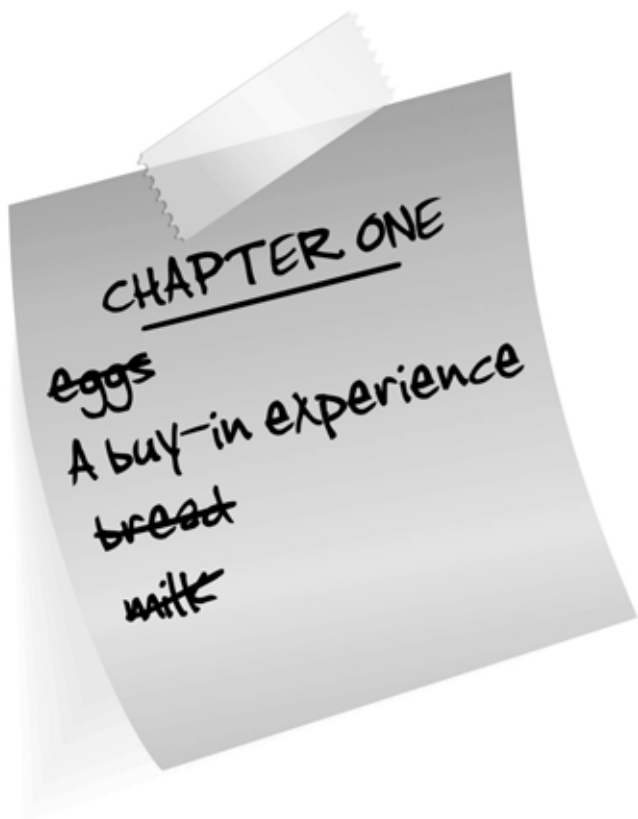
Having peace is not a passive activity it's a choice, a choice that we make every day. We choose each morning what clothes we will wear. Granted some people's wardrobe range may be more extensive than ours, but I don't see many naked people walking around the streets of this country.

Also, consider the many culinary choices available to us daily. From traditional to the exotic. Food that will complement our mood, or the people and circumstances we find ourselves with at that moment. Life is about choices. Finding the available options and making a choice.

Seriously, Are You Taking The Peace?

What follows is a light-hearted look at one man's journey to find peace - peace in a box.





Like most people, during the month of January, I'm taking some time to consider the past year and what the coming one may bring my way. I've lived my whole life rushing around from one situation to the next.

I did that until one day last year when I saw someone actually pick up *peace* off the shopping shelves of life. It was there all the time; I just couldn't see it.

As always, I'm so excited I've started this story in the middle, so let me share this story with you from the beginning.

This all started just five months ago in September of last year. Previous to that, like most people, I had a busy lifestyle and liked to fit as much in as I could. I'm one of those people that said phrases like "I work hard, so I can play hard" or "Sleep? Why would I want to sleep? That's the closest I get to being dead". You know the type.

To me, there is nothing pleasurable about shopping for food or household items; it's one of the necessary evils that we all have to do.

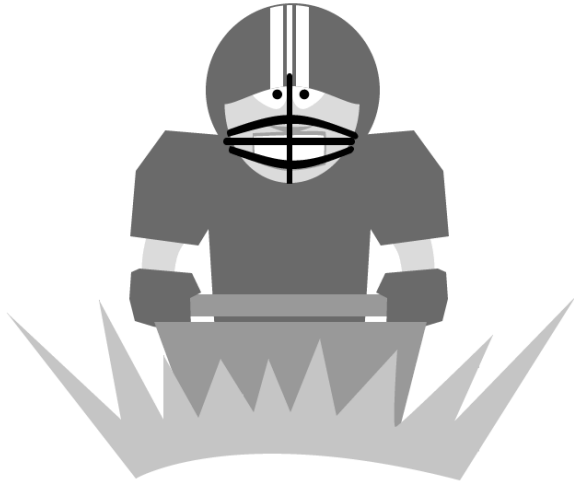
I've tried altering the day and the time I do it - I just hate it.

A new retail chain store had opened up one of those 24-hour shops so I've even tried the nightmare activity at 3am in the morning - the place is filled with the living dead!



I write lists before I go. You've guessed that. I stick to the list and it limits the torture. I've always got a pound coin for the trolley. I still haven't forgiven the tight git who ripped me off with a forgery.

I take a few good deep breaths in front of the automatic doors. I move my hands inside the trolley handles, battle scars from previous experiences remind me that it's not clever to have your hands on the outside. I mentally put on my American football style crash helmet and then the voice in my head says, "It's time... go, go, go" and then I join the masses.



Now, on this night in September, I could see the few shoppers like me who knew exactly what they wanted. I could see the masses of casual shoppers and the “let’s take the family out for the whole day” shoppers. When I was less than five metres through the doors the back nearside wheel started to wobble, and make an annoying grating sound. People were looking at me as if it was my fault. I kicked it, nothing happened. Should I abandon this defective equipment, abort the mission or carry on?

I carried on ... Up and down the aisles I filled the trolley with the provisions I needed. Cereal, 3rd aisle on the right. Toilet rolls, 5th aisle on the left. Oh no, it was September, that meant all the Christmas stock was on the shelves and everything had changed around. I was now in major panic mode, I had no idea where anything was. I had to resort to looking at the overhead signs.

If that’s not enough, there were signs on the floor too. My body was reacting like a diver who is running out of

oxygen and doesn't think there will be sufficient to get to the surface. My list was ticked off; I was ticked off and ready to get out of the place. I headed towards the checkout, every one of them had a massive queue ... AARRRHHHH!

At this point I took a few deep calming breaths knowing that I'd soon be out, mission accomplished. I joined one of the queues. Then it happened as it always does, the checkout queues either side of mine moved so fast leaving me literally standing there watching others leave the store as the intercom was heard relaying the message "Supervisor to checkout 13, thank you."

Finally it was my turn, but no, I had to wait again as there's ice cream all over the conveyor belt. Two minutes and two metres of tissue paper later I was asked, "Do you want help with your packing?"

"No" - I threw the items back into the trolley, I "chipped & pinned" and headed straight out of the exit. On the way out I heard "Are you interested in a conservatory?" The salesman got a short, sharp answer delivered as I raced for the door.

After a final kick of the trolley wheel, it was parked and as I put the £1 coin in my pocket I punched the air and shouted - "YES, mission accomplished"!

--X--

Every time we grocery shop we walk down the aisles and make conscious choices. These days on-line shopping choices are made and cyber-space trolleys filled, and at least you don't get the one with the dodgy wheels.

There are no surprises when we get to the checkout, whatever items we have chosen are what we get. If you

don't consciously take something off the shelf, it's not going to be in your basket or trolley.

Shopping is one of the world's greatest levellers. We all do it in one way or the other and you know that you will see a cross-section of the population in the supermarket at any one time. Some use my smash and grab method, whilst others use the venue as a place to meet new people in a non-threatening environment with the added advantage of seeing their shopping preferences (would you choose your potential life partner depending on the type of toothpaste they buy?) Stranger things do happen, as you will soon get to find out.

--X--

Once at home the job is still not complete. It's now time for the restocking to commence. Items placed in the cupboards in "use by" chronological date order, labels facing exactly forward, jars and tins in size order. Fridge and freezer food rotated efficiently and the contents list updated so I always know what I have to use. Is this really me? No way, life is too short for all that. I have the lucky dip approach to food in cupboards. Many times my culinary choice has been whatever falls out of the cupboard!

Now the food is away, the kitchen cupboards are groaning under the weight, it's a miracle that they are still attached to the walls. I've fought my way out of the chest freezer. You know, there are things inside there that I have no idea what they are. I've had a longer relationship with some of that frozen food than I did with my ex-partner.

Ah, my ex-partner, a 34-year old vision of beauty. She had the looks, the personality, the high-powered job, the

BMW and all the latest fashions. Men loved her and other women just couldn't stand her. I was the proudest man in the world when we went out and she was on my arm. Friends would say to me, "Why is she with you?" I knew they were all jealous; this was the single, smart, sexy and successful woman who walked into my life just two years ago and stole my heart.

However, just a short time ago, with the aid of a legal associate, she stole my bank balance too.

Two years ago, she looked so good wearing my shirt when she stayed over one night, now it doesn't feel so good that she wanted everything, including the shirt off my back. Yes, I have been taken to the cleaners and been left picking up the bill. Was I bitter about this? Of course I was. I'd lost everything apart from the contents of the chest freezer.

I thought, "I must get around to throwing some of that stuff away." I'm sure it's breaking some EU regulation to have food that long.

As I sat trying to bring the feeling back into my now cold fingers, which resemble a pack of frozen sausages (with just the same amount of dexterity) I could feel my blood boil as I shouted at the empty space she left behind, "I hate you as much as I hate shopping!"

Little did I know that by mid October my shopping missions would never be the same again, ever - but even more important than that, neither would I.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



September 11 2001 was the catalyst for change. It was at that point that Jim realised that he was not following his true destiny in life. This was the start of a three year journey into making life changing decisions. He was introduced to the concepts of Personal Development in 2003 and then finally, in March 2004 after working 27 years in corporate life for a large utility company he realised that there was so much more that he was supposed to be doing with his life. Since then he has never looked back and life has taken Jim into new and exciting (ad)ventures.

“Seriously, Are You Taking The Peace?” Is the first novel from the author and his unique style of writing has a wide appeal to those who are new to the concepts of Personal Development, self-awareness and expression.

Over the past two years Jim has become a multi-sensory professional speaker having recently discovered his latent creativity and started to play again with his imagination.

“... the dreams that you dare to dream, really do come true”

Taken from the song “Somewhere over the Rainbow”
Lyrics by E.Y. Harburg

BIOGRAPHY OF JIM PARKES

11th January 1960

He was born at an early age, actually 3 months premature to be precise. That was probably the first and only time he has ever been early. There is fashionably late and then there’s the “late Jim Parkes”.

As a kid growing up he wanted to be many things and many people from a train driver to an astronaut, Star Trek’s James T Kirk to John Travolta in Saturday Night Fever. However, it didn’t help that the warp-drive hadn’t been invented or he couldn’t dance.

He loved drama but was never good enough to be picked for school plays. He was always the one left standing by the wall when all the parts had been dished out.

School reports were consistent, with the words “could do better” featuring prominently.

June 1976

He left full time education in June 1976 and enjoyed one of the best summers on record taking a “well earned break” - his words.

September 1976

He fell into corporate life at the tender age of 16 and continued to free fall down that long rabbit hole for 27 years before emerging back into the big wide world again in April 2004. "There's life Jim, but not as you know it!"

April 2004

He started on a journey of self-discovery, awareness and personal development. His "continuing mission" is to "baldly go" further into these areas, to discover and live his true purpose in life.

After kicking his heels for a time and staring at his navel for inspiration he decided he would return to his first love, that of being on a stage. However, this time he would be *speaking* in public. Shock and horror, people actually enjoyed listening to him.

Normally words like, "multi-sensory experience", "inspirational", "thought provoking" are used after hearing him speak.

On one occasion, someone said: "He has a voice that would be good for a 'closed eye technique'". Translated into English that actually means, "He sends people to sleep!"

Who knows the truth? Only those who have heard him speak I guess.

It's said that Jim is a "people person", willing to give a listening ear to those who need it.

ChildLine

His passion to help distressed children and young people led him to be a ChildLine counsellor at the Birmingham base for a while. Although no longer on the phones he is an active fundraiser for this incredible charity who celebrate their 20th Birthday in 2006.

January 2006

He set a goal of writing his first novel to share his thoughts on how to get some peace back into our lives.

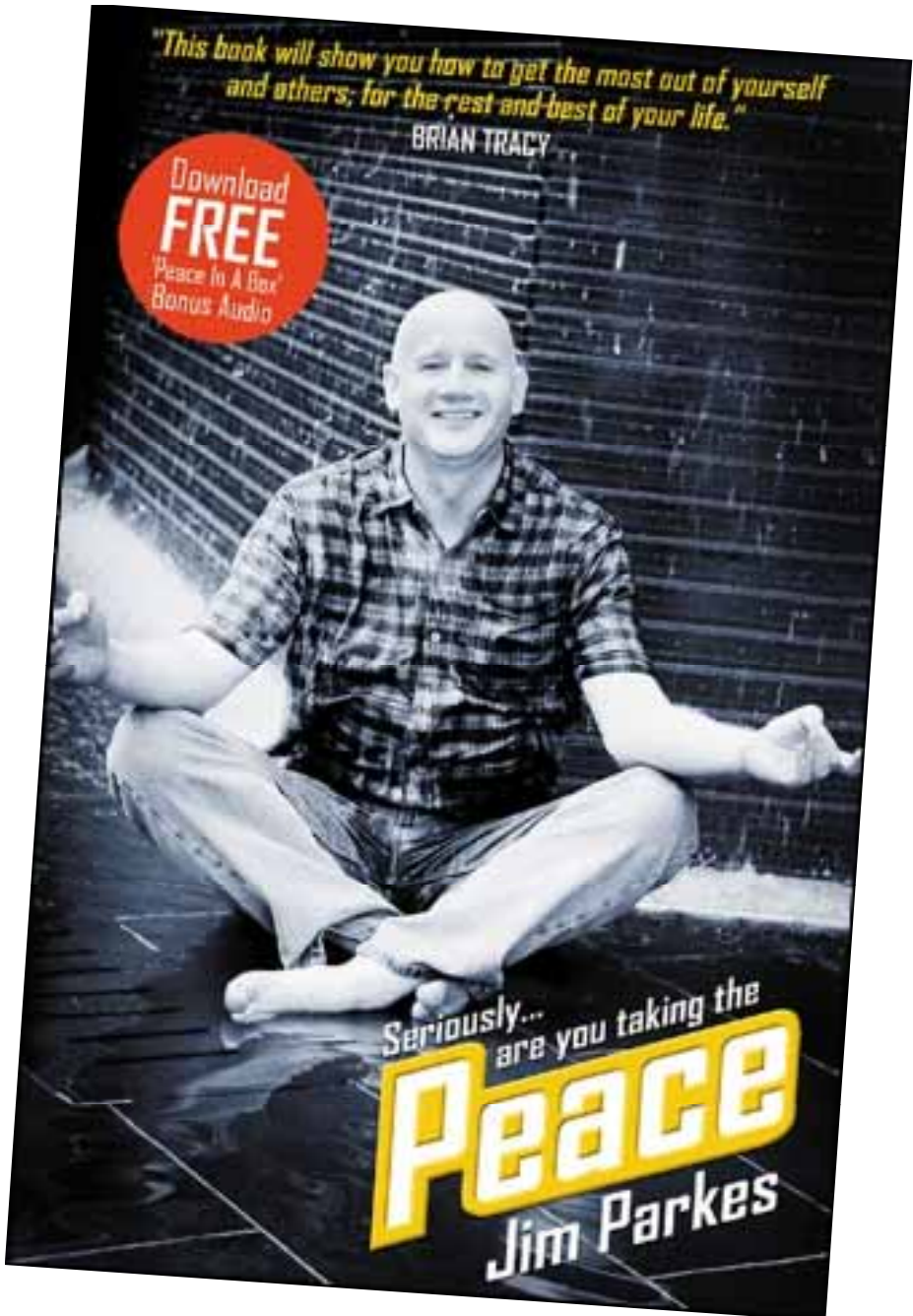
September 2006

"Seriously, are you taking the peace?" is published.

You Decide

You now have an overview of this new author; it's up to you to decide whether you like this man or not. As you can see, throughout his life he has had many failures, and he will be the first to tell you that he will have many more. However, he will keep getting up, dusting himself off and will have another go.

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the complete book here...



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