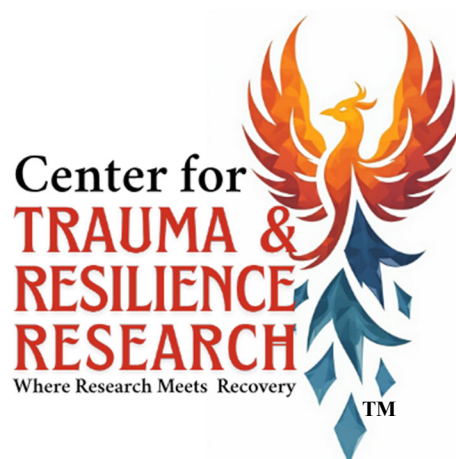**What Are the Different Facets of Peace?**

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Abstract

Peace is often treated as a single state (e.g., "calm" or "absence of conflict"), yet contemporary scholarship suggests it is better understood as a multi-faceted emotion and practice spanning inner experience, relationships, and social life. This essay proposes a facet model of peace that integrates (a) intrapersonal peace (physiological settling, emotional equanimity, cognitive meaning-making, and spiritual/existential groundedness), (b) interpersonal peace (relational safety, repair, forgiveness, and emotionally intelligent engagement), and (c) collective peace (emotional climate, coexistence, and justice-sensitive peacebuilding). The model draws from research on emotion regulation and mindful/embodied pathways to calm and serenity (Gross, 1998; Guendelman et al., 2017; Hölzel et al., 2011; Kreitzer et al., 2009), measurement and predictors of peace of mind and inner peace (Lee et al., 2013; Sikka et al., 2023; Du & Liu, 2025), and peace as a socio-emotional phenomenon shaped by cultural values, narratives, and structures of power (Basabe & Valencia, 2007; Castro-Abril et al., 2025; De Rivera & Páez, 2007; Zembylas, 2021). A key implication is that peace is not merely the reduction of distress but the cultivation of regulated safety, relational capacity, and just social conditions that sustain human flourishing (Gilbert et al., 2008; Halperin, 2011; Wallis, 2024).

Keywords: peace, peace of mind, inner peace, serenity, emotional climate, emotion regulation, peacebuilding

What Are the Different Facets of Peace?

Conceptualizing Peace as a Multi-Faceted Emotion

Peace is commonly described as a subjective sense of calm or relief. However, research and practice-based literatures increasingly depict peace as a layered experience involving internal regulation, relational dynamics, and social context. For example, "peace of mind" has been conceptualized and measured as a distinct form of affective well-being characterized by inner harmony and stability (Lee et al., 2013), and individual differences in peace of mind appear linked to adaptive emotion regulation patterns (Sikka et al., 2023). At the same time, peace also functions as a public, collective phenomenon shaped by emotional climates, cultural values, and social narratives (Basabe & Valencia, 2007; De Rivera & Páez, 2007; Rimé, 2007).

Because peace spans these domains, treating it as a single feeling can lead to mismatched goals in counseling, education, and peacebuilding. A person may report "peace" as emotional numbness or avoidance, while another may experience peace as grounded acceptance amid difficulty (Kreitzer et al., 2009; Sauer et al., 2024). Similarly, a society may claim "peace" through silence or neutrality while structural harms remain unaddressed, shaping whose emotions and security are prioritized (Agius, 2024; Zembylas, 2021). These tensions support the need for a model that differentiates the facets of peace.

Intrapersonal Facets of Peace

Physiological settling and felt safety

One core facet of peace is the body's shift toward regulated safety—often experienced as slower breathing, reduced agitation, and a sense of "settling." The "safe and content" affect regulation system described by Gilbert et al. (2008) emphasizes a form of positive affect associated with safeness, soothing, and lowered threat activation. When peace is framed this way,

it is less a moral achievement and more a regulatory capacity shaped by experience, environment, and supportive practices (Gilbert et al., 2008).

Emotional equanimity and acceptance

Peace also includes equanimity—an ability to remain emotionally present without being overwhelmed. Measures of serenity and acceptance capture this aspect, describing peace as a stance of openness and inner steadiness rather than emotional suppression (Kreitzer et al., 2009; Sauer et al., 2024). This distinction is clinically important: peace is not the same as "not feeling." Rather, it may reflect tolerance for emotion plus a compassionate relationship to one's inner world (Kreitzer et al., 2009).

Cognitive harmony and meaning-making

Peace involves cognitive processes that support coherence—reducing rumination, integrating experience, and finding meaning. "Peace of mind" is associated with cognitive reappraisal and adaptive regulation strategies (Sikka et al., 2023), and recent work links peace of mind with gratitude and positive reappraisal as predictors of psychological well-being (Du & Liu, 2025). In serious illness contexts, peace, equanimity, and acceptance are studied as meaningful psychological constructs rather than vague sentiments (Sauer et al., 2024).

Spiritual/existential groundedness

A further intrapersonal facet is spiritual or existential peace—experienced as connection to purpose, God, ultimate meaning, or transcendent trust. Research on spiritual peace suggests it can buffer distress and support well-being, including among cancer survivors (Sleight et al., 2021) and those with unmet spiritual care needs (Pearce et al., 2012). In Christian healing ministry contexts, embodied emotion work is sometimes explicitly oriented toward inner healing and peace as a spiritual-emotional integration (Althouse, 2023).

Interpersonal Facets of Peace

Relational safety, repair, and forgiveness

Peace often emerges through relationships that provide safety, predictability, and repair after rupture. In conflict contexts, emotions can function as barriers to peace by shaping threat perception and public opinion (Halperin, 2011; Halperin & Pliskin, 2015). This highlights that interpersonal peace is not simply "being nice"; it includes skills for managing disagreement, repairing harm, and transforming cycles of fear and resentment (Long & Brecke, 2002). Forgiveness-oriented approaches offer one pathway for addressing anger and restoring hope where relational injury has occurred (Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2015).

Emotional intelligence and peace leadership

Interpersonal peace also includes emotionally intelligent engagement—recognizing emotions, regulating responses, and communicating in ways that reduce escalation. Emotional intelligence has been identified as a foundation for peace leadership and peace education (Haber-Curran, 2024), and peace-making has been linked to emotional intelligence in educational settings (Bardol & Connor, 2013). In early childhood contexts, programs that promote children's emotional intelligence can reduce aggression and support prosocial climates—an interpersonal-to-collective bridge (Wong & Power, 2024).

Collective and Structural Facets of Peace

Emotional climate and cultures of peace

Peace is not only located in individuals; it is also "in the air" of communities and nations. The concept of emotional climate describes shared affective patterns that influence perceived security, trust, and social cohesion (De Rivera & Páez, 2007; De Rivera et al., 2007). Cultures of peace are shaped by sociostructural conditions, cultural values, and collective emotions, which

can either support peaceful coexistence or sustain cycles of fear and hostility (Basabe & Valencia, 2007). The social sharing of emotion further links personal experience to collective meaning-making, influencing how groups interpret events and maintain social realities (Rimé, 2007).

Narrative, memory, and coexistence after violence

In post-violence contexts, peace can depend on how suffering is acknowledged and narrated. Victims' narratives may influence emotions and attitudes in ways that support peaceful coexistence and reduce acceptance of violence (Castro-Abril et al., 2025). This underscores peace as a collective emotional project: communities need relational and cultural practices that metabolize grief, fear, and anger without reproducing harm (Zembylas, 2015).

Power, gender, and the politics of "peace"

Finally, peace has structural facets shaped by power relations and social representations. Peace and security discourse can include gendered emotional politics, including how "neutrality" is framed and whose emotional needs are legitimized (Agius, 2024). Peacebuilding practice is also influenced by the embodied emotional experiences of interveners, which can shape judgment, priorities, and ethical decision-making in the field (Wallis, 2024). These perspectives warn against reducing peace to personal calm while ignoring structural realities that destabilize safety for marginalized groups (Agius, 2024; Zembylas, 2021).

A Facets of Peace Model

Below is a practical model synthesizing the literature into a usable framework.

Figure 1

Facets of Peace Model: Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, and Collective Dimensions

Facets of Peace Model
Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, and Collective Dimensions

PEACE Multi-Faceted Approach

INTRAPERSONAL Inner Peace
1. **Physiological Settling** *(Felt safety; soothing)*
2. **Emotional Equanimity** *(Acceptance; steadiness)*
3. **Cognitive Harmony** *(Reappraisal; coherence)*
4. **Spiritual/Existential Groundedness**

INTERPERSONAL Relational Peace
5. **Relational Safety & Attachment** *(Co-regulation)*
6. **Repair & Forgiveness** *(Rupture → repair)*
7. **Conflict Navigation** *(De-escalation skills)*
8. **Emotional Intelligence** *(Empathy; wise action)*

COLLECTIVE Public Peace
9. **Emotional Climate & Trust** *(Shared affective patterns)*
10. **Coexistence After Violence** *(Narratives; reconciliation)*
11. **Culture of Peace** *(Values; norms; institutions)*
12. **Justice-Sensitive Peace** *(Power; inclusion; ethics)*

How to use the model

This model supports assessment and intervention planning by clarifying which facet of peace is targeted. For example, mindfulness or embodied practices may primarily support intrapersonal regulation and equanimity (Guendelman et al., 2017; Hölzel et al., 2011), while forgiveness work targets relational repair (Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2015), and peace education or climate interventions focus on collective emotional conditions (Basabe & Valencia, 2007; Liang et al., 2024). Importantly, the model also keeps structural realities in view so "peace" is not reduced to private coping in the face of public harm (Agius, 2024; Wallis, 2024).

Conclusion

Peace has multiple facets that span inner regulation, relational capacity, and social conditions. Intrapersonally, peace includes physiological settling, equanimity, cognitive coherence, and spiritual groundedness (Gilbert et al., 2008; Lee et al., 2013; Sauer et al., 2024).

Interpersonally, peace emerges through relational safety, repair, emotionally intelligent engagement, and conflict navigation (Bardol & Connor, 2013; Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2015; Haber-Curran, 2024). Collectively, peace is sustained—or undermined—by emotional climates, post-violence narratives, cultural norms, and power dynamics that shape security and belonging (Agius, 2024; Basabe & Valencia, 2007; Castro-Abril et al., 2025; De Rivera & Páez, 2007; Wallis, 2024). Viewing peace through these facets strengthens both conceptual clarity and practical action: peace is not only an emotion we hope to feel, but a multi-level capacity we can cultivate and protect.

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