

BACK TO BASICS

Priyanka Gulati

INTRODUCTION

Before we do an in-depth study and analysis of the topic in hand we need to understand what does Back to basics mean and what does it imply. Back to basics is all about honoring one's roots, going back to a more simpler, down to earth and minimalistic living. It is remembering our origin and how we can stay grounded to our true self. It teaches us the importance of respecting others and respecting oneself. Some of the most important elements of back to basics that we need to understand and touch upon are patience, harmony, kindness, empathy, respect and peace.

PATIENCE

It is that quality which allows us to be connected to the calm centeredness within and thereby connect us to the oneness of the whole universe. It helps us deal with difficult people and situations with ease and grace and involves perseverance when faced with delay, having a more tolerating nature and being calm and composed at all times. Patience teaches us not to lose our temper when provoked, to respect others and treat them kindly in every situation. These values are extremely important and make us better humans. Patience enhances the level of endurance one has, in order to not disrespect someone. It is one of the main keys to leading a more fulfilling and healthy life and one of the most emphasized value that is preached across all religions. Why is it of such an important value in today's time? Patience not only helps us to deal with unforeseen and uncomfortable situations but it also helps us remain calm. It imbibes qualities of forbearance that in turn teaches us to respond instead of react.

Patience is a virtue that need to be developed in every child at a very early stage. Infants and toddlers often reflect and act according to the basis of their id(the part of one's mind where desires originate). This is why babies cry and throw tantrums asking for instant gratification. It is important to start embedding the quality of patience in them so that they grow up with more self-control and self-restraint. When kids are taught patience they

automatically get equipped with the ability to adapt and think with an open mind. It teaches them to be more tolerant and look at things from different perspectives and thus enhance their emotional stability.

HARMONY

It is the feeling and sense of oneness, peacefully co-existing not just with others but nature and animals too. Harmony is an important teaching in Buddhism, which encourages people to be compassionate and have a caring and sharing nature. It calls for active listening with the intention of understanding the other person deeply and completely and their struggles and sorrows, before our own selfish needs. Getting children to be involved in various community service programs and active association with NGOs working with different disadvantaged groups and animals rescues. Harmony can also be introduced by some dangerous or demanding accomplishments, like diving, flying, mountain climbing, and much more (Carter *et al.* 2014). These activities help us forget the footling connection that exists and connects to our daily lifestyle and also requires a huge concentration over it. We could have in place a system, whereby, people involved in petty crimes be made to do community service instead of serving a prison term. This would naturally imbibe care, compassion, and a community spirit in them. Getting children involved in gardening, tending to a small organic herb garden, teaching them to reach to the poor and the needy, caring for injured animals in their own little ways, would all help teach harmonious living.



Fig 1: Harmony

Sometimes even watching the children playing in the garden can give us this experience of being in a state of harmony. Connection with nature also provides harmony as it's beauty draws attention from different problems and introduces us to a new world of relaxation. It helps our mind be calm and quiet and allows us to keep our ego boundaries smooth while introducing us to a feeling connected to our surroundings.

KINDNESS

In simple terms it is the quality of being generous, friendly and nice to someone without any expectation. Being affectionate towards someone, the act of caring for someone be it rich or poor, man or woman, black or white is

kindness. It is very important to have this quality, often times we end up hurting those around us without knowing and at times with knowledge, we end up scarring people beyond repair and in order to not do so it is very important for us to practice being kind to others even to strangers in need. An act of kindness takes you a long way in life, a lot of times it can have life changing impact on people. Today, society to a great extent has lost this value, we have forgotten to teach our kids what it means to be kind to someone. I encourage people reading this to start teaching your child from the very beginning. How do you teach people to be kind? Urge them to do for others without any expectations, like sharing food with your house help's children, being nice to everyone regardless of their age or origin, being warm and open to people around, helping those in need. These are some ways in which we can make the world a better place to live in. Kindness needs to be expanded into our entire ecosystem. In the scorching summers, we could keep a small bowl of grains and clean drinking water in the balcony or the terrace for our feathered friends. Similarly, make it a daily habit to feed the stray dogs and cows in your neighbourhood, tend to injured animals, in your own little ways, either through cash or service. Tend to mother earth, by stopping the use of plastic, and make sure that each day you pick up atleast 5 items from the trash lying around your house and throw it in the bin. Random acts of kindness such as these, could go a long way in making this world a heaven on earth.

Empathy

Empathy can be divided into three types, affective, semantic and cognitive. Affective empathy is when you respond to other people's emotions thoughtfully, semantic is when you are able to feel what the other person is feeling and relate to them and cognitive is one's ability to understand one's response to a certain situation. We as humans are always attentive to our own feelings but sadly do not show the same amount of care and compassion when it comes to taking into account other people's emotions and feelings. It allows people to build a social connection with other people. Empathy evokes emotions in a person making them react less aggressively in stressful situations.

Showing consideration towards other's political or religious beliefs and views only goes in shows one's own self-respect and level of maturity. It is even more vital that people in a position of power and authority, like boss in a workplace set-up, teachers/professors of educational institutions, any government officers, political leaders and the like, must take utmost care to make sure that they do not misuse their power and instead always be a role model in humility and respectful nature.

It has been taught to us from childhood that we should respect our elders but as we grow up we forget the importance of respecting everyone alike be it someone elder or younger. A lot of times elders are found disrespecting people younger to them or seniors in work places are found disrespecting their juniors. Respect should not only be towards other people but we also need to learn to respect ourselves, our own body and soul; it is equally important to respect every living being on earth and mother Earth herself. Children should be taught young, how to treat everyone with respect and the best place to start this is by walking the talk yourself...be respectful in your words and action while interacting with your household helps, who are often mistreated and disrespected by many. Teach children who are younger to the household help call them with some endearing title like aunty, uncle or didi. Respecting those around you be it a human, an animal or the whole of nature is an important quality to possess and has always been an integral part of our rich civilization.

PEACE

In a world which seems to be torn apart due to violence, and intolerance, peace has become one of the most sought-after states.

Humans are found depressed often due to categorization, where they divide people and things into millions of groups depending upon certain characteristics, which include religion, political view, ethnicity, and many other points for categorization (Punt *et al.* 1999). However, it is important to note that peace is an essential requirement for the country to remain happy. It also helps people avoid harmful and conflicting means like war, and instead sort out issues through diplomatic dialogues.

Studies show that suicides are at an all-time rise the globe over. Hence, it is important to reach out to people in need, especially those suffering from emotional or mental stress and give them the space to talk, to share on a non-judgmental platform. Take out time to connect with family, friends and most importantly, with your own

self. Peace calms our mind, cures us of all diseases, keeps us filled with health, vitality and in a state of bliss. The state of peace comes when a person always resides in the present moment, which is all accepting and all encompassing. It gives the inner power to face any eventuality with calm inner strength. Peace moves us away from a negative mindset and connects us to all the positive things in life which in turn aligns all the energy chakras and brings into alignment, the body-mind-soul. Disconnecting from social media, news channels and focusing on breathing with full awareness/ meditation, focusing on needs rather than desires are some of the time-tested ways to move from restlessness to the peace point within. People who are at peace with themselves, remain unruffled by external circumstances.

It is encouraging to note that, the youth of today are more committed to introducing ways that can help secure a stable, healthy, and harmonious life through peaceful conflict resolution, and cooperative development. Today, people the world over are focusing on the necessity for protecting human rights, the environment, caring for the flora and fauna, and amongst other international concerns.



Fig 5: Peace

Violence, terrorism, ethnic conflict, new colonialism etc. create the biggest obstacle on the path of peace. However, it is heartening to note that several international communities are joining hands to combat this evil. The crisis may arise repeatedly, but we all need to be prepared for managing the situation with collective efforts and certain devices (Iyigun *et al.* 2015). However, there exists some circumstances which cannot be solved with peace, but it doesn't mean we can stop trying. The nature around us works for creating a peaceful environment and we all have an integral part of this nature within us.

CONCLUSION

It is of paramount importance that we blend modernism with that which is our true nature, and hence we need to go back to basics and root ourselves in the values of our true patience, harmony, kindness, respect and peace. The world would become one oasis of peace, harmony and love...in the true sense a Vasudeva Kutumbakam.

