

# **“We Need to Stop.” For Our World**

**From the March 2025 e-Peace Update**  
[www.MattiesPeaceFoundation.org](http://www.MattiesPeaceFoundation.org)



*Jeni & Mattie Stepanek, pausing to connect  
during a busy school & workday - Fall 2003.*

***We need to stop.  
Just stop.  
Stop for a moment...  
Before anybody  
Says or does anything  
That may hurt anyone else.***

Excerpt 1 of 6 from *For Our World*  
by Mattie J. T. Stepanek (9/11/2001)

This month, we continue exploring Mattie's "*For Our World*" poem - which was his response to an event that interrupted both personal and global peace. Our focus is on the first few lines of this passage - which is a call for a simple "pause."

September 11, 2001 began as a typical weekday morning for Mattie and me. Our routine included a pause for our morning coffee chat - which kept us connected and also organized with our busy schedules. Like so many mornings before that one, we closed with a prayer for peace - for us, for others, for our world. Mattie then started in on school work, and I tended to my own work tasks. Both of us always looked forward to moving through our *To Do Lists* so we could pause again, and enjoy afternoon tea while connecting and chatting about our *To Be Lists* and other important matters - like peace, purpose, play... and people.

But breaking news interrupted the morning hours - shocking hearts and minds, shattering routines, and shaking our sense of "okay'ness" in our world. As we watched buildings collapse, we knew we were also witnessing the tragic and senseless loss of people - some of them personal friends to us, and all of them personal friends to someone.

Midnight approached, and Mattie was at a loss for what to think, for what to say, for what to do, for how to move "forward" - with choice.

In that moment when nothing seemed "okay," Mattie relied on our routine way of coping and hoping in life... he paused, and then he prayed.

And, his prayer began with a simple plea for all people to pause: **"We need to stop."**

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## Pausing matters.

When I re-introduced this poem last month, I stated that a "pause" is not about ceasing to make peace something that matters; instead, it is a chance to **reflect**, so that we can **respond** rather than react to challenges. This can empower us to **reach out** – with concern and compassion, and with purpose for peace.

Even during busy days (or even stressful moments) Mattie and I paused often - by choice.

Before jumping into each day, we paused to connect and chat over morning coffee - sometimes while taking in the gift of a sunrise and sometimes while flipping through pages of news - but always while considering tasks and truths that needed tending to in a timely way.

After checking off timely to-do tasks, we paused to connect and chat over afternoon tea - sometimes while playing a game and sometimes while dealing with a medical situation - but always while considering things and truths that mattered in a timeless way.

It was during one of our philosophical tea conversations that Mattie first expressed his belief that *"equitably and meaningfully tending to basic human needs cultivates 'okay'ness' - which is a critical root of peace."*

He said, *"When we have what we need to survive, and when we have opportunities to thrive, we can be 'okay' with who and how we are - even if we are dealing with differences or challenges."*

A pause is not going to change the news or challenges in our lives and world. But, a pause can help us sort out feelings, and connect with "okay'ness" - so we can choose attitudes and actions that can amplify. peace.

When we choose to stop - **to pause** - for a breath, for a thought, for a realization, for a connection, for whatever we need in some moment, we interrupt the stress that interrupts our peace.

- **A pause can provide space for awareness, and insights** - so we can more clearly process stressful realities that trigger reactions, and that interrupt peace.
- **A pause can help us find and express our inner "okay'ness"** - our sense of personal purpose that matters and is connected to peace - beyond our differences and challenges.
- **A pause can enable us to support and respect the "okay'ness" of others** - which is how we can move peace from "possible" to "a reality" - beyond diversity and disagreements.

As I shared last month, for me, a pause during a challenging moment or reality gives me a chance to purposefully connect with my inner *"grit, grace, and gratitude"* so that I can keep focusing on things that matter – like people and peace.

It is not always easy to pause in our busy world, or to focus on challenges with a perspective that seeks positivity – but it is always worthy.

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Let us pause - and reflect on, respond to, and reach out with this message of hope.

- Below is Mattie's "For Our World" peace passage in entirety, and links to his voice sharing the message.
- Please read or listen to the poem - on your own, or in community with your family, friends, and colleagues.
- Then please consider this month's "Reflect-Respond-ReachOut" suggestions (also below).



**For Our World**  
by Mattie J.T. Stepanek  
September 11, 2001

We need to stop.  
Just stop.  
Stop for a moment...  
Before anybody  
Says or does anything  
That may hurt anyone else.

We need to be silent.  
Just silent.  
Silent for a moment...  
Before we forever lose  
The blessing of songs  
That grow in our hearts.

We need to notice.  
Just notice.  
Notice for a moment...  
Before the future slips away  
Into ashes and dust of humility.

Stop, be silent, and notice...  
In so many ways, we are the same.  
Our differences are unique treasures.  
We have, we are, a mosaic of gifts  
To nurture, to offer, to accept.

We need to be.  
Just be.  
Be for a moment...  
Kind and gentle,  
Innocent and trusting,  
Like children and lambs,  
Never judging or vengeful  
Like the judging and vengeful.

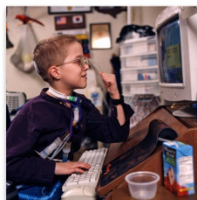
And now, let us pray,  
Differently, yet together,  
Before there is no earth, no life,  
No chance for peace.

*In Just Peace: A Message of Hope (AMP 2006)*

[Click here for an audio/visual version of Mattie reading For Our World](#)

We welcome your shared thoughts - about the poem, about this month's RRR suggestions, about compassion and peace for our world.

Please e-mail us:  
[INFO@MattiesPeaceFoundation.org](mailto:INFO@MattiesPeaceFoundation.org):



## Reflect

Mattie reminds us that being "okay" with who and how we are - as individuals and as communities - is an important truth for peace.

**What are some of the realities that are interrupting peace:**

*for our world?  
for local communities?  
for me, my family, my friends?*

What feelings and thoughts are in my head and heart that may also interrupt peace?

*"We need to stop. Just stop.  
Stop for a moment...  
Before anybody says or does anything  
that may hurt anyone else."*

Excerpt 1 of 6 from *For Our World*  
by Mattie J.T. Stepanek (9/11/2001)  
in *Just Peace: A Message of Hope* (AMP 2006)



## Respond

A "pause" before speaking or acting gives time for purpose, and space for peace, even amid challenges.  
A "pause" while thinking about incoming news or information can also give time for us to process and "respond" rather than "react" to realities that may interrupt peace.  
Take time to consider what triggers strong feelings.  
Be aware of personal or community reactions to challenges.



## Reach Out

We can't choose our feelings, and we can't always choose what happens around us. But, we can shape our attitudes, and we can choose our words. We can choose to "respond" rather than "react" - with purpose.

**Practice "STOP4Peace"**

- Stop.
- Take a deep breath.
- Observe & organize.
- Proceed with purpose for peace.

Peace matters, and so do you.  
Jeni Stepanek, PhD ("Mama Peace")  
March 2025