

## **WALKING THE TALK**

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In the movie *Miss Congeniality*, much fun is poked at the standard and passionate endorsement of “world peace” by virtually all of the contestants in the Miss American contest. Certainly, we can laugh at such unreflective endorsements, and even think of such endorsements as demeaning and hurtful to the “real” work of trying to achieve peace. Yet I think that we in the peace movements tend to pat ourselves on the back too glibly in our appreciation of our elevated values, our work, and our marching to “the right” drum. I would like to pose two avenues for reflection that I think we need to examine closely. First, how are our values of “dignity” and “peace” reflected in our everyday interpersonal relationships? By everyday interpersonal relationships, I mean our relationships within our family, with our friends, with our colleagues, with those holding different if not opposing positions, and with our clients. Second, how do we pursue with honesty and integrity the steps that we feel we must take to pursue our goals of peace and dignity and do this without humiliating and demeaning others? I am not concerned here about a “turning the other cheek” non-violence stance, but rather with what we do and say with others in our everyday work. And perhaps a third question is necessary: how do we forgive ourselves when we recognize our “failures” at upholding our insistence on a humiliation-free world (and recognize past “failures that we hitherto had not recognized), and more importantly, how do we learn from such missteps and use them to grow and move forward (an approach not unlike “relapse prevention” or “harm reduction” in the substance abuse field)?