

THE WAY OUT IS IN by Thich Nhat Hanh
From Zen and the Art of Saving the Planet

When you can face the truth and fully accept reality as it is, you will have a breakthrough and be able to have peace. The truth is so obvious. But, if you continue to resist the truth and allow fear, anger, and despair to overwhelm you, you cannot have peace, and you won't have the freedom and clarity you need to help. If all of us panic, we will only accelerate the death of our civilization.

The way out is in. You have to go back to yourself, face your deepest fears, and accept the impermanence of our civilization. The practice is to deal with our fear and grief *right now*; our insight and awakening will give rise to compassion and peace. Otherwise, we'll only make ourselves sick with denial and despair. If you can be at peace in the face of reality, then we have a chance.

When we look at the present moment, we can already see the future. But things *are* impermanent. Humanity *can* change. First of all, we have to change ourselves. If we *ourselves* can do our best that gives us a lot of peace already. The future of the planet doesn't depend solely on one person, but you have done your part. And that is why you can have peace.

The fact is, we already have enough technological solutions. But we're so possessed by fear, anger division, and violence, that we are unable to make good use of them. We're not making the challenges a priority; we're not investing our time and resources; we're not collaborating. The big powers are still investing a lot of money in manufacturing weapons instead of investing in new sources of energy. And why do countries need weapons? Because they have fear; both sides have fear. So we need to transform our individual and collective fear.

The problem is a human one. And that is why we need a spiritual dimension. If you can generate the energy of calm, acceptance, loving kindness, and non-fear, you can help offer and introduce that dimension of non-fear and togetherness to the situation. Technology alone is not enough to solve the problem. It needs to go together with understanding, compassion, and togetherness.

Our spiritual life, our energy of mindfulness, concentration, and insight is what can bring about the energy of peace, calm, inclusiveness, and compassion. Without that, I don't think our planet will have a chance. So, please, in your sitting meditation, in your walking meditation, in your contemplations, look deeply to get the insight of peace, acceptance, and non-fear. It needs to be a real insight. Our peace, strength, and

awakening will bring us together, and each of us can do our part to avoid catastrophe and contribute to saving the planet.