After the recent passing of Steve Jobs, his famous Stanford graduation speech was widely circulated. He spoke of his belief that when you look back on your life, you can see individual experiences, but when you are strong together, they lead to what becomes significant for you. In his words, “You can’t connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backward. So you have to trust that the dots will somehow connect in your future.” Jobs would talk on particular relevance when viewed in the context of Dr. Elizabeth K. Jackson’s efforts toward world peace. Looking at her life, one can see that each step along a particular path add up. Can just one person actually further world peace? Absolutely.

Dr. Jackson can look back at her life-changing experiences to see how they are strung together, they lead to what becomes significant for you. In this mindset, Dr. Jackson starts each day with meditation, she’s been a transcendental meditator since 1973, and started her yoga practice shortly thereafter. These have aided her through some of the most horrible and non-peaceful moments of her life. When she finds herself wanting to tear her hair out, or worse, wanting to tear someone else’s hair out, the impulse has always been successfully dampened by her deference to her spiritual practice. In her words:

“As you start with yourself, peace flows outward. It keeps you from purposely provoking others, from setting up situations in which you antagonize — after a while you may become keen in noticing conflict — but you are thwarted from aggressively reacting.

Just think, if every person on the planet opted out to exercise the urge — there would be no assassination teams, no smart bombs, no gang wars, no bloody corpses blown to bits… Start with yourself — and do not support war.”

To Contact Dr. Elizabeth K. Jackson, email dredbraids@hotmail.com or Skype elizabeth.jackson333
Links: Negotiation, Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding at California State University, Dominguez Hills: www.csudh.edu/catalog/2011-2013/NCRP.htm
International Foundation for Education and Self-Help: www.ifesh.org/
CSUB Prof in the Heart of Conflict: Malawi, Africa, Bakersfield Californian Article: http://people.bakersfield.com/home/ViewPost/135933
Dr. Elizabeth K. Jackson television interview: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hta1hKTMT9k

Dr. Jackson went on to earn her Post Master’s Certificate in Conflict Analysis and Resolution in the negotiating, conflict resolution and peace building program through the university. She sees her future to be completely entrenched in conflict resolution and peace-related discourse. She believes it is the culmination of all her experiences — the culmination of who she is.

Peace starts solely within oneself. It is impossible to help usher peace into a place unless the idea emanates from oneself.

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Emily Thiroux Threatt is a retired Communications Lecturer from California State University. She has written college textbooks and freelance articles. She lives with her husband in Ventura, California.

Above: Jackson with Peace and Conflict Management Society in Malawi Right: Attendees at Malawi Conference