

# PEACEBUILDING STARTS AT HOME

CORE MESSAGING DOCUMENT · THE READER'S JOURNEY

*"How Do I Become a Peacebuilder?"*

## THE NORTH STAR: WHAT THIS BOOK IS REALLY ABOUT

Peacebuilding Starts at Home is a direct, personal invitation to its readers, asking them to join a movement that is already quietly reshaping how Americans solve their most stubborn problems.

In it, Charles (Chip) Hauss explores a question that most Americans ask but cannot find a positive answer for: *How can I actually do something that has a lasting impact?*

The answer, it turns out, starts closer to home than anyone expects.

Unlike most other books in this space, **Peacebuilding Starts at Home asks you to do something**. At the end of each chapter, there are short exercises — ten minutes each — that build on each other. By the end of Chapter 8, you've drafted your own personal peacebuilding strategy. This is not passive reading. It is a course of action.

Learn more about the book and the community and movement that we are building at **[www.peacebuildingstartsathome.us](http://www.peacebuildingstartsathome.us)**

## THE CORE MESSAGE

Most Americans feel powerless in the face of our country's problems — and that feeling is both understandable and *wrong*. Peacebuilding Starts at Home is an invitation to join a growing movement of ordinary people who are discovering that the same skills used to end shooting wars can transform a neighborhood, a workplace, a family. It starts with a decision to see things differently, builds through practical skills you can use right away, and connects you to a network of thousands already doing the work. The goal isn't a perfect country. It's a country where most people solve most of their problems peacefully, most of the time. That's not a dream. It's already happening — in Rotary clubs, high school classrooms, living rooms, and city halls across America. **The only missing piece is you.**

## THE READER: WHO WE'RE TALKING TO

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The primary reader is **not** a professional activist, a politician, or a peace scholar. The primary reader is someone like Chip's sister Leslie — an ordinary American who is deeply frustrated with the state of the country, has lived a life of quiet service and good values, but has *never* thought of themselves as a "peacebuilder" or an activist of any kind.

- Rotarians who have spent years doing service work but wonder if they are making a dent
- Civic-minded professionals who show up, give back, and still feel something is missing
- People who are exhausted by outrage culture and want to be *for* something
- Anyone who has ever thought: "The future of our country is in your hands" — and felt both moved and helpless

**The message to them: You are already closer to being a peacebuilder than you know. This book shows you how to make the work you're already doing last.**

## THE READER'S JOURNEY: FIVE STAGES

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### 01 Recognition

*"The world is broken — and I already know it. But what can I do about it?"*

The reader doesn't need to be convinced that America is in trouble. What the book offers first is something rarer: a rational basis for *hope*. Not pie-in-the-sky idealism — but a clear-eyed argument that paradigm shifts are possible, and that we've pulled them off before.

**Key message:** *The problems are real. So are the tools we can use to solve them. What's missing is **you**.*

### 02 Reframing

*"Peace isn't what I thought it was."*

Most Americans have a narrow, passive understanding of "peace." The book challenges that by showing that **peace is a verb**. Peacebuilding is something anyone can do, every day, in their own home, workplace, and community. Rotarians reading this will recognize immediately that the service work they've always done already touches every one of the eight "pillars of positive peace." *They are already peacebuilders. They just haven't called themselves that — yet.*

**Key message:** *You don't have to work for the United Nations to be a peacebuilder. Your neighbor, your workplace conflict, your divided town — that's where it starts.*

### 03 The Personal Pivot

*"I can actually do something about this. Starting with me."*

Before changing the world, the book asks readers to change themselves — not in a soft, self-help way, but in a concrete, practical one. Using tools drawn from conflict resolution, neuroscience, and decades of field experience, Chip walks readers through: deciding to operate from curiosity and cooperation; listening actively to understand rather than react; calling people *in* rather than calling them out; seeking win-win outcomes.

**Key message:** *The same skills that end wars between nations can improve your marriage, your workplace, your community. That's not a metaphor. It's how peacebuilding works.*

### 04 Joining the Movement

*"I'm not alone in this — and there's a place for me."*

The book introduces readers to more than 40 organizations and dozens of ordinary Americans already doing this work — from Rotary Peace Activators to high school students in Birmingham to a Portland book club that became a racial healing project. The goal — **1 million new peacebuilders** — is achievable. The single most powerful first step isn't to donate money or attend a conference. It's to host one honest conversation with people you already know.

**Key message:** *This isn't one person's vision. It's already happening. The question is whether you're going to be part of it.*

### 05 Long-Term Commitment

*"This is a lunch-pail job. I'm in."*

Chip is honest: this is a lifetime's work. There is no quick fix, no single election that saves us. But the book closes by showing that sustained, brick-by-brick effort is not just possible — it is the only thing that has ever actually worked. Evolutionary science makes a striking claim: altruistic groups beat selfish groups over time. Not just morally — *evolutionarily*.

**Key message:** *You won't solve everything. But you will be part of the solution. And in the end, that's the only offer any of us gets.*

## KEY PROOF POINTS

Tailored language for specific audiences:

<b>FOR ROTARY AUDIENCES</b>	<i>"Rotary's Four-Way Test and the pillars of positive peace align almost perfectly with what peacebuilding researchers have found sustains peaceful societies. You've been building peace for decades. This book shows you how to name it, deepen it, and spread it."</i>
<b>FOR CIVIC-MINDED PROFESSIONALS</b>	<i>"Most other books tell you what's wrong. This one focuses on what can make things better and gives you 'homework' that, by the end, will have given you a personal strategy for what you're actually going to do about it."</i>
<b>FOR THE SKEPTIC</b>	<i>"This isn't idealism. It's based on decades of work in South Africa, Northern Ireland, and the South Bronx. The tools are real. The results are documented. The question is whether we'll use them here."</i>
<b>FOR THE EXHAUSTED</b>	<i>"You don't have to march, donate, or move to Washington. You can start making a difference by having just one honest conversation with people you already know. That's the first step."</i>
<b>FOR THE LONG-TERM OPTIMIST</b>	<i>"Selfish groups may win individual battles. But altruistic groups — the ones that cooperate, listen, and look for win-win solutions — they are the ones that survive and thrive over time. The data on this is clear. We just have to choose which kind of group we want to be."</i>

## THE MOVEMENT FRAME

<b>The Goal</b>	1 million peacebuilders in 3–4 years.
<b>The Ask</b>	Host one conversation. With people you know. About what it means to build peace at home. Tell us what happened. We'll help you host more.
<b>The Tagline</b>	"You've been doing the service work. This book shows how to make it last."
<b>Public Accountability</b>	Track conversations, regions, and names — publicly — so that the movement becomes visible and stories can be told in real time.

**"I'm becoming a peacebuilder."**

## BEYOND THE BOOK

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Since the book went to press, Chip Hauss and his team have taken its ideas forward in two ways:

- **The Campaign** — Building a national community and movement of peacebuilders one conversation and one person at a time.
- **The Hub** — A growing network of organizations spreading the idea that peacebuilding starts at home to every nook and cranny of the United States — so that, in time, we can have an impact in Washington and everywhere else that the decisions that matter get made.

Visit [www.peacebuildingstartsathome.us](http://www.peacebuildingstartsathome.us) to learn more and get involved.

## WHAT THIS BOOK IS NOT

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To sharpen the message, it helps to name what the book explicitly rejects:

- ✗ About partisan politics or scoring points against the opposition
- ✗ Another doom-and-gloom diagnosis with no prescription
- ✗ Passive — it requires something of the reader
- ✗ Only for experts or professionals — it is explicitly written for the Leslie in your life: the person who already cares, but hasn't found their on-ramp