

This Is What Peace Looks Like

When I walk in Atlanta's Piedmont Park these days, I get a few moments where I see at a deeper level.

I see hundreds of smiling people. I see couples in love, parents with children, and happy dogs trotting ahead of them. I see people playing soccer and football, throwing frisbees, roller-blading, running, biking, picnicking, and doing (popsicle) business.

I see extreme diversity and cultural integration. I see people respecting each other and sharing a park with each other, despite differences in belief, sexual orientation, race, politics, nationality, and ethnicity. By and large, people in a park on a sunny day genuinely don't care about divisions.

I see people wearing all kinds of clothes, rocking different hairstyles, riding around on the strangest contraptions (hoverboards?), and generally doing what they want to do. By and large, people in a park on a sunny day don't care about control.

And I realize something: this is what peace looks like. This is what freedom looks like.

This – here, now, concretely, in front of me- is a small vision of what I and all of my idealistic friends and forebears talk about when we talk about the world we want. This is what people have fought and died for. This is it.

Peace becomes far more interesting and compelling when it has a face. And that face is far more beautiful than any of the allure of war and conflict.

War has only one face: the death mask. But in the park on any random Saturday in Atlanta, I can see far more faces and far more expressions of human joy and creativity – with new expressions being born every weekend.

We have a lot of work to do still. Most of the world is not so lucky. But it helps to have a solid image of what we want to spread. Peace isn't an abstraction: it's a park full of happy people.

Originally published at JamesWalpole.com.