

# Starbucks and the Roadmap For Peace

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Everyone talks about world peace. People even say it's what they want for Christmas. But no one really does anything about it. I'm about to change all that. I have a plan that is so revolutionary, so ingenious, so incredibly innovative that some might even think my crack-pot idea is almost mediocre.

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First a little ground work. Each morning I attend a religious ritual called "getting coffee". Like other religious rituals this one gives me a reason to live - or at least to continue with my day. The temple in this case is my local Starbucks. Each morning I step up to the counter and order "A vente black coffee in a double cup". Yes - I drink it black. No cream. No Sugar. Just good old American.... er... Sumatran, Guatemalan or Ethiopian.... coffee. Those of you on the east coast should under no circumstances try this. It should be left to professional Midwesterners only. Midwesterners on their first trip to New York are often surprised to find that "regular" coffee in New York means cream and sugar whilst unadorned joe is ... well ... special order I guess.

I repeat this ritual 2 more times (on average) during the day - getting my last cup of coffee at around 5:00 for my 15 minute commute home where I enjoy it throughout the evening. Needless to say the "baristas" at Starbucks know me by name - and I know some of them by name. Spending so much time schmoozing with baristas has given me an inside look at Starbucks and I've discovered something - Starbucks holds the key to World peace.

You see, at my Starbucks there is quite an eclectic mix of baristas. There are typical laid back 20 something's. There are some girls with wild spiky hair boasting potluck colors. There's the obligatory tongue pierced girl who asks me "do ou whant woom for cweam?" There's a couple of guys with tattoos. One guy looks like he stepped out of a Marine Corp Calendar and another out of a Yale promo brochure. There are different colors and races. A fellow named "kip" who is surely destined to own a diner someday always tells me what "the damage" is when asking for my money. Of the 12 or 13 folks I know that work there I can't seem to "categorize" any of them.

These people... this crew of disparate individuals... are the most cheerful lot you can imagine. They sing and smile. They chat with the folks going through the drive through. They light up when they realize they know you. They kid and joke. They make me wish that I had worked at a Starbucks when I was in college instead of working at that card shop - a dull work environment even without that unfortunate "ornament" incident involving an elf, a light-up Rudolph and a man with a very very large bottom - but I digress.

It got me to thinking. I don't know if it's the training, the benefits, or the heady fog of caffeine laden drinks but something about Starbucks brings people together - and even enables people to get along and enjoy each other. So then I thought - hey... if Starbucks can bring people together for the common goal of making coffee drinks and selling things for a 150% markup, why can't we use that power to bring peace to the world.

We could build Starbucks everywhere and fill them with a mix of races and creeds - all happily working together. Pretty soon there would be a Starbucks on every corner and..... hey wait a minute....