

## Facilitator's Toolbox

### Becoming a SGM Facilitator (aka Truly Becoming a Unitarian) *by Raef Lee, Devon, PA*

I had been in my SGM group a mere one year, when I got the e-mail. Did I want to co-facilitate the group? The e-mail had a necessary first paragraph about my good contribution and how I was a 'natural'. The second, shorter, and more direct paragraph was the request that I cofacilitate my group. I was pleased to be asked, but curious about my qualifications.

When joining the SGM, I was a new member of the church (Main Line Unitarian Church in Devon, PA) and new to Unitarian Universalism. I knew a fair amount about world religions and had tried a couple, but was still searching for a spiritual home. Like most of the world outside a UU congregation, I knew little about Unitarianism. The coffee hour at church was enjoyable, but not a place I could ask about people's beliefs. SGM seemed the place for me to find answers.

My first year in SGM lived up to those hopes. It was a great group of people with differing backgrounds but a similar set of values. The SGM format of investigating a topic through the group's personal experience was a breath of fresh air. What is more, the topics were hitting all the subjects I had questions about. I was being taught by my group. I was even moved to submit a session of my own, based on NPR's 'This I Believe'; a little self-serving I admit, as I wanted to understand what the rest of the group believed.

I had hit one of the UU core principles. If you show interest in an activity, you will end up running it! I accepted the e-mail's request. Being a facilitator turned out to be an easy, but rewarding role. Professionally I do a lot of facilitation. This was a lot easier; the sessions were done for you, my co-facilitator held the meetings in his comforting house, and the group basically facilitated themselves.

There were additional hidden benefits. The word Ministry is in SGM for a reason. Members occasionally need support and help. This is an aspect which seemed natural to my co-facilitator, but I have to keep reminding myself of. Also, there is the background organization: what sessions to do, feedback from the groups and problems arising. I was involved in my first UU committee, with all of the debate, differing ideas, and innovation that I'm beginning to associate with my church.

Becoming a facilitator has achieved my early goal. I now feel part of the congregation, I understand more about being a UU, and I think I've found a spiritual home.

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