

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website

Small Group Ministry

A Question of Balance

First Parish Church of Stow and Acton, MA

November 2021

Opening Words and Chalice Lighting

We come with the weight of life
held quietly in the secret spaces of our heart.
The ballast of our spirits so easily shifts
and knocks us off center.
Into this place, we walk
hoping to find a voice, a song,
a moment of sacred silence that will bring us back to balance,
that will anchor us again in beauty, trust and connection.
We light our chalice [today] in gratitude for many ways we help each other
return home. - *Soul Matters*

Check-in/Sharing: This is the time to mention any major issues or events on your mind that you would like to share.

Topic: A Question of Balance

There are so many things that need to be balanced in our lives. We hear a lot about “work/life” balance in the workplace. In relationships we think about “self/other” balance and maybe “together/apart” balance. There is a balance to be found between “discovering” who we are and “deciding” who we will be. Many speak about balance between “doing” and “being”. In many of these “polarities” in our lives, it seems like living or focusing on one end of the polarity to the exclusion of the other doesn’t yield a satisfying or healthy life.

Or balance can feel more like a teeter-totter – an attempt to even out your mental/emotional health over a fulcrum. Being out of balance is not intrinsically bad, but it’s not sustainable over time. The yin and yang of Chinese philosophy recognizes this polarity and the need to acknowledge both ends, but to be dominated by neither.

And balance can most fundamentally be physical. Physical conditions like vertigo, injury, or even aging can affect our bodily balance, and interfere with the most basic activities of daily living. Such impairment can also have

a large impact on our psyches, further throwing us out of balance. Let's explore some of these "Questions of Balance" together and see what we can learn from each other and about ourselves.

"Getting in balance is not so much about adopting new strategies to change your behaviors, as it is about realigning yourself in all of your thoughts so as to create a balance between what you desire and how you conduct your life on a daily basis." - *Wayne Dyer*

"A balanced inner calmness radiates from a peaceful centre. It neither craves others' approval nor rejects others' presence. It neither pulls towards nor pushes away. It has a reverent attitude towards life and all its inhabitants." - *Donna Goddard*

"Life is so balanced, even when we are not" - *Mohsin Ali Shaukat*

"Work-life balance is not something we can find. That's because we use words as if this balance were a noun when in reality it's an action verb. We cannot find balance because it's a continual action with ongoing adjustments, just like the tightrope walker who constantly moves his pole to keep from falling" - *Tina Hallis*

"But you do have choices about how you spend your time. Balancing what you need to do with what you want to do can lead to happiness and success." - *Stephen Hall*

Possible Questions for Discussion:

- What polarities (like "work/life" balance) do you find hard to keep in balance in your life? What do you do to help yourself keep these in balance?
- In what areas do you find balance relatively easy? Why might this be so?
- What are the internal or external forces that throw off your balance?
- How do you recognize when you are out of balance? In balance?
- What helps you to maintain or return to an emotional balance?
- Over the course of your life what has changed in what you are balancing and how you work towards balance?
- Is there some area where you strive to not be balanced? What area is this, and why is balance something you avoid in this area?

(Group will take a few minutes to consider topic and questions and then share).

Wrapping Up: How did you like this topic and session?

Closing Words

“Usually, when the distractions of daily life deplete our energy, the first thing we eliminate is the thing we need the most: quiet, reflective time. Time to dream, time to contemplate what's working and what's not, so that we can make changes for the better.” - *Sarah Breathnach*