

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website  
**"Dealing with Adversity and Suffering"**  
A Covenant Group Curriculum, River of Grass UU Congregation, Davie, FL

**Opening Meditation/Music/Silence/Chalice Lighting** (whichever one(s) you choose to do)

**Opening Words:**

"Faith is not making religious-sounding noises in the daytime. It is asking your inmost self questions, the tough questions, when it is night and life appears dark—and then getting up and going to work."

- *Mary Jean Irion*

"I have one concern, and that is to be worthy of my suffering."

- *Paraphrased from Tolstoy*

**Check-in/Sharing**

**Topic/Readings:**

"You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, 'I have lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along.'

You must do the thing you think you cannot do."

- *Eleanor Roosevelt*

"Because I can no longer ignore death, I pay more attention to life."

- *Treya Killam Wilber*

**Facilitator:** Please read these quotes aloud and ask people to consider those moments of suffering or difficulty that they have encountered in life. What resources were available to them—other people, their own capabilities, spiritual traditions or practices, God?

**Basically, what got them through?**

**Also, how has their ability to deal with suffering and adversity clarified, or even muddied, their sense of life's meaning and their purpose in life?**

**What has difficulty taught them?**

**Likes/Wishes/Feedback**

**Closing Words:**

"Despair is my private pain, born from what I have failed to say, failed to do, failed to overcome.

Be still, my inner self, let me rise to you, let me reach down into your pain and soothe you.

I turn to you to renew my life. I turn to the world, the streets of the city, the worn tapestries of brokerage firms, drug dealers, private estates, personal things in the bag lady's shopping cart.

Rage and pain in the faces that turn from me, afraid of their own inner worlds.

This common world I love anew, as the lifeblood of generations who refused to surrender their humanity in an inhumane world, courses through my veins.

From within this world my despair is transformed to hope and I begin anew the legacy of caring.”

- *Thandeka*

Amen. May you live in blessing.