

Asking for Help

First Unitarian Church of Wilmington, Delaware, by Rev. Michelle Collins, 2012

Chalice Lighting, by Janet Vicker

Breath of the divine, light a flame of reflection in all that we do.

Breath of strength, light a flame of courage to be who we are: sentient, vulnerable, and diverse.

Breath of creation, light a flame of connection in our circle of care.

Breath of wonder, light a flame of inspiration to cultivate participation.

Breath of this moment, light a flame of celebration for our future unfolds the covenant of this day.

Check In

Reading: Driving With Your Feet, by Ann Larsen

(on next page)

Discussion & Sharing Questions:

- In the story, Bryce did not want to ask for help and seemed to go to great lengths to avoid it. He claimed that things would be “all over” if someone else started doing things for him. What did help represent for him?
- Is it relatively easy for you to ask for help or is it something that you have struggled with?
- Are there some things that are easier to ask for help with and others that are not? What is the difference between them for you?
- Have you had times when you would have been better off having asked for help but did not? What was holding you back? What would have been different?
- Is giving help part of spiritual practices or social action for you? Does it work to think of receiving help as a spiritual practice as well? Can you think of ways that you could push yourself towards being more willing to ask for help?

Closing Thoughts

Extinguishing the Chalice

Driving With Your Feet, by Ann Larsen

My two brothers, Laine and Bryce, could not be less alike, but as teenagers they were both skilled mechanics. Our garage always had a car or motorcycle in some stage of repair. At the age of thirty-nine, Bryce, the hard-drinking, Harley-riding black sheep of

my conservative Mormon family, was diagnosed with a degenerative nerve disease and given three to five years to live. Five years later he was still very much alive but had lost the use of his arms. They hung limp at his sides, his once-massive chest caved in. He refused all help, however, and ingeniously figured out ways to dress and feed himself. Once somebody started doing things for him, he said, it would be “all over.”

Laine, a dentist and self-sacrificing sort of person, volunteered to convert Bryce’s Jeep to a foot-operated steering system so that Bryce could drive. The goal was to have the job finished for a big off-road rally in three weeks. It was all that Bryce could talk about, and the slow rate of progress tested his patience. Laine was about halfway done when he was diagnosed with a melanoma on the arch of his foot. The surgery left him in a wheelchair for six weeks. He called on our dad and all our brothers-in-law to help with the Jeep. None of these men was an experienced mechanic, so Laine directed them from his wheelchair, step by step, through the complex conversion project.

The day before the rally, the foot-steering system still wasn’t working, and we had a family prayer over the Jeep. At ten o’clock that night, the system finally checked out. Laine and Bryce loaded the Jeep onto a truck and drove with a friend all night. They just made it to the rally.

Bryce is still driving that shiny black Jeep, still making his bed with his feet, and still refusing anyone’s help.

By Ann Larsen; Sun Magazine, April 2003

http://www.thesunmagazine.org/_media/article/pdf/328_Asking.pdf