

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
Chalice Circle Session - **BODY & SOUL**
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Newark, DE, Rev. Andrew Weber, June 2015

Chalice

Rev. Nancy Shaffer, "Blessing for Bodies"

May we creatures of bone and tissue
know our bodies well:
the fourth rib, and how it rises
higher than third, not so high as fifth;
how it feels to the thumb, slowly traced,
and under it, how the heart rests.
May we know that space where
no ribs lie, and unshielded, we bend.

Lighting

May we know the bottom of each
toe, and that tender arch where
no skin touches ground;
also skin smoothed soft by clothing.

May we know the quick curve of the head
before it sits on the spine,
and the tiny hollow just behind the ear;
the length of the forearm,
lifting food to lips, and how lips become
a circle, waiting—and knowing this,
cease our study of war.

Check-In: What's going on in your life?

Readings:

To pay attention to our physical health is a spiritual practice in that we make of our bodies a temple and all that we do an act of worship, of thankfulness, of mindfulness that we are a part of the All.
- Rev. Susan Manka-Seale

Take care of your body. It's the only place you have to live.
- Jim Rohn

We must no more ask whether the soul and body are one than ask whether the wax and the figure impressed on it are one.
- Aristotle

"Soul" is not a thing, but a quality or a dimension of experiencing life and ourselves. It has to do with depth, value, relatedness, heart, and personal substance. I do not use the word here as an object of religious belief or as something to do with immortality. When we say that someone or something has soul, we know what we mean, but it is difficult to specify exactly what that meaning is.
- Thomas Moore, in The Care of the Soul

Questions:

1. What spoke to you (or didn't speak to you) from the readings?
2. Have you done the spiritual practice yet? How has it gone for you?
3. How are your bodily experiences affected by your emotional or spiritual experiences? Vice versa?
4. Are humans more than the sum of our physical parts? What about non-human animals?
5. Is there a soul? What is it... What isn't it?

Check-Out: One sentence on "likes and wishes" from the session.

Closing:

Bodily decay is gloomy in prospect, but of all human contemplations the most abhorrent is body without mind. - Thomas Jefferson

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Newark
Spiritual Practice - **BODY & SOUL**
June 2015

The intersection and interconnectedness of body and soul is a very important and meaningful topic for me. I find physical movement to be a source of great mental and spiritual calm and insight. And at other times my body feels like something apart from “me”, something which I would like to change or alter. Our ministry theme for this month is “Body & Soul”, where we will take a look at these two parts of our selves, and whether they can be separated at all.

The spiritual practice for June is along the normal framework of at once being very easy while providing the opportunity for deep transformation. This month we are all invited to take a few moments and perform a body scan meditation. A body scan involves taking some time to be present with our bodies and paying attention to them. It isn't about changing things, just paying attention. To do a body scan you begin lying down or sitting, focus your attention at the top of your head and mentally scan through all the parts of your body. Here is a site which has more explanation and 3-minute, 5-minute and 10-minute guided meditation videos:

<http://tinyurl.com/bodysoul2015>