

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network
Small Group Ministry

Bucket List

First Parish Church of Stow and Action, MA, February 2018

Opening Words and Chalice Lighting

“It is only when we truly know and understand we have limited time on earth and that we have no way of knowing when our time is up that we will begin to live each day to the fullest, as if it were the only one we had.” - *Elizabeth Kubler Ross*

Check-in/ Sharing: This is a time to mention briefly any major issue or event on your mind that you would like to share. At the first meeting of the year, we review the covenant (especially confidentiality), hand out the SGM Handbook, and read the “I will listen” poem .

Topic: Bucket List

What is a Bucket List? A Bucket List is a list of all the goals you want to achieve, dreams you want to fulfill and life events you want to experience before you die. Many theories, religions, and philosophies address both how to live one’s life and what, if anything, comes after, but despite any differences of opinion, there is no question that we are faced with the same challenge – making the most of this lifetime.

“I don’t want to get to the end of my life and find that I lived just the length of it. I want to have lived the width of it as well “– *Diane Ackerman*

“And in the end, it’s not the years in your life that count. It’s the life in your years” – *Abraham Lincoln*

“Many people die with their music still in them. Why is this so? Too often it is because they are always getting ready to live. Before they know it, time runs out” – *Oliver Wendell Holmes*

“One day your life will flash before your eyes. Make sure it’s worth watching.” – *Gerard Way*

Activity

[Facilitators: Provide paper and pens or pencils for this exercise. Have people draw a line down the middle of the paper. About 10 minutes would probably give people enough time to make a useful list. Let participants know that this is a private list. They will be sharing only what they are comfortable sharing.]

Facilitator reads:

Imagine you have a limited amount of time to live (a minimum of 6 months and a maximum of five years) and that you will be relatively healthy in the meantime. Money is no object; you have an adequate, though not exorbitant, personal fund for your pursuit of your listed aspirations. What would you want to do, see, experience, create, become, try, change, risk before your dying day? Does your list include places to visit, skills to learn, knowledge to master, people to meet, relationships to improve, problems to solve?

Write your answers on the left hand side of your paper. Write as many as you like.

Questions for Discussion:

1. What did you write down? You may share one or more item, as you are comfortable. As you hear others' ideas, use the space on the right hand side of your paper to add new ideas that appeal to you.
2. What kinds of emotions came up for you in creating your list? What thoughts and feelings came up for you about where you are at this point in your life? What was it like for you to imagine you had a limited time left to live?
3. Looking at your complete list, what were some reasons for any or all of the items you chose? Do any of the items point to some underlying unmet needs? Does your list in some way reflect some larger or broader longing within, perhaps a particular aspect of your individual spirituality or orientation to life?
4. Given the unlikeliness that a billionaire will fund your "bucket" pursuits, what can you do now to attempt to address your list in real life? What items on your bucket list are doable in the next 3 to 6 months?
5. Were there items on other people's list that you have added or would like to add to yours?
6. If it were possible to find out what the exact day and time of your death would be, would you want to know?

(Group will take a few minutes of silence to consider topic and questions followed by sharing)

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

Closing Words:

"My invitation to you is to begin living every moment as though you are miraculous and deserve to live an extraordinary life. Fake it, if you must, and keep faking it until it's real to you. The gift you will be giving yourself is a lifelong journey of discovery, one that is infinite and infinitely rewarding.

Begin the journey.

Today.

This moment.

Now. " - *Robert White*

Adapted from: Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Stony Brook, NY, March 2012
Rev. Margie Allen, Rev. Dr. Linda Anderson (Peter Bowden 2008, adapted)