

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
Compassion
Submitted by Phyllis Beckman, UU Fellowship of La Crosse, Wisconsin
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OPENING WORDS & CHALICE LIGHTING:

We are here to abet creation and
to witness to it,
to notice each other's beautiful
face and complex nature
so that creation need not play to
an empty house.

Annie Dillard #420 Singing the Tradition

CHECK IN: Share from your mind and heart. Each person may share, uninterrupted, for five minutes. Anyone can choose to pass without comment if they wish.

FOCUS: Compassion

“The principle of compassion lies at the heart of all religious, ethical and spiritual traditions, calling us always to treat all others as we wish to be treated ourselves.” CHARTER OF COMPASSION as composed by the Council of Conscience, a group of notable individuals from six faith traditions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism) who met in Switzerland in February 2009 to compose the final version. P.13, TWELVE STEPS TO A COMPASSIONATE LIFE by KAREN ARMSTRONG

Vince Hatt, quoted in the Saturday, July22, 2017 of LA CROSSE TRIBUNE newspaper article citing a portion of the commencement speech of Chief Justice John Roberts to his son's ninth-grade class graduation: “I ...hope you will have just enough pain to learn compassion.” Vince Hatt goes on to reflect that “It is pain that teaches us compassion.”

Henri Nowen quoted in JOYCE RUPP, ESSENTIAL WRITINGS, page 125

“Compassion means to come close to the one who suffers...A compassionate person says, ‘I am your brother; I am your sister; I am human, fragile, and mortal, just like you... We can be with the other only when the other ceases to be **other** and becomes like us.

TWELVE STEPS TO A COMPASSIONATE LIFE by KAREN ARMSTRONG

THE GOLDEN RULE presented by INTERFAITH FORUM

HINDUISM (c.1500BCE)

“Do not to others what ye do not wish done to yourself: and wish for others too what ye desire and long for, for yourself.

JUDAISM (1300BCE)

“Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”

BUDDHISM (c.30CE)

“Hurt not others with that which pains yourself.”

CHRISTIANITY (c.30CE)

“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”

ISLAM (c.570CE)

“No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself.”

THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH (1863CE)

“Blessed is he who preferreth his brother before himself.”

DISCUSSION: Each person, in turn, shares thoughts, without interruption, on one or some of the questions provided.

- 1) When, in your life, or in the life of a loved one, have you or they yearned for compassion?
- 2) Who, if anyone, attempted to fill your need for compassion, and what form did that come in?
- 3) When have you demonstrated compassion for a stranger?
- 4) When, if ever, has a stranger acted out compassion for you?
- 5) When, if ever, have you shown compassion for an enemy?
- 6) When if ever, has an enemy shown compassion for you?
- 7) What are the primary qualities that define compassion?
- 8) Other relevant remarks regarding compassion may be shared if time permits.

CLOSING WORDS: BRING HAPPINESS BY BARBARA CHEATHAM

Before we gather here again --
may each of us bring happiness into another's life;
may we each be surprised by the gifts that surround us;
may each of us be enlivened by constant curiosity –
And we remain together in spirit
till the hour we meet again.