

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
Small Group Ministry Session

Condolences

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of La Crosse, WI, R. Haines, March 5, 2019

It's hard to know what to say to people in mourning. Say something if you can and if you don't know what to say, just be there. It is not necessary to say anything. Show you care enough to drop your cares and help another person bear their burdens.

Chalice lighting. The chalice originated as a symbol of service to persecuted people in Europe during WW II. As we light this chalice, we pledge to serve others.

Check-in. Share something from your life with these friends with confidence that what you say will go no further.

Topic. We discuss today the act of extending condolences to persons who has suffered the loss of someone or something very dear to them, that they may know that other people care about them.

The loss may be the death of a person they have loved, or it may be the loss of something else that was very dear and loss of which causes grief.

A friend who lost her son told me what it meant when people came to visit following that loss, even if they had nothing to say. She said that each person who came carried away some of her pain upon departing. I came to understand that better following the death of one of my sons.

Many friends met to celebrate his life and share their memories of him. He lives on in those memories. I heard stories about him that I would never have heard otherwise, and I add those to my memory of him.

The same emotions accompany the loss of a pet or of anything to which a person is emotionally attached.

The words you say are less important than the fact that you took time to be present and to offer comfort to the bereaved.

Discussion

Share one or more stories of condolences you received, that you gave, or that otherwise may help all of us learn to support grieving persons more effectively. How might they have been improved to more effectively relieve the recipient's pain? Speak first without interruption. Further discussion may follow after we have each shared what we prepared.

Closing.

Thanks to all for coming today and for sharing thoughts with the rest of us. Perhaps we are wiser and our time was well spent in each other's presence.