

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
Small Group Ministry Program
Difficult Decisions
Unitarian Universalist Church in Eugene, Oregon, April 2011

CHALICE OR CANDLE LIGHTING OR SOUND A CHIME (2 to 3 minutes for this and silence and opening words)

MOMENT OF SILENCE

OPENING WORDS

We gather together to share our lives, to be together seeking to live more fully. We gather together to meet one another, to grow, and to show our respect. Here let us make room for ourselves and one another by listening with appreciation and speaking directly.

-Adapted from "Gatherings" by Tony Bushman and Bill Hamilton-Holway.

CHECK-IN (up to 20 to 30 minutes total with up to 2 to 3 minutes per person)

TOPIC AND SHARING (up to 70 minutes for readings, questions, a few minutes for reflection and making notes if desired, individual sharing, optional open discussion at the end if the group agrees, with an optional 5 minute break about midway in the session)

READINGS

I shall be telling this with a sigh

Somewhere ages and ages hence: Two roads diverged in a wood,

And I -- I took the one less travelled by,

And that has made all the difference.

-Robert Frost

When you have to make a choice and don't make it, that is in itself a choice.

-William James

Sometimes it's the smallest decisions that can change your life forever.

-Keri Russell

Whatever course you decide upon, there is always someone to tell you that you are wrong. There are always difficulties arising that tempt you to believe your critics are right. To map out a course of action and follow it to an end requires some of the same courage that a soldier needs. Peace has its victories, but it takes brave men and women to win them.

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

A decision is an action you must take when you have information so incomplete that the answer does not suggest itself.

-Arthur Radford

Decide which is the line of conduct that presents the fewest drawbacks and then follow it out as being the best one, because one never finds anything perfectly pure and unmixed, or exempt from danger.

-Niccolo Machiavelli

Move out of your comfort zone. You can only grow if you are willing to feel awkward and uncomfortable when you try something new. -Brian Tracy

Your life changes the moment you make a new, congruent, and committed decision.

-Anthony Robbins

QUESTIONS (Please respond to whichever question or questions you feel moved to answer. It is not necessary to respond to all of the questions. You may also respond to any of the readings that you find to be particularly meaningful.)

1. What were some difficult decisions in your life? What transitions resulted from making those decisions?
2. What has been helpful to you in making difficult decisions?

SHARING (up to 6 to 8 minutes each without interruption, depending on the time available, with optional open discussion at the end after all have shared)

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS (up to 5-10 minutes)

- Confirm next meeting date, time, location, and topic.
- Consider discussing the service project.
- Other

LIKES (celebrations, gratitudes, appreciations for needs met) and WISHES (mournings, requests, acknowledgements of needs not met)/CHECK-OUT (a few words or phrases from each who wants to share, up to 5 minutes total)

CLOSING WORDS (2 minutes for words, and closing)

Hold on to what is good, even if it is a handful of earth.^[1] Hold on to what you believe even if it is a tree which stands by itself.^[1] Hold on to what you must do even if it is a long way from here.^[1] Hold on to my hand even when I have gone away from you.

-Nancy Wood

EXTINGUISH THE CHALICE OR CANDLE OR SOUND A CHIME (and additional optional closing ritual if agreed to)

(Preparation for the facilitator. Please bring the SGM Facilitator Training Manual, paper and writing implements, the lesson plan, and your calendar/date book.)

Lesson plan prepared by the Small Group Ministry steering committee (Laura Adams; Dick Loescher, chair; Sandy Moses; Leora White) and Rev. Alicia Forsey 2/27/11