

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website

Small Group Ministry

Endurance

First Parish Church of Stow and Acton, MA, March 2021

Opening Words and Chalice Lighting

“We call this light before us in hope that we may always remain a strong community, working together to make the world a better place.

When we are grieving or sad,

When we are challenged,

When we need help,

This flame guides us out of the darkness.” - *Atticus Palmer*

Check-in/Sharing:

Please share anything you are carrying into this gathering that may crowd your mind and your ability to be present here and now. Please agree to the Covenant after answering any questions and read aloud “Deep Listening”.

Topic: Endurance

Endurance can be thought of as the ability to sustain an extended stressful effort. The prolonged duration can strain shorter term coping mechanisms and take mental and physical tolls, including depression and anxiety. We may have used multiple motivational mechanisms, and paced ourselves, but the difficulties are still not over and even our strategies may be tired.

It can help to acknowledge that enduring is hard and that we may be doing the best we can. We can make this easier for ourselves by looking at our own past to find things we either had to endure or chose to endure such as long car rides, times of loneliness, school, illness, pain, or children’s growth stages.

When endurance seems unending, perhaps it is time to stand back, shift into a lower gear and look to each other for some new approaches. In difficult times it helps to remember we are not alone.

“A cloak is not made for a single shower of rain.” - *Italian proverb*

“A [person] on a thousand mile walk has to forget [their] goal and say to [themselves] every morning, 'Today I'm going to cover twenty-five miles and then rest up and sleep.'”- *Leo Tolstoy*

“When you have exhausted all possibilities, remember this: you haven't.” - *Thomas Edison*

“Hope is important because it can make the present moment less difficult to bear. If we believe that tomorrow will be better, we can bear a hardship today.” - *Thich Nhat Hanh*

“Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass, it's about learning how to dance in the rain.” - *Vivian Greene*

“That which was bitter to endure may be sweet to remember.” - *Thomas Fuller*

Possible Questions for Discussion:

- What are you finding particularly challenging now? How are you responding?
- Throughout your life, what kinds of situations have you found required endurance?
- What tolls have periods of endurance taken on you?
- Could you describe anything or anyone that has helped you to endure difficulties?
- Do you have any stories of role models for endurance?
- Have you found any silver linings, connections, new possibilities or new habits during times of endurance that were worth carrying forward?

(Group will take a few minutes to consider topic and questions and then share).

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

Closing Words:

“We are [human] because we survive. We do it in a half-assed way, but we do it.” - *James A. Michener*