

# Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website

## Small Group Ministry

### **Epic Fails**

First Parish Church of Stow and Acton, MA September 2022

#### **Opening Words and Chalice Lighting**

“For this one hour,  
may we let go of our anxieties,  
our fears,  
our anger,  
our self-doubts,  
our regrets,  
our petty grievances,  
and our distractions.” - Paul Stephan Dodenhoff

**Check-in/Sharing:** This is the time to mention any issues or events on your mind that you would like to share. Please plan a community service if you have not already done so.

#### Topic: **Epic Fails**

Failure. The word is associated with negativity, incompetence, shame. No one wants to fail. We hide our failures, some times at great cost, presenting our successes as pure and independent, untainted. For many an ‘epic fail’ connotes a major failure. One definition on Urban Dictionary of ‘epic fail’ is “Complete and total failure when success should have been reasonably easy to attain.” Such situations can feel silly and embarrassing.

But, as Alexander Pope reminds us, “to err is human.” No one is perfect, whatever that would mean, and if we’re honest, our successes and accomplishments grow out of failure and, more importantly, what we learn from those missteps. In this session let’s explore the role of failures, “epic” or not, and how we respond to them and what we learn from them.

"Alexander... Congratulations  
You have invented a new kind of stupid  
A damage-you-can-never-undo kind of stupid  
An open-all-the-cages-in-the-zoo kind of stupid  
"Truly, you Didn't Think This Through?" kind of stupid." - *Lin-Manuel Miranda*

“You may encounter many defeats, but you must not be defeated. In fact, it may be necessary to encounter the defeats, so you can know who you are, what you can rise from, how you can still come out of it.” - *Maya Angelou*

“We all crash and burn. Some of us just burn a little brighter.” - *Curtis Tyrone Jones*

“I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work.” - *Thomas A. Edison*

“Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts.”  
- *Winston Churchill*

“Have no fear of perfection - you'll never reach it.” - *Salvador Dali*

“Only those who dare to fail greatly can ever achieve greatly.” - *Robert F. Kennedy*

“If you fell down yesterday, stand up today.” - *H.G. Wells*

“The only real mistake is the one from which we learn nothing.” - *Henry Ford*

### **Possible Questions for Discussion:**

- What was the attitude towards failure that you encountered growing up? How did that influence your own behavior/attitudes?
- Can you share a failure (epic or otherwise) that you learned from?
- Are there things you are willing to fail at?
- What keeps you going after a sense of failure? Can you share anything or anyone that has helped or inspired you?
- Are there situations in which past failures or fear of failure has held you back? Any examples in which you gave something a try anyway?
- Could you share any ways you let go of failures? Or do you hang on to them?
- How do you view situations that do not work out the way you planned? How do you tend to respond?

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

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

### **Closing Words**

“Remind yourself that you cannot fail at being yourself. “ - *Wayne Dyer*