

# Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website

## Small Group Ministry

### **Experiencing Success**

First Parish Church of Stow and Acton, MA, April 2020

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

Our entire life is made up of choices,  
What we decide, the action we take,  
the attitude we display  
All represent the steps of life.

Sometimes we take two steps forward  
And one step back.  
Some of us take baby steps  
Some of us take giant steps

But the secret is not to let that  
one step back turn into a failure.  
Learn from backward steps  
And keep on stepping forward in this dance called Life!  
- *Catherine Pulsifer*

**Check-in/Sharing:** This is the time to mention briefly any major issues or events on your mind that you would like to share.

#### **Topic: Experiencing Success**

As young children we learn that one aspect of success is about learning new skills, reaching goals or completing tasks. We are often taught that success is about comparing ourselves to others or receiving external recognition. As we grow, we can also experience success when cooperating with or helping someone else.

One traditional measure of success is whether a person is capable of independence and making a living. What about success in making a life? Personal success can be about self-awareness and personal growth, persevering during difficulties or overcoming challenges. People experience success in building relationships, building community or contributing to the larger world. Let's think of personal success as something that any of us may notice and feel good about, whether anyone else sees our success the same way we do or whether they never see it at all.

“My job [orchestra conductor] is to awaken possibility in other people. If their eyes are shining, you know you're doing it. ... For me [success is] very simple. It's not about wealth and fame and power. It's about how many shining eyes I have around me.” – *Benjamin Zander*

“Success in life is founded upon attention to the small things rather than to the large things; to the everyday things nearest to us rather than to the things that are remote and uncommon.” - *Booker T. Washington*

“Success lies in what you can control. It's not in things, other people, or places you get to visit. All of that is nice, but it does not define you or what you've accomplished. Success is about becoming the best version of our self, and yes, only you can control that one.” – *Lori Jackson*

“Based on my personal experience ... I have to say that success is not the goal. Success is the process. A journey. It's the way you feel and the energy that is created on your way to whatever your goal may be. It's you, striving for something.” – *Josh Ellis*

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

- Growing up, what were you taught or role-modeled about success? How has your personal view of success evolved?
- Could you share any stories of experiencing success in any of these ways?
  - feeling proud of a small thing that you cherished but went unnoticed
  - being surprised something worked out
  - succeeding after repeated failure
  - inspiring others or helping others to grow
  - working as part of a team
  - knowing yourself well enough to set goals that you enjoy reaching, and then repeating that process
  - challenges you have dealt with or times when you have persevered
- Could you describe other experiences of success not touched on above?

(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**

“Success can be defined in many ways. I think we accomplish success when at the end of a day we can say... this was a good day. I look forward to doing it again tomorrow.” - *Missy Yost*