

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
SMALL GROUP MINISTRY Plan for Facilitators
Fear (adapted from Calvin Dame)
Main Line Unitarian Church, Devon, PA October 2004

Opening Words & Chalice Lighting: From Adrienne Rich

“No one ever told us we had to study our lives,
Make of our lives a study, as if learning natural history or music,
That we should begin with simple exercises first and slowly go on trying the hard ones,
Practicing till strength and accuracy become one with the daring leap into transcendence.
And in fact we can’t live like that: we take on everything at once before we’ve even
begun to read or mark time, we’re forced to begin in the midst of the hardest movement.
The one already sounding as we are born.

Reflection/Personal Sharing/Prayer (approximately 30 minutes)

(The facilitator should briefly remind the group of confidentiality/anonymity, that this is not the time for cross conversation, etc.)

Focus Readings: From Marianne Williamson

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, and fabulous? Actually who are you not to be? You are a child of God.”

From Emerson

“The wise one in the storm prays God, not for safety from danger, but for deliverance from fear. It is the storm within which endangers one, not the storm without.”

From Louisa May Alcott

“I am not afraid of storms, for I am learning how to sail my ship.”

Focus Questions:

Fear of failure. Fear of dependency. Fear of destitution. Fear of other’s judgments. Fear of physical harm. More of our lives have been shaped by fear than we would readily admit. (Give the group time to think before asking.)

How has my life been shaped by fear?

What hold does fear presently have over me?

How have I overcome fear in my life?

Checkout/Likes and Wishes

(This is the time for facilitators to ask participants what they liked about this meeting and what they might wish for future meetings. This is also the time for any discussion of logistics.)

Closing Words & Extinguishing Chalice: From Rabindranath Tagore

“Let me not pray to be sheltered from dangers, but to be fearless in facing them.
Let me not beg for the stilling of my pain, but for the heart to conquer it.
Let me not look for allies in life’s battlefield, but to my own strength.
Let me not crave in anxious fear to be saved, but hope for the patience to win my
freedom.
Grant me that I may not be a coward, feeling your mercy in my success alone; but let me
find the grasp of your hand in my failure.”