

Finding Joy

First Parish Church of Stow and Acton, MA, March 2017

Opening Words and Chalice Lighting

Let there be joy in our coming together. Let there be truth heard in the words we speak and the songs we sing. Let there be help and healing for our disharmony and despair. Let there be silence for the voice within us and beyond us. Let there be joy in our coming together.

Carl Seaburg

Check-in/Sharing: This is a time to mention briefly any major issue or event on your mind that you would like to share.

This would be a good time to hand out the Covenant, SGM Handbook and Listening poem to any members for whom this is their first session. Answer any questions about the covenant and have the group sign a copy or verbally agree to it. Good opportunity to start brainstorming on a group community service project.

Topic: Finding Joy

Joy is the emotion evoked by experiences of needs being met, of well-being, and success. We think of joy as being connected to major celebrations, or breakthroughs, but joyful moments happen all the time. They can happen when you're eating dinner with your friends or family, when you're walking outside basking in the sunshine, or when you're sipping your morning coffee, taking a few quiet moments for yourself. Joy, to many, is the intense awareness of the fullness of life.

"Finding joy is probably tantamount to finding yourself and being comfortable in your own skin." *Morgan Freeman*

"Joy and sorrow are inseparable...together they come, and when one sits alone with you...remember that the other is asleep upon your bed." - *Kahlil Gibran*

"Find a place inside where there is joy, and the joy will burn away the pain." – *Joseph Campbell*

"Joy can be real only if people look upon their life as a service, and have a definite object in life outside themselves and their personal happiness."- *Leo Tolstoy*

"Find joy in everything you choose to do. Every job, relationship, home... It's your responsibility to Love it or Change it." – *Chuck Palahniuk*

"To find joy in another's joy; that is the secret of happiness." – *George Bernanos*

Questions for Discussion:

1. What feelings and images come to mind when you think of the word “joy?”
2. What brought you joy when you were a child?
3. Can you remember a time when you were filled with great joy? Tell us the story of that experience.
4. Who has served as a model or inspiration of joyful living in your life?
5. In your personal life, can you think of times when joy and sorrow were closely related?
6. What will be your legacy of joy to the generations that follow yours?
7. What regular habits and practices might create more joyfulness in your heart, home and community?

(Group will take a few minutes to consider topic and questions followed by sharing)

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

Closing Words:

This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one; the being thoroughly worn out before you are thrown on the scrap heap; the being a force of Nature instead of a feverish selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy. - *George Bernard Shaw*

Includes content from First Unitarian Church of Wilmington Delaware, and Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Stony Brook NY.