

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
Finding Balance, Living with Polarities Series
Holding On and Letting Go

Small Group Ministry Session, Unitarian Universalist Church in Eugene, Oregon, April 2010:

CHALICE OR CANDLE LIGHTING OR SOUND A CHIME (2 to 3 minutes for this and silence and opening words)

MOMENT OF SILENCE

OPENING WORDS

We come together in an attitude of openness - not knowing quite what will happen, yet daring to receive a new idea, a new experience, sustenance for our minds and our hearts. We come with an attitude of praise, expressing our thankfulness for the good that has come into our lives. We come with an attitude of humility, knowing how much we need one another, how alone we can be in the world, how vulnerable if we face life solely by ourselves. We come in the spirit of love, seeking human warmth and fellowship in the hands and faces of those around us. We come in the spirit of joy, seeking reconfirmation and renewal of life, of love, and of hope.

(Adapted from Peter Lee Scott)

CHECK-IN (Up to 20 to 30 minutes, 2 to 3 minutes per person)

TOPIC AND SHARING (Up to 75 minutes for reading, questions and sharing with optional 5 minute break about midway in the session.)

READINGS

Things change. We change. Our lives never stand still. There is always something new. We are always making transitions, from one thing to another, one experience to another, one stage of life to another, one challenge to another.

Some transitions are easy, some are hard. Some seem almost impossible. Some are exciting and joyful, some are painful and frightening. We change cities and homes. We change jobs and activities. We change commitments. We even change our minds.

(Adapted from Thomas Mickelson & Rev. Jory Agate)

And then the day came when the risk to remain tight in the bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom.

(by Anais Nin)

Its not so much that we're afraid of change or so in love with the old ways, but it's that place in between that we fear...It's like being between trapezes. It's Linus when his blanket is in the dryer.

There is nothing to hold on to.

(by Marilyn Ferguson)

If you don't get what you want you suffer; if you get what you don't want, you suffer; even when you get exactly what you want, you suffer because you can't hold on to it forever. Your mind is your predicament. It wants to be free of change. Free of pain, free of the obligations of life and death. But change is a law, and no amount of pretending will alter that reality.

(By Dan Millman)

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Hold on to what is good even if it is a handful of earth. Hold on to what you believe even if it is a tree which stands by itself. Hold on to what you must do even if it is a long way from here. Hold on to my hand even when I have gone away from you.

(By Nancy Wood)

QUESTIONS (Please respond to whichever question or questions you feel moved to answer. It is not necessary to respond to all of the questions.)

1. Tell about a time of holding on to and letting go of things, and how you decided what to keep and what to discard or give away or sell. What or who was helpful in making those choices? How might you make the same or different choices now?
2. Share about an experience of holding on to or letting go of relationships, and how you feel now about those choices.
3. Talk about holding on to or letting go of dreams, goals, or commitments, and how that has impacted you.
4. Talk about your experience of being in “that place in between”, neither in the familiar old situation, nor yet fully in the new.
5. How does holding on and letting go apply to our church transitions? What are your feelings in these transitions?

SHARING (Up to 6 to 8 minutes each, depending on the time available, with time at the end for comment and discussion if the group wishes. Consider the option of having a time of silence, perhaps up to 30 seconds or so, after each person has shared to allow for reflection, and to allow people to make notes about comments or questions they may want to bring up during the open discussion after all have shared.)

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS (Up to 5 to 10 minutes)

- Confirm next meeting date, time, location, and topic.
- Consider discussing the service project.

LIKES (celebrations, gratitudes, appreciations for needs met) and **WISHES** (mournings, requests, acknowledgements of needs not met)/check-out (a few words or phrases from each who wants to share, up to 5 minutes total)

CLOSING WORDS (2 minutes for words, and closing)

To live in this world you must be able to do three things: to love what is mortal; to hold it against your bones knowing your own life depends on it; and, when the time comes to let it go, to let it go.

(By Mary Oliver)

EXTINGUISH THE CHALICE OR CANDLE OR SOUND A CHIME (and additional optional closing ritual if agreed to)

(Preparation for the facilitator. Please bring the SGM Facilitator Training Manual, paper and writing implements, the lesson plan, and your date book.)

(Lesson plan prepared by the Small Group Ministry Steering Committee curriculum subcommittee [Rev. Stephen A. Ames, Dick Loesch, Leora White] 3/5/10)

