

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
Small Group Ministry
How You Spend Your Own Time
First Parish Church of Stow and Acton, MA. March 2022

Opening Words and Chalice Lighting

“We light this chalice to embrace the child in each of us. The child that knows how to play. The child that is fascinated by keys and dandelions, by clouds and balls that bounce. The child that dreams and imagines and creates wonders out of nothing. The child who is always in the moment yet touches and embraces where dragons fly and horses run free. The child that doesn't yet know the difference between the possible and impossible.”

- *Stephanie Certain Matz*

Check-in/Sharing: This is the time to mention any issues or events on your mind that you would like to share. Please agree to the Covenant after answering any questions and read aloud “Deep Listening”.

Topic: How You Spend Your Own Time

How we each choose to spend our time can define who we are and the life we will live. We spend much of our time on the necessities of life – work, school, keeping house, caring for others, eating and sleeping. What do we do with our time that is unstructured, unassigned, free – our own time?

How much free time we have changes as we progress through different phases of our life: children spend time in play; adults may struggle to carve out free time as they balance school, work, child-raising, caring for aging parents; retired folks often have an excess of free time to fill. Interests and abilities change throughout our lives and affect both what we choose to do and what we are able to do.

Let's explore what we do with the time that is our own to spend.

“Time is the most valuable thing a [person] can spend.” - *Theophrastus*

“There's never enough time to do all the nothing you want.” - *Bill Watterson*

“Be aware of wonder. Live a balanced life - learn some and think some and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day some.” - *Robert Fulghum*

“It's better to play than do nothing - ” *Confucius*

“It is utterly false and cruelly arbitrary to put all the play and learning into childhood, all the work into middle age, and all the regrets into old age.” - *Margaret Mead*

“Time is free, but it’s priceless. You can’t own it, but you can use it. You can’t keep it, but you can spend it. Once you’ve lost it you can never get it back.” - *Harvey Mackay*

“Always make time for things that make you feel happy to be alive.” - *Anonymous*

Possible Questions for Discussion:

- Could you share any stories of how you spent free time as a child?
- What do you choose to do in your free time? Hobbies, exercise, play, passions, music, writing, meditation, reading, Netflix, other?
- Does your work / life balance allow for enough free time? If you are working from home or in an “on call” situation, how do you claim your free time?
- Do you get more joy from what you do in your own time or from what you do (or did) for a living?
- Is it important to you that your free time choices are “productive”? Do you ever feel that you don't deserve, or can't afford, to play? Why?
- Is there a downside to having too much free time?
- How have your free time choices changed during your life? Have you met with physical limitations? Have you lost interest in things that you used to enjoy or added new interests?
- If you had more free time, what would you do? Are there things you would like to try in the future?

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

Closing Words

“Life is a song - sing it. Life is a game - play it. Life is a challenge - meet it. Life is a dream - realize it. Life is a sacrifice - offer it. Life is love - enjoy it.”
- *Sai Baba*