

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website  
Small Group Session  
**IT'S A MATTER OF TIME**  
Unitarian Universalist Community Church, Augusta, ME, May 7, 2020

Note: This session is developed from the third one by Thursday morning Small Group Ministry dealing with the impact of the coronavirus. The first focused on the impact of isolation that became the basis for "Reflection: Facets of Isolation" (Attached at the end of this session.) The second session was similar focus to this one a few weeks into the church building being closed. This one was developed about six weeks since it began. These sessions have been via ZOOM.

**Suggest that you have a candle that you can light during Opening Words.**

**Opening words**

Since Covid-19 started to affect our lives,

We have been standing our distance, self-isolating, and donning masks----

Not just wearing but also MAKING masks.

We have waited in lines to get into stores,

Waited for people to move through isles at 6 foot distance, as people have waited for us.

Waited to check out around plastic barriers.

Everything not only seems to – but does -- take longer.

Maybe it 'takes longer' because we were so used to things going faster.

As our routines change, sometimes smoothly and nicely, sometime with increasing disruption or sometimes wondering how things will be when the pandemic ends,

As we connect with others sometimes less, sometime more, sometimes with more electronic intervention,

As we connect with ourselves, checking in to see how we are emotionally and physically, and what has changed or is changing,

How is it with our spirits? What are our needs now, as time goes on?

**Sharing/Check in:** Briefly share how it is with you today, the ups and downs, what you need from the group, and what you have to offer.

**Topic/Activity:**

Social Activities have asked that we start keeping a journal/log of this time. The full article, "Call to all UU Friends?" by Cheryl Clukey, is in the Spring 2020 newsletter and the May 6 E-Blast. We are invited to use any media we wish: photos, poems, journals, etc. When this is over, there will be a Social Activity to share and laugh and hug each other.

Some of the questions from the article are included here for group reflection.

What has brought you comfort and what has brought frustration?

How have you handled being lonely if you lived alone?

Did you watch 'everything' on Netflix. Did you learn a new skill?

Did you try to have conversations with your pets or try to teach them to play gin rummy...and have them walk away?

What have you really missed? What have you learned about yourself?

Please reflect on how this time has been in the community of faith.

How have you been connected with the church community during this time?

What suggestions do you have that would enhance the connections?

How has the change from in-person connections to electronic media been for you?

The church doors may be closed, but the church's heart is open!

**Likes and Wishes/Checking out:** How has this session been for you?

**Closing words:**

We may be more connected now than ever.

We connect by video with (everyone can be seen) or without a camera (people can't see us),

We connect by phone, hearing and being heard.

We learn new ways of listening and interacting in virtual shared space,

We acknowledge this new reality, a different opportunity for time together when other things divide!

May our spirits be together.

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Compiled by Rev. Helen Zidowecki with Thursday Morning Small Group Ministry.

## Reflection: Facets of Isolation

Developed with Thursday AM Small Group Ministry, UCC. April 3, 2020

May our reflections of the current situation bring understanding for ourselves, physically, emotionally and spiritually as we find our strength.

May we find balance of the Equinox and hope in the time of waiting for the pandemic to unfold.

May we know and embrace the strength and creativity to survive and thrive in this time.

*Please share reflections as they mingle with these shared here. Blessed Be.*

### **Isolation is the state of separateness related to the world around us.**

Isolation -- separation to the point of aloneness

Isolation does not define us: we define our world and ourselves in response to isolation.

Rationale ranges from protection or wellbeing of self and/or others to scarcity of resources.

Sometimes it is by choice or preference, sometimes by circumstance

Sometimes it is strange, sometimes claustrophobic, sometimes comfortable or manageable.

*The impact of isolation comes from disruption, change on many levels and types and quality of connection. Together we can still find hope in our companionship.*

**Disruption** is disturbance or problems that interrupts an event, activity, or process –life itself.

Note from Google: The three primary forces of technology, globalization, and demographics that are the root **causes** of **disruption** have existed for millennia. While they are not new, they evolve in waves — and the interaction between these new waves gives rise to new megatrends.

A major impact of disruption stems from our not having control with what is happening.

Routines change, engaging new people, places, things or activities

Activities are canceled and rearranged, sometimes leaving nothing in their place

How are choices made about our lives? By whom? Why?

What sense of power do we have for our own being and for those we love?

The choice we always have is how we deal with the situation.

Disruption is the fear agent that keeps us unsettled throughout the resulting change.

Anxiety relates to the degree of disruption and who controls choice.

And additional angst comes when others do not appreciate the seriousness of the disruption, possibly out of their own sense of fear.

Perhaps this time is akin to deep acknowledgement of fragility of life as we prepare for our own well-being and that of humanity.

Our emotions and spirits draw from our inherent strengths that we may not recognize.

Our options move us from independence to interdependence.

*Balance need to know warnings and restrictions with need to turn off 'news' when it's too much to handle.*

**Change** is a fact of life but now moves toward isolation.

So what is different *now* about change from minor to catastrophic, or from annoyance to upheaval?

Maybe change is now more of a requirement than a choice.

Time and uncertainty: how long this will last – unknown is very difficult for us "planners"

Does change come at a pace so that some adjustment is possible along the way?

Or occur so quickly it 'takes our breath away' and balance is difficult?

Do we go from 'handling what comes' to wearily asking 'what next?'

What changes have occurred for you?

Change of daily routines

The type, the amount, the expectations, the loss

Working in different ways – from in person to electronic meetings and devices

Need for different skills and resources – available or hardship

Changes in where and how we live,

Now with others when we had lived alone,

Or now alone when others had been around

Having to move to a strange place or even a familiar place in a strange situation

Change in our mobility

Own resources – still need fuel, a vehicle, a place to walk

Availability of others to assist: family and friends, relied-upon services that close

Challenges of limited (such as rural) to restricted or closed transportation systems

Change in the certainty and ability to have needs met

Food and essentials of life (toilet paper!)

Medications (including delivery)

Treatments and medical attention

Technology that is not available or not working consistently

Worried and feeling badly about needing to ‘burden’ others

Change in our use of the senses from seeing in person to seeing via electronics or through windows, from talking face to face with the body language as part of the conversation to the voice only world of phone, restriction on touching with loss of tactile tenderness.

Informal connections – wave to neighbors, stop by to check in – may change as we are being isolated ourselves so such informal connections are limited.

*No wonder we are tired!*

Living with disruption and coping with change, takes energy and is draining.

Anxiety and anticipation of risks and symptoms, taking additional precautions and needing treatment can rob us of sleep and even relaxation.

Staying in balance needs focus and attention.

Rest from the weariness comes as we

Hold ourselves and each other in compassion and connect in ways old or new.

Allow people to help us as we help others.

Recognition of our feelings with the flow between ups and downs, and ups again.

Share stories of compassion and grace.

*Coping one a day at a time as together we can make it.*

**Hope** abides

Share about new insight during the disruption, change and isolation.

Consider benefits and adventures with isolation

New ways of connecting and awareness of self

Change of routine and of pace;

Change of people, places and things

Old things used anew.

In essence, there is a paradigm shift – things will be different.

Each of us has the ability to influence that outcome and live into the change.

*We make a difference in our own lives, the lives of people around us, and the universe as we live out the interdependent web in these challenging times.*