

Finding Balance, Living with Polarities Series

Leading and Following

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

To listen is to continually give up all expectation and to give our attention, completely and freshly, to what is before us, not really knowing what we will hear or what that will mean. In the practice of our days, to listen is to lean in, softly, with a willingness to be changed by what we hear.

(By Mark Nepo, poet and philosopher)

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

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

READINGS

Great leaders rally people to a better future...(leaders are) restless for change, impatient for progress... (have) optimism ... (believe they) are the one to make this future come true...curious and inquisitive...discover what is universal and capitalize on it...your ability to be clear and your followers' feelings of confidence are causally linked.

(By Marcus Buckingham, from *The One Thing You Need to Know...About Great Managing, Great Leading, and Sustained Individual Success*)

The challenge of leadership is to be strong, but not rude; be kind, but not weak; be bold, but not bully; be thoughtful, but not lazy; be humble, but not timid; be proud, but not arrogant; have humor, but without folly.

(By Jim Rohn)

A leader's role is to raise people's aspirations for what they can become and to release their energies so they will try to get there.

(By David R. Gergen)

You cannot be a leader, and ask other people to follow you, unless you know how to follow, too.

(By Sam Rayburn)

What makes a good follower? The single most important characteristic may well be a willingness to tell the truth. In a world of growing complexity leaders are increasingly dependent on their subordinates for good information, whether the leaders want to hear it or not. Followers who tell the truth and leaders who listen to it are an unbeatable combination.

(By Warren G. Bennis)

I want to be with people who submerge in the task, who go into the fields to harvest and work in a row and pass the bags along, who stand in the line and haul in their places, who are not parlor generals and field deserters but move in a common rhythm when the food must come in or the fire be put out.

(By Marge Piercy)

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. Describe a time when you had a leadership role and found the experience rewarding and satisfying, and/or frustrating and unsatisfying. What did you learn from these experiences?
2. Describe a time when you had a following or supporting role and found the experience rewarding and satisfying, and/or frustrating and unsatisfying. What did you learn from these experiences?
3. Share about a situation where you experience a shift back and forth between leading and following, and what works well, or not, in changing the roles.
4. How do you decide whether to take a leading role or a following/supporting role in a church or other organization or group? Share some examples.

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)

What is precious is you in others, others in you. We enter into the being and lives of others, as they do into ours. Sometimes momentarily. Sometimes enduringly. This is what love essentially is, to be part of one another. In simple sympathy, in close friendship, in shared stories, in sorrow and in joy.”

(By Jacob Trapp)

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 Loescher, Leora White] 3/5/10)