

Letting Go

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Stony Brook, NY, December 2011

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Opening Words and Chalice Lighting

Two Buddhist Monks were on a journey, one was a senior monk, the other a junior monk. During their journey they approached a turbulent river with no ferry and no bridge to facilitate the crossing. And on the river bank stood a young lady, clearly concerned about how she would get to the other side of the river without drowning. The junior monk walked straight past her without giving it a thought and waded across the river. The senior monk picked up the woman and carried her across the river. He placed her down on the opposite bank. Then the two monks parted ways with the woman and continued on their journey. After a long time walking in silence, the junior monk asked the other hotly, "How could you carry her like that? You know we can't touch women, it's against our way of life." The senior monk answered, "I left the woman at the river's edge a long way back, why are you still carrying her?"

Check-in/Sharing

Images

Distribute the page of images to each person and ask the group to sit with them for a few minutes.

Quotes

Read together in some fashion and then keep a silence or ask people to respond to one or more that touched them particularly.

Guiding Questions

1. Did any of the images we looked at earlier speak to you particularly?
2. Can you think of a time when you were carrying something you needed to let go of and did? What did it feel like (emotionally and in your body) and what were your thoughts when you were in the most difficult stage of attachment to what needed to go? What did it feel like (emotionally and in your body) and what were your thoughts when you were able to finally let go?
3. When you finally were able to let go, what moved or changed in you to allow you to let go?
4. Are you struggling right now to let go of something? How is holding on affecting your life? What are the advantages of holding on? What are the advantages of letting go?
5. How do you think forgiveness (forgiving yourself or another) is related to letting go?

Likes and Wishes/Feedback

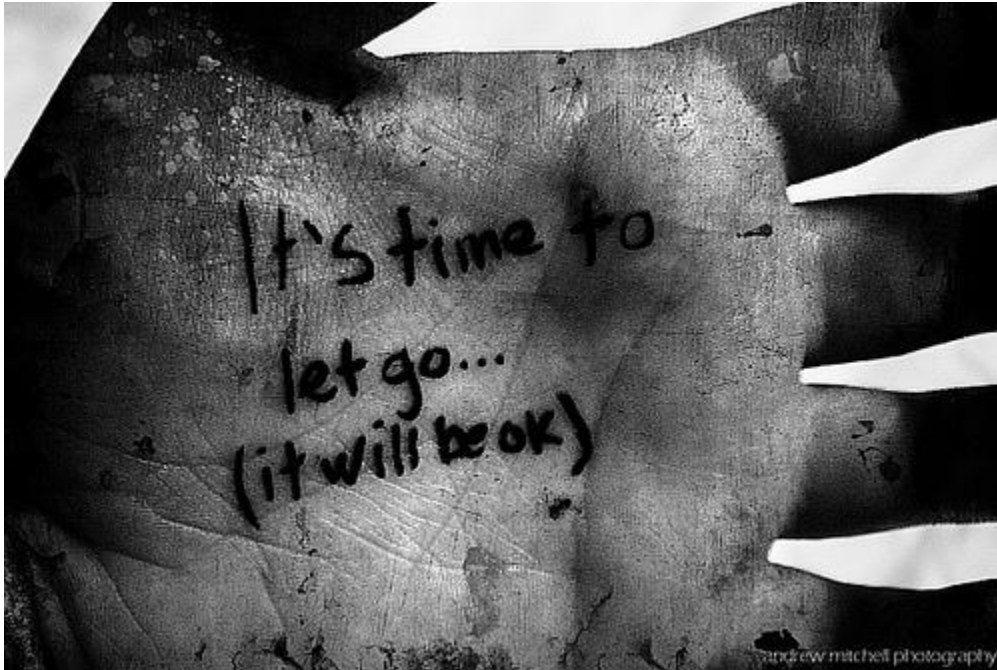
Chalice Extinguishing & Closing Words

May Sarton (excerpt, Gestalt at Sixty)

And now, as the fruit gathers
All the riches of summer
Into its compact world,
I feel richer than ever before,
And breathe a larger air.

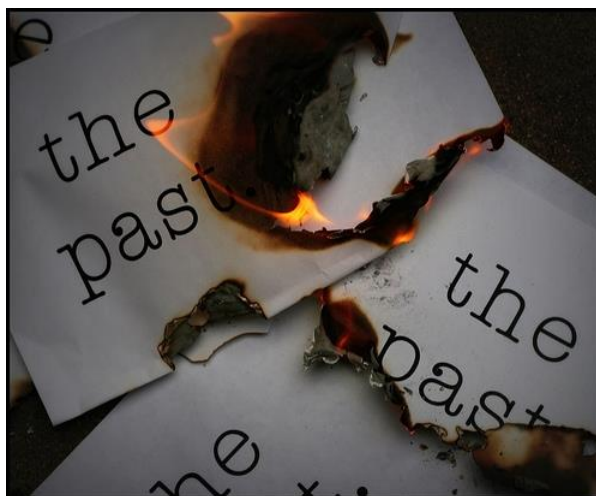
I am not ready to die,
But I am learning to trust death
As I have trusted life.
I am moving
Toward a new freedom
Born of detachment,
And a sweeter grace—
Learning to let go.

Images for “Letting Go”



Quotes

When I let go



for “Letting Go”

of what I am, I become what I

might be. ~Lao Tzu

"When one door closes another door opens; but we so often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door, that we do not see the ones which open for us." ~Alexander Graham Bell

Don't let your mind bully your body into believing it must carry the burden of its worries.
~Astrid Alauda

There's an important difference between giving up and letting go. ~Jessica Hatchigan

You cannot let go of anything if you cannot notice that you are holding it. ~Neale Donald Walsch

I don't let go of concepts - I meet them with understanding. Then they let go of me. ~Byron Katie

People have a hard time letting go of their suffering. Out of a fear of the unknown, they prefer suffering that is familiar. ~Thich Nhat Hanh

All the art of living lies in a fine mingling of letting go and holding on. ~Havelock Ellis

Loving someone is setting them free, letting them go. ~Kate Winslet

We must be willing to let go of the life we have planned, so as to accept the life that is waiting for us. ~Joseph Campbell

You can only lose what you cling to. ~Buddha

"Suffering is not holding you. You are holding suffering. When you become good at the art of letting sufferings go, then you'll come to realize how unnecessary it was for you to drag those burdens around with you. You'll see that no one else other than you was responsible. The truth is that existence wants your life to become a festival." ~Osho

Ask yourself this question: 'Will this matter a year from now?' ~Richard Carlson Ph.D

To change skins, evolve into new cycles, I feel one has to learn to discard. If one changes internally, one should not continue to live with the same objects. They reflect one's mind and the psyche of yesterday. I throw away what has no dynamic, living use. ~Anaïs Nin

Some of us think holding on makes us strong; but sometimes it is letting go. ~Herman Hesse

Let go. Why do you cling to pain? There is nothing you can do about the wrongs of yesterday. It is not yours to judge. Why hold on to the very thing which keeps you from hope and love? ~Leo Buscaglia

Sometimes being a friend means mastering the art of timing. There is a time for silence. A time to let go and allow people to hurl themselves into their own destiny. And a time to prepare to pick up the pieces when it's all over. ~Gloria Naylor

The harder you fight to hold on to specific assumptions, the more likely there's gold in letting go of them. ~John Seely Brown