

# Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website

## Small Group Ministry

### **Life Lessons and Their Teachers**

First Parish Church of Stow and Acton, MA

February 2022

#### **Opening Words and Chalice Lighting**

We seek our place in the world  
and the answers to our hearts' deep questions.  
As we seek, may our hearts be open to unexpected answers.  
May the light of our chalice remind us that this is a community of warmth,  
of wisdom, and welcoming of multiple truths. – *Julianne Lepp*

**Check-in/Sharing:** This is the time to mention any issues or events on your mind that you would like to share. Welcome to our first session of the new year. Please discuss the Handbook, Covenant, and read “I will Listen” together.

#### **Topic: Life Lessons and Their Teachers**

We've all learned some life lessons from others. These “teachers” may have been in actual teaching roles or may have simply demonstrated some important life lesson to us. They might have been older than we were, but in some cases they may have been younger—perhaps *much* younger—than we were at the time.

We often learn best from the actions, inactions, and behaviors of our inadvertent teachers. Intentional teaching is certainly important, but today we're seeking lessons imparted by the way that unintentional teachers in our lives have acted or interacted in the world when they weren't specifically trying to teach us anything.

Many of these life lessons will have been positive, inspiring us to emulate them, while in other cases, what we've learned may be things to avoid in life. It's possible that our conversation will spark the realization that we've been carrying important life lessons in our arsenal that we didn't even know we had. In all these cases we have learned many important lessons from the behavior of others. Let us share some of these stories together.

“No matter how diligent you are about teaching your children right from wrong, the truth is that the majority of the lessons they learn from you will be the ones you teach without meaning to.” — *Brittany Ann*

“If I am walking with two other [people], each of them will serve as my teacher. I will pick out the good points of the one and imitate them, and the bad points of the other and correct them in myself.” – *Confucius*

“You don't teach morals and ethics and empathy and kindness in the schools. You teach that at home, and children learn by example.” — *Judy Sheindlin*

“What the teacher is, is more important than what [they] teach”. — *Karl Meninger*

“I have learned silence from the talkative, toleration from the intolerant, and kindness from the unkind; yet, strange, I am ungrateful to those teachers”. – *Khalil Gibran*

“I like a teacher who gives you something to take home to think about besides homework.” – *Lily Tomlin*

### **Possible Questions for Discussion:**

- Please share a life lesson and from whom and how you learned it.
- Could you describe anyone in your life who has been a role model and how that has changed how you interact with the world?
- Have you learned any life lessons you could share from someone much younger than yourself?
- Do you have any life lessons of the “don't do that” sort you might share with us?
- As you think back on the various “teachers” of life's lessons, do they have anything in common?
- Are you an inadvertent teacher? What lessons do you think you might be imparting by your actions? What lessons do you wish you could impart, but don't know how?
- Do you inadvertently surround yourself with inadvertent teachers? Have you any stories of finding wisdom from an unexpected person?

(Group will take a few minutes to consider the topic and questions and then share).

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

### **Closing Words**

“When the student is ready, the teacher appears.” — *Marlene Canter*