



SMALL GROUP MINISTRIES

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Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website

## Deep Listening with Empathy

Starr King UU Church, Hayward, CA, Bob Britton

Wednesday afternoon group, 12 Noon - 2 PM

June 28, 2017

**Opening and  
Chalice Lighting**  
(2 min)

Come into this place of peace and let its silence heal your spirit;  
Come into this place of memory and let its history warm your soul;  
Come into this place of prophecy and power and let its vision change your heart. ~  
*William F. Schulz*

**Sharing/Check-In**  
(30 min – 3 min ea.)

*Take this time to share how you are spiritually, psychologically, emotionally, and physically. We want to know how you are in this moment.*

**Quiet Reflection**  
(1 min)

Listening is an attitude of the heart, a genuine desire to be with another which both attracts and heals. ~ J. Isham

**Topic Readings**  
(5 min)

Effective listeners remember that “words have no meaning – people have meaning.” The assignment of meaning to a term is an internal process; meaning comes from inside us. And although our experiences knowledge, and attitudes differ, we often misinterpret each other’s messages while under the illusion that a common understanding has been achieved. ~ *Larry Barker*

Listen. Do not have an opinion while you listen because frankly, your opinion doesn't hold much water outside of Your Universe. Just listen. Listen until their brain has been twisted like a dripping towel and what they have to say is all over the floor. ~ *Hugh Elliott*

The greatest compliment that was ever paid me was when one asked me what I thought, and attended to my answer. ~ *Henry David Thoreau*

Listening is the oldest and perhaps the most powerful tool of healing. It is often through the quality of our listening and not the wisdom of our words that we are able to affect the most profound changes in the people around us...Our listening creates sanctuary for the homeless parts within the other person. Listening creates a holy silence. When you listen generously to people, they can hear truth in themselves, often for the first time. And in the silence of listening, you can know yourself in everyone. ~ *Rachel Naomi Remen*

It takes a lot of courage to show your dreams to someone else. ~ *Erma Bombeck*

To listen closely and reply well is the highest perfection we are able to attain in the art of cont'd conversation. ~ *Francois de La Rochefoucauld*

Be a good listener. Your ears will never get you in trouble. ~ *Frank Tyger*

## Topic Readings

Cont'd.

Love only grows by sharing. You can only have more for yourself by giving it away to others. ~ *Brian Tracy*

One of the most important things you can do on this earth is to let people know they are not alone. ~ *Shannon Alder*

The first duty of love is to listen ~ *Paul Tillich*

## Break/ Quiet

**Contemplation** (5 min)

## Sharing/Deep Listening

(50 min - 5 min ea.)

*Speak about this topic in any way that is comfortable to you. If you choose to use the questions, focus on just one or two, as this will allow you to explore the topic in more depth.*

- Have you changed your habits of listening? What event in your life influenced that change?
- What is your listening style? When you are giving someone your full attention, how do you act (e.g. do you close your eyes, maintain eye-contact, lean forward, nod your head, take notes, etc.)?
- Talk about a time you learned something about your listening style.
- What listening experiences have been most enjoyable for you? Most difficult?
- To what extent have your growing up experiences shaped the way you listen to others?
- Is deep listening a form of empathy?
- Where does empathy come from?
- Do you believe empathy is an essential human quality?

## Open Reflection

(20 min)

*This is a time to supportively respond to something another person said or to relate additional thoughts that may have occurred as others shared.*

## Likes & Wishes

(5 min)

*What did you appreciate about this gathering – in yourself, in others, in the gathering as a whole? What would you like to see change at future gatherings?*

## Announcements

(1 min)

Next session July 12, 2017 – **Covenants**

## Closing Reading/ Extinguish Chalice

(1 min)

To laugh is to risk appearing the fool.

*To weep is to risk appearing sentimental.*

To reach out to another is to risk exposing our true self.

*To place our ideas – our dreams – before the crowd is to risk loss.*

To love is to risk not being loved in return.

*To hope is to risk despair.*

To try is to risk failure.  
*To live is to risk dying. ~ Anonymous*