

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website

Living Deliberately—A Thoreau Meditation

Covenant Group Session, Stephanie Certain Matz,, Countryside UU (Feb. 2008)

With inspiration from First Unitarian Church, Providence R.I.

At the end of the previous session, or sometime before this session, give to group members the preparation page for this session (attached at the end of this document.)

Preliminaries

Chalice Lighting and Reading (stand and hold hands in a circle)

“May my feet rest firmly on the ground
May my head touch the sky
May I see clearly
May I have the capacity to listen
May I be free to touch
May my words be true
May my heart and mind be open
May my hands be empty to fill the need
May my arms be open to others
May my gifts be revealed to me
So I may return that which has been given
Completing the great circle.”

-- The Terma Collective

Check-in.

Transition Meditation

Help the group move from check-in preliminaries to silence with directed deep breathing, soft words, music, or other meditative techniques. Remind the group of the topic: **Living Deliberately—A Thoreau Meditation**

Meditation Reading

Why should we live in such a hurry and waste life?
We're determined to be starved before we are hungry.
I wish to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life.
I wish to learn what life has to teach, and not, when I come to die, discover that I have not lived.
I do not wish to live what is not life, living is so dear,
Nor do I wish to practice resignation, unless it is quite necessary.
I wish to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life,
I want to cut a broad swath, to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms.
If it proves to be mean, then to get the whole and genuine meanness of it, and publish its meanness to the world;

Of if it is sublime, to know it by experience, and to be able to give a true account of it.
--Henry David Thoreau

Deep Sharing/Deep Listening

For preparation, you were asked to select one line from the Thoreau quote and meditate on its meaning for you. Why did you select it? What drew you to it? What did you learn from your meditation on that line that was an insight, an understanding of how to live more deliberately? What was the story behind it or the change it requires of you?

Facilitator questions

Try to facilitate this by keeping participants focused on the line they chose for meditation. It's possible that this material could carry over to a second session if the participants wish to tackle meditation on another line or two of the reading. However, depending on the experience of the group, the discussion may not catch that kind of fire. If not, you can use these questions to push the discussion forward:

1. What does it mean to live deliberately?
2. How can we live deliberately in our culture?
3. What changes would we need to make in the pace of our lives?
4. Do we need to reevaluate our priorities?
5. Is there a comfortable compromise?

Check-out

Closing Reading/Extinguishing the Chalice

Tonight we give thanks for the great gift of friendship. Thank you for the circumstances that brought us together and have bound us into the sacred bundle of life. Thank you also for the gifts of our friendship: for knowledge that comforts, for words that encourage, for insight that blesses, for all the experiences shared, for the sweet bliss of deeply knowing each other in so many ways; for history and a hope of the future, for conversation and laughter, for silence, for bearing each other's witness truly, for holding each other safe in our hearts with great love and tenderness. - Daphne Rose Kingma

So May We Be.

Preparation for CCUU Session: Living Deliberately – A Thoreau Meditation

Food for Thought

For preparation, please one line from the Thoreau reading below, and meditate on its meaning for you. Why did you select it? What drew you to it? What did you learn from your meditation on that line that was an insight, an understanding of how to live more deliberately? What was the story behind it or the change it requires of you? (Yes, you' re being asked to choose one sentence *deliberately*.)

Meditation Readings

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