

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
SMALL GROUP SESSION
MAKING PEACE WITH UNHAPPINESS
Glenn Turner, First Unitarian Universalist Church, Auburn, ME

OPENING WORDS & CHALICE LIGHTING:

“Here we are, a reasonably contented group of random people, greeting each other with hugs and smiles before we share the laughter and the pain. On our minds might be: a rough patch in our lives, a child or grand-child gone astray, a spouse or partner in pain, a relationship ending, being aware of birdsong we may never hear again, the indignities of aging, the unfinished business of our souls - a laundry list of possible unhappiness. That's never all there is. We come to moan and groan and sift the ashes and to celebrate. These ashes were once solid oak and supple birch. Their burning fuels our lives.” GHT

CHECK IN: (40 - 50 minutes)

What you share may be about your physical or spiritual health, cares or concerns for loved ones, issues you are facing.

Each person in the group speaks uninterrupted, if time remaining, general response and conversation is welcome. Confidentiality.

FOCUS: “Making Peace With Unhappiness”

“When you are unhappy, is there anything more maddening than to be told that you should be contented with your lot?” Kathleen Norris

“Unhappiness is not knowing what we want and killing ourselves to get it.” Don Herold

“The chief cause of unhappiness is trading what we want for what we want in the moment.”

Baron Wormser, a Maine poet and teacher, talked about his school library:

“The books on the wall could be humorous, but they were not happy. I told my students that they would have to make their peace with unhappiness. That was part of being an adult - not renouncing happiness but making one's peace with unhappiness.”

Discussion

What's the wisdom here? What are the ways in which we make peace with our unhappiness?

LIKES AND WISHES

How did this session go for you? Is there anything you'd like to call particular attention to?

CLOSING WORDS:

“ “This very moment is the perfect teacher, and it's always with us”...

Just seeing what's going on – that's the teaching right there. We can be with what's happening and not dissociate. Awakeness is found in our pleasure and our pain, our confusion and our wisdom, available in each moment of our weird, unfathomable, ordinary everyday lives.”

from “When Things Fall Apart” by Pema Chodron