



STARR KING
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH



Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website

On Dithering (Indecision), Dabbling and Dilettantism (Superficiality)
Hayward, C, Wednesday Evening Group, Kathryn LaMar, 07 February 2018

CHALICE LIGHTING AND OPENING WORDS

1 min

From *The Once and Future King* by T. H. White, this admonition from the wizard Merlin, to the young Arthur:

The best thing for being sad is to learn something. That's the only thing that never fails. You may grow old and trembling in your anatomies, you may lie awake at night listening to the disorder of your veins, you may miss your only love, you may see the world about you devastated by evil lunatics, or know your honour trampled in the sewers of baser minds. There is only one thing for it then—to learn. Learn why the world wags and what wags it. That is the only thing which the mind can never exhaust, never alienate, never be tortured by, never fear or distrust, and never dream of regretting. Learning is the only thing for you. Look what a lot of things there are to learn.

SILENT MEDITATION

2 min

The first sound of the gong brings us to silence. Please take time to center yourself, and temporarily push aside whatever might be preventing you from participating fully in tonight's session. If you wish, meditate on the roles that music and poetry play in your life. The second sound of the gong returns us to each other's presence.

CHECK-IN / FEEDBACK

40 min

Please share something(s) about your life since last we met.

DEFINITIONS FOR FOCUSING

15 min

Dither: To be indecisive; to act nervously or indecisively; to hesitate because of inability to make a decision; *British* to be uncertain or indecisive, *US* to be in an agitated state.

Key Concept: Indecisive

Dabble: To take part in an activity in a way that is not serious; to undertake something superficially or without serious intent.

Dilettante: a person who cultivates an area of interest without real commitment or knowledge. A person who seems to be interested in a subject, but whose understanding of it is not very deep or serious. Synonym = dabbler. *Usually disapproving.*

Key Concepts: Lack of seriousness; superficiality

Video of Street Musicians Playing Unusual Instruments: (10 min total)
(OK to skip thru--~1 min / artist)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UpeuJ9hgkgA>

From comments: "is not called 'weird' it's actually should have been called creative"

READINGS / QUOTES

10 min

[Think about the judgements inherent in some of these quotes. Whose are they? Are they positive or negative? Do you agree?]

Dithering and Indecision

To teach how to live without certainty and yet without being paralysed by hesitation is perhaps the chief thing that philosophy, in our age, can do for those who study it. *Bertrand Russell*

The minimum I need is six months to allow for dithering, procrastination and the research. ... The re-search times varies from book to book; ... *Purple Plumeria* I dithered over for months and then wrote the whole thing between the beginning of July and end of August. The dithering and procrastination time was three times the writing times. *Lauren Willig*

Talking about how I might write the next book is like talking about whether or not to have sex. Any dithering ruins it. *Louise Erdrich*

Indecision and reveries are the anesthetics of constructive action. *Sylvia Plath*

The risk of a wrong decision is preferable to the terror of indecision. *Maimonides*

Indecision may come from an instinctive hunch that there's more you need to know--which means it's time to learn everything you can about the pros and cons of each option. You can continue on this track, however, only as long as you're unearthing genuinely new information. *Martha Beck*

Dabbling

If you want your life to have impact, focus it! Stop dabbling. Stop trying to do it all. Do less. Prune away even good activities and do only that which matters most. Never confuse activity with productivity. You can be busy without a purpose, but what's the point? *Rick Warren*

One reason so few of us achieve what we truly want is that we never direct our focus; we never concentrate our power. Most people dabble their way through life, never deciding to master anything in particular. *Tony Robbins*

We're dabbling in eugenics all the time, breeding ideal crops to replace less aesthetic or nutritious or hardy varieties; leveling forests to graze cattle or erect shopping malls and condos; planting groves of a few familiar trees that homeowners and industries prefer. *Diane Ackerman*

I think that we all at some point are in search of something--a higher power, whatever you want to call it, the meaning of life. I know I was, especially at even my son's age in my 20s, and dabbling in Eastern philosophies and yoga and Buddhism and Christianity and Islam. I kind of touched them all, you know, just trying to figure out the meaning of life or if nothing else, figure myself out. *Denzel Washington*

It was Vikram Bhatt and 'Raaz' that got me interested in the medium of cinema. Before that, I was like any other youngster dabbling with various things--modeling, films--without a definite direction or focus. Now that I'm working with all of them, life has come full circle for me *Bipasha Basu*

When I work alone, it can be like dabbling with a canvas. Maybe you paint over bits, and it starts to form its own life and lead you off in a direction. It becomes an intuitive, subconscious process. *Lindsey Buckingham*

I love dabbling in different genres, and I like being good at different genres of cinema.

Priyanka Chopra

I'm very blessed that I get to dabble in both music and movies, and as long as people are willing to accept me in both roles, I'll be there.
Mandy Moore

I find dealing with tempered chocolate a bit tricky, but that's a chocolatier's job. So I dabble, but I wouldn't profess to be good at it.
Paul Hollywood

Does self-acceptance ultimately require another person, or is there a kind of love that does not dabble in the dream of a perfect twinship?
Jenny Zhang

Hastiness and superficiality are the psychic diseases of the 20th century, and more than anywhere else this disease is reflected in the press.
Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn

Dilettante

The cat is a dilettante in fur.
Theophile Gautier

Data is what distinguishes the dilettante from the artist.
George V. Higgins

I don't mind the word 'dilettante.' A dilettante means someone who does what he loves.
Peter Beard

I'm a dilettante. My governing word is 'curiosity.'
Ian Hacking

It's a wonderful profession, and it opens lots of doors, and I think it's quite right that people can accuse actors and actresses of being dilettante, but you learn on every job, whatever it is, the process moves you on in some way, and yeah, I want to expand my knowledge of our existence, I suppose.
Miranda Richardson

I always worry that I'm a dilettante: I know something about lots of things but don't have exhaustive knowledge of much.
John Darnielle

For better or worse, I've always been curious musically. Whether it's opera or Judy Garland or pop, I've deliberately sought those things out. I've never wanted to do the same things over and over. Some think I've accomplished what I set out to do, and others consider me a dilettante.
Rufus Wainwright

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER FOR THE SHARING

- Do you dither?
 - What do you dither about?
 - Are you down on yourself when you dither, or does something creative come out of it?
- Do you dabble?
 - In what ways do you dabble, or do you try to maintain a linear focus.
 - Do you enjoy dabbling or does it lead you astray?
- Are you a dilettante?
 - Is being called one an accusation?
 - In what way are you a dilettante?
 - What are the different pies you like to stick your fingers into?

BREAK **10 min**

SHARING ABOUT TOPIC / FEEDBACK **40 min**

Please share your thoughts and ideas about dithering, dabbling and dilettantism. Do the opinions and attitudes of others toward subjects affect your interests and how you pursue them?

LIKES AND WISHES **2 min**

Let us know how things are going for you WRT this group. Are there some aspects of the format you would like to change? Should we discuss the covenant again? Suggestions for a service project? Suggestions for discussion topics?

CLOSING VIDEO: Song about a perceived dilettante (Prince Charles) **5 min**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z7_y1CkbOHg&list=RDrqwNuw_b38w&index=14

CLOSING WORDS **1 min**

... what you learn today, for no reason at all, will help you discover all the wonderful secrets of tomorrow
Norton Juster, The Phantom Tollbooth