

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website

Covenant Group Meeting

**Peer Groups**

Les and Joni Grady, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Clemson, South Carolina, May 2009

OPENING WORDS & CHALICE LIGHTING:

Meme: A unit of cultural ideas that gets transmitted within a society. The cultural analog of a gene.

Wikipedia

When people get immersed in a culture with strong new memes, it tends to be a sink-or-swim proposition. Either you change your mind, succumbing to peer pressure and adopting the new memes as your own, or you struggle with the extremely uncomfortable feeling of being surrounded by people who think you're crazy or inadequate. The fact that you probably think the same about them is little consolation.

Richard Brodie, *Virus of the Mind*

CHECK IN

TOPIC

Peer groups play a variety of roles within every society. In fact, some might even argue that society could not exist without the influence brought to bear on the individuals within it by peer groups. Peer groups can be supportive, but they can also be destructive. Think for a moment about the peer groups that have influenced you throughout your life. Who are or were your peers? Does the answer to that question depend on its context (time, place, and circumstance)? Does membership in a peer group require that the members be acquainted with each other? When have your peer groups played a supportive role? When have they played a destructive role? What peer groups have you left as you have traveled on your life journey? Was leaving those peer groups a conscious act? Did leaving cause any pain? Any relief? What peer groups have continued to support you? Is "joining" a peer group a conscious or unconscious action? Does circumstance ever define our peer groups? What peer groups might you "join" as you continue on your journey? There are many other questions that could be posed, but these should serve to initiate our discussion.

CLOSING WORDS

Hold on to what is good even if it is a handful of earth.

Hold on to what you believe even if it is a tree which stands by itself

Hold on to what you must do even if it is a long way from here.

Hold onto my hand even when I have gone away from you.

Nancy Wood

(From *Singing the Living Tradition*)