

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website

Small Group Ministry

The Person in the Mirror

First Parish Church of Stow and Acton, MA, May 2019

Opening Words and Chalice Lighting

For every time we make a mistake and we decide to start again:

We light this chalice.

For every time we are lonely and we let someone be our friend:

We light this chalice.

For every time we are disappointed and we choose to hope:

We light this chalice. - *Maureen Killoran*

Check-in/Sharing: This is the time to mention briefly any major issues or events on your mind that you would like to share. This would be a good opportunity to choose a community service.

Topic: The Person in the Mirror

Researchers believe that when a dog looks at its reflection, it simply sees another dog, and that humans are the only species that identifies our reflections as our unique selves. But what do we really see? Is it simply an image of our physical self, or is it something deeper? So many of us are not satisfied with our image, either physical or that harder to define inner self. Some of us believe others do not see us as we are, for better or worse. Let's explore how self-reflection affects our lives.

"Unless you learn to face your own shadows, you will continue to see them in others, because the world outside you is only a reflection of the world inside you." - *Unknown*

"Everyone wears masks. They come in all different shapes and sizes. The only problem with trying one on is that it fits. How easily we fall into the trap that we don't have to be who we really are. How easily we convince ourselves that we need to cover up what we were born to be. It's a tragedy that fear keeps us from our destiny. It's hell when the person you were created to be is covered up by some cheap imposter" - *Rachel Van Dyken*

"Remind yourself that you cannot fail at being yourself." - *Wayne Dyer*

"People who have had little self-reflection live life in a huge reality blind-spot." - *Bryant McGill*

"Can you remember who you were, before the world told you who you should be?" - *Charles Bukowski*

"It is an absolute human certainty that no one can know [their] own beauty or perceive a sense of [their] own worth until it has been reflected back to [them] in the mirror of another loving, caring human being." - *John Joseph Powell*

“Don’t you, when strangers and friends come to call, straighten the cushions, kick the books under the bed and put away the letter you were writing? How many of us want any of us to see us as we really are? Isn’t the mirror hostile enough?” - *Jeanette Winterson*

“I leaned over the sink, closer to my reflection, and stare at myself hard. I don’t know what I see. I don’t even know what I want to see.” - *Nina LaCour*

“There is no saint without a past, no sinner without a future.” - *Ancient Persian Proverb*

“When you adopt the viewpoint that there is nothing that exists that is not part of you, that there is no one who exists who is not part of you, that any judgment you make is self-judgment, that any criticism you level is self-criticism, you will wisely extend to yourself an unconditional love that will be the light of the world.” - *Harry Palmer*

“Too many people overvalue what they are not and undervalue what they are.” - *Malcolm S. Forbes*

“Comparison is the act of violence against the self.” - *Iyanla Vanzant*

“Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakes.” - *Carl Gustav Jung*

“Forgive yourself for what you think you’ve done or not done. At every moment, you had your reasons for all of your actions and decisions. You’ve always done the best that you could do. Forgive yourself.” - *Doreen Virtue*

Possible Questions for Discussion:

- What do you see when you look in the mirror, both physically and as a reflection of your inner self?
- Can you look in the mirror without self-judgment? With pride?
- Do you feel you know the person who is looking back at you from the mirror? Are there parts of you that you would like to know better? Do you like that person?
- How do you think others see you? In what ways do you think they see you as you see yourself? In what ways do they see you differently?
- Do you have ways in which you put on a mask for others or for yourself?
- When are you most likely to self-reflect? Could you describe any ways in which you have learned to accept parts of yourself or to forgive yourself?
- When you reflect back on your life, what will make you smile?

(Group will take a few minutes to consider topic and questions and then share).

Wrapping Up: How did you like this topic and session?

Closing Words

"You wouldn't worry so much about what others think of you if you realized how seldom they do." — Eleanor Roosevelt

"You're always with yourself, so you might as well enjoy the company." – Diane von Furstenberg