

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website

Small Group Ministry

Redefining Ourselves

First Parish Church of Stow and Acton, MA.

January 2021

Opening Words and Chalice Lighting

“The journey of reinvention is one of
raw emotions
Emerging from dormancy
Surprising as a paper cut
Overwhelming as a hailstorm
One part vulnerability
One part rage
One part surrender
Uncomfortable
Unfamiliar
Unsure
Fearful
Alone

Damaged
Broken
And finding a new Self
Slowly
Different
Healing
Humble
Present
Open
Longing
Free” – *Dave Rudbarg*

Check-in/Sharing: This is the time to mention briefly any major issues or events on your mind that you would like to share. As the last session for this season, please brainstorm potential future topics. Please also consider registering for 2021. <https://fpc-stow-acton.org/sgm>

Topic: Redefining Ourselves

Change is a constant in our lives, occurring every day. We are never exactly the same people as we were yesterday. Yet at many times in our lives, each day feels very similar to the one before.

Then a more significant change occurs or is discovered. It might be something that happens to us or something we made happen: an accident, the end or beginning of a relationship or a job, a birth or a death. It might be our perception of ourselves that changes: perhaps we realize that a change over time has already occurred without being noticed, or perhaps something (a conversation, something read, something else heard or seen, a previously-unasked question) triggers a realization in ourselves. When this occurs—when our very conception of self or life changes—we redefine ourselves.

We have all experienced this throughout our lives, as we change from baby to child through adulthood. What were some times you redefined yourself? How did it

happen, and what did it mean to you? Do you feel the change was for the better? Let us share our thoughts about how we have redefined ourselves in our lives.

Quotes:

"I think it's called my destiny that I am changing, changing, changing, changing." – Suzanne Vega

"You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete." – *R. Buckminster Fuller*

"Life isn't about finding yourself. Life is about creating yourself." – *George Bernard Shaw*

"I can't change the direction of the wind, but I can adjust my sails to always reach my destination." – *Jimmy Dean*

"[Identity is the] furthest thing from being fixed. You're 'lazy' until you're not lazy anymore." – *Robert Firestone*

"When I let go of what I am, I become what I might be." – *Lao Tzu*

"When I was 5 years old, my mother always told me that happiness was the key to life. When I went to school, they asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up. I wrote down 'happy'. They told me I didn't understand the assignment, then I told them they didn't understand life." – *John Lennon*

Possible Questions for Discussion:

- What times in your life stand out as redefining?
- To what extent did you cause your redefinition? To what extent was a redefinition caused by things happening to you?
- Have you ever taken advantage of an external change such as a relationship, job, role, situation, new location, etc. to redefine yourself?
- Have any of your redefinitions happened despite, or because of, problems or difficulties in your life at the time?
- Has redefining yourself ever been a mistake? If so, how did you learn from it?
- Are there ways you have reframed your self-image or made small changes?
- In trying to redefine yourself, have you found any people's responses, situations or other things that made it easier or harder to change?

(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

"Each morning we are born again. What we do today is what matters most." – *Buddha*