

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website

Small Group Ministry

Reflection

First Parish Church of Stow and Acton, MA

December 2020

Opening Words and Chalice Lighting

This is a house of reflection and contemplation, of joy and sorrow, friendship, sharing and laughter.

We light this chalice in remembrance of what we have been and in the hope of what we may become.

- *Dale Hudson*

Check-in/Sharing: This is the time to mention briefly any major issues or events on your mind that you would like to share.

Topic: Reflection

The end of the calendar year is traditionally a time for reflection, for looking back over the preceding months, or years, contemplating our lives and actions. Indeed, one could argue that a New Year's resolution is ideally the result of such reflection as we examine what we find wanting in ourselves and hope to do better. Auld lang syne = times gone past.

Making sense of our experiences often only comes after we reflect on them later, perhaps going over them several times, examining them from several perspectives. Getting some distance from a situation can sometimes allow us to uncover a deeper honesty and to surface feelings that we found too uncomfortable to acknowledge at the time. Looking back at something can bring greater clarity and understanding.

Some situations can take on almost a life of their own, and we keep turning them over and over in our minds, and seem unable to let them go. When we deeply reflect on a situation and develop some clarity about how we felt, why we felt that way, and why we reacted as we did to what happened, we can often let go of the situation or event more easily.

“Usually, when the distractions of daily life deplete our energy, the first thing we eliminate is the thing we need the most: quiet, reflective time. Time to dream, time to contemplate what's working and what's not, so that we can make changes for the better.” — *Sarah Breathnach*

“We cannot see our reflection in running water. It is only in still water that we can see.” – *Zen proverb*

“We do not learn from experience... we learn from reflecting on experience.” – *John Dewey*

“...real childhood scars heal, but not when band-aids replace self-reflection.” — *Cameron Conaway*

“The past can't be changed, can it? It can just be forgiven.” — *Elizabeth George*

“Knowledge is learning something every day. Wisdom is letting go of something every day.” -- *Zen proverb*

“Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards.” — *Søren Kierkegaard*

Possible Questions for Discussion:

- What role does reflection have in your daily life? Are there any activities that help you reflect (art, journaling, physical activity)?
- Could you share any times when reflection has helped you to deal with/understand/resolve the past?
- I tend to reflect on a situation when ...
- Are there times when you wish you had reflected more before responding? What got in the way?
- Could you describe any situations where reflection has caused you to change your response?
- How has reflection helped your interactions with others or improved any relationships?
- When it is time to forgive myself about something in the past and let it go, I ...

(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

“Blessed are those who can laugh at themselves, for they shall never cease to be amused.” – *Anonymous*