

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
SMALL GROUP MINISTRY
Religion/Spirituality and its Development
Main Line Unitarian Church, Devon, PA October 2003

Opening Words & Chalice Lighting: From Sam Keen

“Time and time again everyone who wants an authentic spiritual life must retreat to the sanctuary of the self to discover the footprints of a dancing god in the ground of personal experience.”

Reflection/Personal Sharing/Prayer (approximately 30 minutes)

(The facilitator should briefly remind the group of confidentiality/anonymity, that this is not the time for cross conversation, etc.)

Focus Readings: From *The Spirituality of Imperfection* by Ernest Kurtz & Katherine Ketcham

“What is spirituality? To have the answer is to have misunderstood the question. Truth, wisdom, goodness, beauty, the fragrance of a rose---all resemble spirituality in that they are intangible, ineffable realities. We may know them, but we can never grasp them without hands or with our words.... And yet they exist; they are. Love exists, evil exists, beauty exists, spirituality exists. They are the realities that have always been recognized as defining human existence. We do not define them, they define us. When we attempt to ‘define’ spirituality, we discover not its limitations, but our own.”
(pp.15-16)

From D.H. Lawrence

“I believe that one is converted when first one hears the low, vast murmur of life, troubling one’s hitherto unconscious self. I believe one is born first unto oneself—for the happy developing of oneself, while the world is a nursery, and the pretty things are to be snatched for, and the pleasant things tasted; some people seem to exist thus right to the end. But most are born again on entering maturity; then they are born to humanity, to a consciousness of all the laughing, and the never-ceasing murmur of pain and sorrow that comes from the terrible multitude of brothers [and sisters]. Then, it appears to me, one gradually formulates one’s religion, be it what it may. A person has no religion who has not slowly and painfully gathered one together, adding to it, shaping it; and one’s religion is never complete and final, it seems, but must always be undergoing modification.”

Focus Questions:

What helps your spirit develop?

When do you feel spiritual?

How do you feel about these words, religious and spiritual?

What do they mean to you?

Are they synonymous, or opposites?

How have your understandings of spirituality and religion changed?

What are you doing to take responsibility for your religious, your spiritual life?

What more could you do?

Checkout/Likes and Wishes

(This is the time for facilitators to ask participants what they liked about this meeting and what they might wish for future meetings. This is also the time for any discussion of logistics.)

Closing Words & Extinguishing Chalice: From Edward Frost

“The spirit must be fed, must be nurtured. It can starve. It can wither. It can be buried in the darkest corner of our being like a pretender to the throne we haven’t the nerve to kill outright. Surely, then, if religion has to do with the fulfillment of humanness, it must have to do with the nurturing of the spirit. ”