



Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website

Resilience

Hayward, CA, Wednesday Evening Small Group, Kathryn LaMar, 5 September 2018, 7:15 PM

CHALICE LIGHTING

1 min

We affirm the unfailing renewal of life, rising from the earth, and reaching for the sun, all living creatures shall fulfill themselves.

We affirm the steady growth of human companionship, rising from ancient cradles and reaching for the stars, people the world over shall seek the ways of understanding.

We affirm a continuing hope that out of every tragedy the spirits of individuals shall rise to build a better world.

OPENING WORDS

1 min

More and more I have come to admire resilience.
 Not the simple resistance of a pillow, whose foam
 Returns over and over to the same shape, but the sinuous
 Tenacity of a tree: finding the light newly blocked on one side,
 It turns in another. A blind intelligence, true.
 But out of such persistence arose turtles, rivers,
 Mitochondria, figs--all this resinous, unretractable earth.

Jane Hirshfield, Optimism

SILENT MEDITATION / CENTERING

1 min

The first sound of the gong brings us to silence. Please take time to center yourself, and temporarily push aside whatever might be preventing you from participating fully in tonight's session. The second sound of the gong returns us to each other's presence.

CHECK-IN / FEEDBACK

36 min

Please share some thing(s) about your life since last we met. If you feel comfortable about it, mention something that tested your sense of equilibrium, and how it has affected you so far.

INTRODUCTION TO RESILIENCE

2 min

[From *The Resilient Spirit* by Rev. Jan Carlsson-Bull]

Suffering is a given, as our Buddhist friends remind us. I have a friend who taught me that those among us on the other side of the most harrowing experiences of disaster, war and

civil strife are not victims, but survivors. Victims cry for help. Survivors cry for solidarity, for kinship. Suffering is relative; so is survival.

Polly Young-Eisendrath, Ph.D., professor and psychologist, wrote in her book *The Resilient Spirit* that

...the capacity to be resilient, to respond to difficulty with development, is rooted in many diverse factors, but it consistently depends on one thing: the meaning you, the individual, make of where you are. When suffering leads to meanings that unlock the mysteries of life, it strengthens compassion, gratitude, joy, and wisdom. When suffering leads to barriers and retaliations and hatred, it empties you of hope and love, and then misery will lead to misery...

The resilient spirit is the person who finds in herself, in himself, beside her, beside him, the means requisite to move into the next moment and the next with dignity and hope. Spirited resilience carries wisdom and compassion and the promise of life yet to be lived with grace and gratitude beyond the confines of what we once imagined were our due.

READING ROUND-THE-CIRCLE

5 min

[From Rev. Dr. Jan Carlsson-Bull, (2009-2010)]

No. 1

It is a time for open hearts, open minds, and resilient spirits. ☺ It is a time to listen deeply and to speak with transparency. ☺ It is a time to plan and to dream. ☺ It is also a time to be in the moment and to cherish this moment, together.

No. 2

Winds blow, ☺ Snow flies, ☺ Sleet pounds, ☺ Tides swell. ☺ Watch the cormorant ☺ Diving, ☺ Dipping, ☺ Soaring, ☺ Skimming. ☺ Watch the cormorant ☺ Wings spread, ☺ Feathers full, ☺ Beak focused, ☺ Body bending, ☺ Being, ☺ Alive.

SONG:

No Love Dying Here (Gregory Porter)

4 min

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w0cwxyr6ejQ&start_radio=1&list=RDw0cwxyr6ejQ>

QUOTES TO PONDER

5 min

When we tackle obstacles, we find hidden reserves of courage and resilience we did not know we had. And it is only when we are faced with failure do we realise that these resources were always there within us. We only need to find them and move on with our lives. *A.P.J. Abdul Kalam*

In a culture fueled by burnout, a culture that has run itself down, our national resilience becomes compromised. And when our collective immune system is weakened, we become more susceptible to viruses that are part of every culture because they're part of human nature - fear-mongering, scapegoating, conspiracy theories, and demagoguery. *Arianna Huffington*

Australia is a nation of compassion. Courage and compassion. And the third of these great values: resilience. *Kevin Rudd*

The most surprising thing, honestly, is that so few Americans know about the orphan trains. I was also surprised at the resilience and fortitude of the riders I met, their pragmatism and grace. I don't know whether this is a Midwestern trait or simply a human one. *Christina Baker Kline*

To be a black person is to come from a long bloodline of survivors and storytellers, with a resilience that people can't even comprehend.

Lena Waithe

People inspire me. Every day, I meet amazing individuals in the field. When I see a mother who has walked for three weeks to come to an MSF clinic, with two kids on her back and her belongings on her head, facing intimidation and physical abuse on her way, I am inspired by her resilience--her desire for life.

Joanne Liu

Nature works with five polymers. Only five polymers. In the natural world, life builds from the bottom up, and it builds in resilience and multiple uses.

Janine Benyus

Someone said adversity builds character, but someone else said adversity reveals character. I'm pleasantly surprised with my resilience. I persevere, and not just blindly. I take the best, get rid of the rest, and move on, realizing that you can make a choice to take the good.

Brooke Shields

One of the things I noticed while I lived in New York City was how different the kids and teens were that grew up there versus, you know, my suburban upbringing. They have this innate resilience and toughness to them, and they're incredibly self-sufficient, usually from a pretty young age.

Alexandra Bracken

BREAK

10 min

GROUP REFLECTION

45 min

IDEAS FOR GROUP REFLECTION

- There is a lot of literature on psychological and emotional resilience. What does it mean to be resilient?
- Share an experience past or present that has tapped your own resilience. What did you do to get through the experience? How has it changed you?
- Comment on the resilience of the mother in the story on Page 5. How do her reactions differ from what yours would have been?
- When describing someone who is resilient, what features or traits are you thinking about? Is having hope part of resiliency? What about forgiveness?
- How might you go about cultivating resiliency for yourself? Do you have any spiritual practices or beliefs that strengthen features that you think of as being resilient?
- How has the resilient spirit in you been nurtured by another person or a community of persons? What do you most value in this nurturing?

SESSION FEEDBACK

5 min

CLOSING SONG

Asimbonanga (Johnny Clegg)

4 min

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UJujyzA2Q1E&list=PL3Yv36aUktyS-KOJHhRirqUyB5vnFS3iB&index=9&t=0s>>

CLOSING WORDS / EXTINGUISHING THE CHALICE**1 min**

Go with the arms of your soul stretching
 Beyond your expectations,
 Preparing you for whatever it is that calls you
 To bend and flex and grow.
 Go in peace. Go in hope.

No Love That's Dying Here Written by: GREGORY PORTER

There will be no love that's dying here
 The bird that flew in through my window Simply lost his way.
 He broke his wing I helped him heal and then he flew away
 Well the death of love is everywhere But I wont let it be,
 There will be no love dying here for me.
 There will be no love that's dying here
 The mirror that fell from the wall was tragedy that's all,
 It rests upon a rusty nail Before it made it's fall
 Well the bones of love are every where but I wont let it be,
 There will be no love dying here for me.
 There will be no love that's dying here
 Four flowers is my aging faces, not a sign within
 I payed for three a sweet old lady gave me four instead
 There's some doubt that's out about this love but I wont let it be,
 There will be no love that's dying here for me. There will be no love that's dying here
 Repeat Verse 1
 There will be no love that's dying for me
 There will be no love that's dying for you and me
 [Long Ending]

Asimbonanga – Johnny Clegg & Savuka	
<p>Chorus: Asimbonanga (We have not seen him) Asimbonang' uMandela thina (We have not seen Mandela) Laph'ekhona (In the place where he is) Laph'ehleli khona (In the place where he is kept)</p> <p>Verse: Oh the sea is cold and the sky is grey Look across the Island into the Bay We are all islands till comes the day We cross the burning water</p> <p>Chorus....</p> <p>Verse: A seagull wings across the sea Broken silence is what I dream Who has the words to close the distance Between you and me</p>	<p>Chorus....</p> <p>Steve Biko, [Repeat with Victoria Mxenge, then Neil Aggett Asimbonanga Asimbonang 'umfowethu thina (we have not seen our brother) Laph'ekhona (In the place where he is) Laph'wafela khona (In the place where he died)</p> <p>Hey wena (Hey you!) Hey wena nawe (Hey you and you as well) Siyofika nini la' siyakhona (When will we arrive at our destination)</p> <p>Chorus x 3</p>

STORY OF RESILIENCE

By Cindy Y. Ogasawara, Sun Magazine, April 2009

<http://www.thesunmagazine.org/issues/400/faith>

One sunny Monday morning about fifteen years ago, my mother was attacked in her home while she was doing her hair. She was getting ready to go to her teaching job at a nearby church preschool when she heard the doorbell ring. She went to the living room and peeked through the curtains. A man she didn't recognize was standing there. Deciding he must be a salesman, my mother quietly replaced the curtain and went back to the bathroom.

The man, whose name we later learned was Kenneth, went around to the back of the house, where our overfriendly black Lab watched him break in. He came across my mother's purse in the living room, then continued to the master-bedroom suite.

My mother never saw Kenneth. He grabbed her from behind and started punching her repeatedly in the face. When he was done hitting her, he simply left, taking her purse with him.

At the hospital my mother's face was so swollen and purple that I wasn't sure it was her until she said, "Cindy, it's ok. I'm all right."

A few days later Kenneth's mother turned him in after seeing his picture on the nightly news. He was sentenced to fifteen years. My father installed a high-tech security system and bought a ferocious guard dog, but my illusion of our home as a place of safety was shattered.

My mother returned to work at the preschool after two weeks. (She would have returned sooner, she said, but she didn't want to scare the children.) Kenneth had chipped one of her facial bones, and her left cheek still sagged a little, but otherwise she was ok.

More remarkable than her physical recovery was her emotional resilience. She never experienced flashbacks or post-traumatic stress, or even felt afraid when alone in the house. (I, on the other hand, wouldn't be comfortable at home alone for years.) By the time Christmas rolled around, she had sent a New Testament to Kenneth in jail, with a card telling him that she'd forgiven him, just as Jesus Christ had forgiven her.

My mother and I rarely see eye to eye on religion, but her grace and strength remind me daily of all that is good about faith.