

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network

Role Models

First Parish Church of Stow and Acton, MA

June 2025

Opening Words and Chalice Lighting

At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us. — *Albert Schweitzer*

Check-in/Sharing: Let's each take a couple minutes to check in with how we are feeling and anything we would like to share. Clarify summer plans.

Topic: Role Models

Role models embody the values, attitudes, and behaviors that we admire and aspire to emulate. Role models guide us, inspire us, and often challenge us to become better versions of ourselves. Role models can be just about anyone, from celebrities and other figures in the public eye to individuals we know in our everyday lives. We may find role models in characters of books, on television, and in movies.

On the flip side, we sometimes encounter folks who embody negative values and behaviors. We can think of those folks as cautionary tales, whose pitfalls we hope to avoid. Observing negative role modeling presents us with opportunities to consider how we don't want to be.

We model behaviors for others. Other people are always observing us: our colleagues, our children, our friends – whether at home, in public, or on social media. The ways we navigate our world, make choices, and demonstrate our values all serve as guides for those around us. How can we model who we want to be in the world?

“Each person must live their life as a model for others.” — Rosa Parks

“Children have never been very good at listening to their elders, but they have never failed to imitate them.” — James A. Baldwin

“If I am walking with two other [people], each of them will serve as my teacher. I will pick out the good points of the one and imitate them, and the bad points of the other and correct them in myself.” — Confucius

“I believe in recovery, and I believe that as a role model I have the responsibility to let young people know that you can make a mistake and come back from it.” — *Ann Richards*

“Some of the most important people in my life would be shocked to learn that they were role models. They weren’t celebrities, or even particularly accomplished. But they had some quality that I admired, that made me want to be like them.” — *Donn Moomaw*

“Being a role model is the most powerful form of educating.” — *John Wooden*

Possible Questions for Discussion

- Are there people in your life who have been positive role models? What traits do they embody? How do you try to incorporate their positive actions into your life?
- Are there any famous people who you consider to be role models? Are there any fictional characters that you consider to be role models? What are their traits? How have you applied them to your life?
- Have you ever been failed or disappointed by someone you once considered to be a role model? How has that affected you?
- Are there people in your life who set poor examples? What negative behaviors do you see in them that you do not want to emulate? How do you use them as cautionary tales?
- How are you a role model? What values and attitudes might you be embodying and modeling for others? Any examples you are proud of? Could you share any times you have been surprised to find a behavior of yours emulated?

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

Closing Words

“Few things are harder to put up with than the annoyance of a good example.” – Mark Twain