

SELF-PITY

First Universalist Church UU, Auburn, ME, Rev. Glenn Turner

OPENING WORDS & CHALICE LIGHTING:

“I am one of the searchers. There are, I believe, millions of us. We are not unhappy, but, neither are we really content. We continue to explore life, hoping to uncover its ultimate secret. We continue to explore ourselves, hoping to understand. We are drawn by the oceans... We like forests and mountains, deserts and hidden rivers, and the lonely cities as well. We searchers are ambitious only for life itself, for everything beautiful it can provide. Most of all we want to love and be loved.”

from *There Are Men Too Gentle To Live Among Wolves* by James Kavanaugh

CHECK IN: (40 - 50 minutes)

What you share may be about your physical or spiritual health, cares or concerns for loved ones, issues you are facing.

Each person in the group speaks uninterrupted, if time remaining, general response and conversation is welcome. Confidentiality.

FOCUS: “Self-Pity”

Resisting “self-pity” was another important factor in the 1950 Duke University research on how to achieve “peace of mind.”

“Refuse to pity yourself or seek self-justification in easy alibis that make you appear noble to yourself and others.”

Krishnamurti wrote:

“Self-pity is one of the elements of sorrow. Another element is being attached to someone and encouraging or fostering his/her attachment to you. Sorrow is not only there when attachment fails you but its seed is in the very beginning of that attachment. In all this the trouble is the utter lack of knowing oneself. Knowing oneself is the ending of sorrow. We are afraid to know ourselves because we have divided ourselves into the good and the bad, the evil and the noble, the pure and the impure. The good is always judging the bad, and these fragments are at war with each other. Walking in this corridor of opposites is sorrow. This fragmentation of life into the high and the low, the noble and the ignoble, God and the Devil, breeds conflict and pain. When there is sorrow, there is no love. Love and sorrow cannot live together.”

Discussion:

How do you deal with the self-pity of your friends/relatives? How do you deal with your own episodes with self-pity?

What is the nature of the sorrow Krishnamurti writes of when he describes how we divide ourselves into the good and bad, the evil and the noble?

What is the difference between “attachment² and holding life with ³an open hand?”

LIKES AND WISHES

How did this session go for you? Is there anything you’d like to call particular attention to?

CLOSING WORDS

“Let me tell you something very important. It is no new thing to be lonely. It comes to all of us sooner or later. Friends die, families die. Lovers and husbands, too. We get old, we get sick. And the last and greatest loneliness is death... If we try to retreat from it, we end in a darker hell... But if we face it, if we remember that there are a million others like us, if we try to reach out to comfort them and not ourselves, we find in the end that we are lonely no longer. We are part of a larger family, the family of humankind.²

adapted from *The Devil's Advocate* by Morris West