



**STARR KING**  
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH



Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website

**Simplicity**

**Hayward, CA, Wednesday Evening Group, Kathryn LaMar, 06 December 2017**

**CHALICE LIGHTING**

**1 min**

There is really nothing you must be.  
And there is nothing you must do.  
There is really nothing you must have.  
And there is nothing you must know.  
There is really nothing you must become.  
However. It helps to understand  
that fire burns, and when it rains,  
the earth gets wet.

*Manabu Foljamakis, in Robert Fulghum's Words I Wish I Wrote*

**SILENT MEDITATION**

**2 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. If you wish, meditate on the concept of simplifying your life. The second sound of the gong returns us to each other's presence.

**CHECK-IN / FEEDBACK**

**35 min**

What's going on in your life? Have you had a chance to experience simplicity (or not) recently?

**INTRODUCTION**

Voluntary simplicity involves both inner and outer condition. It means singleness of purpose, sincerity and honesty within, as well as avoidance of exterior clutter, of many possessions irrelevant for the chief purpose of life. It means an ordering and guiding of our energy and our desires, a partial restraint in some directions in order to secure greater abundance of life in other directions. It involves a deliberate organization of life for a purpose. Of course, as different people have different purposes in life, what is relevant to the purpose of one person might not be relevant to the purpose of another. The degree of simplification is a matter for each individual to settle for himself.

*Richard Gregg quoted in Voluntary Simplicity by Duane Elgin)*

**READINGS / QUOTES ON SIMPLICITY**

**10 min**

Childhood means simplicity. Look at the world with the child's eye -- it is very beautiful.

*Kailash Satyarthi*

Simplicity is the most difficult thing to secure in this world; it is the last limit of experience and the last effort of genius.

*George Sand*

I have just three things to teach: simplicity, patience, compassion. These three are your greatest treasures.

*Lao Tzu*

In character, in manner, in style, in all things, the supreme excellence is simplicity.

*Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*

Progress is man's ability to complicate simplicity.

*Thor Heyerdahl*

Purity and simplicity are the two wings with which man soars above the earth and all temporary nature.

*Thomas a Kempis*

There is a beauty and clarity that comes from simplicity that we sometimes do not appreciate in our thirst for intricate solutions.

*Dieter F. Uchtdorf*

Elegance is achieved when all that is superfluous has been discarded and the human being discovers simplicity and concentration: the simpler and more sober the posture, the more beautiful it will be.

*Paulo Coelho*

People are looking for a simplicity in their fictional worlds where good and evil are clearly delineated, that you can't find in the real world, and that provides an enormous comfort -- and that, I think, has an awful lot to do with the reason fantasy is so popular.

*Robert J.*

To me, the extraordinary aspect of martial arts lies in its simplicity. The easy way is also the right way, and martial arts is nothing at all special; the closer to the true way of martial arts, the less wastage of expression there is.

*Bruce Lee*

Things that I grew up with stay with me. You start a certain way, and then you spend your whole life trying to find a certain simplicity that you had. It's less about staying in childhood than keeping a certain spirit of seeing things in a different way.

*Tim Burton*

What a circus act we women perform every day of our lives. Look at us. We run a tightrope daily, balancing a pile of books on the head. Baby-carriage, parasol, kitchen chair, still under control. Steady now! This is not the life of simplicity but the life of multiplicity that the wise men warn us of.

*Anne Morrow Lindbergh*

We were going for simplicity with the Minions and, frankly, I think that's a huge appeal of the characters. They're essentially pills with goggles. A child can draw them quite easily.

*Chris Renaud*

The line that describes the beautiful is elliptical. It has simplicity and constant change. It cannot be described by a compass, and it changes direction at every one of its points.

*Rudolf Arnheim*

As I grew older, I realized that it was much better to insist on the genuine forms of nature, for simplicity is the greatest adornment of art.

*Albrecht Durer*

Painting picture by picture, I followed the impressions my eye took in at heightened moments. I painted only memories, adding nothing, no details that I did not see. Hence the simplicity of the paintings, their emptiness.

*Edvard Munch*

UNIX is basically a simple operating system, but you have to be a genius to understand the simplicity.

*Dennis Ritchie*

The common faults of American language are an ambition of effect, a want of simplicity, and a turgid abuse of terms.

*James F. Cooper*

Whatever simplicity I've achieved in writing, I think I owe most of it to Jean Renoir and Hemingway: simple, declarative sentences. I've read some very good writers, but the sentences were so long that I've forgotten what the point was.

*Gene Wilder*

Christianity began as a religion of the poor and dispossessed - farmers, fishermen, Bedouin shepherds. There's a great lure to that kind of simplicity and rigor -- the discipline, the call to action.

*Camille Paglia*

When the faith is strong enough, it is sufficient just to be. It's a journey towards simplicity, towards quietness, towards a kind of joy that is not in time. It's a journey that has taken us from primary identification with our body and our psyche, on to an identification with God, and ultimately beyond identification.

*Ram Dass*

Unnecessary possessions are unnecessary burdens. If you have them, you have to take care of them! There is great freedom in simplicity of living. It is those who have enough but not too much who are the happiest.

*Peace Pilgrim*

Simplicity does not mean getting rid of all your possessions, but rather integrating them into your life's purpose.

*Mary Gregory*

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER FOR THE SHARING

- What spoke to you (positively or negatively) from the readings?
- What does simplicity in living look like for you?
- What is the opposite of simplicity? How have you experienced that in your life?
- What would you like to say “no” to in your life? What stops you?
- Are you motivated to seek simplicity? Why or why not?
- What demands in life keep you busy? What needs or forces keep you *too* busy?
- What are you willing to give up that will move your life closer to your goals for a simpler and more meaningful life?

**BREAK** **10 min**

**SHARING ABOUT SIMPLICITY:** **35 min**

**DISCUSSION/FEEDBACK ON SIMPLICITY** **5 min**

**CLOSING SONG: Stuff That Works (Rodney Crowell and Guy Clarke)** **4 min**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yRiM1KyDb4Y>

[Lyrics at end of program]

**CLOSING WORDS** **1 min**

May the light around us guide our footsteps, and hold us fast to the best and most righteous that we seek. May the darkness around us nurture our dreams, and give us rest so that we may give ourselves to the work of our world. Let us seek to remember the wholeness of our lives, the weaving of light and shadow in this great astonishing dance in which we move.

*Kathleen McTigue*

***Stuff That Works*** as written by Guy Clark and Rodney J Crowell

I've got an old blue shirt, and it suits me just fine. / I like the way it feels, so I wear it all the time.  
I've got an old guitar that won't ever stay in tune, / But I like the way it sounds in a dark and empty room.  
I've got an old pair of boots that fit my feet just right. / I can work all day, and go out and dance all night.  
I've got a new used car that runs just like a top; /  
Yeah, I get the feeling it ain't ever gonna stop.

Stuff that works; stuff that holds up / Is the kind of stuff you don't hang on the wall.

Stuff that's real; that stuff you feel / Is the stuff you always reach for when you fall

I've got a pretty good friend who's seen me at my worst. / He don't care if I'm a blessing or a curse,  
But he always shows up when the chips are down. / That's the kind of friend I like to be around.

Stuff that works . . .

There's a woman I love; she's crazy, and she paints like God. /

She's got a playground sense of justice; she don't give odds.

I've got a tattoo with her name right through my soul, / And I think everything she touches turns to gold.

|: Stuff that works . . . :|