

## I Smell a Good Memory Coming On

UU Congregation of the Susquehanna Valley, First Monday Covenant Group

~~1<sup>st</sup> Monday~~ **Tuesday**, December 2018, 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm

### Welcoming Chimes, Chalice Lighting, and Opening Words (2 minutes):

*We light the flame in the chalice to remind ourselves that we are part of a beloved community where we are encouraged to bring our authentic selves to join each other in sharing from our hearts and listening with our hearts. May it be so.*

### I Smell a Memory Coming On

The scents I remember like hand rolled cigars  
Wine cask lined cellars in musty cool basements  
Chocolate miniatures nestled in bright candy dishes  
Tea leaves and mint steeping in dainty china cups.

Baked goods cooling on the kitchen counter  
Roast with potatoes in a rich onion broth  
Lilacs and roses lined on back yard fences  
Channel #5 clings to grandmother's sweater

Scents I remember from childhood spent  
Fondly reminiscing with a wistful smile  
In this sterile world I live in now  
What will my grandchildren remember?

No leaves burnt on a cold autumn night  
No carcinogens cooked over red hot coals  
No second hand smoke that will cling to your clothes  
No hairspray, no tea roses, no creams or colognes

No Sundays exploring my old Aunt Ruth's farm  
No chickens or guineas; no old dusty barns  
No fresh moved hay or cinnamon apple pies  
Just germicide, purified, Ionic fresh air. *Lena Pate*

### Check-In and Check-Back (25 minutes):

This structured process (and spiritual discipline) of deep listening and uninterrupted speaking offers participants the opportunity to know and connect with each other more deeply and personally than their busy lives and casual conversations usually allow.

- Check-In (up to 3 minutes, no interruptions)

Free yourself to be fully present with the group by noting any features of your inner or outer life that seem especially important for you today. Also indicate if you are open to comment during check-back.

- Check-Back (up to 2 minutes, no interruptions)

After everyone has finished checking in, briefly comment, if invited to do so, on any of the check-in statements that you have just heard.

### Topic: Smell & Memory (40 minutes)

#### Topic Readings:

Music and smells are the most memory-recall, nostalgia-inducing things. *Richard Linklater*

I found one remaining box of comics which I had saved. When I opened it up and that smell came pouring out, that old paper smell, I was struck by a rush of memories, a sense of my childhood self that seemed to be contained in there. *Michael Chabon*

When I smell pho, I just automatically think of my mom. All these nostalgic feelings and memories come rushing through my head. *Michelle Phan*

Let's get into talking about how autism is similar to animal behavior. The thing is I don't think in a language, and animals don't think in a language. It's sensory based thinking, thinking in pictures, thinking in smells, thinking in touches. It's putting these sensory based memories into categories. *Temple Grandin*

The one thing that holds people back from working out together is that they don't want to smell around other people. Your olfactory sense is the primary sense in your memory, and you don't want to be part of anyone's memory thinking that you smell bad. *Dhani Jones*

One thing I always make - and I'm sure this is partly to do with memory and yearning and because I've made it ever since my children were born - I make gingerbread every year. And it's partly just the perfume of the spices in the house, makes it smell like winter to me. *Bee Wilson*

My new favorite smell is new baby smell. It makes me so happy. If someone could bottle that, I'd love to have it. *Jane Krakowski*

You are the sum total of everything you've ever seen, heard, eaten, smelled, been told, forgot - it's all there. Everything influences each of us, and because of that I try to make sure that my experiences are positive. *Maya Angelou*

I have smelled some very famous and undoubtedly sexy boys. And sometimes, as cute as they are, I'd rather have them as a friend - just because of the way they smell! *Rachel Nichols*

I lived in the library with my grandmother as a child. I still love the smell of books; the library card is still my friend. *Dawn Richard*

Both my grandmother and mother used to wear the Red Roses cologne, and when I was 21 or 22, I smelled the same scent on a friend of mine. *Poppy Delevingne*

They say that our sense of smell is one of the strongest triggers of memories. Of course, our sense of smell is integral to our sense of taste, so it is no surprise, then, that in a life full of moving and traveling, food has always been a source of familiar comfort for me. *Philippe Cousteau, Jr.*

I've had a hard life. I smell and sense fear. *Bernard Hopkins*

In a meadow full of flowers, you cannot walk through and breathe those smells and see all those colors and remain angry. We have to support the beauty, the poetry, of life. *Jonas Mekas*

There's all kinds of those moments in your life where either through a weird set of circumstances, or a song you hear, or a smell you smell, or one person says something totally out of the context without the meaning that you assigned to it, but you snap back to the way you were when you were 14 or 15. We all deal with that. *Patton Oswalt*

Smell is a potent wizard that transports you across thousands of miles and all the years you have lived. *Helen Keller*

## **Deep Listening**

One goal of deep listening is to create inviting space for another to share deeply from her/his heart, while we listen with an open heart that is willing to be touched not only by the words that are spoken but also by the feelings that are shared. Please open your heart to listen deeply as each person speaks.

The Topic Discussion is more informally structured. Participants are now free to respond to the topic, limiting themselves only by:

- Keeping to the topic;
- Speaking from personal experience (using “I” rather than “we”, “one” or “you” statements) and sharing only what we are comfortable sharing.
- Valuing the experience of others by sharing the time available and not debating or arguing.

Please choose one of these questions to frame your sharing. As time allows, we may do additional rounds of sharing. Each person has about three (3) minutes to share.

### **Topic Focus Questions**

- If you could share a smell with someone else, what would it be and why?
- What is your favorite/comforting/joyful smell and what memories accompany it?
- What is your earliest smell memory?
- What smells do you find yourself reproducing or purchasing in order to experience fond feelings or fond memories?
- If you could only experience one more smell in life, what would it be and why?
- Do your friends, family, or co-workers have identifiable or unique smells and how so?
- Is there such thing as a smell for danger or fear as Hollywood movies imply? Explain?
- Is there a smell you avoid? Are there smells you seek out? Why?
- How would you describe the smell of your parent or your spouse or your children or your pet?
- Do seasons of the year or seasons of your life have smells? Have your careers had smells? Explain.

**Likes and Wishes (10 minutes):** What did I enjoy about this session? What would I like to see done differently?

### **Extinguishing the Chalice and Closing Words:**

“If you take a book with you on a journey,” Mo had said when he put the first one in her box, “an odd thing happens: The book begins collecting your memories. And forever after you have only to open that book to be back where you first read it. It will all come into your mind with the very first words: the sights you saw in that place, what it smelled like, the ice cream you ate while you were reading it... yes, books are like flypaper—memories cling to the printed page better than anything else.”

Cornelia Funke, *Inkheart*

*As we leave this place and this company, may the fellowship of this circle carry us forward, remind us of our covenant to patiently and deeply listen, and encourage us every hour until we meet again.*