

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
Spirals, Cycles & Circles
First Parish Church of Stow and Acton, MA. October 2023

Opening Words and Chalice Lighting

“We light our chalice in honor of ‘returning’, recognizing that the journey back can be as meaningful as the path forward. May it glow as a symbol of our ability to renew, reconnect, and find our way back to what truly matters, guiding us to deeper wisdom and the warmth of community. With gratitude for the gift of return, we light this chalice.”

Check-in/Sharing: This is the time to mention any issues or events on your mind that you would like to share.

Topic: Spirals, Cycles & Circles

Spirals, those remarkable counterparts of circles, continually shift in size with each revolution and present us with intriguing phenomena. They manifest themselves in diverse forms across the natural world, whether in the grandeur of the Milky Way, the descent of movement of water down a drain, or the pattern in the seeds of echinacea. These spirals, in their subtle yet constant transformation, remind us of the beauty of change and evolution.

On the other hand, we often perceive the seasons, the phases of the moon, and the circle of life as seamless circles or repetitive cycles. However, upon closer examination, these seemingly constant elements also conceal delicate spirals within. This perspective invites us to acknowledge that life, too, follows intricate and multifaceted patterns of transition, rather than adhering to rigid linearity.

In our personal journeys, we frequently navigate these cyclical patterns – an experience that can be equally captivating and challenging. There are times when we bask in the delight of personal growth and the ever-progressing transformative process. At other junctures, we may encounter periods of perceived stagnation, where we feel caught in a repetitive loop. These phases are all integral to the tapestry of our lives.

Today, we explore the intricate interplay between spirals and cycles, delving into their profound connection with the natural world and our spiritual perspectives. As we share our insights, let us uncover the wisdom they hold for our lives.

“This seems to be the law of progress in everything we do; it moves along a spiral rather than a perpendicular; we seem to be actually going out of the way, and yet it turns out that we were really moving upward all the time.” - *Frances E. Willard*

"The spiritual path is not a straight line; it's a spiral. You continually come back to things you thought you understood and see deeper truths." - *Barry H. Gillespie*

"In the spiral of life, when you go up, you can also go down, and when you go down, you can also go up. Embrace the rhythm of the spiral and find balance." - Debasish Mridha

Possible Questions for Discussion:

- Do you have memories about encountering natural or manufactured spirals and what they meant to you?
- Have you ever felt as though you were learning or experiencing the same thing again but discovered you were at a different place, or level, with it?
- Have you found opportunities to reconnect with people, places or ideas?
- Identify any recurring patterns or cycles in your life. How have they influenced your personal growth and development?
- Could you share any times when you found yourself facing recurring emotions from a different perspective?
- Spirals can symbolize both progress and repetition. Share an experience where you felt stuck in a loop. What helped you break free from it?
- When faced with challenges or setbacks, do you find yourself drawn towards spirals of growth or downward spirals? What might the direction depend on?

(Group will take a few minutes to consider topic and questions and then share).

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

Closing Words

"Opening and closing spirals constitute the heartbeat of the universe." - *Walter Russell*