

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
SMALL GROUP SESSION
STEREOTYPING
By the Rev. Glenn H. Turner

OPENING WORDS & CHALICE LIGHTING:

“Don’t judge me by what you see
Like my religion or my race
There’s more beyond my looks
There’s so much more beyond my face
Don’t judge me by what I wear
How I do my hair and such
Because to me all those things
don’t even matter much
So if you were to get to know me
maybe you’ll like what’s inside
even though you cannot see
the fear and pain that I hide
It’s what you learn about me
That really does matter
Because when life feels empty
When your whole world shatters
you’ll have a friend to turn to
Who’ll show you that they care
all because you befriended them
when they were scared and insecure
so think twice before you judge
a great friend might be passing you by
Also, you wouldn’t like to be the one
standing there, being judged on the
other side”

Essay by a student on Martin Luther King Day

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: “Stereotyping”

How quickly the short-hand descriptive words fall from our lips: “groupie..woo woo...Frog...welfare queen...fascist...nerd...egg head. Then there are dismissive categories, that are conjured with a tone of voice: lawyers, politicians, rednecks. What’s behind our using descriptive language in this way? What’s the feeling state behind stereotypical language? Do we think about how others will feel? We all do it to a greater or lesser extent. How might you be stereotyped? How do you feel when it happens? How prevalent is it where you live and work? There’s the Irish, Italian, and blond jokes. Innocent or demeaning? What’s the payoff? What do you do when your kids, your relatives, or you fall into stereotyping?

LIKES AND WISHES

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

CLOSING WORDS:

“The energy employed in the judging mind is sufficient to transform the world. It is an energy we need to rechannel. Forgiveness, tolerance, patience, and love bring us humility. They remind us that the person we see before us is simply ourselves in another form, someone who yearns for the same love, acceptance, and open- heartedness that we yearn for, is capable of suffering the same pain of rejection, judgment, and hatred that we are capable of suffering.

One of the great rules of the heart, one of the great laws of spiritual life, is that no matter what else happens never put anyone out of your heart.”

- from “Soul Food” by Jack Kornfield & Christina Feldman