

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
Small Group Ministry
Stories We Tell and Why
First Parish Church of Stow and Acton, MA, January 2019

Opening Words and Chalice Lighting

“Each of us brings a separate truth here. We bring the truth of our own life, our story.
We do not come as empty vessels, but rather we come as full people,
People who have our own story and our own truth.
We seek to add to our truths and to our stories.
This room is rich with truth, rich with experience.
May we recognize the truth and the story of everyone’s life.” –Penny Hackett- Evans

Check in and Sharing: This is the time to mention briefly any major or interesting event on your mind that you would like to share

Topic: Stories We Tell and Why

Humans have been telling stories for thousands of years, sharing them orally even before the invention of writing. In one way or another, much of people’s lives are spent telling stories—often about other people. Social topics—especially gossip—account for 65 percent of all human conversations in public places.

“Stories are a communal currency of humanity” - *Tahir Sahah in Arabian Nights*

“The human species thinks in metaphors and learns through stories” - *Mary Catherine Bateson*

“Stories have to be told or they die, and when they die, we can't remember who we are or why we're here.” - *Sue Monk Kidd, The Secret Life of Bees*

“There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you.” - *Maya Angelou*

“After nourishment, shelter and companionship, stories are the thing we need most in the world.” - *Philip Pullman*

“Some of these things are true and some of them lies. But they are all good stories.” - *Hilary Mantel*

“A good story should make you laugh, and a moment later break your heart.” - *Chuck Palahniuk*

“Never spoil a good story for lack of color.” - *Celtic Wisdom*

Questions for Discussion:

1. If you like to tell stories, why? If you prefer not to tell stories, why?
2. Why might this topic be difficult for you?
3. Do you have any stories from your childhood you still like to tell today?
4. Stories can be many different things including: humorous, sad, persuasive, autobiographical, familial, and educational. Which are you most likely to tell?
5. Could you share any stories of how you gained a particular insight or understanding?
6. To whom do you like to tell your stories?
7. Do you feel the types of stories you tell vary based on audience?

Activity:

It is highly likely that this topic may invite long, interesting stories, each of which may consume much of the available time we have together. So that we may all hear each other's story, let us each tell a short, five minute or so story first as we go around. After hearing each story, we can then randomly tell other stories, but with a mind to leaving time for others to tell their story as well. We will pause a moment to retrieve our first story from our memory.

Wrapping Up:

Did you like this topic? Why? Why not?

Closing Words:

"Perhaps some day I'll crawl back home, beaten, defeated. But not as long as I can make stories out of my heartbreak, beauty out of sorrow." - *Sylvia Plath, The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath*