

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
SMALL GROUP SESSION
TAKING TIME TO THINK
By the Rev. Glenn H. Turner

OPENING WORDS & CHALICE LIGHTING:

“Sit down and be quiet.
You are drunk, and this is the
edge of the roof.”
Rumi

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: Taking Time to Think

“As a species, we humans possess some unique capacities. We can stand apart from what’s going on, think about it, question it, imagine it being different. We are also curious. We want to know ‘why?’ We figure out ‘how?’ We think about what’s past, we dream forward to the future. We create what we want rather than just accept what is. So far, we’re the only species we know that does this.

As the world speeds up, we’re giving away these wonderful human capacities. Do you have as much time to think as you did a year ago? When was the last time you spent time reflecting on something important to you? At work, do you have more or less time now to think about what you’re doing? Are you encouraged to spend time thinking with colleagues and co-workers, or reflecting on what you’re learning?

No one will give (you time to think) because thinking is always dangerous to the status quo. Those benefiting from the present system have no interest in new ideas. In fact, thinking is a threat to them. The moment we start thinking, we’ll want to change something. We’ll disturb the current situation.

Paulo Freire taught critical thinking as a non-violent approach to revolutionary change. He taught poor people how to think about their lives and the forces that were impoverishing them. Nobody believed that exhausted and struggling poor people could become intelligent thinkers. But it is easy for people to develop this capacity when they see how thinking can save their life and the lives of those they love.

Our lives are not as desperate as those poor, and we may not notice that we’re losing the possibility of a fully human life. To see whether you’re losing anything of value to yourself, here are some questions to ask yourself:

- Are my relationships with those I love increasing or decreasing?
- Do I feel more or less energy for my work than a few years ago?
- Are those things which anger me different than a few years ago?
- Which of my behaviors do I value, which do I dislike?
- Generally, am I feeling more peaceful or more stressed?

Discussion: (from the preceding questions)

LIKES AND WISHES

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

CLOSING WORDS:

“If we were not so single-minded
about keeping our lives moving,
and for once could do nothing,
perhaps a huge silence
might interrupt this sadness
of never understanding ourselves
and of threatening ourselves with death.

- Pablo Neruda from “Keeping Still”