

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry
Things We Hold Onto
First Parish Church of Stow and Acton, MA. December 2022

Opening Words and Chalice Lighting

May the flame of this chalice, the symbol of our faith,
connect us to all who have come before us,
all who are with us in body and spirit,
and all who are yet to come into being.

May it serve as a reminder of our unity and connection across all time and space.

— *Katie Romano Griffin*

Check-in/Sharing: This is the time to mention any issues or events on your mind that you would like to share. SGM 2023 registration: <https://www.fpc-stow-acton.org/sgm> . Please help us to understand reasons for wanting/not wanting remote or hybrid.

Topic: Things We Hold Onto

Facilitators: invite participants to optionally bring one or more special, meaningful objects (or representations) to the session.

At first glance, an object may seem meaningless and ordinary, looking like no more than a yard-sale find, a thrift store bargain, or a fun gift. But what about its intrinsic value? Let's explore our truly precious possessions, prized for a significance that goes beyond physical or monetary value.

Meaningful or precious objects can often be a kind of story. They may tell the tales of a special voyage, a historical remembrance, or sentimental moment. They could be talismans of good fortune, amulets of protection, or ceremonial objects used in religious practice. They may connect us with people or a past that we can't seem to touch in any other way. Or maybe the things we hold dear are simply beautiful or pleasing to touch or hold.

“Sometimes there are things that are too precious to let go” — *Emi Zako*

“Every object is a piece of information that always comes with an embedded pair of instructions.” — *Joey Lawsin*

“[Our] sentimental attachment to objects is one of life's greatest consolations.”
— *Orhan Pamuk*

“No objects of value are worth risking the priceless experience of waking up one more day.” — *Jack Smith*

“Cultural objects have no notable identity outside of that which we confer upon them. Their value is entirely a product of the interaction that we have with them.” — *Brian Eno*

“The beauty of quality is set up in the right orchestration of objects or people that values the beholder.” — *Priyavrat Thareja*

“My desk is covered with talismans: pieces of rose quartz, wishing stones from a favorite beach, essential oils with names like concentration and focus and inspiration – the kind I might have laughed at when I was younger ... All that stuff is there to remind me to stay in the present.” – *Dani Shapiro*

Possible Questions for Discussion:

Please take turns sharing a special object. If you have more than one object, feel free to take another turn after everyone has had a chance.

- Tell us about one of your precious objects - what makes it special, how and when did it come to be yours, who gave it to you? Where do you keep it? Is your object meant to be used and how do you use it?
- Do you have stories about things you keep because they were given to you by special people or that remind you of a person or event?
- Do you have objects that you imagine passing on to someone else someday? If so, will they value the same aspects that you value in it?
- Could you tell us about any treasures you had in childhood or have kept from childhood?
- Have you lost any special possessions? What happened, and how did you deal with the loss?
- Have there been times when attachment to things has been helpful or harmful to you? Have you found anything that has made it easier to let go of things?

(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

“Memory dilutes, but the object remains unaltered.” — *Aanchal Malhotra*