

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
Session Plan
Transition and Change
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Raleigh, NC, Chris Abbate, April 25, 2016

Chalice Lighting & Opening Thought (Octavia E. Butler):

All that you touch
You Change.

All that you Change
Changes you.

The only lasting truth
is Change.

God
is Change.

Check In: Talk about one thing you have learned or a significant feeling or thought you have had since our last meeting.

Topic: Transition and Change

When our lives are happy and full, we want things to stay just as they are. When life is messy and difficult, we pray that change will come soon, but find it hard to believe that it ever will. And in both cases the inevitable force of change rolls on, introducing some bittersweet into the happiness; some peace and joy into the despair.

Some of us take to change naturally, gladly, seeing excitement and interesting challenges in new situations. Others find change unsettling, disruptive, something to be avoided if at all possible – and slowed down if it can't be avoided. But change can often operate on its own time schedule, and at those times we can neither hasten it nor delay it to suit our own purposes.

How do we develop a relationship with change that allows for graceful acceptance, while giving us room to explore our feelings? How do we craft a rooted yet flexible approach to life that invites change in without risking our sanity or stability?

Quotes:

“The root of suffering is attachment.” – *The Buddha*

“Another word for life is CHANGE. Two words for suffering are RESISTING CHANGE.” – *Michael Jeffries*

“If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change your attitude.” – *Maya Angelou*

“If you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change.” – *Wayne Dyer*

“You must be the change you wish to see in the world” – *Gandhi*

“If you do not change direction, you may end up where you are heading” – *Lao Tzu*

“If we don't change, we don't grow. If we don't grow, we aren't really living.” – *Gail Sheehy*

“God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.” – *Reinhold Niebuhr*

“For the past 33 years I have looked in the mirror every morning and asked myself: ‘If today were the last day of my life, would I want to do what I am about to do today?’ And whenever the answer has been ‘No’ for too many days in a row, I know I need to change something.” – *Steve Jobs*

Discussion Questions:

Has there been a transition or change at any point in your life that was completely unexpected? How did it affect or change your life? Did you welcome or resist the change? Was there a message or lesson in the experience?

Has there been a transition or change at any point in your life that you purposefully created? What did you lose and what did you gain in the process? Did the change bring results you hoped for?

Do you usually avoid change or embrace it? In what ways have you learned to handle the fear that comes as you contemplate and move through significant changes? It is possible to be addicted to change, to the adrenalin rush of leaving frustrations behind and stepping out into the unknown?

Have you ever functioned as an agent of change within a family, a relationship, a congregation, a workplace, or some other community?

As you look back on some of the biggest transitions and changes in your life, what can you say you learned about yourself in the process? What help and support was most effective for you as you made your way through times of change?

What changes in the surrounding culture have been most challenging or painful for you in the course of your life? What changes in the world around you have freed you to be more yourself?

Closing Thought (Rumi):

This being human is a guest house.
Every moment a new arrival.
A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture,
still, treat each guest honorably
He may be clearing you out
for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice
meet them at the door laughing,
and invite them in.

Be grateful for whoever comes,
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.