

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website

Travel

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Stony Brook, NY, February 2014

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Opening words

Afoot and light-hearted I take to the open road,
 Healthy, free, the world before me,
 The long brown path before me leading wherever I choose.

Henceforth I ask not good-fortune, I myself am good-fortune,
 Henceforth I whimper no more, postpone no more, need nothing,
 Done with indoor complaints, libraries, querulous criticisms,
 Strong and content I travel the open road.

The earth, that is sufficient,
 I do not want the constellations any nearer,
 I know they are very well where they are,
 I know they suffice for those who belong to them.

(Still here I carry my old delicious burdens,
 I carry them, men and women, I carry them with me wherever I go,
 I swear it is impossible for me to get rid of them,
 I am fill'd with them, and I will fill them in return.)

~ Walt Whitman, *Song of the Open Road* (1)

Chalice lighting and silence

Covenant (optional)

Check-in

Topic Introduction

Travel has many facets and in this session we will explore some of them. For instance, people travel for different reasons: pleasure, education, business. People travel for religious reasons by going on pilgrimages. People travel in order to get away from harsh conditions and find better ways to live. Some people are forced to travel and would not choose to do so. For what purposes have you traveled?

Secondly, we often think of travel as going to distant places, and often it is, but it does not have to be so. We can travel sitting in our favorite easy chairs simply by using our imaginations. We can travel through experiencing stories in books, films, photographs, etc. Travel can be to places as far away as Australia and as near as our own backyard.

What is it then that makes travel travel? Perhaps it is our experience of something new. New about ourselves, new about our loved ones, new about people we never met before. When we travel we learn things. We might see sights, hear sounds,

taste foods we never noticed or bothered with before. Maybe more important, we learn how we cope with newness, with differences. Sometimes we can be surprised at what we learn.

Quotations

Activity: This activity is meant to be contemplative and done in silence.
(Facilitators please bring a copy of "What I Learned About Myself from Traveling" for each member of the group. Ask participants, in silence, to read it over and circle or check the words/phrases that apply to them. They can also add words/phrases if they choose. Explain that there will be a chance to share during the discussion time.)

Questions for group reflection

1. Read aloud the phrases you circled or checked on the What I Learned About Myself from Traveling sheet. Pick ONE of them and tell us a story about how and when you learned this. *(Or, go around several times using the insights from this sheet.)*
2. What was the best experience you have had while traveling? What was the worst? Tell us the stories.
3. When you travel do you try out new behaviors? Can you name some? Have you held onto them when you returned home?
4. Can you think of ways that you have changed because you traveled?
5. How have your travel experiences influenced your ethical views, your political views, your understanding of justice, equity and compassion in human relations?
6. Have you surprised yourself, either pleasantly or unpleasantly, while traveling? Give some examples. What did that tell you about yourself?

Likes and wishes

Closing words and Chalice extinguishing

From this hour I ordain myself loos'd of limits and imaginary lines,
 Going where I list, my own master total and absolute,
 Listening to others, considering well what they say,
 Pausing, searching, receiving, contemplating,
 Gently, but with undeniable will, divesting myself of the holds that would hold me.
 I inhale great draughts of space,
 The east and the west are mine, and the north and the south are mine.

I am larger, better than I thought,
 I did not know I held so much goodness.

All seems beautiful to me,
 I can repeat over to men and women You have done such good to me I would do the same to you,
 I will recruit for myself and you as I go,
 I will scatter myself among men and women as I go,
 I will toss a new gladness and roughness among them,

Whoever denies me it shall not trouble me,
Whoever accepts me he or she shall be blessed and shall bless me.

~ Walt Whitman, *Song of the Open Road* (5)

Quotations

Wandering re-establishes the original harmony which once existed between man (sic) and the universe. ~Anatole France

Most travel is best of all in the anticipation or the remembering; the reality has more to do with losing your luggage. ~Regina Nadelson

Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men (sic) and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime. ~Mark Twain

The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes. ~ Marcel Proust

No one realizes how beautiful it is to travel until he (sic) comes home and rests his (sic) head on his (sic) old, familiar pillow. ~Lin Yutang

Not all who wander are lost. ~ J.R.R. Tolkien

The world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page.
~ Augustine of Hippo

In books I have traveled, not only to other worlds, but into my own. ~ Anna Quindlen

I travel not to go anywhere, but to go. I travel for travel's sake. The great affair is to move. ~ Robert Louis Stevenson

I have found out that there ain't no surer way to find out whether you like people or hate them than to travel with them. ~ Mark Twain

We travel, some of us forever, to seek other states, other lives, other souls.
~ Anaïs Nin

The traveler sees what he (sic) sees. The tourist sees what he (sic) has come to see. ~G.K. Chesterton

Though we travel the world over to find the beautiful, we must carry it with us, or we find it not. ~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

Travel far enough, you meet yourself. ~ David Mitchell

What I Have Learned About Myself from Traveling (circle or check all that apply)

I have an adventurous spirit.

I can become anxious in unfamiliar places.

I like to control where I go and what I do and plan everything out for myself.

I prefer to have other people make all the arrangements and take care of me.

I don't really like to travel. I'd rather stay close to home.

I am spontaneous when I travel and enjoy having no particular itinerary. I go where the day will take me.

I can become impatient with customs and ways different from my own.

I am eager to learn about different cultures, try new foods, meet new people.

What I like the most about travel is to visit parks and natural wonders.

What I like most about travel is to visit museums and historical sites.

I like to shop when I travel.

I want to be physically active when I travel.

I want to relax and rest when I travel.

I feel comfortable traveling alone.

I want to travel with a few close friends or family members.

I like to travel in groups.

When I travel, no matter who I'm with, I need some time for myself.

I don't really care where I stay, as long as it's safe and clean.

I want to stay in accommodations that give me a sense of luxury, however small.

I feel afraid to travel and/or I don't feel safe when I travel.

It's enough for me to travel to my own backyard, or deck, or stoop.