

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website

Small Group Ministry

Why Can't You Just ...

First Parish Church of Stow and Acton, MA

November 2022

Opening Words and Chalice Lighting

“Welcome, you who come in need of healing,
you who are confused, or have been betrayed.
Welcome, with your problems and your pain.
Welcome, too, your joys and your wonderings,
welcome your need to hope, your longing for assurance.
Instead of answers, here may you find safety for your questions.
Instead of promises, may you find community for your struggles,
people with hands and hearts to join you
in engaging the challenges and changes of our day.” - *Maureen Killoran*

Check-in/Sharing: This is the time to mention any issues or events on your mind that you would like to share.

Topic: **Why Can't You Just ...**

Many of us have heard the admonishment “Why can't you just ...” with a variety of endings. Perhaps some of us have said that to others a time or two? This particular phrase seems to flow from a combination of frustration and a feeling of “that should be easy enough for you” regarding the ending of the phrase.

There is a certain impatience behind this admonishment, and the “just” adds its own bit of put-down — the phrase doesn't have the same punch without the “just”. It seems like everything would settle back into its proper place “if you would just ...”, and we could move on and — not have to actually confront and deal with what is going on for you, and the difference and dissonance that you are creating by ... whatever you are doing or not doing, or whatever you are being or not being.

Regardless of whether or not you have used or have been the target of this phrase, perhaps you can share situations in which you might have used this phrase with another person, another group, technology or even with yourself. Or perhaps you could share situations in which you have been the target of a similar attitude. These could be situations that were frustrating or might be ones in which either you have created a difference that was uncomfortable for others, or you have been uncomfortable with a difference highlighted by someone else.

“The main character turns to her son in her car and cries “Why can't you just be normal?” The child responds by shrieking.” - *The Babadook*

Why can't you just be....more like everyone else? - *Leo (Stargirl)*

“I had someone tell me today “why can't you just get over it” and I shook from head to toe in anger. Don't you think I want to feel better? Don't you think I want to sleep? I'm so frustrated & confused by all of this. I've never experienced grief.” - *Stacey (after having lost her father)*

“Please be reasonable, do it my way” - *Rusty Mills*

“You are your own worst enemy. If you can learn to stop expecting impossible perfection, in yourself and others, you may find the happiness that has always eluded you.” - *Lisa Kleypas*

“Everything that irritates us about others can lead us to an understanding of ourselves.” - *Carl Jung*

Possible Questions for Discussion:

- Did you ever hear the phrase “Why can't you just ...” growing up? Can you remember the situation, how the sentence ended and how you felt?
- As an adult, have you been on the receiving end of “Why can't you just ...”? What was the ending? How did you feel?
- Have you said this phrase to someone else, or something like it? What was going on for you when you did?
- Could you share times when you have said “why can't you just” to yourself?
- How often do you find yourself saying to technology “why can't you just”. In what ways has that helped you?
- Could you describe any situations in which you thought “why can't you just” but refrained from saying it out loud? What helped you refrain?
- Could you share any times you felt that someone was asking you to not feel a certain way? How did you feel when that happened?

(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

“Before you marry a person, you should first make them use a computer with slow Internet to see who they really are.” — *Will Ferrell*