

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
Covenant Groups for December, 2009

Theme: "Patience"

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OPENING WORDS & CHALICE LIGHTING

Do you have the patience to wait
till your mud settles and the water is clear?

Can you remain unmoving
till the right action arises by itself?

The Master doesn't seek fulfillment,
but not seeking, not expecting,
is present, and can welcome all things.

-Lao Tse

CHECK IN – (for the two hour covenant groups)

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 for approximately ____ minutes. Comfort and care can be offered after the group session.

READING:

“The alternatives to patience in the spiritual life are frustration, anger and waste of energy. By trying to force ourselves to grow we hinder our growth. If we try to force others to change we prevent them from changing. Patience is needed to further our own spiritual growth and to help others to grow. This does not mean a lack of effort, in fact it means great effort. Patient effort, enduring effort, persistent, consistent effort is greater, more noble, than the violent effort of frustration and anger.” -Rathnagosa

QUESTIONS:

Here are some possible questions to share on, choose the one that resonates with you at this moment, in your own life. If none of them do, perhaps something from the reading did. *In any case, though we are using a reading and some questions to begin to focus the topic, the real text is always our own lives.*

Who or what has taught you patience? Children? Age? Your pets? Your job? Difficult experiences?

The Buddhists say patience is the antidote to anger. They define anger broadly on a spectrum from impatience to rage. Are you able to sit with anger, patiently, and learn from it? If so, what have you learned?

Guidelines for Sharing – (leader reads these guidelines, or has another person do it, then can repeat the questions again)

We'll each speak for roughly _____ minutes, with no cross talk or interruptions. Cross talk means advice giving, blaming or fixing another person. It is wise to speak in the first person, "I think, I feel..."

When we are listening: Try to listen to each other as if you were listening to, or watching, your own thoughts. Let others' words simply fall down into your heart. It is not necessary to give the person reassurances that they are being heard, such as nodding or eye contact. By simply listening together we create a holding space for each speaker. That is enough.

When it is your turn to speak it is not necessary to respond to the persons who have gone before you, though you may find yourself building on what has been shared already. Find out what your own inner wisdom wants to say. Together we create a quilt of wisdom, the design is a surprise.

(Leader can re-read the questions here)

Sharing around the circle

After everyone has shared (some groups go around twice, or more)...

Likes and Wishes – What did you like about this session? What would you wish to be different if anything?

Closing words

Let nothing disturb thee; Let nothing dismay thee; All thing pass; the eternal One never changes. Patience attains all that it strives for. – St. Theresa of Avila

Extinguishing the chalice We extinguish this flame but not the light of truth, the warmth of community, or the fire of commitment. These we carry in our hearts until we are together again.