

USG SGM ~ FEAR

March ~ 2017

Chalice Lighting

We can easily forgive a child who is afraid of the dark; the real tragedy of life is when we are afraid of the light.

~ Plato

Check-in

Share briefly what's been on your mind lately or your highs and lows since we last met. We will listen to each other without asking questions or offering advice to allow people the safety to share what's in their hearts.

Quotes for Inspiration/Readings

Fear is an idea-crippling experience-crushing success-stalling inhibitor inflicted only by yourself.

~ Stephanie Mulish-Sales Bari

First of all, let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself – a nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror, which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance.

~ Franklin D. Roosevelt

He who has overcome his fears will truly be free.

~ Aristotle

The cave you fear to enter holds the treasure you seek.

~ Joseph Campbell

Do one thing every day that scares you.

~ Eleanor Roosevelt

Fear is a natural reaction to moving closer to the truth. Fear is a universal experience, even the smallest insect feels it. It is when faced with the unknown. It is part of being alive, something we all share, not a terrible thing that we feel fear.

...No one ever tells you to stop running away from fear, the advice we usually get is to sweeten it up, smooth it over, take a pill, or distract ourselves but by all means make it go away. So the next time you encounter fear, consider yourself lucky. This is where the courage comes in. Usually we think that brave people have no fear. The truth is that they are intimate with fear.

~ Pema Chodron (*When Things Fall Apart: Heartfelt Advice for Difficult Times*)

Spiritual Exercises

1) Think about an event that makes you anxious and/or fearful. Instead of looking at unknown with fear and/or anxiety, try encountering the unknown with curiosity, i.e. what will this be like? While curiosity may have killed the cat, it won't do you any harm to investigate your fears. Get curious about what thoughts generate your fear, where do you feel the fear, and how do you react to it? Be an observer of what is going on.

2) During the month, think of something that you are afraid of trying, and consider what steps (either real or figurative) you could take to begin getting over that fear. If, after looking at your fear with curiosity (in the first exercise), you feel ready to face this fear, take the first step in overcoming it, no matter how small a step it is. The first step might be giving yourself permission to let go of the fear, or the first step might be to face it directly; only you can determine what your first step will be. If you feel more comfortable, call on a trusted friend to help you.

Questions:

- 1) Do you remember what you feared when you were 5? When you were 10? When you were a teenager? Are any of those fears still with you? If so, how do you deal with those fears now? How do those fears affect you as an adult?
- 2) How can we live with fear in a healthy way?
- 3) When you are afraid, what other emotions come to the forefront?
- 4) How can you help someone else with a fear they have that you might think isn't important, without minimizing their feelings?
- 5) How do your fears influence your actions and thinking?

Sitting in Silence *Take a few moments to sit quietly and reflect upon your thoughts.*

Sharing/Deep Listening *Respond with your thoughts/experiences with the topic.*

Reflection *This is a time to respond briefly to something another person said or to relate additional thoughts that may have occurred as others shared.*

Singing

You'll Never Walk Alone (Susan Boyle, available on YouTube)

When you walk through a storm, hold your head up high
And don't be afraid of the dark.
At the end of the storm, there's a golden sky
And the sweet, silver song of a lark.
Walk on through the wind
Walk on through rain
Though your dreams be tossed and blown.
Walk on, walk on
With hope in your hearts
And you'll never walk alone.

Extinguishing the Chalice

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us.

~ Marianne Williamson