

Resilience
February, 2017
USG Small Group Ministry

Chalice Lighting

"Fall seven times, stand up eight."

~ Japanese Proverb

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

Resilience: 1. The ability of a substance or object to spring back into shape; elasticity
2. the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness.

"The capacity to be resilient, to respond to difficulty with development, is rooted in many diverse factors, but it consistently depends on one thing: the meaning you, the individual, make of where you are. When suffering leads to meanings that unlock the mysteries of life, it strengthens compassion, gratitude, joy and wisdom."

~ Polly Young-Eisendrath, PhD (*The Resilient Spirit*)

"The oak fought the wind and was broke, the willow bent when it must and survived."

~ Robert Jordan (*The Fires of Heaven*)

"Some moments in a life, and they needn't be very long or seem very important, can make up for so much in that life; can redeem, justify, that pain, that bewilderment, with which one lives, and invest one with the courage not only to endure it, but to profit from it; some moments teach one the price of human connection: if one can live with one's own pain, then one respects the pain of others, and so, briefly, but transcendently, we can release each other from pain." ~ James Baldwin (*Tell Me How Long the Train's Been Gone*)

"The way I see it, if you want the rainbow, you gotta put up with the rain."

~ Dolly Parton

"More and more I have come to admire resilience.
Not the simple resistance of a pillow, whose foam
returns over and over to the same shape, but the sinuous
tenacity of a tree: finding the light newly blocked on one side,
it turns in another. A blind intelligence, true,
But out of such persistence arose turtles, rivers,
mitochondria, figs – all this resinous, unretractable earth."

~ Jane Hirshfield (*Optimism*)

"If you're going through hell, keep going." ~ Winston Churchill

"Although the world is full of suffering, it is also full of the overcoming of it." ~ Helen Keller

Spiritual Exercises

1. Take some time this month to list the challenges you've faced in your life and meditate on how you've overcome them. Note how you grew from those experiences and write down any meaning you may have been able to pull from them.
2. Share an experience past or present that has challenged your resilience. How were you able to stretch and persevere, perhaps like the "sinuous tenacity of a tree", perhaps like the willow bending?
3. Engage in a guided meditation to help build resilience. This can be done on your own or as a group activity.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4z4d48qqh_8 (5 mins)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hgg5_vBVdfo (3 mins)

Questions:

- 1) How do you build resilience in yourself? How do you help build it in others?
- 2) Is there someone in your life or in the world who is or has been a resilience role model for you? Who are they and what have you learned from them?
- 3) Are there specific personality traits that you associate with resilience? If so, what are they?
- 4) Was there a time in your life when you wished you had been more resilient? If the memory is painful, is there something you can do now to make that memory less powerful?

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 #1031 *Filled with Loving Kindness (in Singing the Journey)*

May I be filled with Loving Kindness. May I be well.

May you be filled with Loving Kindness. May you be well.

May we be peaceful and at ease. May we be whole.

Alternative Song Suggestion – Lean on Me, Singing the Journey #1021

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KEXQkrllGbA>

Sometimes in our lives, we all have pain, we all have sorrow.

But if we are wise, we know there's always tomorrow.

Lean on me, when your not strong and I'll be your friend,

I'll help you carry on, for it won't be long, til I'm gonna need somebody to lean on.

Extinguishing the Chalice

"They tried to bury me, but didn't know that I'm a seed."

~ Mexican Proverb