

Change

In honor of Black History Month, this curriculum is dedicated to black women.

Chalice Lighting

It takes but one person, one moment, one conviction, to start a ripple of change. ~ Donna Brazile

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

Quotes

If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change your attitude.

~ Maya Angelou

A lot of people resist transition and therefore never allow themselves to enjoy who they are. Embrace the change, no matter what it is; once you do, you can learn about the new world you're in and take advantage of it. ~ Nikki Giovanni

You really can change the world if you care enough. ~ Marian Wright Edelman

I am no longer accepting the things I cannot change. I am changing the things I cannot accept.
~ Angela Davis

Reading

Change is a constant and integral aspect of life. Seasons change, the earth changes, the world around us changes. As a result, we change too. Change can be exciting, scary, exhausting or liberating. It can make us happy, sad, angry or anxious.

Approaches that help to deal with change include being mindful that:

- change is constant and inevitable; there is no escaping it
- everyone experiences change; we are all in this together
- it is normal to resist change; allow yourself to mourn the loss that the change caused
- to resist change is to resist reality; we can face it and learn from it
- perspective defines outlook; change the perspective, change the outlook

~ Parvathy Menon

Spiritual Exercises

1. Basic concepts in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy include how you behave can change how you feel and think. For example if you are feeling sad, taking a specific action to help somebody may help to soften or even lift your thoughts or mood. There are a number of other examples in this Psychology Today article: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/in-practice/201212/cognitive-behavioral-therapy-techniques-work> It recommends a practice called *Pleasant Activity Scheduling* to help with depression, and *Situation Exposure Hierarchies* or *Imagery Based Exposure* to help manage the distress caused by events in your life. Choose a practice that sounds like it could be helpful to you and try it.

2. Russell Ackoff was a pioneer in the field of Systems Thinking, which focuses on the performance of a system as a whole rather than the individual parts and rebuts the assumption that if each individual part is improved then the sum of the parts will also be better. He said that the best thing that can be done to a problem is to not to solve it but to redesign the system so as to eliminate the problem. <https://thesystemsthinker.com/a-lifetime-of-systems-thinking/>

Is it possible to change an existing system by changing certain aspects or parts of it? Think of an example of a system in your life or US society in general that could be redesigned and figure out how you would redesign it.

Questions for Contemplation

- Think of a major unexpected change in your life. Was it a welcome or unwelcome change? How did it change you, your life? In retrospect, would you have preferred to have handled it differently? How and why?
- Name one thing you would like to see changed in your world? What would it take to make that happen?

Sitting in Silence *Take a few moments to quietly reflect on the topic.*

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

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

Unison Reading

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I want something else;
a different system
entirely.

One not seen
on this earth
for thousands of years. If ever.
Democratic Womanism.

...

~ Alice Walker, from the poem *Democratic Womanism*

Extinguishing the Chalice

Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world. ~ Harriet Tubman