

## USG SGM ~ MEMORY ~ November 2018

drawn from Soul Matters materials [www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com](http://www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com)



“What is it that takes you back, and where does it take you?” These may be our most important questions this month. “What takes you back?” invites us to see memory as having its own volition. Not a skill we manipulate, but a sacred energy that “wants” something from us, or “hopes” something for us. And “Where does it take you?” Well, that’s a big question too. The space of memory is elusive. Mysterious. Seemingly beyond our grasp. Who can really say “where” it is? But here’s what we do know: it is in the space of memory that we are somehow held together, and also re-assembled. As we remember, we are re-membered. In that space, memories become these self-animated threads that weave the pieces and parts of us into this more complete thing we call “me” and “you.”

It’s so humbling, and remarkable! The past is not a place that traps us; it’s more like soil that clings tightly to our roots in order to nourish and stabilize us. If memory had a voice, it wouldn’t sing “remember me.” It would call out, “don’t forget who you are.”

And so, friends, this month, may that be our charge: To allow memory to flow through us in order that it may patch us back together and keep us whole.

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### Spiritual Exercises

#### 1. Your Earliest Memory.

What's your earliest memory? Spend some time this month not only remembering it but exploring why you remember it. Come to your group ready to share not only the story of this first memory but more importantly the story of how it’s shown up throughout your life with little nudges and reminders of its own.

#### 2. The Memento That Matters.

We all have one: a memento that holds one of our favorite memories. The physicality of these objects somehow gives our memories more substance and staying power. But they also have a way of getting lost. So you are invited this month to spend some time dusting off one of your treasured “memory objects” and getting it back into view. What value, relationship, aspiration needs to return to the center of your life? What object symbolizes this for you? Find it and return it to its central place. Bring your memento to the group and be ready to share your experience with it.

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### Session Plan

#### Chalice Lighting

“Memory is never a precise duplicate of the original... it is a continuing act of creation.”  
*Rosalind Cartwright*

**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 for Inspiration/Readings**

“I do not know if the seasons remember their history or... if the oak tree remembers its planting. I do not know if the squirrel remembers last fall's gathering or... if the night remembers the moon. I do not know if the earth remembers the flowers from last spring or if the evergreen remembers that it shall stay so. Perhaps that is the reason for *our* births -- to be the memory for creation.

“Perhaps salvation is something very different than anyone ever expected. Perhaps this will be the only question we will have to answer: ‘What can you tell me about September?’ ”

*Burton D. Carley*

“To live in hearts we leave behind, is not to die.”

*Thomas Campbell*

### **Questions**

1. **What memory has been with you the longest?**
2. **How has your memory changed as you've grown older?**
3. **What memories have been entrusted to you by others?**
4. **What memory will die with you if you don't pass it on?**
5. **What do you do to remind yourself that you did not make yourself?**
6. **What has life taught you about memory and pain?**

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

**Sharing/Deep Listening:** *Respond with your thoughts and experiences with the topic. We create a safe space by listening deeply and not responding. When sharing, connect with what is true for you. When listening, give the speaker your full attention rather than thinking about what you will share.*

**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.*

### **Extinguishing the Chalice**

“Time does not heal all wounds but gives us the tools to endure them. I have found this to be true in the greatest and smallest of matters.”

*Patti Smith*