

## USG SGM ~ Liberation ~ April 2020

drawn from Soul Matters materials, see the full packet for more of all of these elements

[www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com](http://www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com)



### Intro

Liberation is much more complicated than we usually tell ourselves. It would be so much easier if life really was divided up neatly between the good and bad guys, between those trapped and those holding the key. There are certainly times when the fight for freedom is about calling out and challenging “those people.” But true liberation seems to rest with those who have the courage to start with themselves and notice how “me” and “them” are more entangled than it appears at first blush.

And seeing ourselves as both prison and key is only the beginning. Sometimes we are also the guard, carrying out orders we don’t like but are too afraid to challenge. And what about the many ways we are funders of the entire jail? ....

### Spiritual Exercises

#### A. *The Mess that Set You Free*

Alanis Morissette's song, Thank U (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DK9zCnfMAeM>), functions like a gratitude prayer to the many unexpected sources of liberation in her life:

*“Thank you India*

*Thank you terror*

*Thank you disillusionment*

*Thank you frailty*

*Thank you consequence*

*Thank you silence!”*

It’s a testament to the way liberation comes from the most unlikely of sources, such as struggle, pain and mess. So how about you? When was the last time you thanked the challenges and messes in your life for surprisingly setting you free? When has the thing you resisted ended up showing you the way to new life? Saying thanks for those moments starts with remembering.

#### B. *Escape your Ruts*

Our ruts are among the most ubiquitous forms of imprisonment out there. Their power rests in their comfort. .... So, this month, why not liberate yourself from your routines? We promise an unexpected gift will arise. Here are some suggestions to get you inspired. Do them for a week or two:

- Instead of starting your day with the news, find a way to begin with beauty.
- Forgo your usual route home and explore some back roads and “new ways home.”
- Been bingeing on Netflix a lot lately? Why not try out one of these things they call “a book”?
- Proud of how many books you read weekly? Ask your friends to recommend a Netflix series?
- End your pattern of checking email first thing when you wake up.

**Chalice Lighting:** True wisdom comes in understanding that sometimes, you are both the prison and the key. *Johnathan Jena*

**Check-in:** *Share your highs and lows since we last met, focusing on what drains you and what lifts you up. 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

No one who has ever touched liberation could possibly want anything other than liberation for everyone. *Rev. angel Kyodo williams*

If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time, but if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together. *Lila Watson*

Your uprising against the forces of darkness has got to do more than say "no." A fierce, primal yes should be at the heart of your crusade. *rob brezny*

We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed. Frankly, I have never yet engaged in a direct action movement that was "well timed," according to the timetable of those who have not suffered unduly from the disease of segregation. For years now I have heard the words "Wait!" It rings in the ear of every Negro with a piercing familiarity. This "Wait" has almost always meant "Never." *Martin Luther King, Jr.*

Come to the edge. We can't. We're afraid. Come to the edge. We can't. We'll fall! Come to the edge. And they came. And he pushed them. And they flew. *Guillaume Apollinaire*

We are our stories, stories that can be both prison and the crowbar to break open the door of that prison; we make stories to save ourselves or to trap ourselves or others, stories that lift us up or smash us against the stone wall of our own limits and fears. Liberation is always in part a storytelling process: breaking stories, breaking silences, making new stories. A free person tells her own story. A valued person lives in a society in which her story has a place. *Rebecca Solnit*

**Questions:** *Pick the one question that speaks to you most and let it lead you where you need to go. The goal is to figure out what being a part of a people of liberation means for you and your daily living.*

1. What's something you know now about liberation that you didn't know when you were 18?
2. Have you become more or less free as you've aged?
3. For you, what is the opposite of liberation?
4. Do you need to liberate yourself from the ordinary?

**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.*

**Reflection and Gratitude:** *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:** [I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel to Be Free](#), by Nina Simone

I wish I knew how  
It would feel to be free  
I wish I could break  
All the chains holding me  
I wish I could say  
All the things that I should say  
Say 'em loud, say 'em clear  
For the whole round world to hear

I wish I could give  
All I'm longin' to give  
I wish I could live  
Like I'm longin' to live  
I wish I could do  
All the things that I can do  
And though I'm way over due  
I'd be starting anew

**Extinguishing the Chalice:** We will find the key to our liberation only when we accept that what we once did to survive is now destroying us. *Laura van Dernoot Lipsky*