



USG SGM ~ Journey ~ March, 2019

drawn from Soul Matters materials

Learn how to join at <http://www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com>

Intro

We UUs love to tell our stories. We welcome people to our fold not by asking them to think a certain way, but by having them declare how their journey is unlike anybody else's. We bond not by sharing the same journey but by offering each other the room to discover their unique journey, by making room for people to write or even re-write their own stories.

The popular notion that a spiritual journey involves finding a true self is helpful, yet something deep within UUism resists it. Historically, we've struggled not to find ourselves but to untangle ourselves from inherited religious identities. Our spiritual journeys did not begin with a blank slate; they began with the hunger to wipe the slate clean.

Spiritual journeys are about not only finding a true self, but also untangling from your old self. We agree with Albert Schweitzer that "The path of awakening is not about becoming who you are. Rather it is about unbecoming who you are not."

Which means we are also sensitive to the fact that most spiritual journeys begin with a leaving, a separation, a decision to walk away. We know that the first step is often laced with mourning and isolation. We know that "unbecoming" is not easy work.

We know that it isn't a one-time thing. We find ourselves routinely tangled up in all kinds of identities and journeys that aren't truly ours. "Unbecoming who you are not" is a journey we walk every day. It's a reminder that we're not just here to help each other persevere on our current paths; often our primary gift is to help each other find the exit ramps.

Being a people of journey involves tenderness. We not only make room for each other's unique stories; we also make room for each other's pain. Again, "unbecoming who you are not" involves bravely walking away, isolation and mourning. If we are going to complete our journeys of unbecoming and becoming anew, we're going to need pit stops of kindness and tenderness along the way.

Spiritual Exercises

Option A: The Most Surprising Part of Your Spiritual Journey

To deepen your connection with your small group, share a leg of your spiritual journey that your fellow group members don't know about, and may be surprised to learn. Make it something that helps tell the story of who you are. Share how it continues to impact you and how you and your faith would be different if it hadn't happened.

Option B: Your Journey in Six Words

Larry Smith created a website with a popular tool to make sharing easier: Pair down your life journey to six words. It helps focus on, celebrate and hold on to the essence of your story. So try it yourself.

Six-Word Story Writing Advice <https://eightladieswriting.com/2016/03/16/elizabeth-six-word-stories/>

The Story of the Six-Word Project: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jR1V7lxsOu0>

Chalice Lighting

The path of awakening is not about becoming who you are. Rather it is about unbecoming who you are not. ~ Albert Schweitzer

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

It's time to change the question from "Where are you from?" to "Where are you going? ~ Chetan Bhatt

The world cannot be discovered by a journey of miles, no matter how long, but only by a spiritual journey, a journey of one inch, very arduous and humbling and joyful, by which we arrive at the ground at our own feet and learn to be at home. ~ Wendell Berry

As always when returning from a time away my counsel is: don't return entirely. ~ Steve Garnaas-Holmes

All journeys have a secret destination of which the traveler is unaware. ~ Martin Buber

I felt in need of a great pilgrimage, so I sat still for three days, & God came to me. ~ Kabir

The exits were entrances in disguise. ~ Shannon B.

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 Journey means for you and your daily living.

1. How would you describe the current leg of your journey? Are you close or far from home?
2. What is the most important thing you've learned about getting lost?
3. Whose journey needs your help? Who that you know can't make their next step alone?
4. Is your path one of becoming who you really are or unbecoming who you are not?
5. What if the obstacles in front of us aren't in the way of our lives, but are our lives?

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 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. Consider lifting up one comment or experience for which you are particularly grateful.*

Singing - Come, Come, Whoever You Are ~ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-QTB1AgVpZM>

Come, come, whoever you are
Wanderer, worshipper, lover of leaving
Ours is not a caravan of despair.
Come, yet again, come.

Extinguishing the Chalice Not all those who wander are lost. ~ J.R.R. Tolkien