



Intro Remember those folk sayings that hold up the image of a tree being able to bend with the wind? Remember how they end with a message about resilience resting in our ability to flexibly lean and bend? Well, for us UUs, another kind of leaning is just as important: the practice of leaning on those next to us! Yes, bend with the wind we say, but also remember that no one makes it through the windstorms alone.

It's all a reminder that while resilience has a lot to do with what is *inside us*, it equally depends on what is *between us*. This is where our Soul Matters framing is so important: we are indeed a *people* of resilience. Forget solo act; think community choir! We survive our pain by having the strength to tell others about it. We find the courage to make our way through the dark only when we sense we are not alone. Internal and individual grit only gets us so far; empathy, assurance and love from others gets us the rest of the way. Resilience has everything to do with the water within which we swim and the web of connections that surround us. Resilient people arise from resilient relationships!

Spiritual Exercises

List 'Em and Share 'em

We are more resilient than we realize. Or maybe it's more accurate to say we have more resiliency tricks up our sleeves than we give ourselves credit for. Over time we all accumulate go to strategies that help us maintain our resilience. The challenge is remembering them. So this month, bring your resiliency tools into greater awareness. Here's how:

1. Carve out some time to make a list of your *TOP FIVE* resiliency practices and habits. For instance, here some example from the lists of our Soul Matters facilitators: Getting eight hours of sleep, getting *some* exercise every day, meditating 3 mornings a week, make my bed, spending time with animals, knitting
2. After you list your top 5, think about them more deeply using these questions:
 - Which resiliency practice/habit is "saving" you right now?
 - Which one have you let slide and need to start doing more of again?
 - Which one was given to you by someone else?
 - Which one did you discover on your own?
 - Which do you need to pass on to someone in your life?
3. Share your list with a family member or close friend. Ask them if they recognize the list as true. Have them offer what they think is missing.
4. Come to your group ready to share your insights from this exercise

Chalice Lighting Anyone can slay a dragon, he told me, but try waking up every morning and loving the world all over again. – *Brian Andreas*

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

Word Roots and Definitions We get resilience from the Latin *re* "back" and *saliens* "the beginning, the starting point, the heart of the embryo". *Saliens* also holds the suggestion of movement; to leap, to flow, to run, to hurry. These images instill a sense of an active effort to return, retain and hold to that core

heart of ourselves. Resilience is not a passive idea, it asks us to take action to sustain that beginning point, that core essential self.

Although the world is full of suffering, it is also full of the overcoming of it. *-Helen Keller*

Ultimately, resilience is learning from your past rather than resenting it. *-Rev. Scott Taylor*

Resilience is the strength and speed of our response to adversity, and we can build it. It isn't about having a backbone. It's about strengthening the muscles around our backbone. – *Sheryl Sandberg*

I can be changed by what happens to me. But I refuse to be reduced by it. *-Maya Angelou*

It's not the load that breaks you down, it's the way you carry it. *-Lena Horne*

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 Resilience means for you and your daily living.*

1. When do you remember first watching one of your parents act resiliently?
2. What makes your resiliency unique?
3. Has someone else's resilience helped you survive? When did you not give up because they didn't give up?
4. How has your life partner made you more resilient?
5. What did your hardest moment teach you about yourself?
6. Is it possible that "Grin and bear it" is actually the worst advice you could be following right now?
7. Have you been trying to act strong for too long? Could it be that resilience is asking you to rest, just rest?

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

The Peace of Wild Things, Wendell Berry

On finding resilience in the wild things..

When despair for the world grows in me...

I go and lie down where the wood drake

rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds..

I rest in the grace of the world and am free.

Put to song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ObYb8EtZm78>

Extinguishing the Chalice You may encounter many defeats, but you must not be defeated. In fact, it may be necessary to encounter the defeats, so you can know who you are, what you can rise from, how you can still come out of it. - *Maya Angelou*