

USG SGM ~ Commitment ~ March 2021

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

www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com



Intro

The path of commitment can be a lot like climbing a mountain, but it is just as often more like trudging through a thick forest where all sorts of paths complicate our journey. Not every path of commitment is clear and long, with a reward waiting at the end. Some just lead to dead ends. Others start out along beautiful streams but mid-way through snakes slither out through the grass. Some trails are simply too steep and must be abandoned, not just for our safety but for the safety of those we love. And almost always there's that fork in the road. We want to travel both, but we are forced to choose. So commitment to one necessarily means traveling with regret and "What ifs."

In such woods, our backpacks need to be filled with more than just endurance, focus and grit. Self-forgiveness, acceptance, and the ability to let go or admit "I was wrong" need to be tucked in there too. In such woods, people need us to be more than coaches and cheerleaders. They need something more like pit stop crews. A trusted circle of people willing to offer them repair and rest. Less pushing grit and more encouragement to forgive themselves. Less shouting "You can do it!" from the sidelines, and more whispering "I'm here to listen." Yes, there's no doubt that's exactly what so many need this month. And maybe that's exactly what you need too...

One Minute Video: On Commitment & Our Desire to be Consistent

<https://embertelelevision.co.uk/blog/psychology-of-persuasion-commitment-consistency/>

Spiritual Exercises

Commit to Creating a Helpful Habit (or Ending an Unhelpful One)

Habits are arguably our most pervasive and powerful commitments. Once in place, they happen so effortlessly and automatically that we don't even consider them a chosen commitment. But it's clear that our bodies, behaviors and emotions are without a doubt committed to them. And if you are wondering how much of our lives are dominated by these "cruise control commitments," well, [researchers](#) tell us that at least 40% of our behaviors are dictated by habits. Some studies even suggest that by age 35, that percentage is as much as 95%! With so much of our lives shaped by these automatic behaviors, it seems it would do us all good to try a bit harder to *shape them*. So spend this month adding a new helpful habit to your life or removing an unhelpful one. All it takes is a bit of intentionality, and as [researchers](#) tell us, a focus on small steps. Here's some inspiration and guidance to help you on your way... Try it for 30 days, TED Talk:

https://www.ted.com/talks/matt_cutts_try_something_new_for_30_days?rid=tRBigzKBjt7F&utm_source=recommendation&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=explore&utm_term=watchNow

Commit it to Memory

The author John Irving wrote, "When you love a book, commit one glorious sentence of it to memory. That way you won't forget the language of the story that moved you to tears."

Who of us hasn't been moved to tears by a book, poem, song lyric or quote? We stumble across it and it lights up as if neon lights. Like a gift sent by Life and meant just for us. Often those precious words heal us. Other times they guide us. Sometimes they even grab us by the shoulders and shake off the blinders we've had on for far too long. And yet too often and too quickly the neon fades. The guidance is forgotten. The blinders return. This is why Irving urges us to take the time to commit those words to memory. Indeed that act of memorization is an act of commitment. It binds us to the truth and gift of those words. It turns them from insights into life companions. It moves us from stimulating our minds to impacting our life. So what life-giving sentence, poem, lyric or quote will you commit to memory this month?!

Chalice Lighting

The first step towards getting somewhere is to decide that you are not going to stay where you are. *J.P. Morgan*

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

The one who promises everything is sure to fulfill nothing. *Carl Jung*

The heart of justice is truth telling, seeing ourselves and the world the way it is rather than the way we want it to be. More than ever before we, as a society, need to renew a commitment to truth telling. *bell hooks*

We need to do a better job of putting ourselves higher on our own 'to do' list. *Michelle Obama*

Anything less than a conscious commitment to the important is an unconscious commitment to the unimportant. *Stephen Covey*

If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. *Bishop Desmond Tutu*

We promise according to our hopes and perform according to our fears. *François VI de la Rochefoucault*

I am doing something I learned early to do, I am paying attention to small beauties, whatever I have—as if it were our duty to find things to love, to bind ourselves to this world. *Sharon Olds*

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 Commitment means for you and your daily living.

1. What commitment has shaped you the most? What commitment most deeply defines you?
2. Do you have a secret commitment? A promise to yourself that no one (or very few) know about?
3. How has your relationship with commitment changed over time? For instance, are you better or worse at following through on commitments as you've grown older? Or have you grown more selective about the commitments you make? Maybe you now easily break commitments if they don't feed you? Maybe you are now more committed to beauty than work? Or small things rather than "big things"?
4. When we commit to one path, we leave some other path behind. Is there a "path not chosen" that still haunts you?
5. Are you keeping a commitment that is limiting your growth? Keeping you in a cage?

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.*

Song Should I Stay or Should I Go? Paraphrase of the song by the Clash, performed by the Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yW8mF2be0I0&feature=emb_logo

Extinguishing the Chalice

Faith is a commitment to live as if certain things are true, and thereby help to make them so. Faith is a commitment to live as if life is a wondrous mystery, as if life is good, as if love is divine, as if we are responsible for the well-being of those around us. *Rev. Galen Guenrich*