

USG SGM ~ Becoming ~ April 2021

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



Introduction

It's become popular in our society to talk about spiritual journeys as a process of living into your full or true self, of letting the authentic seed inside you unfold. We UU's agree. We even enshrined it in our principles that celebrate each of our unique seeds (inherent worth) and unique journeys (a free and responsible search).

At the same time, there's something deep within UUism that pushes in the opposite direction. Historically, we've been "leavers" - people who struggled not so much to find ourselves but to untangle ourselves from the religious identities we were given. Our spiritual journeys did not begin with a blank slate; they began with the hunger to wipe that slate clean and begin anew. We are sensitive to the fact that most spiritual journeys begin with a goodbye - a separation, a decision to walk away. We know that the first step is often laced with mourning, difficult endings and, all too often, isolation. We know that "unbecoming" is not easy work.

Spiritual Exercises

Option 1 - Could Have Been Your Credo Often the journey of becoming is guided by one's credo. These statements of belief and purpose ground us, keep us on track and remind us who we most want to be. But the truth is few of us actually write them. However, we do stumble upon them. We come across someone else's words and they feel as though they are ours. Every word may not fit perfectly but the essence of the piece captures the essence of us. Holding on to their words helps us hold on to ourselves.

So this month, spend some time with the credo-like pieces below and figure out which one is the one you could have written. Come to your group ready to share why exactly it spoke to you. Consider keeping your chosen piece in front of you for a few weeks, allowing you the occasion to read it and see it almost every day. If you end up inspired to write your very own credo, by all means, that counts too!

Credos to Choose From:

This Is What You Shall Do - Walt Whitman

<https://icatchshadows.com/walt-whitman-love-the-earth-and-sun-and-the-animals-despise-riches-and-hate-tyrants/>

Famous - Naomi Shihab Nye

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/47993/famous>

If - Rudyard Kipling

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46473/if-->

Thirty Things I Believe - Tarak McClain

<https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=99478226>

Advice to Myself - Louise Erdrich

<https://wordsoftheyear.com/2016/05/04/advice-to-myself-by-louise-erdrich/>

The only dream worth having is... - Arundhati Roy

<https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/160805-the-only-dream-worth-having-is-to-dream-that-you>

The Credo - Robert Fulghum

<http://orlandospreciouspoems.blogspot.com/2010/05/credo-by-robert-fulghum.html>

"Hokusai Says" - Roger Keys

<https://suzannehitby.com/hokusai-says-dont-be-afraid-with-thanks-to-roger-keys/>

9 Learnings from 9 Years of Brain Pickings - Maria Popova

[https://www.brainpickings.org/2015/10/23/nine-years-of-brain-](https://www.brainpickings.org/2015/10/23/nine-years-of-brain-pickings/?mc_cid=637ca026b4&mc_eid=04e3c8a6e2)

[pickings/?mc_cid=637ca026b4&mc_eid=04e3c8a6e2](https://www.brainpickings.org/2015/10/23/nine-years-of-brain-pickings/?mc_cid=637ca026b4&mc_eid=04e3c8a6e2)

12 truths I learned from life & writing - Anne Lamott

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X41iulkRqZU>

9 Life Lessons - Tim Minchin

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yoEezZD71sc>

Option 2 - Five Pictures of Becoming As we age, our understanding of becoming shifts; it's a bit less about where we're headed and more about where we've been. Our concern with our "emerging self" lessens and is replaced with thoughts about our "whole self." We don't simply picture ourselves as who we are and who we hope to be, but instead as all of who we've been. So this month get in touch with the wholeness of who you are by finding 5 pictures of who you have been! Find five pictures that capture five key stages/chapters of your life, five chapters that are key to who you are. The goal is not only to capture pieces of you, but to pull them together in one space. (For you creative folks, consider using them to create a collage!)

When you are done, spend some time with all of them. What do you see in the wholeness of the pictures that you may not have noticed before when looking at them all by themselves? How do they tell the story of who you are?

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

And the day came when the risk to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom. -*Anais Nin*

Real isn't how you are made," said the Skin Horse. "It's a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real... It doesn't happen all at once. You become. It takes a long time. -*Margery Williams Bianco, The Velveteen Rabbit*

Do not ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive, and go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive. -*Howard Thurman*

If you can see your path laid out in front of you step by step, you know it's not your path. Your own path you make with every step you take. That's why it's your path. -*Joseph Campbell*

We find comfort among those who agree with us – growth among those who don't. -*Frank A Clark*

For a long time it had seemed to me that life was about to begin — real life. But there was always some obstacle in the way. Something to be got through first, some unfinished business, time still to be served, a debt to be paid. Then life would begin. At last it dawned on me that these obstacles were my life. -*Alfred D'Souza*

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 Becoming means for you and your daily living.*

1. What has "growing older" unexpectedly birthed in you?
2. What if we only grow when we travel beyond the circle of those who agree with us?
3. Is it possible that you have actually become what your 6 year old self imagined you be, perhaps in a totally unexpected form?
4. Is life calling you to return to the past so you can move more fully into the future?
5. Are you living in spite of your losses or to avenge them?

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 Aisha Badru, Water

https://youtu.be/6z2ut9SiITg?list=PLvXOKgOQVYP7ekbXbwxiZB-bVFzVUk_i7

Extinguishing the Chalice I wanted a perfect ending. Now I've learned, the hard way, that some poems don't rhyme, and some stories don't have a clear beginning, middle, and end. Life is about not knowing, having to change, taking the moment and making the best of it, without knowing what's going to happen next. Delicious ambiguity. -*Gilda Radner*