

USG Racial Healing SGM ~ Becoming ~ April, 2021

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

www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com



To Engage Before We Meet (Any or All)

Spiritual Exercises

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. That's right, 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 (I include the only the ones by people of color) 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. Was it a particular line or two? Or something more general?

Consider keeping your chosen piece (or part of) in front of you for a few weeks, allowing you the occasion to read it and see it almost every day.

Oh, and if you end up inspired to write your very own credo, by all means, that counts too!

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>

Famous - Naomi Shihab Nye <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/47993/famous> (I wasn't sure whether to include her, her father is Palestinian.)

What Inhibits Our Becoming

With her Pulitzer Prize-winning book, [The Warmth of Other Suns](#), Isabel Wilkerson established herself as a shimmering voice and trusted guide as America reckons with its racist history and struggles to become a country on a new path. Her newest book, [Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents](#), continues to uncover the unacknowledged and insidious structures that divide us and prevent the full becoming of all our citizens.

So as your exercise this month, allow Wilkerson's new work to take you into a deeper understanding of the challenge ahead of all of us. America will never be a "land of true becoming" as long as the undertow of caste remains in place. Here's her book and other avenues for exploration:

Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents, Isabel Wilkerson - Book

<https://www.amazon.com/Caste-Origins-Discontents-Isabel-Wilkerson/dp/0593230256>

NY Times Review

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/31/books/review-caste-isabel-wilkerson-origins-of-our-discontents.html>

PBS Interview: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nz0HYnQWMwQ>

Interview with Trevor Noah: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7m49DT8pPe0>

Discussion with Bryan Stevenson: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bP0m0jKORwg>

Resources

Music

Water, Aisha Badru https://youtu.be/6z2ut9SilTg?list=PLvXOKgQQVYP7ekbXbwxIZB-bVFzVUk_i7
Joy Oladokun, Younger Days https://youtu.be/NHX6WinAE84?list=PLvXOKgQQVYP7ekbXbwxIZB-bVFzVUk_i7
Road to Self, Aisha Badru https://youtu.be/aCBnfMGlMh4?list=PLvXOKgQQVYP4QjIUbtIlgABAd_jiph74Va
Everybody Be Yo'self, Keb' Mo' https://youtu.be/N3nUIEo4URs?list=PLvXOKgQQVYP4QjIUbtIlgABAd_jiph74Va

Films

Becoming, Michelle Obama in an intimate documentary looking at her life, hopes and connection with others as she tours with "Becoming." <https://www.netflix.com/title/81122487>
[Moonlight](#)
[Soul](#)

Session Plan

Chalice Lighting

We evolve in the midst of narratives meant only for some and ways of being made narrow by fear and power.

We must, then, have the courage to listen to the truth of our own lives, to the wisdom that comes from within...

This lifelong labor cannot be carried out alone. It requires help from friends, and lovers, family, and creaturely companions who bear witness to what makes us come alive.

And say to us, "Listen. Look. Feel. Pay attention to that."

This is loving and being loved. [enfleshed](#), "Spiritual Nourishment for Collective Liberation"

Check-in *Share something of your journey with racism or where racism is showing up in your life now.*

Quotes for Inspiration/Readings/Song

There is something dying in our society, in our culture, and there's something dying in us individually. And what is dying, I think, is the willingness to be in denial. And that is extraordinary. It's always been happening, and when it happens in enough of us, in a short enough period of time at the same time, then you have a tipping point, and the culture begins to shift... Where I feel like people are at now is, no, no, bring it on. I have to face it — we have to face it. [Rev. angel Kyodo williams](#)

Everything about our existence points toward change, flexibility, and dynamic re-creation.

And it's hard because change involves loss.

Can we hold the losses well while not holding ourselves back? [Rev. Manish Mishra-Marzetti](#)

There are two questions that [a person] must ask [themselves]. The first is "Where am I going?" and the second is "Who will go with me?" If you ever get these questions in the wrong order, you are in trouble. *Howard Thurman*

There is no me without you.

We shape one another.

The Sacred that birthed us

weaves our lives together
so that we can only find ourselves
through shared becoming. [*enfleshed*](#)

Love After Love
The time will come
when, with elation,
you will greet yourself arriving
at your own door, in your own mirror,
and each will smile at the other's welcome,
and say, sit here. Eat.
You will love again the stranger who was your self.
Give wine. Give bread. Give back your heart
to itself, to the stranger who has loved you
all your life, whom you ignored
for another, who knows you by heart.
Take down the love letters from the bookshelf,
the photographs, the desperate notes,
peel your own image from the mirror.
Sit. Feast on your life. *Derek Walcott*

Soul Bird Rise, India Arie
https://youtu.be/GDr4KGlmhEs?list=PLvXOKgOQVYP4QjIUbtIgABAd_jiph74Va

Sitting in Silence

Questions

1. What if becoming first requires us to unbecome who we are not? Is it possible that you need to unravel before you can unfold?
2. What if we only grow when we travel beyond the circle of those who agree with us?

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 Nina Simone, Feeling Good

https://youtu.be/ml3au4KM4xM?list=PLvXOKgOQVYP4QjIUbtIgABAd_jiph74Va

Extinguishing the Chalice

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*