

## USG SGM ~ Embracing Possibility ~ September 2021

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



### Chalice Lighting

So many things are possible just as long as you don't know they're impossible. - *Norton Juster, The Phantom Tollbooth*

**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.*

### Intro

We tell ourselves so many small stories about who we and others are, what the world could be. Part of it has to do with real life defeats, but often a bigger part of it is about imagined fear and protecting ourselves. There's comfort in convincing yourself that the effort is hopeless; that way you don't have to try, and risk failure, hurt or disappointment. Maybe Embracing Possibility has more to do with vulnerability and courage than we thought. The work isn't just about *believing* in possibility, it's about being willing to endure a few wounds along the way. It can hurt to be hopeful.

So maybe the question this month isn't "Are you ready to lean into possibility?" but "Who is beside you and who are you bringing along?" "Who have you gathered to patch and pick you up when the path gets bumpy?" Whose faith can you lean on when yours grows dim? After all, no one makes it down the road of possibility alone.

### Spiritual Exercises

#### 1) *What Made Surviving the Pandemic Possible?*

The pandemic changed us. It also changed the way we related to the things around us. Put simply, many ordinary objects we took for granted suddenly became precious. They became essential for helping us get through it.

Artist/ethnographer Paula Zuccotti created a fascinating experiment to honor this. Via social media, she invited people to photograph 15 items that they relied on during the pandemic. Explore that project and check out some of the responses here: <https://lockdownessentials.org/About-the-project> and <https://www.itsnicethat.com/news/paula-zuccotti-future-archaeology-of-a-global-lockdown-photography-280421>

And so...your assignment: Find and take a picture of at least a handful of the ordinary objects you relied on during the pandemic.

#### 2) *The Possibility of Putting it Down*

In his poem, [Things to Think](https://inspirare.blog/2010/03/14/things-to-think-by-robert-bly/), <https://inspirare.blog/2010/03/14/things-to-think-by-robert-bly/> Robert Bly writes,  
When someone knocks on the door, think that they're about  
To give you something large: tell you you're forgiven,  
Or that it's not necessary to work all the time, or that it's  
Been decided that if you lie down no one will die.

It's a reminder that it's possible for us to let go of many of the things that drain our spirit. It's also a reminder that putting things down opens up space for the possible. So what's draining your spirit? Working all the time? A friendship that's gone well beyond its shelf life? Picking up after everyone else in the house? Daily workouts that could be reduced to every other day? The role of organizing all the family events? An expectation of what you are supposed to be or do? Whatever it is, this month try putting it down or letting it go. And watch what that makes possible!

### Quotes for Inspiration/Readings

It's the possibility of having a dream come true that makes life interesting. - *Paulo Coelho*

Argue for your limitations and sure enough they're yours. - *Richard Bach*

There is more to see in myself than just what I look for. There is more to see in my enemies than just what I look for. There is more to see in this country than just what I look for. I need this to be true. I need to stop looking for affirmation of what I already believe and instead see the world and others and myself through the eyes of a God who loves all of it madly. - *Nadia Bolz-Weber*

There is no power greater than a community discovering what it cares about.

Ask: "What's possible?" not "What's wrong?" Keep asking.

Notice what you care about.

Assume that many others share your dreams... - *Margaret Wheatley*

For a seed to achieve its greatest expression, it must come completely undone. The shell cracks, its insides come out and everything changes. To someone who doesn't understand growth, it would look like complete destruction. - *Heather Warman*

We have an obligation to imagine. It is easy to pretend that nobody can change anything, that we are in a world in which society is huge and the individual is less than nothing: an atom in a wall, a grain of rice in a rice field. But the truth is, individuals change their world over and over, individuals make the future, and they do it by imagining that things can be different. - *Neil Gaiman*

**The Hill We Climb**, *Amanda Gorman*

<https://www.cnbc.com/2021/01/20/amanda-gormans-inaugural-poem-the-hill-we-climb-full-text.html>

"...Every breath from my bronze-pounded chest,  
we will raise this wounded world into a wondrous one...  
We will rebuild, reconcile and recover...  
our people diverse and beautiful will emerge,  
battered and beautiful..."

**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 Embracing Possibility means for you and your daily living.*

- 1) How has your belief in the possibility of a better world grown or shrunk over the past couple of years?
- 2) When it comes to possibility, are you among those who carefully assess the cliff and gather an abundance of gear for the descent? Or are you one of those who simply leap and trust that you'll figure it out on the way down? And what do those close to you think of your particular way of pursuing the possibilities that lie at the bottom of the cliffs?
- 3) What do you know about the possibilities that live on the other side of grief?
- 4) Is it possible that the thing you're sure you're right about is wrong?
- 5) What would enable you to leave the life you've outgrown?

**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** (or watching a video of someone else singing)

Sam Cooke, A Change is Gonna Come <https://youtu.be/wEBlaMOmKV4>

## **Extinguishing the Chalice**

It is never too late to be what you might have been. - *George Eliot*