

USG SGM ~ Love ~ 2023

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



Chalice Lighting Love is what we are born with. Fear is what we learn. The spiritual journey is the unlearning of fear and prejudices and the acceptance of love back in our hearts. - Marianne Williamson

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: Words That Come From "Love", Arika Okrent

<https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/61620/11words-you-might-not-realize-come-love>

- 1. BELIEVE** In Old English, *believe* was *geliefan*, which traces back to the Germanic *galaubjan*, where *laub* is the root for "dear" (so "believe" is "to hold dear"). *Laub* goes back to the Proto-Indo-European root for "love," *leubh*.
- 2. FURLOUGH** We got *furlough* from the Dutch *verlof*, which traces back to the same Germanic *laub* root as in *believe*. It is also related to the sense of *leave* meaning "allowance" or "permission" ("get leave," "go on leave"). The "leave" in a furlough is given with pleasure, or approval, which is how it connects back to love.
- 3. FRIDAY** Old English *Frigedæg* was named for Frigg, the Germanic goddess of love (and counterpart to the Roman Venus). According to the OED, *frīg* was also a noun for "strong feminine" love.
- 4. VENOM** *Venom* comes from the Latin *venenum*, which shares a root with the love goddess Venus, and originally referred to a love potion.
- 5. AMATEUR** The root of *amateur* is Latin *amare*, "to love." An amateur practices a craft simply because they love it.
- 6. CHARITY** The Latin *caritas*, which ended up as *charity* in English, was a different kind of love than *amor*, implying high esteem and piety, rather than romance and passion. It was used to translate the Ancient Greek *agape*, the word used in the New Testament to express godly love.
- 7. PHILOSOPHY** Greek had another word for love, *philia*, that—in contrast to *agape* and *eros* (sexual love)—meant brotherly or friendly love. It's used in many classical compounds to signify general fondness or predilection for things. Philosophy is the love of *sophos*, wisdom.
- 8. PHILANTHROPY** This one means love of *anthropos*, humanity.
- 9. PHILADELPHIA** You might know it as the "city of brotherly love," but you might not know that the tagline is right there in the name. It's love for *adelphos*, brother.
- 10. PHILIP** The name *Philip* comes from the compound *phil-* + *hippos*, love of horses.
- 11. ACIDOPHILUS** Have you been taking acidophilus probiotic supplements for digestive health? It's made from acid-loving bacteria, i.e., bacteria that easily take up an acid dye for viewing under the microscope.

Spiritual Exercises Option A: Loving Your Whole Self

Self-care (and self-love) is never a selfish act — it is simply good stewardship of the only gift I have, the gift I was put on earth to offer others. Anytime we can listen to our true self and give it the care it requires, we do so not only for ourselves, but for the many others whose lives we touch. - Parker Palmer

We are told "Love yourself!" But which part? There is our spiritual self, our physical self, our emotional self, our relational self, just to name a few. This needs to be taken into account. We are multidimensional beings with the need for a multidimensional understanding of self-love. So, to help us engage that work, we've created this schema with ideas for how to care and love your various selves throughout the month. Your work is to do some act of self-love and self-care for each aspect of yourself.

Our suggestions are there only to stimulate your imagination. Only you know what it means to truly love and care for that part of you. You've got the whole month to do it, but why wait to get started?! The catch: You must find one thing to do for each category listed! The second catch: Figure out which of your many selves needs the most self-care and self-love. Come to your group ready to share your biggest learning and your biggest surprise.

Here's the "Love Your Whole Self List": https://docs.google.com/document/d/1BxmZvoZYLspKDEuSJH8TjE-L_phKrTfvcnVv_ZKmEWw/edit?usp=sharing

Spiritual Exercise: Option B: Ask Them About Love

One of the best ways to explore our monthly themes is to bring them into the conversations you have with those closest to you. It's a powerful way to deepen our conversations and our relationships. Below is a list of "love questions" to help you on your way. Come to your group ready to share what surprised you about the conversation(s) and what gift or insight it gave you. And as always, keep a lookout for how your inner voice is trying to send you a word of comfort or challenge through these conversions with others. Explore these Love Questions:

1. What did love mean to you as a child?
2. How have you changed your mind about love?
3. How has love changed as you've gotten older? Is it softer? Quieter? Larger? Tougher? Smaller? Sneakier? More central?
4. Whose love has companioned you the longest?
5. When did love scare you the most?
6. When did love invite you to play?
7. What has been your greatest act of love?

Quotes for Inspiration/Readings

To love a person is to learn the song That is in their heart, And to sing it to them When they have forgotten. - Arne Garborg

Your task is not to seek for Love, but merely to seek and find all the barriers within yourself that you have built against it. - Rumi

Loving only ourselves is escapism; loving only our opponents is self-loathing; loving only others is ineffective. All three practices together make love revolutionary, and revolutionary love can only be practiced in community. - Valarie Kauer

Even after all this time, the sun never says to the earth, "You owe me." Look what happens with a love like that. It lights the whole sky. – Hafiz

When we understand love as the will to nurture our own and another's spiritual growth, it becomes clear that we cannot claim to love if we are hurtful and abusive. Love and abuse cannot coexist. -Bell Hooks

Perhaps everything terrible is, in its deepest being, something that needs our love. - Rainer Maria Rilke

There are days I drop words of comfort [and love] on myself like falling leaves and remember that it is enough to be taken care of by myself. – Brian Andrea

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.*

Questions Choose a Question from Spiritual Exercise Option B: Ask Them About Love

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 Love means for you and your daily living.

Sitting in Silence *Take a few moments to sit quietly and reflect upon your thoughts.*

Reflection and Gratitude *This is a time to respond briefly to something another person said or to relate additional thoughts that may have occurred. Consider lifting up one comment or experience for which you are particularly grateful.*

Singing (or watching a video of someone else singing) On Love (regular playlist) • Spotify playlist [here](#) • YouTube playlist [here](#)

Extinguishing the Chalice Never forget that justice is what love looks like in public. - Cornel West