

USG SGM ~ The Gift of Interdependence ~ April 2024

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

www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com



Chalice Lighting

We never know how our small activities will affect others through the invisible fabric of our connectedness. In this exquisitely connected world, it's never a question of 'critical mass.' It's always about critical connections. *Grace Lee Boggs*

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.

Spiritual Exercise: Reconnect with the Place You Already Are

Who we are is deeply intertwined with where we live. And yet our connection to and with our nearby world is often frayed. So, in an effort to reconnect with your sense of place, we invite you this month to go on some "micro-adventures"!

Here's more information to explain it and guide you along your way:

- <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/05/well/live/awe-microadventure-exploration.html>
- <https://www.noemamag.com/a-single-small-map-is-enough-for-a-lifetime/>
- <https://www.outsideonline.com/adventure-travel/destinations/north-america/outdoor-activities-ideas-close-to-home-fun/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vwHwXId0pxE&t=119s>

Quotes for Inspiration/Readings

A human being is a part of the whole called by us 'the universe'... [But we] experience ourselves, our thoughts and feelings as something separated from the rest, a kind of optical delusion of our consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty. *Albert Einstein*

Much as I enjoy popular New Age commentary on love, I am often struck by the dangerous narcissism fostered by spiritual rhetoric that pays so much attention to individual self-improvement and so little to the practice of love within the context of community. Packaged as a commodity, spirituality becomes no different from an exercise program. While it may lead to the consumer feeling better about his or her life, its power to enhance our communion with ourselves and others in a sustained way is inhibited. *bell hooks*

"It is time to walk a different path. This path is not about accumulating stuff. It's not about money and power. It's not about dominating other living beings. And it has nothing to do with anger and hate. No, walking this path is simply about living, experiencing, and caring about this precious life and this abundant world. It is a holistic experience for the body, mind and spirit. It is about recognizing, sensing, and exchanging energy with the natural world around us and feeling that energy reciprocated." *Aaron Hoopes*

You are not IN the universe, you ARE the universe, an intrinsic part of it. Ultimately, you are not a person, but a focal point where the universe is becoming conscious of itself. What an amazing miracle. *Eckhart Tolle*

There is nobody in this country who got rich on their own. Nobody. You built a factory out there--good for you. But I want to be clear. You moved your goods to market on roads the rest of us paid for. You hired workers the rest of us paid to educate. You were safe in your factory because of police forces and fire forces that the rest of us paid for... Now look. You built a factory and it turned into something terrific --God bless! Keep a hunk of it. But part of the underlying social contract is you take a hunk of that and pay forward for the next kid who comes along. *Senator Elizabeth Warren*

Your great mistake is to act the drama as if you were alone... To feel abandoned is to deny the intimacy of your surroundings. Surely, even you, at times, have felt the grand array; the swelling presence, and the chorus, crowding out your solo voice... Put down the weight of your aloneness and ease into the conversation. The kettle is singing even as it pours you a drink... Everything is waiting for you. *David Whyte*

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 the Gift of Interdependence means for you and your daily living.

1. What aspect of nature did you connect with most meaningfully as a child? A dog? A horse? A tree? The ocean? Lightning bugs? The rain? A path in the woods?
2. Where do you feel your connection to nature in your body? What happens to you when that place of connection is stirred?
3. Do you feel that "sacrifice" has a central role to play in addressing the climate crisis? How do you feel about "sacrifice"?
4. Some of us live in a place and others of us belong to a place. Have you found [a place you belong to](#) yet?
5. We are glad to support and bear the burdens of others. But many of us wouldn't dare "burden" those same people with our troubles. Who or what taught you that the weight of your worries [must be carried by yourself alone](#)?
6. Have you ever had a friend that "[birthed a new world in you](#)"?

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.*

Extinguishing the Chalice

If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together. *African Proverb*