

Intention

UU Community Church of Santa Monica

Heart to Heart Circles January 2018

Intention- From Latin *intentus* "to stretch out, lean toward. In 17th Century English law: "state of mind with respect to intelligent volition".

Chalice Lighting

"Here's what I discovered. Intention is different from setting goals or resolutions in that it "pulls us into" who we truly are. Goals and resolutions "push us out" into future possibilities. To set intentions, we listen to our inner voice which tells us who we truly are."

- *Katie Covey, on what she learned from Soul Matters colleagues during their brainstorming session on being a people of intention*

Sharing Silence (3 minutes)

You may wish to bring your attention to your breath, or move a bit until you have found a comfortable seat. If silence is not a familiar experience to you, three minutes may seem long. If you are accustomed to silence, it may seem short.

On Our Hearts

On Our Hearts is a practice of sharing and listening that invites us into connection with one another by sharing what is really going on for us as we come into the circle. Some months you will come to the group with wonderful news or a heavy heart, and it will be important for the group to know what's going on with you. Please share the major highs and lows, the things you'd like everyone to keep in their hearts or in their prayers for you.

Covenant and Ground Rules

Our covenant includes a description of how we want to be with each other, ground rules for our time together, and our expectations for members of the group. Adapted from *Heart to Heart* by Christine Robinson and Alicia Hawkins

I commit myself:

- to give attendance at meetings a real priority knowing that my presence is important to the group;
- to let the leader know if I will be absent or need to quit
- to share with the leader the responsibility for good group process by watching how much time I take ~~to~~ to speak and noticing what is going on for others;
- to not gossip about what is shared in the group, and tell only my own story to others;
- to honor the safety of the group by listening to what others share with an open heart;
- to refrain from cross-talk, judging, problem solving, or giving advice;
- and to share as deeply as I can when it is my turn.

Readings

A person will worship something, have no doubt about that. We may think our tribute is paid in secret in the dark recesses of our hearts, but it will out. That which dominates our imaginations and our thoughts will determine our lives, and our character. Therefore, it behooves us to be careful what we worship, for what we are worshipping we are becoming.

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

With goals, the future is always the focus: Are you going to reach the goal? Will you be happy when you do? What's next? Setting intention, at least according to Buddhist teachings, is quite different than goal making. It is not oriented toward a future outcome. Instead, it is a path or practice that is focused on how you are "being" in the present moment. Your attention is on the ever-present "now" in the constantly changing flow of life. You set your intentions based on understanding what matters most to you and make a commitment to align your worldly actions with your inner values... Goals help you make your place in the world and be an effective person. But being grounded in intention is what provides integrity and unity in your life.. What would it be like if you didn't measure the success of your life just by what you get and don't get, but gave equal or greater priority to how aligned you are with your deepest values?

-Phillip Moffitt, from [The Heart's Intention](#)

Intentions and Trust

Today I want to greet joy
Without a trace of suspicion
I want to open my eyes to the light
Without a blink of dread
I want to look at my past
Without a whisper of shame
I want to look at my future
Without a hint of fear
Today I want to dance
Without pausing to think
I want to belly laugh
Without caring who hears
I want to open my arms
and twirl in the sun
Until I fall breathless
free to be myself
full of the joy
that I open to allow
completely letting go
Without even a smudge of suspicion
or a wink of hesitation
That's my intention
It's what I want

-Amy Loyd

Questions for consideration:

(Sharing 60 minutes)

Each question is asked individually. After someone starts, move around the circle.

1. Name a few of your intentions. Will following through with these intentions help bring integrity and unity to your life and keep you aligned with your deepest values?
2. The philosopher, Nietzsche, said, "No one can build you the bridge on which you, and only you, must cross the river of life," We are all intentionally crossing a bridge of some sort. Are you crossing someone else's bridge? Or your own?
3. Describe an intention you have been holding on to- one you've failed at following through on again and again. Is it time to intentionally be gentle with yourself and let it go?
4. New things do not arise without trial and error, missteps and slip-ups. If we're not making mistakes, we're likely choosing safety. Are you intentionally choosing safety over new life?

Reflecting On Our Time Together

Please share anything that would otherwise be unsaid as you leave our time together. Do you wish you had shared something more, less, different? How are you feeling as you leave? Feeling words are ok, such as sad, mad, glad, peaceful, powerful, joyful.

Closing Words

I hope that in this year to come, you make mistakes.

Because if you are making mistakes, then you are making new things, trying new things, learning, living, pushing yourself, changing yourself, changing your world. You're doing things you've never done before, and more importantly, you're Doing Something. So that's my wish for you, and all of us, and my wish for myself. Make New Mistakes. Make glorious, amazing mistakes. Make mistakes nobody's ever made before. Don't freeze, don't stop, don't worry that it isn't good enough, or it isn't perfect, whatever it is: art, or love, or work or family or life.

Whatever it is you're scared of doing, Do it.

Make your mistakes, next year and forever. *Neil Gaiman*