

Risk
UU Community Church of Santa Monica
Heart to Heart Circles
April 2017

Welcome and Explanations 5 minutes

Chalice Lighting

To act is to be committed, and to be committed is to be in danger.
~James Baldwin

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 15 minutes

Please share any burdens you bring with you today. This is not a check-in, it is a time to share wonderful news or a heavy heart - the major highs and lows of your life 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. This covenant is adapted from *Heart to Heart: Fourteen Gatherings for Reflection and Sharing* 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 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

“To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything and your heart will be wrung and possibly broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact you must give it to no one, not even an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements. Lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket, safe, dark, motionless, airless, it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable. To love is to be vulnerable.” ~*C.S. Lewis*

“Concerning all acts of creation, there is one elementary truth, the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself, then Providence moves too. All sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in one's favor all manner of unforeseen incidents and meetings and material assistance, which no one could have dreamt would have come their way.” ~*W.H. Murray*

I love the recklessness of faith. First you leap, and then you grow wings. ~*Rev. William Sloane Coffin*

Most reckless things are beautiful in some way, and recklessness is what makes experimental art beautiful, just as religions are beautiful because of the strong possibilities that they are founded on nothing. ~*John Ashbery*

A sheltered life can be a daring life as well. For all serious daring starts from within. ~*Eudora Welty*

We mistook violence for passion, indolence for leisure, and thought recklessness was freedom. ~*Toni Morrison*

When I think about risk, what strikes me most is the ordinariness of it all. That's right. Most of it is pretty ordinary, everyday stuff. That's not to minimize it. I think it actually elevates it. It reminds us that risk, bravery and boldness aren't once-in-a-lifetime things done in uniquely daring moments, but instead make up a way of life that must be lived out each and every day. Yes, there are those stories of someone pulling a stranger from the burning car. Yes, we should sit in awe of the civil rights workers who put their life on the line for justice or the soldiers who are willing to give their lives for others. But in addition to such dramatic acts that alter history, there are daily choices that prevent history from altering us. Staying centered and maintaining integrity don't happen without daily bravery. Ordinary risk is what stops us from disappearing, losing ourselves or becoming small. ~*Rev. Scott Tayler*

Questions for consideration:

1. **Are your commitments deep and big enough to put you in danger?**
2. **What about the risks of letting go? What about the boldness of taking a pass?** Sometimes deciding to walk away from the cliff is as courageous and bold as jumping off.
3. **Are you being reckless and calling it “freedom”?**
4. **How might that struggle of yours change if you took the risk of sitting down and listening rather than the risk of standing up and speaking?**
5. **When was the last time you referred to life using the phrase: “The thrill of it all?” Where is there room this month to make life a bit more thrilling?**

Sharing 60 minutes

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

The person who risks nothing, does nothing, has nothing, is nothing. He or she may avoid suffering and sorrow, but he or she simply cannot learn, feel, change, grow, love – live. Only a person who risks is free. ~*Janet Rand*