

EMBODIMENT

UU Community Church of Santa Monica
Heart to Heart Circles
May 2017

Chalice Lighting

No one longs for what he or she already has, and yet the accumulated insight of those wise about the spiritual life suggests that the reason so many of us cannot see the red X that marks the spot is because we are standing on it. The treasure we seek requires no lengthy expedition, no expensive equipment, no superior aptitude or special company. All we lack is the willingness to imagine that we already have everything we need. The only thing missing is our consent to be where we are.

Barbara Brown Taylor (American Episcopal priest, professor, author and theologian)

Sharing Silence

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. This is not meant to be a check-in, where each group member talks about his or her week. It is really only for 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 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

em·bod·i·ment

noun

- a tangible or visible form of an idea, quality, or feeling.
- the representation or expression of something in a tangible or visible form.

Synonyms: personification, incarnation, realization, manifestation, avatar, expression, representation, actualization, symbol

from Psychology Dictionary:

- human thinking is the metaphorical extension of a body experience.

When I am inside writing,
all I can think about is how I should be outside living.
When I am outside living,
all I can do is notice all there is to write about.
When I read about love, I think I should be out loving.
When I love, I think I need to read more.
I am stumbling in pursuit of grace,
I hunt patience with a vengeance.
On the mornings when my brother's tired muscles
held to the pillow, my father used to tell him,
For every moment you aren't playing basketball,
someone else is on the court practicing.
I spend most of my time wondering
if I should be somewhere else.
So I have learned to shape the words *thank you*
with my first breath each morning, my last breath every night.
When the last breath comes, at least I will know I was thankful
for all the places I was so sure I was not supposed to be.
All those places I made it to,
all the loves I held, all the words I wrote.
And even if it is just for one moment,
I will be exactly where I am supposed to be.

The Paradox, Sarah Kay (American poet, founder and co-director of Project V.O.I.C.E.)

The purpose of life is not to transcend the body, but to embody the transcendent.

The Dalai Lama (spiritual leader of the Tibetan people)

Let me put it this way –
I am wildly, irrevocably in love
with the world.
And you –
you wonderful, beautiful, brave
spark of creation –
you are inseparable from the world.
I breathe you in.
I take your story into me,
and it lodges
in my soul.
We will never be
two separate things again –
if ever we were.

Rev Leslie Mills (UU Church of Elgin, IL)

What's it like to be a human the bird asked.

I myself don't know;
it's being held prisoner by your skin
while reaching infinity,
being a captive of your scrap of time
while touching eternity,
being hopelessly uncertain
and helplessly hopeful,
being a needle of frost
and a handful of heat,
breathing in the air
and choking wordlessly.
It's being on fire
with a nest made of ashes,
eating bread
while filling up on hunger.
It's dying without love;
it's loving through death.

That's funny said the bird
and flew effortlessly up into the air.

Funny, Anna Kamienska (Polish poet, writer, translator and literary critic)

Questions for consideration:

1. When was the last time you felt that “this is exactly where I am supposed to be!”?
2. What embodiment are you longing to break out of? What new story is your body trying to tell?
3. What family legacy are you embodying and living out? Is that legacy a blessing or a burden?
4. Have you embodied and embraced your shadow side as well as your light?
5. When was the last time you listened to your body? What is your body saying right now?

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

It may be that when we no longer know what to do,
we have come to our real work,
and when we no longer know which way to go,
we have begun our real journey.

Wendell Berry (American novelist, poet, environmental activist, cultural critic, and farmer)