

Courage
UU Community Church of Santa Monica
Heart to Heart Circles
October 2017

Welcome and Explanations

Welcome! We are so glad you are here! For today's Heart 2 Heart Session we will be focusing on courage in its many forms.

Chalice Lighting-

To face the world's darkness —
a chalice of light.

To face the world's coldness —
a chalice of warmth.

To face the world's terrors —
a chalice of courage.

To face the world's turmoil —
a chalice of peace.

May its glow fill our spirits, our hearts, and our lives.

- From the UU Fellowship of Harrisonburg Virginia

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 your name any 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

“Courage is a heart word. The root of the word courage is cor - the Latin word for heart. In one of its earliest forms, the word courage meant "To speak one's mind by telling all one's heart." Over time, this definition has changed, and today, we typically associate courage with heroic and brave deeds. But in my opinion, this definition fails to recognize the inner strength and level of commitment required for us to actually speak honestly and openly about who we are and about our experiences -- good and bad. Speaking from our hearts is what I think of as "ordinary courage." - *Brene Brown*

Here is where I found my voice and chose to be brave.

Here's a place where I forgave someone, against my better judgment, and I survived that, and unexpectedly, amazingly, I became wiser.

Here's where I was once forgiven, was ready for once in my life to receive forgiveness and to be transformed. And I survived that also. I lived to tell the tale.

This is the place where I said no, more loudly than I'd thought I ever could, and everybody stared, but I said no loudly anyway, because I knew it must be said, and those staring settled down into harmless, ineffective grumbling, and over me they had no power anymore.

Here's a time, and here's another, when I laid down my fear and walked right on into it, right up to my neck into that roiling water.

Here's where cruelty taught me something. And here's where I was first astonished by gratuitous compassion and knew it for the miracle it was, the requirement it is. It was a trembling time.

And here, much later, is where I returned the blessing, clumsily. It wasn't hard, but I was unaccustomed. It cycled round, and as best I could I sent it back on out, passed the gift along. This circular motion, around and around, has no apparent end.

Here's a place, a murky puddle, where I have stumbled more than once and fallen. I don't know yet what to learn there.

On this site I was outraged and the rage sustains me still; it clarifies my seeing.

And here's where something caught me—a warm breeze in late winter, birdsong in late summer.

Here's where I was told that something was wrong with my eyes, that I see the world strangely, and here's where I said, "Yes, I know, I walk in beauty."

Here is where I began to look with my own eyes and listen with my ears and sing my own song, shaky as it is.

Here is where, if by surgeon's knife, my heart was opened up—and here, and here, and here, and here. These are the landmarks of conversion.- **Map of the Journey in Progress**, by **Victoria Safford**

"I always ask a very simple question to people. I just say, think of the last time you did something that you thought was really brave or the last time you saw someone do something really brave. And I can tell you as a researcher — 11,000 pieces of data — I cannot find a single example of courage, moral courage, spiritual courage, leadership courage, relational courage, I cannot find a single example of courage that was not born completely of vulnerability. We buy into some mythology about vulnerability being weakness and being gullibility and being frailty because it gives us permission not to do it." - **Brene Brown**

Questions for consideration:

1. Who says it's always courageous to never give up? How might life be calling you to bravely let go and walk away?
2. When have you been courageous for someone else?
3. Courage is often about bravely saying "yes," but sometimes saying "no" is what is needed. Opening ourselves to new experiences enriches us, but putting our foot down and setting boundaries often saves us. When have you been brave for yourself and said no?
4. Who in your life needs their courage affirmed and celebrated? Who needs told that their courage is contagious and helping you to be more brave?

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

Take courage friends.

The way is often hard, the path is never clear,
and the stakes are very high.

Take courage.

For deep down, there is another truth:
you are not alone. – *Wayne Arnason*