

**Memory**  
UU Community Church of Santa Monica  
Heart to Heart Circles  
November 2018

**Memory:** The practice of honest remembrance & honoring the shoulders on which we stand

**Welcome and Explanations** 5 minutes

**Chalice Lighting**

Memory is intelligent. It's a knowledge seated neither in the senses, nor in the spirit, but in collective memory. It is communal, though deeply personal. Involved with the self, though autonomous. At war with death.

*Etel Adnan*

**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

Gratitude is the memory of the heart.

*French proverb*

Life is not what one lived, but what one remembers and how one remembers it in order to recount it.

*Gabriel García Márquez*

Memory is never a precise duplicate of the original... it is a continuing act of creation.

*Rosalind Cartwright*

You will lose someone you can't live without, and your heart will be badly broken, and the bad news is that you never completely get over the loss of your beloved. But this is also the good news. They live forever in your broken heart that doesn't seal back up. And you come through. It's like having a broken leg that never heals perfectly – that still hurts when the weather gets cold, but you learn to dance with the limp.

*Anne Lamott*

*Memory invites us to maintain our grip on the past, but it also calls us to pay attention to the present.*

*Memory's question is not just "Do you remember?" but "How do you want to be remembered?"*

*Rev. Scott Tayler*

Remembering that you are going to die is the best way I know to avoid the trap of thinking you have something to lose. You are already naked. There is no reason not to follow your heart.

*Steve Jobs*

## Questions for consideration:

**What memory has been with you the longest?** What does it want from you so badly that it has held on this long?

**How has your memory changed as you've grown older?** Do you think of childhood memories more or less? Is it stories or images you now remember more? Has your confidence about the accuracy of your memory grown or lessened? Or is that no longer a question you worry so much about, as long as the "truth" of those memories remain?

**What memory will die with you if you don't pass it on?** Is this the month you finally make a concrete plan to make sure it lives on the memory of another?

**Is it time to admit that your memory may not be the complete picture of what happened?**

**What memory holds your truest self?** For some, it comes from childhood, like that time we were handed a paintbrush and canvas and felt a strange sense of home. For others it is from our adult adventures, maybe that time we bravely walked away. We don't just have personality traits, we hold tight to our defining traits through memory. What memories help you hold on to yourself?

**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**

Where I'm From  
By George Ella Lyon

I am from clothespins,  
from Clorox and carbon-tetrachloride.  
I am from the dirt under the back porch. (Black, glistening  
it tasted like beets.)

I am from the forsythia bush,  
the Dutch elm  
whose long gone limbs I remember  
as if they were my own.  
I am from fudge and eyeglasses, from Imogene and Alafair.  
I'm from the know-it-alls and the pass-it-ons,  
from perk up and pipe down. I'm from He restoreth my soul  
with cottonball lamb  
and ten verses I can say myself.

I'm from Artemus and Billie's Branch, fried corn and strong coffee.  
From the finger my grandfather lost  
to the auger  
the eye my father shut to keep his sight. Under my bed was a dress box  
spilling old pictures.  
a sift of lost faces  
to drift beneath my dreams.  
I am from those moments --  
snapped before I budded --  
leaf-fall from the family tree.