



LIVING WITH UNCERTAINTY

Covenant Group Session Plan

Greenville Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, Greenville, South Carolina

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Welcome, Chalice Lighting

We gather this hour as people of faith

With joys and sorrows, gifts and needs.

We light this beacon of hope,

sign of our quest

for truth and meaning,

in celebration of the life we share together.

--Singing the Living Tradition reading #448, by Rev. Christine Robinson

Personal Check In: Briefly share something from your life since we last met and how you are feeling now.

Opening Words:

Living On Paradox Drive by the Rev. Richard S. Gilbert

Life is a controlled fall.

As we take each step,

We throw ourselves out of balance.

I don't recall the author; it does not matter;

It is the truth of the words that counts.

We all yearn for stability,

For equilibrium,

But they are elusive.

We work ourselves up into anxiety

Or down into depression,

Longing for the time when all will be on an even keel.

I do it too:

If only I can manage these next faltering steps, all will be well.

And, happily, there are moments of blessed calm,

Of centering.

But they are merely a pause in the ongoingness of living.

Life throws us off balance once again,

And we thrust one foot forward seeking to regain it.

The process repeats itself for--

A lifetime.

Yet strangely,

It does seem infinitely better than standing still.

Questions to prompt and guide discussion:

1. How is uncertainty affecting your life right now? Is there a particular situation in which you're waiting for an answer?
2. How do you cope with the uncertainty and ambiguity in your life?
3. Has your attitude toward uncertainty changed during your lifetime? What has influenced the change?

Sitting in Silence (Reflect on questions just posed as you prepare to hear readings)

Readings- Words from the Common Bowl: Quotes/Readings – see below

Sharing - This is a time to speak without interruption and for deep listening. Deep listening means no interrupting, no fixing, no saving, no advising, and no setting each other straight. Please share one or more responses to the session questions.

(This is usually a good time to take a brief break)

Open Discussion -This is a time to respond to something another person said about the topic or to relate additional thoughts that may have occurred as others shared their thoughts on this topic. Continue to practice deep listening.

Closing reading:

Go your ways,
Knowing not the answers to all things,
yet seeking always the answer
to one more thing than you know.
-*Singing the Living Tradition reading #687 by John W. Brigham*

Announcements/Plans

Personal Check out: As we close today, how are you feeling now?

Extinguish the Chalice

Amen. Shalom. Blessed be.

Readings:

Courageous men never lose the zest for living even though their life situation is zestless; cowardly men, overwhelmed by the uncertainties of life, lose the will to live. We must constantly build dykes of courage to hold back the flood of fear.
~**Martin Luther King, Jr.**

Life is about not knowing, having to change, taking the moment and making the best of it, without knowing what's going to happen next.
~**Gilda Radner**

All life is an experiment. The more experiments you make the better. ~ **Ralph Waldo Emerson**

The only certainty is that nothing is certain. ~ **Pliny, the Elder**

If you are afraid for your future, you don't have a present. ~ **James Petersen**

Life means living with uncertainty ... feeling your way through life, letting your heart guide you like a lantern in the dark.
~ **Dan Millman**

Pre-Reading for Living with Uncertainty Session

Readings from the *Women's Book of Confidence* by Sue Patton Thoele

Enduring the unknown is draining for most of us. Whether it is waiting for the results of a test, wondering about the outcome of a job interview, or questioning whether a particular relationship is healthy for us, we have a tendency to want the answer *now*. Especially difficult is having the patience and wisdom to allow our inner sorting process to happen naturally--sitting with our "I don't know"--rather than forcing ourselves into decisions and commitments before we really *know* what is best.

Just as babies take months to develop and seeds take days or weeks to sprout, most of our answers unfold from an internal questioning period in which the only honest and authentic reality *is* "I don't know." Our task is to accept this process as creative and productive, honor and embrace our questions, and trust that, if we allow it, the best choice will eventually evolve. ... Although sitting with our "I don't know" may feel like an endless free-fall, it allows our astute interior computer to gather the information necessary to make valid decisions.