



PRESENT OVER PERFECT
Greenville UU Fellowship
Covenant Group Session Plan

Welcome, Chalice Lighting: *Here we are, together in this space. By our love and by our covenant, we make this a holy place. We light the chalice of Unitarian Universalism in honor of the light that lives in each of us, the light that shines among us, and the light we bring into the world.*

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

Opening Words:

What people think about you means nothing in comparison to what you believe about yourself.

~ Shauna Niequist, author, from her book *“Present Over Perfect”*

Questions to prompt and guide discussion:

1. Shauna Niequist uses a play on words in her book title “Present Over Perfect” to describe her understanding that it is more important to live a life of meaning and connection instead of pushing for perfection. What are your thoughts on this as you see it in your own life?
2. Have you had times where life feels frantic as you long for a simpler, more soulful way of living? If so share how you have worked towards that simpler, soulful path.
3. How do you deal with society’s pressure to perform faster, push harder and produce more?
4. What gives your life meaning?

Readings- Words from the Common Bowl: Quotes/Readings

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.

Sitting in Silence

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:

We receive fragments of holiness, glimpses of eternity, brief moments of insight. Let us gather them up for the precious gifts that they are and, renewed by their grace, move boldly into the unknown.

~Sara Moores Campbell, UU Minister

Announcements/Plans

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

Extinguish the Chalice

Readings/Words from the Common Bowl

Busyness is an illness of the spirit.

~Eugene Peterson, American-born clergyman, scholar, author, and poet

We can't trade empty for empty

We must go to the waterfall

For there's a break in the cup that holds love

Inside us all

~David Wilcox, American folk musician

I bet it all on busyness, achievement, being known as responsible, and escaping when those things didn't work. What I see now is that what I really wanted was love, grace, connection, peace.

~Shauna Niequist, author, from her book *"Present Over Perfect"*

You wander from room to room

Hunting for the diamond necklace

That is already around your neck.

~Rumi, 13th century Sufi mystic

I have only one thing to do and that's be the wave that I am, and then sink back into the ocean.

~Fiona Apple, American singer and songwriter

The religious community is essential, for alone our vision is too narrow to see all that must be seen. Together, our vision widens and strength is renewed.

~Mark Morrison-Reed, UU minister and writer.

You find peace not by rearranging the circumstances of your life, but by realizing who you are at the deepest level.

~Thomas Merton, American Trappist monk and Catholic theologian

Take all those things that would propose to be important, and weigh them upon the scale of your soul. Asking how much each thing actually impacts, not just the moment, but the years ahead. Discard all that is trivial masquerading as significant, and reserve your days for those things that truly matter.

~L.M. Browning, *Seasons of Contemplation: A Book of Midnight Meditations*

The more you praise and celebrate your life, the more there is in life to celebrate.

~Oprah Winfrey, American talk show host and actress

Session topic inspired by: *Present Over Perfect: Leaving Behind Frantic for a Simpler, More Soulful Way of Living*, Book by Shauna Niequist, published 2016