



The Practice of Repair

Covenant Group Session Plan

Greenville Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, Greenville, South Carolina

Based on material from Soul Matters-Small Group: Living Love through The Practice of Repair-
November 2024. Compiled and adapted by Marie McIntyre, October 2024

Welcome, Chalice Lighting:

Out of darkness, light.

Out of light, warmth.

Out of warmth, togetherness.

Out of togetherness, joy.

May this flame hold us together for the time that we are here. ~Ben Soule

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

Opening Reading:

Our lives can be broken in many ways. Damaged relationships, tragic events, bad decisions, painful losses . . . the list goes on and on. And when the cracks come, who doesn't wish to restore what might have been? We hang on to the hope that, like Humpty Dumpty, everything can be seamlessly put back together.

But, as our faith teaches us, transition and change are the flow of life, and the current of time is much too strong for us to swim back.

And so the repair available is not trying in vain to return life to its previous state, but to work with what remains to create something new. The shards are not pieces of a puzzle to be reassembled, but building blocks which can be molded into a newly imagined form.

All of which means that there is freedom in the breaking. The cracks, if we can widen our view, become conduits for creativity. That's not to minimize the pain involved. And it's certainly not a way of justifying tragedy as "part of God's plan." Rather, it's a call for us to perceive the broken pieces of our lives as more than just a pile of ruined rubble. "Look closer!" whispers the wisdom within. "That ash, if worked with, can give birth to a Phoenix."

~Adapted from Soul Matters materials, Practice of Repair

Questions to prompt and guide discussion:

1. Were there events in your early life which required repair? How has this repair been accomplished? Or not?
2. Are you currently working to repair something in your present life? What has helped? Or not helped?
3. Complete the sentence: (1) I knew I was healing when . . . or (2) I will know I am beginning to heal when . . .
4. Has there been someone in your life who helped you repair? How was that person helpful?
5. What places or experiences have been consistent sources of repair for you?
6. How might working for a worthy cause or helping to combat injustice also be helping to repair you?

Readings- Words from the Common Bowl: Quotes/Readings

Healing involves discomfort. But so does refusing to heal. Over time, refusing to heal is always more painful.

~Resmaa Menakem

If I could sum up all my years of clinical training and research in one statement, it would be this: We heal when we can be with what we feel. ~Hillary L. McBride

She taught me it is enough to sit
with someone who is grieving,
to sit and listen with your whole body
as if eyes could hear as well as ears,
as if a person's silence is as essential as their words.
~Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer

One example of repair in our lives is how we mend treasured objects so that we don't have to part with them. It might be a shirt, blanket, pair of shoes, tool, watch, lounge chair, or childhood toy - but while the objects may differ, the motivation is the same. We repair them for the sake of love, because they continue to connect us with a beloved memory or person.
~Soul Matters

the places in our heart
where the world took bites out of us
may never fully heal
and will likely become
wide open spaces
be careful to not fill them
with just anything or anyone
~John Roedel

She stood in the storm, and when the wind did not blow her away, she adjusted her sails. ~Elizabeth Edwards

Although the world is full of suffering, it is also full of the overcoming of it. ~Helen Keller

Sitting in Silence (Reflect on questions and readings before sharing starts)

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 responses to one or more of the session questions or the readings.

(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:

Broken hearts hurt, but they also allow us to connect with the pain of others. While protected hearts may seem safe, our armor only creates a straitjacket. One of the most important yet paradoxical spiritual truths is this: Broken people end up as bigger people.

~Soul Matters, The Practice of Repair

Announcements/Plans

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

Extinguish the Chalice

We extinguish this flame but not the light of truth, the warmth of community, or the fire of commitment. These we carry in our hearts until we are together again.