



VULNERABILITY*

Greenville UU Fellowship, Greenville, South Carolina

Covenant Group Session Plan, written in 2016, Updated, May 2024

Welcome, Chalice Lighting: We come together to remind one another to rest for a moment on the forming edge of our lives, to resist the headlong tumble into the next moment until we claim for ourselves Awareness and Gratitude, taking the time to look into one another's faces and see their communion: the reflection of our own eyes. This circle of laughter and silence, memory and hope, is hallowed by our presence together.

~Kathleen McTigue

Check In: Briefly share something from your life since we last met.

Opening Words:

I think I fall in love a little bit with anyone who shows me their soul - this world is so guarded and fearful - I appreciate rawness so much. ~Anonymous

Vulnerability opens the door to deeper connection to one another. ~Gayle Lynne Goodwin

Questions to prompt and guide Discussion:

1. What first comes to your mind when you hear the word "vulnerable"?
2. Describe a time when you felt vulnerable.
3. How has a time when you experienced being vulnerable helped you to change in some way?
4. How do you think that being vulnerable can open up creativity?
5. Is it difficult for you to ask for what you need, to talk about how you're feeling, or to have the hard conversations? If so, why do you think those things are difficult for you?
6. Describe someone you know whom you consider to be a beautiful person. How do you think they acquired the qualities that make them a beautiful person?

Readings:

Daring greatly means the courage to BE VULNERABLE. It means to show up and be seen. To ask for what you need. To talk about how you're feeling. To have the hard conversations. ~Brene Brown

We are never so vulnerable as when we trust someone, but paradoxically, if we cannot trust, neither can we find love or joy. ~Walter Anderson

In times of suffering, when you feel abandoned, perhaps even annihilated, there is occurring at levels deeper than your pain the entry of the sacred, the possibility of redemption. Wounding opens doors of our sensibility to a larger reality. Pathos gives us eyes and ears to see and hear what our normal eyes and ears cannot.

~Jean Houston in *"A Dancing Star"*

Vulnerability is the only bridge to build connection. ~Brene Brown

Vulnerability is the only way to allow your heart to feel true pleasure. ~Bob Marley

Vulnerability is not weakness, and that myth is profoundly dangerous. Vulnerability is the birthplace of innovation, creativity, and change. ~Brene Brown

The most beautiful people we know are those who have known defeat, known suffering, known struggle, known loss, and have found their way out of the depths. These people have an appreciation, sensitivity, an understanding of life that fills them with compassion, gentleness, and a deep loving concern. Beautiful people do not just happen. ~Elizabeth Kubler-Ross

I found that the more truthful and vulnerable I was, the more empowering it was for me.

~Alanis Morissette

I tend to keep everything to myself. Not because I don't trust, but because I'm terrified of vulnerability. Once you tell someone everything, you hand them your heart, and that's a lot of power to play with, but I am finding that vulnerability gives me great strength, because you're not hiding anymore. It's really about being a pioneer for myself, going into the places where I am not being taught. I have to teach myself. ~Tori Amos

Opening yourself up to making mistakes and being vulnerable is what makes us beautiful and special with the people you love. ~Simone Elkeles

Sitting in Silence

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:

There is love in everything, and when we really live and view life with an open heart and share our truth, the light illuminates the way.

~Adapted from Kasi Kaye Iliopoulos, Author

Announcements / Plans

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.

*This session inspired by a sermon given titled "The Practice of Presence" by Rev. Sally Sarratt on February 21, 2016. <https://02df2c.a2cdn1.secureserver.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/022116-SES-Practice-of-Presence.pdf>