

12-Reinventing Yourself—UUFVB Covenant Groups—December 2016

Chalice Lighting

May we know once again that we are not isolated beings,
but connected, in mystery and miracle,
to the universe, to this community and to each other.

Check-in: How is your spirit right now?

Opening Reading

"If you want to identify me ask me not where I live, or what I like to eat, or how I comb my hair, but ask me what I am living for, in detail, and ask me what I think is keeping me from living fully for the things I want to live for. Between those two answers you can determine the identity of any person." (from *The Man in the Sycamore Tree* by Thomas Merton)

Topic Exploration

Reinventing yourself can be a purposeful endeavor, brought about by internal reflection or external circumstances. Truly reinventing yourself, whether you want to change your daily habits, your outlook, or the way you view your relationships, is hard work. It has the potential to pay off in satisfaction and contentment, but may also bring about unanticipated changes in your life.

Questions / Sharing

A. Create a vision for your future.

Let's sit quietly, close your eyes, and imagine the people, places, or situations that you need to leave behind. Now imagine the future that you want, whether it's simply a feeling, a group of people, a relationship, or a different environment. Silently voice your appreciation for everything that came before. Once you've thanked the past, imagine yourself walking away from the past and into the future. We'll take about 3 minutes for the reflection.

1. Do you have a vision for the future that will require reinventing yourself? Describe.
2. Does this vision seem do-able, or daunting?
3. Do you find it difficult to think of reinventing yourself? Why or why not?

B. When you have a vision of your future, break it up into workable tasks.

4. What are the changes that you could make to achieve your vision?
5. Are you ready to work on a plan, to write down specific goals and a timeframe for moving towards your vision? How would you go about creating such a plan?

C. Address your patterns of behavior that may hamper your reinventing process.

6. Do you put the needs of others before your own?
7. Are you drawn into relationships with people who are self-centered, cold to you, misunderstand you, or use you? How could you change those relationships?
8. Do you feel inadequate compared to people around you? If so, in what way?
9. Are you preoccupied with the mistakes and failures of the past? If so, how can you move beyond those oppressive inclinations?

D. Share your plans to reinvent yourself with others.

Reinventing yourself will be much easier if your loved ones or other people in your life know about your decision.

10. Are you comfortable sharing your tentative vision with others?
11. Do you think you have, or can create, a support system for your reinventing effort?
12. Do you believe that social media can play a positive role?

Closing Reading

“The Journey”

One day you finally knew what you had to do, and began,
though the voices around you kept shouting their bad advice --
though the whole house began to tremble and you felt the old tug at your ankles.
"Mend my life!" each voice cried.

But you didn't stop. You knew what you had to do,
though the wind pried with its stiff fingers at the very foundations,
though their melancholy was terrible.

It was already late enough, and a wild night, and the road full of fallen branches and stones.
But little by little, as you left their voices behind,
the stars began to burn through the sheets of clouds,
and there was a new voice which you slowly recognized as your own,
that kept you company as you strode deeper and deeper into the world,
determined to do the only thing you could do --
determined to save the only life you could.

--Mary Oliver

Check- out and reflection on today's session

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.

Housekeeping