

Having Fun—UUFVB Covenant Groups---June 2017

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 Readings: the need for fun

Let's face it: We're all busy people. With our jobs, housework, school, appointments, and other daily commitments, finding time for play is often a low priority. We often overlook it, viewing it as unnecessary or guilty pleasure. But play represents more than just fun and games. When properly applied, it can improve the physical, mental, and emotional health of people of all ages. In a TED Talk that discussed the concept of play in depth, Dr. Stuart Brown explains that 'the opposite of play is not work; it's depression.' (*Krista L. Vair*)

I am dead serious about fun. As a life coach I am determined to help all my clients have as much fun as they possibly can. I'm often surprised by how vehemently some of them reject this idea. They see fun as trivial, unworthy, disreputable. Maybe they'll have fun someday, they tell me, but not until they've made a huge fortune or a scientific breakthrough or an artistic masterpiece. What they don't realize is that people who achieve such things are the ones who have fun doing them. Having fun is not a diversion from a successful life; it is the pathway to it. (*Martha Beck*)

Topic Exploration: what is fun?

Each of us is born with a propensity to have fun doing certain types of activities, in certain proportions—you may love doing something I hate and vice versa. I call the pattern of activities you most enjoy your "funprint," and like your thumbprint it's unique. We are most productive, persistent, creative, and flexible when we're engaged in precisely the combination of activities that brings us maximum fun. Your funprint isn't a frivolous indulgence. It is the map of your true life, an instruction manual for your essential purpose, written in the language of joy. Learning to read and respond to it is one of the most crucial things you'll ever do.

My views on fun rely on a rather narrow definition of the word. Fun is sometimes used to describe both the best and worst of human behavior. Bullies may torment others for "fun"; addicts may have "fun" that destroys their health and relationships. I'm using quotation marks because these forms of fun aren't really fun. They're faux fun, and they lead straight to misery. It isn't difficult to tell faux and real fun apart once you've learned to recognize the manic giddiness of the former and the nourishing pleasure of the latter. (*Martha Beck*)

Finding Your Funprint

Genetic research suggests that our fun preferences are largely inborn and remain consistent throughout life. Look for patterns in your childhood fun.

Did you like playing alone or with others?

Inside or outside?

Calmly or roughly?

With words, objects, or actions?

Almost certainly those preferences still exist in you, even after all your years in prep school or prison or wherever. No socialization is so complete that it can override the funprint buried in our genes. Choosing careers, avocations, and personal activities that fit this code will make you happier and more purposeful across the board. (*Martha Beck*)

Silent Reflection: Let's pause to think about how we define "fun" and what our "funprint" may be. The facilitator will signal the end of the meditation, then we shall share our responses to the following questions.

Questions / Sharing

1. Describe your funprint pattern.
2. How has your funprint been reflected in your life choices, such as jobs, activities, associations, and choice of friends or life partners?
3. Describe a time when you ignored your funprint in making important life choices, and how that worked for you.
4. What are the things you enjoy doing for fun at this stage of your life? Do they relate to fun things in your childhood, and are they consistent with your funprint?
5. What fun things did you do yesterday? Last week? Last month? How would you rate the frequency of fun in your life? Is it about right, or do you need more fun in your life? If you need more fun, how would you bring that about?
6. Did you learn something about yourself answering these questions? How fun was it?

Closing Readings

"You gotta have fun. Regardless of how you look at it, we're playing a game. It's a business, it's our job, but I don't think you can do well unless you're having fun." (Derek Jeter)

I never did a day's work in my life. It was all fun. (*Thomas A. Edison*)

Check-out and reflections 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