

## Humility—UUFVB Covenant Groups—September 2020

### 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:** What is most on your mind today?

### Opening Reading

If you want to become whole, first let yourself become broken.  
If you want to become straight, first let yourself become twisted.  
If you want to become full, first let yourself become empty.  
If you want to become new, first let yourself become old.

Those whose desires are few gets them,  
those whose desires are great go astray.

For this reason the Master embraces the Tao,  
as an example for the world to follow.

Because she isn't self-centered, people can see the light in her.  
Because she does not boast of herself, she becomes a shining example.  
Because she does not glorify herself, she becomes a person of merit.  
Because she wants nothing from the world, the world cannot overcome her.

When the ancient Masters said, "If you want to become whole,  
then first let yourself be broken,"  
they weren't using empty words.

All who do this will be made complete.

(The Tao de Ching, Chapter 22, translated by J. H. McDonald)

### Topic Exploration

The word "humble" comes from the root word: Humus, of the earth, lowly. As we practice acceptance we increasingly find ourselves humbled. We find we're not always right, or acting as we would like, or in charge, or in control. Sometimes this makes us feel small or low. Sometimes it is a relief, and a new freedom. The content of our own minds and hearts can surprise us, both positively and negatively when we practice acceptance. Again resulting in a new awareness of our self in relation to others.

Humility might also be about becoming "right-sized." In other words, about finding our place in the "family of things." Not being invisible, but not needing to be "the one," either. Here is a paragraph from Alice in Wonderland that speaks (wonderfully) to the journey of becoming "right-sized."

“It was so long since she had been anything near the right size, that it felt quite strange at first; but she got used to it in a few minutes, and began talking to herself, as usual, “Come, there’s half my plan done now! How puzzling all these changes are! I’m never sure what I’m going to be, from one minute to another! However, I’ve got back to my right size: The next thing is, to get into that beautiful garden—how is that to be done, I wonder?”

(Topic exploration from the Rev. Maj-Britt Johnson, Chapel Hill North Carolina, March 2009, “Humility” in Small Group Ministries website.)

### **Questions / Sharing**

1. When you think about the term Humility, what thoughts and images come to mind? Might some be more related to your early religious upbringing in other faith traditions than your current UU beliefs?
2. Humility has been defined as the opposite of narcissism. Do you see high self-regard and humility as mutually exclusive?
3. What traits might you observe in a humble person? (list on whiteboard).
4. Which if these traits do you share? Which do you strive to share?
5. False humility, in a religious sense, involves taking credit for what God has done for us. Modern psychology views it more as a cry for attention and affirmation. How would you define the term and how do you see it being played out by others?
6. Describe the role of humility in leadership. What part does it play in teamwork?

### **Closing Reading**

Unitarian Universalist minister, the Rev. Barbara Wells ten Hove learned about humility from her father: “To be humble, he told me, was to remain teachable. Whenever we think we know it all, real humility reminds us to stay open and willing to learn. The magic words, ‘I don’t know,’ are at the essence of both awe and humility.”

### **Check-out and reflections on today’s session**

Please express your closing thoughts on the content or process of 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**