

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Vero Beach
Covenant Groups
Conflict
July, 2022

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: *The Parable of the Prodigal Son*



A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father: "Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me." And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after, the younger son wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent it all, he began to be in want. He said, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants.'" But the father said to his servants, "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet." Now the elder son asked what these things meant. And he was angry, and would not go in; therefore came his father out, and entreated him. And the son said, "Lo these many years do I serve thee and yet thou never gave me a young goat. And the father said to him, "Son thou art ever with me, and all that I have is yours. Be glad, for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; was lost, and is found."

The Bible, Luke 15: 11-32

Topic Exploration:

Spiritual journeying with others can be challenging. In seeking our own inner truths, sharing our epiphanies with fellow congregants offers us important opportunities to test those new ideas to see how well they fit into our daily lives. This sharing might sometime lead to conflicts of opinions; how we choose to address and resolve these differences reveals much about what we value. How do we react to conflict? Some people want to change the subject or put off discussion, while others deliberately steer into rough seas. As such, our UU first principle, to promote the inherent worth of every person, reminds us to try to understand the other person's perspective and accept their views as having merit. This Principle asks UUs to remember that we all have the potential to do good. In doing so, we create a positive foundation for right relationships and resolution of conflicts.

Questions/Sharing:

1. What is the moral of *The Parable of the Prodigal Son*?
2. How did your family of origin handle conflict? What strategies did you learn growing up? How have you adapted these methods to resolving conflict as an adult?
3. Stress management has been shown to benefit weight loss, improve a person's immune system, lower blood pressure, and improve heart health. How well are you aware of what stresses you? Describe one activity that you have successfully used to lower your stress.
4. When has a personal or professional ambition of yours ever created stressful conflict for you? How did you resolve this struggle?
5. Everyone treats personal conflicts differently. Some people are conflict-avoidant, others can cope effectively, while others intentionally steer into rough waters. How would you resolve a disagreement with someone who avoids the issue? How would you approach a conflict with someone who wants to pour oil on the fire?
6. As Unitarian Universalists, we promote our individual responsibility to grow spiritually. Spiritual growth prompts us to examine our own attitudes, values, and beliefs, which might lead to discovering unresolved conflicts. Have you ever faced a spiritual challenge like this? How did this conflict change you?

Closing Reading:

Difficulties are meant to rouse, not discourage. The human spirit is to grow strong by conflict.

-William Ellery Channing, Unitarian minister

Check-out and reflections on today's session: Please express any closing thoughts on the content or process of today's session.

Extinguishing 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