

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Vero Beach
Covenant Groups
Possessions
December, 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:

Storage

*When I moved from one house to another
There were many things I had no room
for. What does one do? I rented a storage
space. And filled it. Years passed.*

*Occasionally I went there and looked in,
but nothing happened, not a single
twinge of the heart.*

*As I grew older, the things I cared
about grew fewer but were more
Important. So one day I undid the lock
and called the trash man. He took
everything.*

*I felt like the little donkey when his
burden is finally lifted. Things!
Burn them! Burn them! Make a
beautiful fire!*

*More room in your heart for love,
for the trees! For the birds who own
nothing -- the reason they can fly.*

(Mary Oliver)

Untitled

*The things we own we love
with the guts to shout that
even if these things seem weird
these things are ours,
belonging to identity,
the things that comprise
hearts and our eyes
that find joy in the things
we call mine.*

(Leanne Rebecca. Blogger, poet)

“Most of us remain forever in one of two categories – either poor seeking to become wealthy or wealthy seeking always to regain the happiness we had when we were poor”

(The Seasons of Life by Jim Rohn –entrepreneur,
author and motivational speaker)

Topic Exploration:

Possessions: are they a good thing or a bad thing? Should we strive to own little or work to make sure we have what we need? What is enough? How much is too much? Is it all right to want to own something, to feel that you have everything you need or want, or are those feelings a sign that one is lacking in spirituality? In our culture, it's fashionable and politically correct to talk about possessions in a disdainful way. Many books, articles and advice columns tell us “minimalism is good”; “it's materialistic to own much and it won't make you happy”; “stress-free living requires ‘decluttering’ and purging everything non-essential”; “striving for wealth will only make you unhappy”.

BUT the vast majority of us don't really subscribe to that way of thinking, and certainly don't manage to live that way, even as we chide ourselves for being self-indulgent and materialistic because we love our comfortable homes and our nice furniture, our framed family photos, our linens, our cell phones and our computers, our books and our attractive clothes. In her article “The Pitfalls and Potential of Minimalism,” (New Yorker Magazine, 2020) Jia Tolentino writes “*it is rarely acknowledged by the life-hack-minded authors or the proponents of minimalist design that many people have minimalism forced upon them by circumstancesnor do they mention that poverty and trauma can make frivolous possessions seem like a lifeline rather than a burden. Many of today's gurus maintain that minimalism can be useful no matter one's income, but the audience they target is implicitly affluent -- the pitch is never about making do with less because you have no choice.*”

Questions/Sharing:

1. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being real minimalism and 10 being materialism, where would you place yourself and/or your lifestyle?
2. Do you ever feel guilty because you own too much, or burdened by your many possessions?

3. Have you ever been seriously lacking in what you need? Or have you always had plenty of everything? Do you think that has affected your current attitude toward possessions?

4. Do you have a short list of possessions you would rush to rescue if your house were on fire?

5. "Possessions" can also refer to attitudes or values. What "possession" like this has helped you the greatest on your own spiritual journey?

Check out and reflection on today's meeting: Please express any 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