Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Vero Beach
Covenant Groups

Repairing Damaged Relationships
November, 2026

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:

People in relationships invariably behave in ways that can hurt each other, whether intentionally or not. When the damage is unintentional, the chances are that people are motivated to patch things up but often may not know how to do so. Is there a way to rectify the damage? According to the University of Pittsburgh's Karina Schumann and Anna Dragotta, it's important to try. In their words, "Although common, offenses that are left unresolved can poison people's valued relationships." Not only do these offenses spoil the relationship at the heart of the dispute, but they can spread to the larger social networks of each person, ultimately "severely undermining the wellbeing of those involved."

Topic Exploration:

Repairing a damaged relationship requires six important skills. First, **willingness** to discuss the problem, taking the risk of being hurt. Second, **open communication:** transparent, honest, and consistent sharing of thoughts, ideas, and feedback. Third, **forgiving** the other person. Fourth, **rebuilding trust** by doing what you say you will over time. Fifth, fostering **emotional intimacy** by sharing honest feelings, identifying and resolving problems, and focusing on ways to resolve differences. Sixth, using **conflict resolution** strategies such as finding common ground, acknowledging the other person's feelings, owning your part, and working together to find a solution that satisfies everyone's interests.

Questions/Sharing:

1. How willing are you to try to repair damages in your close relationships? How willing are you to take risks of being hurt?

2. How easy is it for you to share your honest feelings in difficult situations?

3. How well do you forgive other people who have hurt you?

4. Think of a situation where you have lost trust in a close friend. How did you feel? What did you lose? How did you attempt to regain it? How successful were you?

5. In what ways do you share emotional intimacy with close friends? What barriers have gotten in your way to express yourself in the past?

6. How important is resolving conflicts in relationships to you? Take a minute to think deeply about this. Why or why not is it important?

Closing Reading:

Repair often begins with small, intentional acts — a pause, a touch, a specific apology, or a shared vision — that interrupt escalation and create space for healing. Consistency, empathy, and genuine accountability are the threads that weave these moments into lasting connection.

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

UUFVB covenant groups program/sb