

UU Casper
Discussion Forum: The Challenge of Uncertainty
Dual Service
9/25/2022

9:50 am

Jani: Prelude music 10 minute

RING CHIME

1 Cindy: Welcome/Introductions, children stay

Good morning! I am Cindy Wright, this morning's service leader and chair of the membership committee. Welcome to the Unitarian Universalist Community of Casper. The purpose of this spiritual community is to foster individual spiritual growth, ethical living, inclusive fellowship and engagement with other faith traditions."

"No matter your age, your size, the color of your hair or skin – you are welcome here!

Whether you walked, drove, rolled, or were carried – you are welcome!

No matter how you speak, whatever your abilities, where you live or how you make your living – you are welcome!

No matter whom you love; whether you come with joy or tears in your heart --

Welcome to all who come with an open mind, willing hands, and a loving heart!"

2 Cindy: Housekeeping Items

Please check that your cell phone is muted.

Exits

Bathrooms

Tea, Coffee & snacks

Announcements

Upcoming events, groups, and services can be found in your OOS, on our website, and in the weekly newsletter.

Meditation Drumming Circle - September 28, 2022 - 6:30pm

Does anybody else, in the sanctuary or Zoom, have other announcements, for the good of the community?

I want to say Welcome to our guests. I invite you to fill out a visitor card (located on the cabinet by the door), and I want mention that you are welcome to stay after the service for conversation and refreshments

3 Cindy: Chalice Lighting - Letting Go By Jay Wolin

Two hands gracefully reach upward, palms open and fingers relaxed

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Are we a people of holding on or of letting go?

Holding on to rigid ideas or

Letting go and opening our minds and our hearts, to something new;

Holding on to certainty of how things should be or

Letting go and living with the uncertainty of new ways of being in the world;

Holding on to what makes us comfortable or

Letting go so we may grow which can be uncomfortable;

Holding on to what makes us safe or

Letting go to make room to help others feel safe?

With this flame, this symbol of our religion,

let it be a symbol of burning up the ties that hold us back from being our true self and reaching our true potential;

let it be a symbol of lighting a new way for us into a better tomorrow;

and let it be a symbol of letting go

Because holding on too long and too tightly is never good for the soul.

4 **Debra Park or Orion: Opening Reading** - Excerpts from *The Revolution of Hope: Toward a Humanized Technology* by Erich Fromm

These excerpts are from Humanistic philosopher and psychologist Erich Fromm's 1968 book, *The Revolution of Hope: Toward a Humanized Technology*, written in an era when both hope and fear were at a global high, by a German Jew who had narrowly escaped a dismal fate by taking refuge first in Switzerland and then in America when the Nazis seized power.

...

Hope is a decisive element in any attempt to bring about social change in the direction of greater aliveness, awareness, and reason. But the nature of hope is often misunderstood and confused with attitudes that have nothing to do with hope and in fact are the very opposite.

...

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Man, lacking the instinctual equipment of the animal, is not as well equipped for flight or for attack as animals are. He does not “know” infallibly, as the salmon knows where to return to the river in order to spawn its young and as many birds know where to go south in the winter and where to return in the summer. His decisions are not made for him by instinct. He has to make them. He is faced with alternatives and there is a risk of failure in every decision he makes. The price that man pays for consciousness is insecurity. He can stand his insecurity by being aware and accepting the human condition, and by the hope that he will not fail even though he has no guarantee for success. He has no certainty; the only certain prediction he can make is: “I shall die.”

...

Man is born as a freak of nature, being within nature and yet transcending it. He has to find principles of action and decision making which replace the principles of instinct. He has to have a frame of orientation that permits him to organize a consistent picture of the world as a condition for consistent actions. He has to fight not only against the dangers of dying, starving, and being hurt, but also against another danger that is specifically human: that of becoming insane. In other words, he has to protect himself not only against the danger of losing his life but also against the danger of losing his mind. The human being, born under the conditions described here, would indeed go mad if he did not find a frame of reference which permitted him to feel at home in the world in some form and to escape the experience of utter helplessness, disorientation, and uprootedness. There are many ways in which man can find a solution to the task of staying alive and of remaining sane. Some are better than others and some are worse. By “better” is meant a way conducive to greater strength, clarity, joy, independence; and by “worse” the very opposite. But more important than finding the better solution is finding some solution that is viable.

5 **Opening Song: [Song - lyrics](#) Blessed Motion by Annie Zylstra**

Our opening song is Blessed Motion by Annie Zylstra. On her website, she writes:

“Blessed Motion is a 4-part acknowledgement of the nature of Life as an unpredictable, ever-changing movement toward itself. The melody came next to a fast moving fork of the Trinity River, where salmon were in their first week of journeying to their spawning sites in northern California. Martin Prechtel said after surviving the Guatemala earthquake of 1976, during which he witnessed the ground beneath him rising up and swallowing people and villages whole, that solid ground is a myth believed by people who live on the earth rather than in it. This idea stuck with me through the years and provided partial inspiration for this song.”

Annie gave permission for this song to be streamed in all UU services.

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We have lyrics slides for this song. Although it's doubtful any of you have heard it before, some parts of it repeat. So please rise in body or spirit and sing along as best you can. To warn you, there are some overlapping parts, I think rounds is the right word, so don't let that throw you off too much.

6 All: *Unison Covenant

Please remain standing for our Unison Covenant

Love is the spirit of this church and service its cause.
This is our great covenant: to dwell together in peace,
to seek truth in love, and to help one another.

James Vila Blake (adapted)

7 Cindy: Joys and Concerns

"The spirit of love is with us: it comforts us and connects us. If you have a joy or a concern this morning, you are invited to come forward and light a candle and share with our community. If you prefer, you may write your joy or concern on one of the prayer cards from the basket as it is passed around, and then place your card in the box at the Altar of Hope by the piano. Altar of Hope cards will be burned in the next burning ceremony as a symbolic joining with universal healing energies. All offerings are private and treated with reverence and respect."

8 Cindy: Sharing the fruits of our labor and good fortune

We are so blessed to be a free religious community that is entirely self-governed and supported financially by the voluntary generosity of our members and friends. You are now invited to participate in the blessing of giving to this free religious community, as we Share the Fruits of our labor and good fortune."

After baskets are collected: "We give thanks for these gifts and dedicate them to continue the good works of this Unitarian Universalist Community of Casper."

9 Cindy: Discussion *The Challenge of Uncertainty*

Microphone helper: Orion

- What are some circumstances in which you've experienced uncertainty?
 - ambiguity & vagueness
 - the future
- How does it feel?

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- Do you agree with me that our uncertainty has to do with our relationship to time?
- When uncertainty rears its head, how does it impact you or your work?
 - ruins the flow state
- Measuring uncertainty- activity with rulers (make slides)
- What are some superstitions that help people, including yourself, deal with the discomfort of uncertainty?
 - knocking on wood
 - lucky charms
 - flower petals - he loves me, loves me not
 - oracle cards
- Consider a person who is going through a high level of uncertainty in their life, or might just have a low tolerance for it. What are some unpleasant or unhealthy ways they might react?
 - anxiety, addiction to “the answer”
 - suffering
 - controlling behaviors
 - fighting it - shame spirals, blaming
 - Black and white thinking
 - Bimodal distribution and types of curves
- How can we make peace with uncertainty?
- Does everybody face uncertainty or is it just you?
- What about when someone asks you a question and you’re unsure of the answer? Is it hard to say “I don’t know”? Why?
 - Eckart Tolle
 - Dalai Lama
- What are some of the big questions that you just don’t know the answer to?
 - Why are we here?
 - Who are we?
 - Do we live in a simulation?
 - What happened in the past?
 - The meaning of life?
 - What will happen tomorrow?
 - chart - what we know, what we know we don’t know, and what we don’t know that we don’t know
- Is there a beauty in not knowing?
 - The great mystery
 - Faith

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- What do you think the function of dogma is?
 - Unquestionable explanations for the unknown
 - Leads to “our truth” versus “their truth”
- Aside from the superstitions we talked about earlier, what are some other ways people deal with uncertainty?
- How can one move from discomfort with uncertain circumstances and move towards contentment?
 - Radical Acceptance
 - Mindfulness meditation
 - Faith - trusting it will be okay, or at least there's a chance things can be okay
 - Consciously acknowledging gray areas

10 **Jani: *Closing Song: #16 ‘Tis a Gift to be Simple [2 min]**
Screen share: [lyrics](#)

11 Mindfulness Meditation [9 min]

- Intro
 - About feeling content
 - Happiness in the form of joy can be fleeting. Another form of happiness is contentment.
 - Being content is less about getting what we want and more about being okay with things as they are
 - In meditation this can happen by consistently showing up for our experiences, noticing whatever arises, whether it’s thoughts, emotions, or sensations and training our minds to allow whatever arises just to be there. Without trying to fight it. trying to change it, or trying to resist it
 - We still want to have goals and visions, but when things don’t turn out our way, we can accept things as they are without resistance and instead plan for what needs to happen next.
 - Instead of starting from a place of anxiety or fear, we can move toward our goals starting from a place of inspiration.
- Comfortable posture.
- Deep breath in nose, out mouth
- Invite your jaw to soften
- Shoulders, belly

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- Eventually allow your attention to settle back with the breath. Inhale, as belly expands, exhale as belly deflates
- Settle into the simplicity of simply breathing. [3 breaths]
- There may be many things that take you attention away from the moment. Ideas and impulses may come to take you away from the moment, such as checking your phone, or getting up to get a cookie.
- Thoughts arise. These are fleeting ideas and impulses. they might even be compelling. the more we practice letting them come and letting them go, the less power they have over us.
- Notice these things that arise. Thoughts, emotions, sensations, discomfort. Smile at them and say, “I see you. Thank you for coming. I’ll see you later.” and come back to the breath.
- If some discomfort comes up, just allow it to be there, say “I see you. Thank you for coming.” and go back to the breath. [3-5 breaths]
- You will develop a sense of peace that is not contingent on this moment being perfect.
- The more we fight these things the more they fight back which becomes self defeating.
- So just breathe, and be in the moment. breathe for a while, maybe x10]
- As we come to the end you are welcome to continue this practice.

12 **Cindy: Extinguish the Chalice**

In the words of Doris Day,

Qué será, será

Whatever will be, will be

The future's not ours to see

Qué será, será

What will be, will be

Thank you to Jani for the music, to Debra Park & Orion for helping with the service, and to Megan Jessup for helping with A/V and the Zoom room.

After the postlude, you are invited for tea and coffee and snacks.

13 **Jani: Postlude**