

Gathering for Loss and Grief

There are suggestions for Zoom sessions – speaking in turns, muting, and using Chat. Some sections use a timer / clock.

When you join the meeting *Facilitators – do these for yourself first and help others.*

- Check your volume and video (if using video). Check your name tag.
- Make sure you have a copy of the Gathering available.
- **Words of the Day.** In Chat, write “One lesson I have learned from experiencing loss or grief in my life is …” and complete the sentence.

Chalice Lighting “We’ll begin by lighting the chalice.” *Ask for a volunteer to read.*

In our time of grief, we light a flame of sharing, the flame of ongoing life. In this time when we search for understanding and serenity in the face of loss, we light this sign of our question for truth, meaning and community.

Rev. Christine Robinson

Words of the Day “Now we’ll read the Words of the Day from the Chat box.” *People can’t see Chat written before they joined the meeting, so you might want to read these yourself or ask people to read their own.*

Sharing of Joys and Concerns “We’ll share joys and concerns.” *Begin, and then either call on people or ask them to “chain” to the next person. Make sure everyone has an opportunity.*

Silence, holding each other in support “Now a few minutes of silence” (2 or 3)

Shared Readings “I’ll start the first Shared Reading.” *Begin, and then either call on people or ask them to “chain” to the next person. Make sure everyone has an opportunity to read.*

The reality is that you will grieve forever. You will not “get over” the loss of a loved one; you will learn to live with it. You will heal and you will rebuild yourself around the loss you have suffered. You will be whole again but you will never be the same. Nor should you be the same nor would you want to. *Elisabeth Kübler-Ross*

Time, all by itself, is not a healer. What matters is what we do with our healing time.
Grieving is Hard Work (handout from First Unitarian’s Grief Group)

You will lose someone you can’t live without, and your heart will be badly broken, and the bad news is that you never completely get over the loss of your beloved. But this is also the good news. They live forever in your broken heart that doesn’t seal back up. And you come through. It’s like having a broken leg that never heals perfectly – that still hurts when the weather gets cold, but you learn to dance with the limp. *Anne Lamott*

People grow through experience if they meet life honestly and courageously. This is how character is built. *Eleanor Roosevelt*

Life, inherently, is a continual journey of letting go. You don’t hold onto your breath, so why hold onto any moment or experience or deem any experience or moment to be wrong or bad? But that which is the truth, that which is real, can never be taken away. *Panache Desai*

A time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance. *Ecclesiastes 3:4*

Suffering has been stronger than all other teaching, and has taught me to understand what your heart used to be. I have been bent and broken, but – I hope – into a better shape. *Charles Dickens*

No one has imagined us. / We want to live like trees, / sycamores blazing through the sulfuric air, / dappled with scars, still exuberantly budding. *Adrienne Rich*

It's okay to smile through your grief. As time passes, it's okay to laugh and enjoy yourself. Don't let the devil of guilt consume you. We are still here for a reason. It's time to live life with purpose and passion. *Daphne Greer*

Trust that an ending is followed by a beginning. *Anonymous*

Deep Listening and Sharing

Round 1. Deep Sharing. “Now we share reflections on Loss and Grief.” *Note the time available for each person and ask people to mute or remain quiet for each speaker.*

Go first to model. Then ask people to raise their hand if they are ready. Assist with un-muting if needed. Make sure everyone has an opportunity.

Round 2. Responses and Comments. *Note how much time is available for Round 2. People can unmute for freer exchange. Go first as a model for the group.*

Closing Circle “We're going to say a word or sentence about what we are taking away from the session.” *Begin, and then either call on people or “chain.” Make sure everyone has an opportunity.*

Chalice “We will extinguish the chalice.” *Ask for a volunteer to read.*

We extinguish this flame and we remember the warmth of our community, the light of our wisdom, the generosity of our sharing. We keep these in our heart until we meet again.

Bell or Chime

Announcements

The Covenant

I commit myself:

- to come to meetings when I possibly can, knowing that my presence is important to the group
- to let the facilitator know if I will be absent or need to quit
- to share responsibility for good process by watching how much time I take to speak, noticing what is going on for others, and considering problems if they occur
- to do the reading and thinking about the topic ahead of time
- to not gossip about what is shared in the group, and tell only my own story to others
- to honor the safety of the group by listening to what others share with an open heart
- to refrain from cross-talk, judging, giving advice, or advocating a specific view
- to share as deeply as I can when it is my turn and to stay on the “I-message.”