

Gathering for Cultivating Relationships (October theme)

There are video session suggestions – speaking in turns, using Chat. Some sections use a timer / clock.

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

- Check your volume and video, if you are using video. Check your “name tag.”
- Make sure you have a copy of the Gathering available.
- **Words of the Day.** If your group is using Chat, write “In my life, relationships have been …” and complete the sentence.

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

And a youth said, Speak to us of Friendship.

And he answered, saying:

Your friend is your needs answered.

He is your field which you sow with love and reap with thanksgiving.

And he is your board and your fireside.

For you come to him with your hunger, and you seek him for peace.

Khalil Gibran

Words of the Day “Now we’ll share the Words of the Day.” *If you’re using Chat, people can’t see chat written before they joined, so the facilitator can read. Or people can 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.*

We are respecting our parents’ wishes ... They didn’t want to shelter us from the world’s treacheries. They wanted us to survive them. *Lemony Snicket, The End*

Few parents nowadays pay any regard to what their children say to them. The old-fashioned respect for the young is fast dying out. Whatever influence I ever had over mamma, I lost at the age of three. *Oscar Wilde, The Importance of Being Earnest*

Each friend represents a world in us, a world possibly not born until they arrive, and it is only by this meeting that a new world is born. *Anais Nin*

“Why did you do all this for me?” he asked. “I don’t deserve it. I’ve never done anything for you.” “You have been my friend,” replied Charlotte. “That in itself is a tremendous thing.” *E.B. White, Charlotte’s Web*

Sometimes being a friend means mastering the art of timing. There is a time for silence. A time to let go and allow people to hurl themselves into their own destiny. And a time to prepare to pick up the pieces when it’s all over. *Gloria Naylor*

Women helped each other in ways small and large every day, without thinking, and that was what kept them going even when the world came up with new and exciting ways to crush them.

Alyssa Cole, Let Us Dream

The friend who holds your hand and says the wrong thing is made of dearer stuff than the one who stays away. *Barbara Kingsolver*

It gives me strength to have somebody to fight for; I can never fight for myself, but, for others, I can kill. *Emilie Autumn, The Asylum for Wayward Victorian Girls*

There's not a word yet, for old friends who've just met.
Jim Henson, Favorite Songs from Jim Henson's Muppets

We'd discuss one unwritten rule and a hundred exceptions would instantaneously appear.
Temple Grandin, Unwritten Rules of Social Relationships: Decoding Social Mysteries Through Autism's Unique Perspectives

Deep Listening and Sharing

Round 1. Deep Sharing. “Now we share reflections about Cultivating Relationships.” *Note the time available for each person. Go first to model. 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 to 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 use “chaining.”*

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.”