

REFLECTIONS

INTEGRITY

Theme Based Ministry Newsletter of the Unitarian Church of Calgary
Volume 2, Issue 14 • November 2015

What Does It Mean to Be a People of Integrity?

“Integrity is doing the right thing even when no one is watching” wrote C.S. Lewis. Morality, honesty, knowing right from wrong - who of us would argue that these are qualities of a person with integrity? And yet our faith tradition has always been a little uneasy with leaving it simply at that. When it comes to integrity, the Unitarian Universalist take has always been as much about wholeness as goodness. Embracing the many aspects of ourselves has been more of a concern than perfecting every last aspect of ourselves. Indeed, we resonate with Quaker theologian Parker Palmer who writes, "I now know myself to be a person of weakness and strength, liability and giftedness, darkness and light. I now know that to be whole means to reject none of it but to embrace all of it." Yes, says our religion, keep working at making yourself better, but along the way please don't allow yourself to get so tangled up in perfection that you feel the need to hide those imperfect parts. This need to hide is what has always worried us UU's the most. Integrity is most surely about honesty, but the honesty that seems to matter the most is the ability to hold an honest view of oneself.

Which also involves enjoying that flawed self. When Palmer talks of “embracing it all” this is not a matter of somber resignation. There is a gladness involved. We can be whole without being perfect! To come to this realization is most surely the goal of any spiritual path. And there is yet another sense in which integrity calls us to gladness. Here the poet Rainer Maria Rilke puts it best: “May what I do flow from me like a river, no forcing and no holding back, the way it is with children.” Here the call of integrity is not “Be perfect” or “Be good” but “Be yourself!” Know your center. Know what makes you uniquely you. And live from that place! Forget the masks. Forget the “shoulds” and the “supposed tos.” Just figure out what takes you to that place of deep gladness and to that remain true! This doesn't mean abandoning the task of “doing the right thing when no one is watching,” says our faith; it just means that you will know what the right thing is when deep joy accompanies your choice. Integrity and joy. They are companions on the spiritual journey. May we encounter them both more deeply this month.

Namaste, Debra

November Services: Sunday 10:30

**November 1
Integrity and Authenticity:
Partners In the Dance of Life**

**November 8th
Who Do You Think You Are?**

**November 11th
Remembering**

**November 15th
Walking Our Talk**

**November 22nd
The Integrity of Universalism**

**November 15th
Artisan: Spirituality of Harmony**

Upcoming Services

All services are Sunday mornings at 10:30am

November 1st **Integrity and Authenticity Partners In the Dance of Life**

The theme for November in a number of Canadian congregations, including ours, is integrity. Some have chosen authenticity which seems similar though not exactly, they don't show up as synonyms. Yet these two concepts do seem connected.

Presenter: Rev Debra Faulk
Service Leader: Danielle Webber, Intern Minister
Music: Jane Perry, Music Director

November 8th **Who Do You Think You Are?**

An examination of the gap between our pictures of who we think we are (or who we think we should be) and who we actually are. Sometimes authenticity means getting out of our own way!

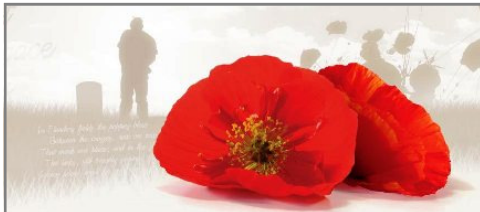
Presenter: Rev Karen Fraser Gitlitz*
Service Leader: Rev Debra Faulk
Music: Jane Perry, Music Director

*Developmental Minister with the Unitarian Congregation of Saskatoon and Consulting Minister Unitarian Fellowship of Regina

November 11th (11:00 am) **Remembering**

A special service to recognize Remembrance Day; the theme of the day is the longing for peace.

Presenter: Rev Debra Faulk
Music: Jane Perry, Music Director



November 15th **Walking Our Talk**

Integrity calls us to act on our convictions yet we don't always do so. What encourages us to move into action and what gets in our way. This service will include recognition of this year's Irvine Award winner, Bill Wuttunee, a man who truly walks his talk.

Presenters: Rev Debra Faulk, Sharon Henderson and Penney Kome
Music: Jane Perry, Music Director

November 22nd **The Integrity of Universalism**

Our church is called The Unitarian Church of Calgary – but Universalism has a large role to play in our Denomination. What is Universalism, and how do we reconcile Universalism in a denomination that no longer makes a statement of salvation. Can we look at this theology through a modern lens?

Presenter: Danielle Webber, Intern Minister
Music: Jane Perry, Music Director

November 29th **Artisan, Spirituality of Harmony**

The spirituality of the musical trio Artisan is best expressed through the lyrics of their songs. Topics that are near and dear to the hearts of Unitarians are explored with tenderness, passion, humour, and always with beautiful a capella harmonies. Their lyrics inspire this morning's service. At the Service Auction each year, Debra and Jane offer the opportunity to name the artist for a "Spirituality of" Service. Artisan is the choice of David Bradt.

Presenters: Rev Debra Faulk and Dave Bradt
Music: Jane Perry, Music Director, Artisan Tribute Band and assorted musicians

November's Spiritual Exercises

Option A: Acknowledging our Quirks Pick one thing that makes you distinctively you and then resolve to protect, celebrate or live into it for at least this month. Think of it as a “resolution to your integrity.” Consider where this distinctive characteristic comes from and who you choose to celebrate it.

Option B: What's The Big Deal about White Lies? White lies regularly come up in conversations about integrity. Are they really that big of a deal? Spend this month figuring out the role they play in your life. Monitor when you use them. See what patterns emerge. Do you use them to protect the feelings of others? Or to hide something about yourself? Do they serve your sense of integrity or betray it? Come to your group ensure what you learned?

Option C: Your Personal Model of Integrity We all have someone in our lives who shaped our sense of integrity significantly. Identify one or more people in your life who have modeled integrity for you. Think about what it was about the person that impressed you and the degree to which you reflect that characteristic in your own life.

Option D: Your Greatest Act of Integrity All of us have it: that time in our life on the strength of our character stood out and we acted out of our deepest sense of what was morally right or most true to our core. Revisit and recelebrate that moment. Spend some time reflecting on how that moment of high resolve not only brought you pride but challenge you to live up to it again and again.

Option E: A Personal Inventory Many of us, but not all of us, have the capability to do more to live our ideals. It is hard to know when we have given enough to others and when we need to conserve, or enjoy our own resources be that time or money. Living with integrity would require that we make such decisions as conscious choices, acknowledging that we could do more, but choose not to. The alternative is to have our allocation of resources, one of the most important decisions we could make, become the result of an unconscious decision making process. How intentional are you in allocating your time and money?

Questions to Live With

As has become our practice, be sure to engage these questions in advance of your group meeting and find the one that “hooks” you most. Then let it take you on an adventure. Live with it for the entire month. Allow it to break into—and break open—your ordinary thoughts. And then come to your Journey Group meeting prepared to share that experience with your group.

- 1. As a child or young adult, what did watching those around you teach you about integrity?** Were they positive or negative lessons? And maybe most importantly, how has that impacted you today, knowing that young ones around you are also watching you?
- 2. Has your integrity grown?**
- 3. Does integrity bring you joy? Or does it feel like work?**
- 4. One of our recommended quotes reads, “There are times in this harum-scarum world when figuring out the right thing to do is quite simple, but doing the right thing is simply impossible.” Are you facing such a situation right now? As you struggle, are you being kind to yourself?**
- 5. In her poem, “Now I Become Myself,” May Sarton, writes, “Now I become myself. It's taken time, many years and places; I have been dissolved and shaken, worn other people's faces...” Are you aware of wearing other people's faces? What's stopping you from taking them off?**
- 6. Parker Palmer writes, “I now know myself to be a person of weakness and strength, liability and giftedness, darkness and light. I now know that to be whole means to reject none of it but to embrace all of it.” What one thing could you embrace right now to feel more whole?**
- 7. Is your workplace a place of integrity? If not, how have you learned to stay true to yourself in the midst of those pressures to do otherwise?**
- 8. Have you raised your children to have integrity?**
- 9. Does your marriage have integrity?**
- 10. Do your friendships have integrity?**
- 11. Does your spiritual life have integrity?**

For Inspiration

As always, the following texts are not "required reading." We will not analyze or dissect these pieces in our groups. They are simply meant to spark your reflections—and maybe open you to new ways of thinking about what it means to "live in and with Integrity."

Resources

Online

The Calm Within

<http://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=2568>

Dewey Bozella was locked up for 26 years for a crime he did not commit. This story is about one man's journey to reclaim his life and hold on to his integrity against all odds.

A Lesson in Academic Integrity: The cost of plagiarism

<http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/teaching-and-learning/a-lesson-in-academic-integrity-as-students-feel-the-injustice-of-plagiarism/>

"Walking Your Talk: The Path of Personal Integrity" ~ Cat Thompson

<http://experiencelife.com/article/walking-your-talk-the-path-of-personal-integrity/>

The Insufficiency of Honesty

By Stephen L. Carter

An article exploring the meaning of integrity, and its differentiation from honesty.

<http://cunycomposers.wikispaces.com/file/view/Carter%2C%20Stephen%20-%20The%20Insufficiency%20of%20Honesty.pdf/129843253/Carter%2C%20Stephen%20-%20The%20Insufficiency%20of%20Honesty.pdf>

Seeing Ourselves in the Hunger Games

By Cynthia Landrum

How do we live with integrity amidst our own dystopian future?

<http://www.uuworld.org/ideas/articles/220173.shtml>

A Christopher Hitchens Memorial

<http://www.upworthy.com/people-were-outraged-by-what-he-said-his-entire-life-but-right-before-he-died-he-was-still-at-it?c=reccon2>

"Deception"

<http://www.radiolab.org/2008/mar/10/>

Lies, liars, and lie catchers. This hour of Radiolab asks if it's possible for anyone to lead a life without deception. We consult a cast of characters, from pathological liars to lying snakes to drunken psychiatrists, to try and understand the strange power of lying to yourself and others.

Against Innocence

by Rosemary Bray McNatt Does our political integrity prevent us from compromise?

<http://www.uuworld.org/2003/06/feature2.html>

A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward and Undivided Life by Parker Palmer

A Queer and Pleasant Danger by Kate Bornstein

On Lies, Secrets and Silence, Selected Prose by Adrienne Rich <http://www.brainpickings.org/2013/07/02/adrienne-rich-honorable-human-relationship>

Care of the Soul – Thomas Moore

Letters to a Young Poet – Rainer Maria Rilke. Link to online transcript of book --

<http://kbachuntitled.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/rainer-maria-rilke-letters-to-a-young-poet.pdf>

Man's Search for Meaning – Victor Frankl

Link to online transcript of book --

http://books.google.ca/books?id=F-Q_xGjWBi8C&printsec=frontcover&dq=man%27s+search+for+meaning&hl=en&sa=X&ei=ixwuVlnWH8utogSWpILA DQ&ved=0CB4Q6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=man's%20search%20for%20meaning&f=false

Man's Ultimate Commitment - Henry Nelson Wieman (Unitarian theologian)

Fiction

A Fine Balance – Rohinton Mistry

Jane Eyre – Charlotte Bronte

A Prayer for Owen Meany – John Irving

Regeneration – Pat Barker

A Tale of Two Cities – Charles Dickens

Movies

Locke

To Kill A Mockingbird

Pleasantville

Constant Gardener

Chocolate

The Shawshank Redemption

On The Waterfront

The Mission

Dead Poets Society

Thank You For Smoking

12 Monkeys

Billy Elliot

Children of Heaven (Iran)

Dead Man Walking

Far From Heaven

Nasty Girl (German)

Philadelphia

Saving Private Ryan

The Shawshank Redemption

Milk (Check out the UUA study guide: <http://www.uua.org/lgbtq/discuss/125446.shtml>)

Quotes to Inspire Integrity

Integrity noun

1. the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles; moral uprightness.
2. the state of being whole and undivided.

"I now know myself to be a person of weakness and strength, liability and giftedness, darkness and light. I now know that to be whole means to reject none of it but to embrace all of it."

- Parker Palmer

"Integrity is telling myself the truth. And honesty is telling the truth to other people." - Spencer Johnson

"Everyone makes mistakes, so being a person of integrity does not mean you haven't committed a moral or ethical violation, ever. It means having the strength of character to learn from those 'misbehaviors' and seek continual self-improvement." - Eric Kail

"Before we can even embrace the notion of integrity, we need to develop the ability to intellectually wrestle with the urge to rationalize away our underlying faults and the related consequences." - Eric Kail

"A little integrity is better than any career"

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

"But there are times in this harum-scarum world when figuring out the right thing to do is quite simple, but doing the right thing is simply impossible...."

— Lemony Snicket, *Horseradish: Bitter Truths You Can't Avoid*

"May what I do flow from me like a river, no forcing and no holding back, the way it is with children."

— Rainer Maria Rilke

I'm an Obliger, for sure! I do really well when other people are expecting me to do something, when I have a commitment with someone else ... but I tend to let myself off the hook if it's "only" a commitment to myself." -Leo Babauta"

"Keep fresh before me the moments of my high resolve. Despite the dullness and barrenness of the days that pass, if I search with due diligence, I can always find a deposit left by some former radiance. But I had forgotten. At the time it was full-orbed, glorious, and resplendent. I was sure that I would never forget. I had forgotten how easy it is to forget.

"There was no intent to betray what seemed so sure at the time. My response was whole, clean, authentic. But little by little, there crept into my life the dust and grit of the journey. Details, lower-level demands, all kinds of cross currents - nothing momentous, nothing overwhelming, nothing flagrant - just wear and tear. If there had been some direct challenge -a clear-cut

issue - I would have fought it to the end, and beyond.

"In the quietness of this place, surrounded by the all-pervading Presence of God, my heart whispers: Keep fresh before me the moments of my High Resolve, that in fair weather or in foul, in good times or in tempests, in the days when the darkness and the foe are nameless or familiar, I may not forget that to which my life is committed"- Howard Thurman

"Integrity is doing the right thing, even if nobody is watching." - Jim Stovall and C.S. Lewis

On some questions, Cowardice asks the question, "Is it safe?" Expediency asks the question, "Is it polite?" And Vanity comes along and asks the question, "Is it popular?" But Conscience asks the question, "Is it right?" And there comes a time when we must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular, but we must do it because Conscience tells us it is right."

- Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr

"Return to the most human, nothing less will nourish the torn spirit, the bewildered heart, the angry mind."

- May Sarton

Have the courage to say no. Have the courage to face the truth. Do the right thing because it is right. These are the magic keys to living your life with integrity. - W. Clement Stone

Real integrity is doing the right thing, knowing that nobody's going to know whether you did it or not. - Oprah Winfrey

Perhaps the surest test of an individual's integrity is his refusal to do or say anything that would damage his self-respect. - Thomas S. Monson

One of the truest tests of integrity is its blunt refusal to be compromised. - Chinua Achebe

You are in integrity when the life you are living on the outside matches who you are on the inside. - Alan Cohen

"I'm Much Too Alone in This World"

~ Rainer Maria Rilke

"...I want to unfold.

Nowhere I wish to stay crooked, bent; for there I would be dishonest, untrue.

I want my conscience to be true before you..."

<http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/16290>

"You are only afraid if you are not in harmony with yourself." - Hermann Hesse

REFLECTIONS

INTEGRITY



C.S. Lewis once said, *"Integrity is doing the right thing, even when no one is watching."*

Oftentimes we talk about this idea of integrity without grasping what it truly means. What if I told you it was not a single action, but a mind-set you needed to develop? Integrity is born in the mind and heart of a person. It comes from who you really are as a man or woman, and what you really believe about right and wrong, good and evil. And integrity is exhibited not in just one act of goodness, but in your whole character.

To teach your kids how to harness this vital virtue, you must first ask yourself if you really believe in the importance of modeling a life of integrity that your children can follow. If so, here are 4 practical ways to teach integrity to your kids. We need to teach integrity in:

- 1. What we say:** When you speak, people need to be able to trust that you will be true to your word. With a mind-set of integrity established, you will find that you'll be much more likely to speak truth and follow through with what you've said. This echoes the reality that we need to be careful to let our "yes" be yes and our "no" be no.
- 2. How we say it:** Do you find yourself speaking to your children in a sarcastic or condescending tone of voice? Replace this attitude with a patient demeanor. Once you have developed a mind and heart of integrity, positive actions and words will more naturally flow forth. So hold on to your integrity by honoring your family in the way you talk to them on a daily basis.
- 3. What we do:** Perhaps the most obvious, yet most important, way to teach your kids integrity is to lead by example. I know I often remind my kids not to speed on the highway, yet constantly drive too fast myself. Or, do you ever tell your kids to stop texting at the dinner table, only to check emails in the middle of a conversation they're having with you? Start being a model for your kids and live a life of integrity that they can follow.
- 4. How we do it:** We had a couple of guys come to our house to repair our air conditioning duct work. They didn't repair it right, and within a year we had to have it redone again. These contractors took shortcuts when they thought no one would find out, yet the truth eventually surfaced. Learn from their mistake, and teach your kids to do everything with excellence from the start, even when no one is watching. Why? Simply because it's the right thing to do!

Borrowed from Mark Merrill, Helping Families Love Well www.markmerrill.com/how-to-teach-integrity-to-your-kids

Resources for Younger Folks

Books

The Empty Pot by Demi
Amazing Grace by Mary Hoffman
The Day the Crayons Quit by Drew Daywalt
Ruthie and the (not so) Teeny Tiny Lie by Laura Rankin
Dear Mr. Rosenwald by Carole Weatherford
The Berenstein Bears and the Truth by Stan and Jan Berenstein
The Story of the Jumping Mouse by John Steptoe

Movies

Frozen
Brave
Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory
Mary Poppins
The Miracle Worker
It's a Wonderful Life
Babe
Charlotte's Web
Toy Story 2
War Games

"I meant what I said,
and I said what I meant.
An elephant's faithful, 100%"
-Horton the Elephant
(Dr. Seuss)



Looking Ahead

Themes for 2015-2016

September - **Promise**
October - **Grace**
November - **Integrity**
December - **Wonder**
January - **Resilience**

February - **Reconciliation**
March - **Renewal**
April - **Revelation**
May - **Tradition**
June - **Revelry**

Theme Based Listening Circles (TLCs)

You are invited to deepen your experience of the monthly theme by participating in a facilitated small group. These groups meet once a month, usually in the later part of the month to allow time to be with the theme, at various times and places in the city. If you are interested in a group, either as a facilitator or participant, please send an inquiry tlc@unitarianscalgary.org

Current times and places include:

4th Wednesday - 1:00 - 3:00
4th Friday - 10:00-12:00 - Unitarian Church of Calgary
4th Sunday noon - 2:00 - Unitarian Church of Calgary

The content for these packets is a group effort. We welcome submissions of your ideas of readings, stories, videos, visual images, questions, and spiritual exercises for each month's topic. While not everything will make it into this collection, it is useful for our worship team and our group facilitators. You can send submissions for any theme anytime - for October's theme of "Grace" by September 15th, to debra@unitarianscalgary.org.

Reflections



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*Thanks to all who contributed and deep appreciation to:
the Canadian Unitarian Congregations participating in the thematic ministry sharing circle,
and Rev. Scott Tayler's Soul Matters Sharing Circle.*