



Soul Matters

What does it mean to be a
people of COURAGE?

Contents

CALENDAR CONNECTIONS:	2
CHALICE LIGHTINGS & OPENING WORDS	3
MEDITATIONS & PRAYERS	6
READINGS	9
MUSIC	13
STORIES FOR ALL AGES	14
SERMON SEEDS	15
RECOMMENDED SERMONS	22
CLOSING WORDS	23
REACH OUT FOR SUPPORT & CONNECTION	24

Calendar Connections

Click on the name on each event for more information or inspiration.

Interfaith:

- [Feast of St Francis of Assisi](#) (Christian) - Oct. 4
- World Communion Sunday (Christian) - Oct. 7
- [Sukkot: Feast of Tabernacles](#) (Jewish) - Oct. 5 - Oct. 11*
- [Diwali: Festival of Lights](#) (Hindu) - Oct. 19
- National Observance of [Children's Sabbath](#) - Oct. 20-22
- [Reformation Day](#) (Christian) - Oct. 31
- [Samhain](#) (Wiccan) - Oct. 31 - Nov. 1

Unitarian Universalist:

- Birthday of [e e cummings](#) - Oct. 14

National & Cultural Holidays:

- [LGBTQ History Month](#)
- [Breast Cancer Awareness Month](#)
- [Bullying Prevention Month](#)
- [Indigenous Peoples Day](#) - Oct. 9
- [National Coming Out Day](#) - Oct. 11
- [UN Sunday](#) - Oct. 22
- Halloween, All Soul's Eve - Oct. 31

Important Historical Events:

- Birthday of Mohandas Gandhi - Oct. 2 (1869)
- Apple introduce new iPod - Oct. 13 (2005)
- John Brown's Raid - Oct. 16 (1859)
- Laquan McDonald is killed by officer Jason Van Dyke in Chicago - Oct. 20 (2014)
- Suffrage Movement March In New York - Oct. 23 (1915)
- War of the Worlds radio lay causes mass hysteria - Oct. 30 (1938)

For Fun and On the Fringe:

- World Vegetarian Day - Oct. 1
- First episode of Unitarian [Rod Sterling's](#) "Twilight Zone" - Oct. 1 (1959)
- [Mad Hatter Day](#) - Oct. 6
- [World Smile Day](#) - Oct. 6
- [Clergy Appreciation Day](#) - Oct. 8

Chalice Lightings & Opening Words

To Face The World's Darkness

From the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Harrisonburg Virginia

To face the world's darkness —
a chalice of light.
To face the world's coldness —
a chalice of warmth.
To face the world's terrors —
a chalice of courage.
To face the world's turmoil —
a chalice of peace.
May its glow fill our spirits, our hearts, and our lives.

All That We Have Been, All That We Will Become

By Leslie Ahuvah Fails

<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/meditation/all-we-have-been-all-we-will-become>

All that we have been separately
and all that we will become together
is stretched out before and behind us
like stars scattered across a canvas of sky.
We stand at the precipice, arms locked
together like tandem skydivers
working up the courage to jump.

Tell me, friends:
What have we got to lose?
Our fear of failure?
Our mistrust of our own talents?

What have we got to lose?
A poverty of the spirit?
The lie that we are alone?

What wonders await us in the space
between the first leap
and the moment our feet, our wheels
however we move our bodies
across this precious earth
touch down softly on unknown soil?
What have we got to lose
that we can't replace with some
previously unimaginable joy?

[And so, may we have courage in our leaping,
and gratitude in our landing.
And let us begin today!]

Bold and Courageous Together

By Rev. Erika A. Hewitt

<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/chalice-lighting/bold-and-courageous-together>

Reader 1:

The word courage comes from the Latin cor, which means heart. The original use of the word courage meant to stand by one's core: a reminder... that living from the Center is what enables us to face whatever life has to offer."

Reader 2:

To "encourage" means to hearten; to impart strength and confidence. This is our work, as a religious community: to encourage one another; to give one another the confidence and heart to live as fully as possible.

Congregation:

With full hearts,
we affirm our relationships with one another;
we recognize our agency and our connective power;
and we accept our responsibility to be bold and courageous.

We light this chalice,
symbol of all that we are, all that we have done together,
and all that we will [bravely become.]

Out of the Flames

by Sara Eileen LaWall

<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/opening/out-flames>

Out of the flames of fear
We rise with courage of our deepest convictions
to stand for justice, inclusion and peace

Out of the flames of scrutiny
We rise to proclaim our faith
With hope to heal a fractured and hurting world

Out of the flames of doubt
We rise to embrace the mystery, wonder and awe
of all there is and all that is yet to be

Out of the flames of hate
We rise with the force of love
Love that celebrates our shared humanity

Out of the flames we rise.

To Face the World's Shadows

by Lindsay Bates

<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/chalice-lighting/face-worlds-shadows>

To face the world's shadows, a chalice of light.
To face the world's coldness, a chalice of warmth,
To face the world's terrors, a chalice of courage.
To face the world's turmoil, a chalice of peace.
May its glow fill our spirits, our hearts, and our lives.

Invitation to Join the Journey

by Lyn Cox

<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/invocation/invitation-join-journey>

Note: this was written for a worship service with a Wizard of Oz theme.

Come you accidental pilgrims, you who find yourself on a journey of surprise and wonder. Come you who emerge into this place as an act of liberation.
Come you who seek a life of mindfulness and a place to test your thoughts.
Come you who bring hearts of all kinds: heavy hearts, rusty hearts, hearts broken open in revelation, hearts full of love to share.
Come you who seek courage, and you who have more courage than you realize.
Come you who stand behind the curtain, gathering up the resources to claim your truth.
Come you who have been in a bubble, you who are poised for transformation.

We begin our story again, gathering courage, love, mindfulness, and a sense of purpose. We gather as people of all ages, of different abilities, different backgrounds, and different perspectives. We share a covenant, a direction for our shared journey, and a commitment to encourage and challenge one another to spiritual growth.

This path will ask much from us. Let us move forward with love. Let us move forward with appreciation for one another. Let us move forward knowing we are not alone. Whoever you are, whatever your gifts, you are welcome to join this journey. You are welcome this very day!

Meditations & Prayers

If We Do Not Venture Out

by Marni Harmony (adapted)

<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/meditation/if-we-do-not-venture-out>

If, on a starlit night,
with the moon brightly shimmering,
We stay inside and do not venture out,
the evening universe remains a part of life we shall not know.

If, on a cloudy day,
with grayness infusing all
and rain dancing rivers in the grass,
We stay inside and do not venture out,
the stormy, threatening energy of
the universe remains
a part of life we shall not know.

If, on a frosty morning,
dreading the chilling air before the sunrise,
We stay inside and do not venture out,
the awesome cold, quiet, and stillness of
the dawn universe remains
a part of life we shall not know.

If, throughout these grace-given days of ours,
surrounded as we are by green life and
brown death, hot pink joy and cold gray
pain and miracles—always miracles—

If we stay inside ourselves and do not venture out
then the Fullness of the universe
shall be unknown to us
And our locked hearts shall never feel the rush of worship.

[And so, in the silence we now share, may we listen deeply
for that still and small but brave and bold voice within
that calls us to risk and reach
to open and emerge
to venture out
into the newness waiting to be known.]

Map of the Journey in Progress

by Victoria Safford

<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/meditation/map-journey-progress>

Here is where I found my voice and chose to be brave.

Here's a place where I forgave someone, against my better judgment, and I survived that, and unexpectedly, amazingly, I became wiser.

Here's where I was once forgiven, was ready for once in my life to receive forgiveness and to be transformed. And I survived that also. I lived to tell the tale.

This is the place where I said no, more loudly than I'd thought I ever could, and everybody stared, but I said no loudly anyway, because I knew it must be said, and those staring settled down into harmless, ineffective grumbling, and over me they had no power anymore.

Here's a time, and here's another, when I laid down my fear and walked right on into it, right up to my neck into that roiling water.

Here's where cruelty taught me something. And here's where I was first astonished by gratuitous compassion and knew it for the miracle it was, the requirement it is. It was a trembling time.

And here, much later, is where I returned the blessing, clumsily. It wasn't hard, but I was unaccustomed. It cycled round, and as best I could I sent it back on out, passed the gift along. This circular motion, around and around, has no apparent end.

Here's a place, a murky puddle, where I have stumbled more than once and fallen. I don't know yet what to learn there.

On this site I was outraged and the rage sustains me still; it clarifies my seeing.

And here's where something caught me—a warm breeze in late winter, birdsong in late summer.

Here's where I was told that something was wrong with my eyes, that I see the world strangely, and here's where I said, "Yes, I know, I walk in beauty."

Here is where I began to look with my own eyes and listen with my ears and sing my own song, shaky as it is.

Here is where, if by surgeon's knife, my heart was opened up—and here, and here, and here, and here. These are the landmarks of conversion.

On Being Scared

by Jane Ranney Rzepka

<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/meditation/scared>

I spent some time this weekend with an old friend, a dentist. She's considering buying her own practice, but wonders if she could retain the current patients and attract new ones. She wonders if the office staff would like her, or befriend her too much, or resent her, or desert her; she wonders about bill collecting, spending too much time on crowns and root canals (which she likes) at the expense of oral surgery (which she doesn't); she wonders about being a good wife and mother and all-around person. She's scared.

My friend is intelligent, well organized, energetic, terrific with teeth... but scared. It makes me think we all are. Scared we'll lose the company's big Formica account, scared we'll miss the time change, scared we're handling the kids' curfew wrong, scared our money will be in all the dumbest places when tax laws

change, scared of our failing health, scared of everything falling apart, scared that nobody really loves us, scared of the fragility of all creation. Scared.

O Spirit of Life and Love, we aren't the giants we'd like so much to be, and the world can loom so large. When all is quiet and we are small and the night is dark, may we hear the tender breathing of all who lie awake with us in fear, that together we may gather strength to live with love, and kindness, and confidence.

The Courage of Patience

by Richard S. Gilbert

<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/meditation/courage-patience>

When we are overwhelmed with the world
And cannot see our way clear,
When life seems a struggle between tedium and apathy
Or frenzy and exhaustion;
When today seems a punishment and tomorrow a torment,
May we find the courage of patience.

May we recognize courage in ourselves and our companions;
That is not dramatic, that elicits no fanfare;
That commands little notice by the world,
That is forgotten and taken for granted.

May we learn how to cope
Like those who live one day of pain at a time,
Who see the long path of suffering and do not despair,
Who inspire us by their patient courage,
When we are impatient and afraid.

May we know such courage
And quietly celebrate its presence among us.

Amen

The Courage to Not Look Away - Video/Music Meditation

Chains by Usher

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Knd2el4Lfw>

Usher and Nas teamed up on a multi-platform protest song "Chains." The song debuted last October as an interactive video that used facial recognition technology to pause the track every time the viewers' eyes deviated from the screen. (The screen would read "Don't Look Away" if the viewer stopped watching.) The singer and rapper re-released the track with a new video montage of portraits of black people of different ages, genders and locations who were killed at the hands of police brutality.

All The Way - Video Meditation

Charles Bukowski

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k6_QUhUPrF4

Readings

Come to the Edge

Christopher Logue

<https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/come-to-the-edge/>

Come to the edge.
We might fall.
Come to the edge.
It's too high!
COME TO THE EDGE!
And they came,
And he pushed,
And they flew.

Brave Space

Micky ScottBey Jones, inspired by an unknown author's poem

<https://uucf.org/blog-041017/>

Together we will create brave space
Because there is no such thing as a "safe space"
We exist in the real world
We all carry scars and we have all caused wounds.
In this space
We seek to turn down the volume of the outside world,
We amplify voices that fight to be heard elsewhere,
We call each other to more truth and love
We have the right to start somewhere and continue to grow.
We have the responsibility to examine what we think we know,
We will not be perfect.
This space will not be perfect.
It will not always be what we wish it to be
But
It will be our brave space together,
and
We will work in it
side by side.

Courage – it takes more

by Phillippa Yaa de Villiers

Full poem: <http://www.poetryarchive.org/poem/courage—it-takes-more>

"...It takes more than breath to be alive
more than blood to find your line
more than a hand to throw a stone
it takes a heart, a heart
beaten into bricks and built into a house

a house where humanity finds a home...
The best of us are rivers who give themselves to oceans,
rivers who throw themselves over cliffs into oceans..."

I Will Not Die an Unlived Life

Dawna Markova

<https://www.values.com/inspirational-quotes/6160-i-will-not-die-an-unlived-life-i-will-not-live>

I will not die an unlived life
I will not live in fear
of falling or catching fire.
I choose to inhabit my days,
to allow my living to open me,
to make me less afraid,
more accessible,
to loosen my heart
until it becomes a wing,
a torch, a promise.
I choose to risk my significance;
to live so that which came to me as seed
goes to the next as blossom
and that which came to me as blossom,
goes on as fruit.

Roll the Dice

Charles Bukowski

Full poem: [http://www.agonia.net/index.php/poetry/13902956/Roll the Dice](http://www.agonia.net/index.php/poetry/13902956/Roll_the_Dice)

"...if you're going to try, go all the way...
it could mean not eating for 3 or 4 days.
it could mean freezing on a park bench.
it could mean jail, it could mean derision, mockery,...

you will be alone with the gods...
you will ride life straight to perfect laughter...
It is the only good fight there is."

A Vote For the Gentle Light

by Charles Bukowski

Full poem: <http://inwardboundpoetry.blogspot.com/2006/08/181-vote-for-gentle-light-charles.html>

"there's no courage there,
just the desire to
possess something—admiration, fame, lovers,
money, any damn thing
so long as it comes easy..."

Some Notes on Courage

by Susan Ludvigson

Full Poem: <https://wordsoftheyear.com/2016/09/12/some-notes-on-courage-by-susan-ludvigson/>

“Think of a child who goes out
into the new neighborhood,...
Or your friend whose father
locked her in basements,...
She forces herself indoors each day,
sheer will makes her climb the stairs...
Think of doing it again.”

Most of the Days of the Week

by Deirdre Fagan

Full Poem: <https://wordsoftheyear.com/2015/07/15/most-of-the-days-of-the-week-by-deirdre-fagan/>

On Monday you make pancakes, pay the bills...
On Tuesday you start the Crock-Pot, dust the blinds, rake the leaves...
Wednesday after tucking the kids into bed and starting the dishwasher, you wash your face...turn out the lights, and climb into bed yourself...
Thursday night you have a little bit too much to drink... then you remember something Nietzsche said about thoughts of suicide...
Friday you go out for groceries and consider high speed, a curve, a tree, or maybe that bridge over there...
Saturday,...there are kids on top of you, climbing over you, giggling,...
When the grease in the bacon pan begins to sizzle, you don't imagine dousing yourself in it or starting a grease fire. Instead you serve up breakfast and sip your coffee admiring the life you have created, the one still in the making.

The Courage to Resist Cynicism

by Maria Popova

<https://www.brainpickings.org/2016/05/16/annenberg-commencement/>

Don't just resist cynicism — fight it actively. Fight it in yourself, for this ungainly beast lays dormant in each of us, and counter it in those you love and engage with, by modeling its opposite. Cynicism often masquerades as nobler faculties and dispositions, but is categorically inferior. Unlike that great Rilkean life-expanding doubt, it is a contracting force. Unlike critical thinking, that pillar of reason and necessary counterpart to hope, it is inherently uncreative, unconstructive, and spiritually corrosive. Life, like the universe itself, tolerates no stasis — in the absence of growth, decay usurps the order. Like all forms of destruction, cynicism is infinitely easier and lazier than construction. There is nothing more difficult yet more gratifying in our society than living with sincerity and acting from a place of large-hearted, constructive, rational faith in the human spirit, continually bending toward growth and betterment. This remains the most potent antidote to cynicism. Today, especially, it is an act of courage and resistance.

Warbler

by Jim Harrison

This year we have two gorgeous
yellow warblers nesting in the honeysuckle bush.
The other day I stuck my head in the bush.
The nestlings weigh one-twentieth of an ounce,
about the size of a honeybee. We stared at
each other, startled by our existence.
In a month or so, when they reach the size
of bumblebees they'll fly to Costa Rica without a map.

Courage

by Sri Chinmoy

<http://www.poetseers.org/poem-of-the-day-archive/poems-about-courage/index.html>

To speak ill of the world
Needs courage,
But fortunately or unfortunately
Everybody has that courage.
To love the world
As one's own,
Very own,
Needs courage.
Unfortunately, most of us are wanting
In that courage.
The courage of the heart,
The courage of the soul
We badly need,
And not the courage
Of the unruly,
Aggressive,
Impure,
Demanding.

Music

Soul Matters Musicians Recommendations

We are excited to share that we now have three sources of support for music:

- **Monthly Worship Packet:** We will continue to share ideas for contemporary and popular music here in our monthly packets
- **UUMN (UU Musicians Network) Online Database:** We're grateful to the wonderful leadership of the UUMN who have agreed to partner with us and add our monthly themes to the UUMN music database. Not only does this allow all Soul Matters musicians to post and share ideas there, but it also brings us the suggestions from other UU musicians around the country. The UUMN is currently updating their database and will share a link to it soon. We will share details about accessing it and contributing to it very soon through email and on the Soul Matters Worship support page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/soulmatterssharinqcircle/>.
- **Soul Matters Worship Support Facebook Page:** This support page is for on-going sharing. If you come across a great piece during the month, please post and share it with your fellow Soul Matters musician and worship teams.
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/soulmatterssharinqcircle/>

Other Recommendations

Quiet

MILCK with GW Sirens and Capital Blend

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V9lond4SXgk>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QZD05-ZvQFs>

"I can't keep quiet..."

We Are Building Up a New World

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qfuWQhWFK6k>

We are building up a new world (3x)

Builders must be strong.

Courage sisters don't be weary,

Courage brothers don't be weary,

Courage people don't be weary,

Though the road be long.

Rise and shine and give God glory (3x), Lift every soul in song!

I Ain't Afraid

Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F5fKaa7cXuM&list=RDOvIPa28cVfA&index=14>

Stories For All Ages

A Sea of Pink

<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/sing/session9/sea-of-pink>

Tell “A Sea of Pink” from Tapestry of Faith, Sing to the Power, Session 9 and hand out pink armbands. Gets at the theme of courage against bullying.

The Wise Teacher’s Test

<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/tales/session2/story1>

From Tapestry of Faith’s Moral Tales, Session #2 Conscience, Hearing the Inner Voice. Addresses the theme of having the courage to act on truth.

Life of an Ally

<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/youth/call/workshop5/172096.shtml>

From Tapestry of Faith, Heeding the Call for youth, story of a woman who preceded Rosa Parks. Courage to act.

The Wolf of Gubbio

<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/welcome/session9/118424.shtml>

For St. Francis’ Day/ Blessing of the Animals (Oct. 4). From Tapestry of Faith, Wonderful Welcome.

A Different Kind of Superhero; The Story of Christopher Reeve

<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/journeys/session3/132246.shtml>

Start out by wearing a Superman Cape or T-shirt. Addresses the courage to persevere.

Toibio Quimada Making A Difference

<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/journeys/session1/132144.shtml>

About the Universalist Church of the Philippines from Tapestry of Faith, Faithful Journeys. Hold up your favorite book, or a favorite book from a child, perhaps Harry Potter. Celebrates the courage to follow your heart.

Supriya’s Bowl

<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/lovesurrounds/session12/activity2>

A story of how a little girl saved her village from hunger. Good for Children’s Sabbath Sunday (Oct. 22). Use with musical instruments for a collaborative telling. From Tapestry of Faith, Love Surrounds Us, A Peaceful and Fair World

Fire, Water, Truth and Falsehood

<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/toolbox/session3/fire-water-truth>

Celebrates how being courageous and telling the truth will finally win out. From Ethiopia, as told in Tapestry of Faith, Toolbox of Faith, Integrity. Tell with a candle and a cup of water.

Sermon Seeds

Angles, Ideas & Twists To Get Your Sermon Started!

(Don't forget to explore the small group packet for sermon seeds.

In addition to using quotes and poems to enhance your sermon, you can find numerous sermon angles in the questions and the spiritual exercises.)

Quote: The cost of not bravely being true to yourself.

"The reward for conformity was that everyone liked you except yourself." - *Rita Mae Brown*

"Courage is acting out of self-respect for doing the right thing. To not act, or to do something different other than the right thing, is soul murder. Not being true to oneself and others leaves one diminished and in some ways less than human." - *Harry Holleywood*

Quote: Sometimes what we fear needs to be embraced not defeated.

"Perhaps all the dragons in our lives are princesses who are only waiting to see us act, just once, with beauty and courage. Perhaps everything that frightens us is, in its deepest essence, something helpless that wants our love." - *Rainer Maria Rilke*

Quote: Bravely standing up - even in defeat - is a victory.

Sometimes standing against evil is more important than defeating it. The greatest heroes stand because it is right to do so, not because they believe they will walk away with their lives. Such selfless courage is a victory in itself." - *N.D. Wilson*

Quote: Security and joy may not come in the same package.

On this day of your life I believe God wants you to know... that safety is not the thing you should look for in the future. Joy is what you should look for. Security and joy may not come in the same package. They can, but they also cannot. There is no guarantee." - *Neale Donald Walsh*

Quote: Courage arises from love.

"I believe that courage follows love.... When I love something I can be very strong in defense of it, or very brave in pursuit of it. And I think my own courage has come from being loved well enough so that I could love myself and others." -- *A Soul Matters Member*

Quote: "Courage is a heart word..."

"Courage is a heart word. The root of the word courage is cor - the Latin word for heart. In one of its earliest forms, the word courage meant "To speak one's mind by telling all one's heart." Over time, this definition has changed, and today, we typically associate courage with heroic and brave deeds. But in my opinion, this definition fails to recognize the inner strength and level of commitment required for us to actually speak honestly and openly about who we are and about our experiences -- good and bad. Speaking from our hearts is what I think of as "ordinary courage." - *Brene Brown*

Four quotes on the courage to follow your heart:

"Our word 'courage' comes from the French word *coeur*, 'heart'. Courage is a willingness to act from the heart, to let your heart lead the way, not knowing what will be required of you next, and if you can do it." --
Jean Shinoda Bolen

"Passion is what drives us crazy, what makes us do extraordinary things, to discover, to challenge ourselves. Passion is and should always be the heart of courage." - *Midori Komatsu*

And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become. Everything else is secondary."
- *Steve Jobs, Stanford commencement speech, June 2005*

"It takes courage ... to endure the sharp pains of self discovery rather than choose to take the dull pain of unconsciousness that would last the rest of our lives." - *Marianne Williamson*

Video: Courageous Conversations: A Conversation With White People on Race

<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/01/opinion/a-conversation-with-white-people-on-race.html? r=1>

Video: The Courage to Confront Our Unjust Justice System - 2 TED Talks

https://www.ted.com/talks/adam_foss_a_prosecutor_s_vision_for_a_better_justice_system

https://www.ted.com/talks/bryan_stevenson_we_need_to_talk_about_an_injustice

Video: The Courage of and need for a Politically Engaged Spirituality

A talk by William Sloane Coffin

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-XvGhii8xuE>

Video: Moral Courage TV

YouTube channel dedicated to videos about moral courage

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbp94Mntcb2IV9n4BtHXpUq>

For LGBTQ History Month:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fAbilsZLtN4>

For Bullying Prevention Month:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TstO_xRejHq&list=PLcqw1jHO-pitmcfbSpCEpJ7j0QetxRj79

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w349PXuyZLA&list=PLcqw1jHO-pivNG0Q-80_128mOIBSYqFxF&index=2

For engagement about racial prejudice and healing:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O4QZrui7lp8>

Video: Cornel West 2015 Ware Lecture

<http://www.uuworld.org/articles/cornel-west-ware-lecture>

"We begin with a critical self-inventory. If there's white supremacy in me, then my hunch is that you've got some work to do."

Dr. Cornel West challenged the audience to "sacrifice something precious in the name of integrity." He took "timid" megachurch leaders, politicians, Wall Street figures, and others to task, suggesting that present times require "moral resolve."

"There are four questions every generation has to wrestle with," said West, channeling twentieth-century intellectual W.E.B. DuBois. "How shall integrity face oppression? . . . What does honesty do in the face of deception? . . . What does decency do in the face of insult? . . . How does virtue meet brute force?" West implored the assembly—and the nation—to "aspire to integrity" and courageous truth-telling.

Podcast: Maya Angelou on Courage - *On Being*

<https://onbeing.org/blog/maya-angelou-on-courage/>

“Just weeks before her death, our host Krista Tippett interviewed the great writer Dr. Maya Angelou. In audio from that interview, Maya Angelou remembers her encounter with W.E.B. Du Bois in Ghana — and offers some wisdom for upcoming generations:

“I would encourage young men and women, black and white and Asian and Spanish-speaking and all, to look at Dr. Du Bois and realize that courage is the most important of all the virtues, because without courage you can’t practice any other virtue consistently. You can’t be consistently fair or kind or generous or forgiving any of those without courage.”

Podcast: The Courage to Be Wrong - *TED Talk*

https://www.ted.com/talks/kathryn_schulz_on_being_wrong

Most of us will do anything to avoid being wrong. But what if we're wrong about that? "Wrongologist" Kathryn Schulz makes a compelling case for not just admitting but embracing our fallibility.

The Courage of Heretics - A This American Life Radio show

<http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/304/heretics/>

(news interview with Pearson) <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/14337492/>

The story of Reverend Carlton Pearson, a nationally-known evangelical pastor in Tulsa, Oklahoma, who cast aside the idea of Hell, and with it everything he'd worked for over his entire life. A story of a very courageous man who followed his conscience and lost just about everything. UU connection: Carlton Pearson and the remaining members of his church joined with our UU congregation in Tulsa, Oklahoma!

Podcast: Courage is Born from Struggle - *On Being* interview with Brene Brown

<https://onbeing.org/programs/1-courage-born-struggle-brene-brown/>

“I always ask a very simple question to people. I just say, think of the last time you did something that you thought was really brave or the last time you saw someone do something really brave. And I can tell you as a researcher — 11,000 pieces of data — I cannot find a single example of courage, moral courage, spiritual courage, leadership courage, relational courage, I cannot find a single example of courage that was not born completely of vulnerability. We buy into some mythology about vulnerability being weakness and being gullibility and being frailty because it gives us permission not to do it.”

Story: Frozen Fear by David Ullendorff

<https://themoth.org/stories/frozen-fear>

A father's courage is put to the test in his own home. “But I still don’t believe there are people hiding in the bushes. I just can’t live that way.”

Essay: 11 Ways White America Avoids Taking Responsibility for its Racism By Dr. Robin Diangelo

The pernicious impact of "white fragility" and the revolutionary courage to accept feedback.

<http://www.hopkinsmn.com/police/equity/pdf/11-ways-avoid-taking-responsibility.pdf>

Also: <https://notesfromanaspiringhumanitarian.com/white-people-increase-your-racial-stamina-take-the-pledge/>

Essay: We need co-conspirators, not allies: how white Americans can fight racism

By Rose Hackman

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/26/how-white-americans-can-fight-racism>

The courage to move into the role of co-conspirator. “Black folks are readily risking their lives every day purely by existing,” he says, while the risk being taken by white communities to be in solidarity with black liberation is “getting over that uncomfortable feeling.”

Essay: The Courage to Speak the Truth, but Not to Punish

by James Hoggan with Thich Nhat Hanh, excerpt from I’m Right and You’re an Idiot

<http://www.utne.com/community/speak-the-truth-but-not-to-punish-zm0z17szsel?pageid=1#PageContent1>

“The work seems to be about balance: speaking up against injustice with courage and passion but with greater awareness of the dangers in becoming overly adversarial and treating those who disagree as foes... Anger can give us the mettle to speak with courage and conviction, but also the venom that blinds us to the views of others...”

Essay: Face Fear and Keep Going By Carolyn Gimian

<https://www.mindful.org/face-fear-and-keep-going/>

“Fear, while critically necessary for life itself, can be horrifying and crippling. It can also eat away at us day in and day out. And yet, welcoming our fear turns out to be the best way to conquer it. Over and over again.”

Essay: The Courage to Acknowledge Our Frailty by Courtney E. Martin

Full essay: <https://onbeing.org/blog/courtney-martin-the-courage-to-acknowledge-our-frailty/>

“...I see this same freedom in the emotional courage of my friends who lost their son, too. They are unusually in-touch with what is sacred in the midst of the chaos of this moment, juggling two small kids and two big jobs. We rarely hear them complaining about sleeplessness, as empathic as they are when we do. They’re always up for hosting last-minute dinners at their house — the kids eating more ice cream than vegetables, and sometimes acting like wild things, and, oh well, who wants a glass of wine, and isn’t it all so amazing? And it is. Which is something that is often hard to hang on to when the default assumption is that our very safety and/or health is guaranteed. It’s not. I’ve learned that over and over again...”

Reflection: The courage and strength of vulnerable inter-being, by Richard Rohr

Full reflection: <https://cac.org/absolute-vulnerability-2017-03-08/>

“Weakness” isn’t a trait any of us wish to be associated with, and yet the apostle Paul describes no less than God having weakness! Paul says, “God’s weakness is stronger than human strength” (1 Corinthians 1:25). How could God be weak?... Human strength I would describe as self-sufficiency. God’s weakness I would describe as inter-being. Human strength admires autonomy and holding on. There is something positive about this; it’s not all wrong. But the irony is, the mystery of Trinity is much more about letting go, which looks like weakness...”

Reflection: The Courage to Endure, by Chaplain George Tyger

Full reflection: <https://www.questformeaning.org/quest-article/the-courage-to-endure/>

“This courage to endure is more difficult to find than the courage required for a one-time act of heroism. This everyday courage to drive on day in, day out requires more than overcoming fear. It requires us to overcome ourselves.

Maybe you never imagined yourself as courageous. Maybe you see your work as mundane. You are not out kicking down doors, grabbing up bad guys, or stopping the next spectacular attack. Even on a combat deployment, very few of us here are doing any of those things. But that does not mean that what you do does not require a real kind of courage, the kind of courage that gets you out of bed every morning and gives you the power to keep going late into the night...

Reflection: Three Courageous Choices That Make Us Better, Happier People

By Kyana Miner

<https://tinybuddha.com/blog/3-courageous-choices-that-make-us-better-happier-people/>

“Courage doesn’t always roar. Sometimes courage is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying, ‘I will try again tomorrow.’” -Mary Anne Radmacher

“Courage is the ability to move forward boldly and authentically, guided by your intuition, despite fear, pain, or uncertainty. The word courage actually comes from the Latin word “cor,” which means heart. Inner courageousness allows us to follow our hearts, listen to our intuition, and lead soulfully satisfying lives while having all of our needs, desires, and goals met.”

Article: How to Cultivate [the skill of] Ethical Courage, by Brooke Deterline - Greater Good

Full article: <http://www.dailygood.org/story/1402/how-to-cultivate-ethical-courage-brooke-deterline/>

“Sometimes we only realize our deepest values once we’ve contradicted them...it’s possible to reframe the situation so that we’re less likely to “go along to get along,” and more likely to take courageous action...Below are three ways to stay true to your values and find the courage to stand up for them. 1. Learn your patterns; 2. Listen to your body; 3. Use the power of commitment...”

Article: Courage as a Skill, by Kathleen K. Reardon - HBR

Full article: <https://hbr.org/2007/01/courage-as-a-skill>

“...In business, courageous action is really a special kind of calculated risk taking. People who become good leaders have a greater than average willingness to make bold moves, but they strengthen their chances of success—and avoid career suicide—through careful deliberation and preparation. Business courage is not so much a visionary leader’s inborn characteristic as a skill acquired through decision-making processes that improve with practice. In other words, most great business leaders teach themselves to make high-risk decisions. They learn to do this well over a period of time, often decades.

Learning to take an intelligent gamble requires an understanding of what I call the “courage calculation”: a method of making success more likely while avoiding rash, unproductive, or irrational behavior. Six discrete processes make up the courage calculation: setting primary and secondary goals; determining the importance of achieving them; tipping the power balance in your favor; weighing risks against benefits; selecting the proper time for action; and developing contingency plans...”

Book: The Courage to Love, by William Sloane Coffin

Brief review: <https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/william-sloane-coffin-2/the-courage-to-love/>

Book: A Passion For The Possible, by William Sloane Coffin

<https://www.amazon.com/Passion-Possible-Second-William-Sloane/dp/0664228569>

Book: The Courage to Be, by Paul Tillich

https://www.amazon.com/Courage-Be-Third-Terry-Lectures/dp/030018879X/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1499706965&sr=8-1&keywords=courage+to+be+paul+tillich

Courage is the self-affirmation of being in spite of the fact of nonbeing (e.g., death, anxiety, meaninglessness etc,). Faith is the expression of the power to be. Faith is not a theoretical affirmation of something uncertain, it is the existential acceptance of something transcending ordinary experience.

Book Excerpt: The Courage to Deal with Deadly Secrets

from Ed Friedman's Generation to Generation, pages 52-54 on the function of secrets in families and other human systems:

"Family secrets act as the plaque in the arteries of communication; they cause stoppage in the general flow and not just at the point of their existence.

The communication system of many families is riddled with secrets. Favorite subjects are an affair, illegitimacy, elopement, terminal illness, abortion, adoption, institutionalization (crazy or criminal), previous marriage, black sheep in previous generation (skeleton in the closet), finances, and any minor matter where one family member says to another, "But don't tell Dad (Mom, etc.)."

Far more significant than the content of any family secret is the ramification of its existence for the emotional processes of the entire family. These effects are specific and predictable. Secrets function to divide a family, as an avalanche would a community. Those "in" on the secret will become far better able to communicate with one another than with those in the outsider group, about any issue, not just about the secret. For example, a minister once complained how he was unable to help four sisters who were recuperating from an accident because they had yet to be told that their brother had died in the same crash. He spent so much time pre-thinking everything he said, for fear it would lead to questions about the brother, that he was totally unable to be the spontaneous self that was the basis of his pastoral effectiveness. When that same emotional phenomenon occurs in a family over a long period of time, very rigid triangles result.

Therefore, a second effect of secrets on a family system is that they create unnecessary estrangements as well as false companionship. For example, a father and daughter conspire not to tell mother about the abortion. Mother and daughter's relationship is likely to be affected well beyond the specific issue. An overall atmosphere of unnecessary distance will develop between them. On the other hand, father and daughter will become closer, but it will be a shallow togetherness.

A third major effect of secrets on a family is that they distort perceptions. Family members will become confused or misled by information they obtain because they really are seeing only part of the picture. An ironic example of this is the husband who was considering leaving his wife because she had become "cold, selfish, and distant." She was having an affair, which she kept a closely guarded secret for fear that he would leave her if he found out. When she finally told him the truth at the urgings of the counselor, though he first expressed deep hurt and rage, breaking almost every glass in the house, he then began to feel better about things because he was now able to put together, in a comprehensive way, many messages and actions that had not made sense. Almost immediately, they found they were able to communicate better on every subject.

The most important effect of secrets on a family's emotional system is that they exacerbate other pathological processes unrelated to the content of the particular secret, because secrets generally function to keep anxiety at higher energy levels. When secrets are revealed, despite the fact that family members might at first be upset (either over the information or the fact that the secret is out), the anxiety level of the family generally decreases. This is particularly the case if the family continues to work at the issues that then surface, issues that often had precipitated the forming of a secret. The formation of a family secret is always symptomatic of other things going on in the family.

To some extent, secret formation feeds back to the previously mentioned issues concerning pain. Family members will say that they kept a secret "to spare" someone's feelings; the truth is more likely to be that they did so in order to spare their own feelings. Few of us are irreparably hurt by upset. Chronic anxiety, on the other hand, kills.

All of the above is equally true in the parish. The clergy are constantly triangled by various clandestine messages that parishioners report to them about one another, or about the other minister. That network of interlocking triangles is always in operation. But to the extent that messages about the minister are reported back and forth between "family members" in secret, then such secrets will promote pockets of pseudo-mutuality and unnecessary estrangements throughout the emotional system of the entire congregational family.

The ultimate proof of the function and the power of secrets within a family is that when they are revealed, more change usually takes place throughout the entire system than could have been attributed solely to the content of that secret. In short, secrets create and perpetuate triangles; they are always on the side of the existing homeostasis, the labeling process, and the chronicity of symptoms. They are never on the side of challenge and change. Secrets are very serious stuff."

Recommended Sermons

Fear

Rev. Christine Robinson

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZMQDKutKNSE>

“Some things will scare you so bad that you will hurt yourself...”

The Courage to Unfurl Yourself into Grace

Rev. David Ruffin

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JOYqCKXsAB4>

The courage to let go of the stories of who we want and planned to be...

Who Would True Valour See?

Rev. Shawn Newton

<http://www.firstunitarianontario.org/media/sermons/2013/2013-11-10%20Shawn%20Newton%20-%20Who%20Would%20True%20Valour%20See.pdf>

“My hope, this day, is that each of us might be ever more willing to summon the courage required to be known in our full humanness, wondrous warts and all...”

Cultivating a Culture of Courage and Risk

Rev. Roger Bertschausen

<http://fvuuf.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Cultivating-a-Culture-of-Risk1.pdf>

“So, friends, what parts of your life feel stale right now? What parts feel like you're under a mushroom, living in the dark, poop up to your chin? And what large or, especially, small risks could you take to step out of the stale comfort of the status quo today?...”

Henry David Confronts The Donald

Rev. Rob Hardies

<http://www.all-souls.org/node/1713>

Henry David Thoreau and the courage and question of civil disobedience. “Let your life be a counter-friction to stop the machine!”

Closing Words

Go Boldly, by Jean M. Olson

<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/blessing/go-boldly>

May you be brave enough
to expose your aching woundedness and reveal your vulnerability.

May you speak your deepest truths,
knowing that they will change as you do.

May you sing the music within you,
composing your own melody, playing your song with all your heart.

May you draw, paint, sculpt, and sew,
showing the world your vision.

May you write letters, poetry, biography, slogans, graffiti, the great novel,
laying bare your words to love and hate.

May you love even though your heart breaks again and again.

And until the end of your days,
may your life be filled with possibilities and courage.

The World is Too Beautiful, by Eric Williams

<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/benediction/world-too-beautiful>

The world is too beautiful to be praised by only one voice.

So may you have the courage to sing your part.

The world is too broken to be healed by only one set of hands.

So may you have the courage to use your gifts.

The Peace of Wild Things, by Wendell Berry

When despair for the world grows in me and I wake in the night at the least sound in fear of what my life
and my children's lives may be, I go and lie down where the wood drake rests in his beauty on the
water, and the great heron feeds. I come to the peace of wild things who do not tax their lives with
forethought of grief. I come into the presence of still water. And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

Reach Out For Support & Connection

Like the Soul Matters Inspiration Facebook Page:
<https://www.facebook.com/soulmatterssharingcircle/>

Join the Soul Matters Worship Leader Support Facebook Page:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/soulmatterssharingcircle/>

Join the Soul Matters Ministers' Support Facebook Page:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/719788338192570/>

And don't forget about our monthly online planning & implementation labs for worship leaders. Mid-month, we host one lab for any leader (lay and clergy) and another one ministers. Susan, our Soul Matters Director, sends out notices about the specific time and dates of the meetings well in advance.

Contact Susan (susan@soulmatterssharingcircle.com) for more information.



<https://www.facebook.com/soulmatterssharingcircle/>
<https://www.facebook.com/soulmatterssharingcircle/>

© 2017-18 Soul Matters ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Packets are for use by member congregations of the Soul Matters Sharing Circle.

Learn how to join at <http://www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com>