

SYNONYMS: release, discard, set free, surrender, liberate

Taking It Home:

Activity: Spiritualize a space in your life

The international bestseller, *The Life Changing Magic of Tidying Up*, helps us see cleaning up clutter in a new light. It's not about eliminating mess; it's about letting in joy and creating space in which our spirits can breath. The author's challenge to all of us is this: "Anything that doesn't "spark joy" is to be touched, thanked and ceremonially sent on its way!" This month take up the challenge:

Your assignment: Read the article or book (below) and pick a space to tidy up. Take pictures before and after. Find some time to reflect on what it felt like to let go of things you owned.

Books:

The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up: The Japanese Art of Decluttering and Organising - Marie Kondo
TITLE- AUTHOR

Article:

Top Tips to Decluter Your Home-
<http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2014/nov/27/top-tips-to-joyfully-declutter-your-home-from-marie-kondo>

Video:

Griefwalker- Documentary about the lead of a palliative care team
<http://www.nfb.ca/film/griefwalker>

These materials are part of the small group ministry program at Jefferson Unitarian Church. For more information on using them, or to set up your small group, please contact Rev. Eric Banner.
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Jefferson Unitarian Church October 2015 Small Group Session: Letting Go 1.0

**Opening/
Chalice
Lighting:**

As we come together,
I go into myself.
I dig into myself for a deep answer.
I have patience with everything that remains
unsolved in my heart, and I live the question.
What is required of us is that we love the difficult
and learn to deal with it.
In the difficult are the friendly forces, the hands
that work on us.
It is clear that we must embrace the struggle.
Right in the difficult we must have our joys, our
happiness, our dreams.
We create this space to go into ourselves and see
how deep the place is from which our
lives flow. **(RM Rilke, adapted by Scott Rudolf)**

Check In:

Up to 2 minutes per person to share what they
bring with them since the last time the group met

Reading:

Writers have to get used to launching something
beautiful and watching it crash and burn. They
also have to learn when to let go of control, when
the work takes off on its own and flies, farther
than they ever planned or imagined, to places
they didn't know they knew. All makers must
leave room for the acts of the spirit.

— Ursula LeGuin

**Resting in
the
Silence:**

Take 2 minutes to just sit. If your group is up to it,
go longer, as long as you let people know how
long the silence will be.

**Questions
and
Quotes
From The
Common
Bowl:**

Share the quotes and questions for today's
session in the way that is customary in your small
group. You can pass the sheet, you can select
them randomly from a bowl after having cut them
into individual pieces. Or whatever works well for
your small group.

**Sharing/
Deep
Listening:**

Allow each person up to five minutes to share
what has come up for them about today's topic. If
someone does not use the full five minutes, make
sure you count to ten full breaths before moving
on to the next person, in case the speaker is not
truly finished.

**A Second
Share:**

If time allows, you may have a brief second share
from those who have found they have more to
say, keeping in mind your commitment to going
no longer than ninety minutes.

**Closing
Reading:**

When cast into the depths, to survive, we must
first let go of things that will not save us. Then we
must reach out for the things that can.

— Rev. Forrest Church

**Extinguish
the
Chalice:**

Join hands and say the following together:
**As we let go of each others hands, may we
remain connected in our hearts until we meet
again.**
And then, extinguish your chalice until you meet
again.

What Does It Mean To Be A People of Letting Go?

When cast into the depths, to survive, we must first let go of things that will not save us. Then we must reach out for the things that can. — Rev. Forrest Church

All [of us] must leave room for the acts of the spirit. — Ursula LeGuin

We cling. You name it, we've wrapped our grasping fingers and anxious hearts around it: success, safety, society's standards of beauty, personal desires to be accepted, perfectionism, duty, fear, grudges, hurts, hopes, stuff, shame and privilege. Whether the object of our grasping is good or bad is not, as we learn, truly the issue. It's the grasping itself. That's the real problem. Holding on too long and too tightly is never good for the soul. So our faith pleads with us, "Let it go!"

But here's the twist: Our faith follows that up quickly with "Let it in!" This spiritual dance takes a two-step. As Forrest Church puts it, letting go must be followed up by reaching out. Or maybe it's better to say opening up. Indeed, the tragedy of grasping so tightly is not simply that we anchor ourselves to that which burdens us, but that we end up shutting out that which is trying to save and feed us. Letting go is ultimately about letting in. It's really about making room.

And the great gift of Unitarian Universalism is its claim that this is what "salvation" is all about. With all due respect to our orthodox Christian brothers and sisters who see salvation as a process of becoming cleansed or purified, we join with those who see it as a journey of remaining open. To some the world may appear a place chock-full of temptations to keep out, but to us the world is full of gifts, second chances and new starts desperately trying to get in! However, because of our clinging, there is no room.

All of which means that letting go is really an act of faith. Yes, it takes strength, resolve, discipline and courage. But mostly it requires we believe that, once we release our grips, life will not leave us empty-handed.

So friends, do you believe? Do you trust that making room will be worth it? Do you have faith that letting go will be met with a life-giving coming in? This month, let's find out.

May we all be blessed by this spiritual two-step!

Everything I've ever let go of has claw marks on it. — **Unknown**

Are you living in (and holding on to) a story about yourself that isn't letting you grow?

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Are you looking at (and holding on to) a story about others that isn't letting them grow? A story that is blinding you to the wholeness and complexity of who they really are? That is putting them in a box that they don't deserve? That is putting up an unnecessary wall between you and them?

I am not ready to die, but I am learning to trust death as I have trusted life. I am moving toward a new freedom born of detachment, and a sweeter grace — learning to let go. — **from *Gestalt at Sixty* by May Sarton**

Is staying in control controlling you? Is it time to let go of always being in charge?

To let go is not to quit. Indeed to let go is to commit to something particular! The letting go is of whatever holds you back. To let go is to find that central and ultimate value in life worthy of your commitment, and then to surrender all else to win it.

Are you ready to forgive yourself? Sometimes the kind of mercy most needed is mercy for oneself. Is it time to let go of being so hard on yourself?

Let go or be dragged. — **Zen proverb**

Of the Seven Deadly Sins, anger is possibly the most fun. To lick your wounds, to smack your lips over grievances long past, to roll over your tongue the prospect of bitter confrontations still to come, to savor the last toothsome morsel of both the pain you are given and the pain you are giving back—in so many ways it is a feast fit for a king. The chief drawback is that what you are wolfing down is yourself. The skeleton at the feast is you. — **Frederick Buechner**

What's hard, my father taught me, is not so much the proper match of stone and hand, nor the way the arm must swing exactly parallel to shore, what's hard is what's unteachable: reckoning that point at which you must release, knowing something's bound to take a proper course because you followed through all the way, clear to the end — it's learning the hard way how to let go. - **Skipping a Stone on Water by Charles Darling**