

DEFINITION.

1. the act or process of freeing someone or something from another's control; the removal of traditional social rules, attitudes, etc.; a movement seeking equal rights and status for a group

SYNONYMS: setting free, salvation, emancipation, unchaining, release

Taking It Home:

Activity: DANCEBREAK

If music and dance have saved you before, they can save and free you again. This exercise asks you to let music and/or dance interrupt your weekly routine.

Your assignment: Sign up for DANCEBREAK! at <http://dancebreak.weebly.com/join-the-dance-party.html>

By signing up, you will receive a weekly email that has a song/video to dance along with. If you want a dancebreak more than once-a-week, then set an alarm on your calendar and visit the DANCEBREAK archives:

<http://dancebreak.weebly.com>.

Books:

Liberation: New Works on Freedom from Internationally Renowned Poets edited by Mark Ludwig

Article:

Missing Out: Liberating ourselves from the curse of our unlive lives

https://www.brainpickings.org/2015/08/17/missing-out-adam-phillips/?mc_cid=74b7067de7&mc_eid=04e3c8a6e2

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.

ericbanner@jeffersonunitarian.org

(303)279-5282 ext. 28

<http://www.jeffersonunitarian.org/SmallGroups>



Jefferson Unitarian Church March 2016 Small Group Session: Liberation 1.0

**Opening/
Chalice
Lighting:**

“True wisdom comes in understanding that sometimes, you are both the prison and the key.”
— **Johnathan Jena**

Check In:

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

Reading:

When personal guilt in relation to a past event becomes a continuous cloud over your life, you are locked in a mental prison. You have become your own jailer. Although you should not erase your responsibility for the past, when you make the past your jailer, you destroy your future. It is such a great moment of liberation when you learn to forgive yourself, let the burden go, and walk out into a new path of promise and possibility. Self-compassion is a wonderful gift to give yourself. — **John O'Donohue in *Eternal Echoes***

**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:**

We are not trapped or locked up in these bones. No, no. We are free to change. And love changes us. And if we can love one another, we can break open the sky. — **Walter Mosley**

**Extinguish
the
Chalice:**

Join hands and say the following together:
May I be an agent of liberation, for others, or for myself, or maybe even both, until we meet again.
And then, extinguish your chalice until you meet again.

What Does It Mean To Be A People of Liberation?

*“True wisdom comes in understanding that sometimes, you are both the prison
and the key.” —Johnathan Jena*

Sometimes the key is right in our hand.

Let's be clear: Liberation is about struggling against “others.” There **are** forces, structures and people that put bars around us. Liberation is indeed about “opposing the powerful,” “dismantling systems,” and “fighting *them* for freedom.” But sometimes the bars are of our own making. Sometimes the limits and boxes are self-imposed. Sometimes, we are indeed both the prison and the key.

So this month, let's make sure to look in all directions. Let's look honestly and hopefully at the many ways that liberation requires a clear-eyed re-assessment of our choices, not just a battle against those bad guys. All of the great religions agree: We are more powerful than we realize, or want to admit. We can forgive and free ourselves from the cage of resentment. We can let go of jealousy. We can stop playing the self-defeating games of status, money and beauty. We don't have to keep telling ourselves that life is unfair and we've been cheated. We can let that chip fall from our shoulder and freely move on.

Christian author, Israelmore Ayivor, writes, “You have the right to suppress yourself, oppress yourself and depress yourself. You also have the right to impress yourself. And let yourself feel happy too!” There is something perfectly balanced about that quote. It's both critical and kind. Confrontational and inspirational. It honors the fact that there are bars that hem us in, but it also invites us to notice when the key is setting right there in the lock.

May this be the month when we notice and turn that key.

The sculptor Michelangelo was once asked how it was that he could create such beautiful works. "It's very simple," he answered. "When I look at a block of marble, I see the sculpture inside it. All I have to do is remove what doesn't belong." What can you remove that doesn't belong in yourself? What might be liberated by removing what doesn't belong? What beauty is waiting for you to give it a bit more room?

When things are taking their ordinary course, it is hard to remember what matters." -Marilynne Robinson

No one can be perfectly free until all are free. — **Herbert Spencer**

If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time, but if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together." - Lila Watson

How is your balance between spiritual/personal liberation and social/political liberation? Are they feeding each other or fighting? Or just not talking?

It is only through disruptions and confusion that we grow and are set free, jarred out of ourselves by the collision of someone else's private world with our own.

— **Joyce Carol Oates**

Is the thing you do to feel better actually making you feel worse? Has what you turn to for liberation become a bit of a trap?

I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. — **Henry David Thoreau**

Are you ready to take off the mask? Do you even notice that it is on?

Jesus's resurrection is the beginning of God's new project not to snatch people away from earth to heaven but to colonize earth with the life of heaven. That, after all, is what the Lord's Prayer is about. — **N.T. Wright**

Are you looking for liberation and freedom in far away places and possibly not noticing it is waiting for you right back at home? Or right there where you are standing now?

We will find the key to our liberation only when we accept that what we once did to survive is now destroying us. — **Laura van Dernoot Lipsky**

Is kindness waiting for you to pick it up and liberate someone? Maybe even yourself?

Liberation begins with an acceptance of a past we can't change, an unrelenting conviction that the future can be different, and the stubborn wisdom to use the past to make the future what the past was not.— **Craig D. Lounsbrough**