

DEFINITION : the act of producing or causing to exist; an original product of the mind, especially an imaginative artistic work; the world; the universe.

SYNONYMS: cosmos; nature; life; formation; genesis; handiwork; opus

Taking It Home:

Activity: Your Resume of Failures

Sit down with a piece of paper and spend a day or two listing all your life failures. Then take another day or two and consider them in a new light. Jot down a few bullet points under each “failure” explaining how those dead ends actually became a new road, how what seemed a moment of coming up empty really turned out to be a time of discovering something new, something you would have never looked for otherwise.

Then come to your group ready to share what you learned about creation and blessed failures.

Books:

The Green Boat by Mary Pipher

The Everything Seed by Carole Martignacco

Article: “Ten Things Creative People Know”

“Do you consider yourself creative? If the answer is ‘no,’ you are not alone. ... It turns out that you don't have to be a great artist to be creative. Creativity is simply our ability to dream things up and make them happen.”

<http://www.dailygood.org/story/766/ten-things-creative-people-know-peggy-taylor-charlie-murphy/>

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://jeffersonunitarian.org/connection/small-group-ministry/>



Jefferson Unitarian Church

April 2016

Small Group Session: Creation 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: The writing life requires courage, patience,
persistence, empathy, openness, and the ability
to deal with rejection. It requires the willingness to
be alone with oneself. To be gentle with oneself.
To look at the world without blinders on. To
observe and withstand what one sees. To be
disciplined, and at the same time, take risks. To
be willing to fail — not just once, but again and
again, over the course of a lifetime. “Ever tried,
ever failed,” Samuel Beckett once wrote. “No
matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better.”
— **Dani Shapiro**

**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:** To be alive: not just the carcass
But the spark.
That's crudely put, but ...
If we're not supposed to dance,
Why all this music?
— **Gregory Orr**

**Extinguish
the
Chalice:** Join hands and say the following together:
**May the light of creativity burn in our lives until
we meet again.**
And then, extinguish your chalice until you meet
again.

What Does It Mean To Be A People of Creation?

*Creativity is simply our ability to dream things up and make them happen. —
Peggy Taylor*

Amen. It *is* about dreaming and imagination. It is about being able to envision what others haven't. It is about noticing connections that haven't been drawn. Even connections between us and the earth, and us and each other. To be a people of creation is indeed to dream the "not yet."

But what about that other part? "...and make them happen." There's something in there that sometimes gets short shrift. Yes, creation requires the ability to imagine the "not yet," but it also requires the courage to live into it.

Which means that this month is not just about imagination, artistry and self-expression, but also about bravery. It takes courage to offer a unique expression. It takes courage to try new things and fail. Heaven knows it takes courage to create and plant seeds for that which won't be finished in your lifetime. Creativity asks us to leave the familiar, to break with the pack, to risk being singled out. Yeah, there is joy, beauty and play in creation, but there is also insecurity, isolation and the sheer exhaustion of trying again and again until you finally stumble on that one and lucky moment of getting it right.

And so maybe that's why we also better talk about "co-creation" this month. Something as daring as creativity is dangerous if we try to do it alone. Indeed, where did we get that silly idea that artists and inventors are isolated, independent geniuses?! If there ever was a myth, that is definitely one. There is no such thing as a "person of creation"; only "people of creation"! New ideas are created in the clash of debate. New art occurs only when inspired by those who have gone before. New and better forms of community are built on the back of those who have toiled and sacrificed long before we put ourselves on the line. Simply put, there are no creators without companions.

So this month, let's honor the bravery that allows the creative instinct to come alive. But let's also give thanks for the companions that make it all possible. And, yes, ok, let's go ahead and indulge a little in the sheer joy and sacred fun of dreaming things up!

Every act of creation is first of all an act of destruction. — **Pablo Picasso**

What if you started every day with “In the beginning...”?

All the arts we practice are apprenticeship. The big art is our life. — **M.C. Richards**

What are you building, painting, composing or planting with your life?

All children are artists. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up.
— **Pablo Picasso**

When was the last time you “failed beautifully”? Is fear of failure preventing your life from becoming art?

The extravagant gesture is the very stuff of creation. After the one extravagant gesture of creation in the first place, the universe has continued to deal exclusively in extravagances, flinging intricacies and colossi down eons of emptiness, heaping profusions on profligacies with ever fresh vigor. The whole show has been on fire from the word go! — **Annie Dillard**

When was the last time you created (or helped create) something that will outlive you?

It is the tension between creativity and skepticism that has produced the stunning and unexpected findings of science. — **Carl Sagan**

Human salvation lies in the hands of the creatively maladjusted. — **Martin Luther King, Jr.**

Are you as “creatively maladjusted” as you’d imagined you would be?

A spirituality of work is based on a heightened sense of sacramentality, of the idea that everything that is, is holy and that our hands consecrate it to the service of God. When we grow radishes in a small container in a city apartment, we participate in creation. We sustain the globe. When we sweep the street in front of a house in the dirtiest city in the country, we bring new order to the universe. We tidy the Garden of Eden. We make God’s world new again. When we repair what has been broken or paint what is old or give away what we have earned that is above and beyond our own sustenance, we stoop down and scoop up the earth and breathe into it new life again, as God did one morning in time only to watch it unfold and unfold and unfold through the ages. — **Joan Chittister**

What’s your question? Your question may not be listed above. As always, if the above questions don't include what the theme is asking from you, spend the month listening to your days to hear it.