

First Parish Church of Groton, Small Group Ministry

Session 6: Possibilities

Facilitators/Date: _____

Supplies: Chalice, Singing Bowl, matches, printed questions for each participant, pencils, pens

1. Chalice Lighting/Opening Words: 2 min

All the possibilities of your human destiny are asleep in your soul. You are here to realize and honor these possibilities. When love comes in to your life, unrecognized dimensions of your destiny awaken and blossom and grow. Possibility is the secret heart of time.

~John O'Donohue, Anam Cara: A Book of Celtic Wisdom~

2. Check-in/Sharing: up to 30 min (Divide the time by number of participants, allowing for short interval of silence in between sharing.) Invite people to check in by sharing:

- *How is it with your spirit? –or– What has stirred your passion this week?*

- *And/or: Did you have any further thoughts about last week's topic?*

3. Topic: TOTAL TIME 60 min

A. Introduction and Questions: 5 min

You do not need to know precisely what is happening, or exactly where it is all going. What you need is to recognize the possibilities and challenges offered by the present moment, and to embrace them with courage, faith and hope.

~Thomas Merton~

Man often becomes what he believes himself to be. If I keep on saying to myself that I cannot do a certain thing, it is possible that I may end by really becoming incapable of doing it.

On the contrary, if I have the belief that I can do it, I shall surely acquire the capacity to do it even if I may not have it at the beginning.

~Mahatma Gandhi~

Where there is possibility there is choice. And where there is choice there is freedom.

~Gabriella Goddard~

Not knowing when the dawn will come/I open every door...

~Emily Dickinson~

A disciple...can never imitate his guide's steps. You have your own way of living your life, of dealing with problems, and of winning. Teaching is only demonstrating that it is possible.

Learning is making it possible for yourself.

~ Paulo Coelho, *The Pilgrimage*~

The only way of discovering the limits of the possible is to venture a little way past them into the impossible.

~Arthur C. Clarke~

(Distribute Questions, last page, & Read out loud)

B. Silence for Reflection/Writing/Drawing: 10 min

Invite group into 5-10 minutes of silence during which they are asked to reflect on the questions. Participants are invited to use this time for writing and drawing their responses if they wish.

C. Sharing: 40 min

Invite each person to share their response as they feel moved, rather than clockwise. Give each person equal time to share. *If time* after each person has shared, invite people into a more free flowing discussion of the theme. Coaches may need to direct the conversation back to the questions.

4. Check-out: 10 min

Encourage people to check out with a final thought or reflection about the theme (or any other thoughts about the session) and how the session might shape or impact their life in any way in the week ahead.

5. Introduction of Next Week's Topic 1 min

6. Closing Words 1 min

But we have only begun to love the earth.
We have only begun to imagine the fullness of life.
How could we tire of hope? -so much is in bud.
How can desire fail? -we have only begun to imagine justice and mercy,
only begun to envision how it might be to live as siblings with beast and flower,
not as oppressors.

Surely our river cannot already be hastening into the sea of nonbeing?
Surely it cannot drag, in the silt, all that is innocent?
Not yet, not yet- there is too much broken that must be mended.
Too much hurt we have done to each other that cannot yet be forgiven.

We have only begun to know the power that is in us if we would join
our solitudes in the communion of struggle.
So much is unfolding that must complete its gesture,
so much is in bud.
~ Denise Levertov, *Beginners*~

7. Blessing to Extinguish the Chalice 1 min

May the efforts we have made here today
to listen with caring and compassion
sustain us in the days ahead.
May these efforts bring peace into our lives
and into the lives of all those whom we touch.
And now, may love surround us, may joy gladden us, may peace lie deep within.
May our lives and the lives of all those we love go well.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION: POSSIBILITIES

1. What does being open to possibilities mean in your life?
2. Are the best years behind us or before us in terms of your sense of possibility? Where do you see yourself in the future? (next week? six months? longer range ?) How are you spending your time now? How will this future self compare to who you are today?
3. How do you keep a sense of possibility alive in your heart? How do you stay open to life and the unexpected?
4. What signs of “budding” do you see around you?
5. In considering possibilities, what is in your spiritual toolkit: a sense of humor? an appreciation for mystery? a love of relationships? a commitment to justice? something else?