

# Gathering for Beliefs and Self-Deception

## Words of the Day

I changed my beliefs about ...

## Chalice Lighting

We light this chalice to shine on our time together. In its light we celebrate the relationships and understanding we are creating in this place and time. May our sharing be deep. (*Light chalice*)

## The Basket

## Sharing of Joys and Concerns

## Silence, holding ourselves and each other in silent support

## Shared Readings

There are no facts, only interpretations. *Friedrich Nietzsche*

Doubt is not the opposite of faith; it is an element of faith. *Paul Tillich*

Alice laughed: "There's no use trying," she said; "one can't believe impossible things." "I daresay you haven't had much practice," said the Queen. "When I was younger, I always did it for half an hour a day. Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast."

*Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland*

We assume that politicians are without honor. We read their statements trying to crack the code. The scandals of their politics: not that men in high places lie, only that they do so with such indifference, so endlessly, still expecting to be believed. *Adrienne Rich*

It takes considerable courage and commitment to be brutally honest with oneself. But it is precisely this willingness to stop our chronic self-deception and face the truth that finally sets us free.

*Stephen Diamond*

Respect the delicate ecology of your delusions. *Tony Kushner, Angels in America*

Making sense of the world and the happenings within it is nothing more than our brain's individual interpretations of the signals received as we go through our days interacting with our environments ... Every spoken word we hear, every written word we read, every experience we have, absolutely everything, is the product of our brain's subjective interpretation of stimuli.

*Debbie Hampton*

Reality is not always probable, or likely. *Jorge Luis Borges*

Our beliefs are what create our experiences. As we change our beliefs, we alter our perception, our version of reality. *Iyania Vanzant*

Perhaps the foremost lesson which I have learned is that emotions rule the world, rather than statistics, information, or anything else. *Roger W. Babson*

Believe those who are seeking the truth; doubt those who find it. *André Gide*

## **Deep Sharing/Deep Listening**

**Round 1:** Share your reflections on beliefs and delusions, considering the preparation materials.

**Round 2:** Share additional thoughts or reflect on what others have shared.

## **Closing Circle**

## **Extinguishing the Chalice**

We extinguish this flame and we remember the warmth of our community, the light of our wisdom, the generosity of our sharing. We keep these in our heart until we meet again.

*(Extinguish the chalice.)*

## **Song/Chime**

## **Announcements**

### **The Covenant**

I commit myself:

- to come to meetings when I possibly can, knowing that my presence is important to the group
- to let the facilitator know if I will be absent or need to quit
- to share with the facilitator the responsibility for good group process by watching how much time I take to speak and noticing what is going on for others
- to do the reading and thinking about the topic ahead of time
- to not gossip about what is shared in the group, and tell only my own story to others
- to honor the safety of the group by listening to what others share with an open heart
- to refrain from cross-talk, judging, giving advice, or advocating a specific view
- to share as deeply as I can when it is my turn and to stay on the “I-message.”