

Gathering for Listening

Chalice Lighting

Let us seek the quiet and the calm
Let us lay aside our loud calling
Let us lay aside our struggle . . .

Let us speak softly that we may hear
Let us enter into the quiet.

Jay E Abernathy, Jr., Enter into the Quiet

Introductions

Tell us about yourself in 4 or 5 sentences. Here are some possibilities.

I grew up in

I have been (teacher, parent, engineer, artist, caregiver, salesperson . . .)

I am interested in (gardening, reading, social justice, painting, . . .)

My family or support system (partner, children, friends . . .)

In this covenant group I hope

The Basket (Words of the Day)

When I was truly listened to, I felt

Silence, holding ourselves and each other in silent support

Business

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.”

Shared Readings

Listen as though your life depended on it. It does. *Phil Cousineau*

The greatest gift we can give another is our presence. *Thich Nhat Hahn*

The first duty of love is to listen. *Paul Tillich*

I believe we can change the world if we start listening to one another again. . . . Simple, truthful conversation where we each have a chance to speak, we each feel heard, and we each listen well.
Margaret Wheatley

Listening is a hug you give with your mind. *Barbara Nixon*

To “listen” another’s soul into a condition of disclosure and discovery may be almost the greatest service that any human being ever performs for another. *Douglas Steere*

Listen to yourself and in that quietude you might hear the voice of God. *Maya Angelou*

It’s not about what you say. It’s about creating a space where every person can hear, discover and listen to their own voice. *Parker J. Palmer*

Love is the quality of attention we pay to things. *J.D. McClatchy*

I suspect that the most basic and powerful way to connect to another person is to listen. Just listen. Perhaps the most important thing we ever give each other is our attention. *Rachel Naomi Remen*

Introducing the Process for Deep Sharing/Deep Listening

Rounds of Sharing. There are two rounds of sharing. During each round, one person speaks at a time. Speakers share from the heart as deeply as they are willing, reflecting on the topic and their feelings, thoughts, and experiences. The job of listeners is to listen deeply, keeping their hearts open.

Round 1. Each person in the group takes about five minutes to reflect aloud on the topic and the preparation materials. The facilitator starts. Everyone who wants to speak gets one turn, in any order they choose. Anyone may pass. As each person finishes speaking, there are a few breaths of silence. Then the next person speaks.

Round 2. This is an opportunity to share additional reflections as well as thoughts prompted by what others have shared. The speaker still focuses on his or her thoughts, feelings, and experiences and remains mindful of our commitment not to judge another’s sharing, give advice, or advocate a position. Everyone who wants to speak gets a turn, and everyone is mindful of time so that each person has an opportunity to speak.

Sharing and Listening

Round 1. Share some reflections on listening and the preparation materials.

Round 2. As time allows, 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.

Song/Chime

Announcements