

Of Coping Skills & Visionaries

Why wouldn't we want to help make one another's lives more enjoyable? Especially in wholesome and nourishing ways?

That was one of my primary thoughts & insights the day after election day.

I used to have a more elaborate sense of purpose, that took more words to describe: to help each of us to recognize our own holy/ wholeness and to create opportunities to celebrate this sacred essential oneness together in beloved community.

But now it feels simpler: to help make our lives more enjoyable (ideally in wholesome & nourishing ways).

Since the election, I have been observing my own way of being with what is. For myself and those whom I counsel, I notice that I have been steering towards both coping skills and visionaries.

Some of us may need to explore new (to us) coping skills and/or to recommit to noticing when a spiritual practice or coping skill is needed, rather than a debate with someone whom we see as "other," or a harsh self-directive to "just push through it."

The good news is that most coping skills that have worked at any time in our lives when we've felt anxious, afraid, out of control, despairing, or emotionally debilitated in any way are likely to help this time: calling oneself to presence, conscious breathing, meditation, crying, showers & baths, nurturing hobbies, time with well loved friends, family & pets, hiking, gardening, making & enjoying music & poetry. Celebrating what is good and available to us in each moment. Finding beauty & gritudes.

The day after election day, I was also feeling into the necessity for calm, connection, and care. Each one of us is irreplaceable. Times ahead appear as though they will be challenging, perhaps in many ways even life-threatening, to more of us than before. It is a good time to remember that the way that we relate is as both particle and wave, like light. We can see each of us as nouns, individual, separate, independent people. Or we can center the verb. Perhaps we are the sum of our relating; perhaps the interactions are what's

essential. Can we call ourselves to love one another earnestly and to demonstrate a kind & gentle curiosity, even more than we had before?

The Jewish sacred text, Pirkei Avot, states that “We are not obligated to complete the work, but neither are we free to desist from it.” Many visionaries, in UU spheres and beyond, have been offering gatherings and posting ideas, encouragement, and strategies for being in relationship and doing the work. I especially commend to you resources at this UU site:

<https://sidewithlove.org/>

“Side with Love is a public advocacy campaign that seeks to harness love’s power to stop oppression. It is sponsored by the [Unitarian Universalist Association](#) and all are welcome to join.”

There are many other visionary organizations and encouraging thoughts, coping skills, and memes that I hope we will share with one another over the weeks and months and years ahead, as we continue the work of coming together for spiritual support and to build the world we dream of (or simply rise to support one another in loving & surviving the world in which we now find ourselves).

I want to apologize for not publishing something for you sooner. As your part time Minister, I am charged with Sunday Services & Pastoral Care. Since Nov 6th, I have felt a pull to write and publish something for you, but I was at a loss. My words and ideas spent longer than usual forming and rising. I had to engage my own coping skills and seek my own sources of inspiration and motivation. Some of you have unknowingly helped me with that, by sharing your own questions, musings, draft sermons, and touchstones so far.

Hopefully you’ve also heard reminders from the pulpit that I am available for pastoral care. If you need help with hoping, coping, self-regulating, or embracing life, please reach out to me by email, by chatting with the Caring Committee, or by leaving a message on the UUFLG voicemail. I aspire to respond with care within a few days or sooner.

Deepening in community is what may save us. Please don’t be a stranger.