

Spiritual Deepening Circles January 2020: From Fear to faith

Session 1

Arriving	10 min	10 minutes before starting time
Singing	2 min	Gathered Here in the Mystery of the Hour Light the chalice
On our hearts Go round	5 min	– each person can say if something is on their heart tonight. Limit 1-2 sentences this is not a time for extended check-in
Gathering reading	3 min	Fear by Ruth Gendler (read twice)
Connecting <i>go around.</i>	5 min	One question for each to answer. When was the last time you were afraid? 1-2 sentence answer,
Readings	5 min	Seeing Into the Darkness Mark Nepo
Silence	2 min	May use bell or sound, timer or 12 deep breaths
Activity	15 min	Make sure everyone has something to write on and to write with. Show them the colored pens and pencils they can use. Read the instructions together and answer any questions. Give them 10 minutes for drawing and then remind them to review the questions in preparation for sharing then 5 min.
Silence	2 min	May use bell or sound, timer or 12 deep breaths
Sharing	45- 60 min	Popcorn style, time limits controlled by facilitators, no dialogue, questions or comments
Silence	2 min	May use bell or sound (or 12 deep breaths)
Responding	10-15 min	Second opportunity for sharing, responding to others, no questions or dialogue. No one speaks twice before everyone who wants to, speaks once.
Take Away	10 min	Go around – one thing that you will take away from tonight’s session in a few words. For example: what moved you or what insights did you have.
Closing	5min	Reading – by Jane Ranney Rzepka
Business	10 min	Final comments by facilitators, reminder of confidentiality and no unsolicited comments/advice. Date of next meeting
Singing	2 min	Trust the Light Within Your Heart Extinguish the chalice

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Session 1: Gathering reading
From “The Book of Qualities,” by J Ruth Gendler

Fear

Fear has a large shadow, but she herself is quite small. She has a vivid imagination. She composes horror music in the middle of the night. She is not very social, and she keeps to herself at political meetings. Her past is a mystery.

She warned us not to talk to each other about her, adding that there is nowhere any of us could go where she wouldn't hear us. We were quiet. When we began to talk to each other, she changed. Her manners started to seem pompous, and her snarling voice sounded rehearsed.

Two dragons guard Fear's mansion. One is ceramic and (of) Chinese design. The other is real. If you make it past the dragons and speak to her close up, it is amazing to see how fragile she is. She will try to tell you stories. Be aware. She is a master of disguises and illusions. Fear almost convinced me that she was a puppet-maker and I was a marionette.

Speak out boldly, look her in the eye, startle her. Don't give up. Win her respect, and she will never bother you with small matters.

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Seeing into Darkness- Mark Nepo

Fear gets its power from our not looking, at either the fear or what we're afraid of. Remember that attic, or closet door behind which something terrifying waited, and the longer we didn't look the harder it was to open that door?

As a boy, this obsessed me until I would avoid that part of the house. But, finally, when no one was home, I felt compelled to face the unknown. I stood before that attic door for the longest time, my heart pounding. It took all my small inner boy strength to open it.

I waited at the threshold, and nothing happened. I inched my way in and stood in the dark even longer until my breathing slowed, and to my surprise, my eyes grew accustomed to the dark. Pretty soon I was able to explore the old musty boxes, and found pictures of my grandfather, my father's father, the only one in the family that I am like. Seeing those pictures opened me to aspects of my spirit.

It seems whatever the door, whatever our fear – be it love or truth or even the prospect of death- we all have this choice again and again: avoiding that part of our house, or opening the door and finding out more about ourselves by waiting until what is dark becomes seeable.

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Session 1 – Activity: Naming your Fears

Using the blank piece of paper and the colored pencils and pens, write down your fears. These could be fear for yourself, for others, or for the world. Write/draw them in a way that represents their significance to you. Be creative.

Some ideas:

- Use bolder colors and larger script for your biggest fears and vice versa
- Make clusters of fears for those that are related.
- Use single words or phrases, whatever helps you articulate your fears.
- Include fears from various stages in your life – identify those which are still present for you.
- Use drawings, lines, scribbles, spirals, or whatever helps you to express your fears.

After you have completed your drawing, consider the prompt questions for sharing on the back of this page.

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Session 1 Prompt questions for sharing

Please consider any of the following questions in preparation for sharing.

- If you could eliminate one fear from your life, which would it be?

- Describe a time in your life when you were impacted by fear. What helped you? How did you move through or beyond those feelings?

- **Pick one or two of the fears from your drawing and answer these questions:**
 - How is this fear present in my life right now? How does it affect me?
 - What can I learn from this fear?
 - What would my life be like without this fear?

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Closing Reading

When all is quiet and we are small and the night is dark, may we hear the tender breathing of all who lie awake with us in fear, that together we may gather strength to live with love, and kindness, and confidence.

Jane Ranney Rzepka

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Session 2

Arriving	10 min	10 minutes before starting time
Singing	2 min	Gathered Here in the Mystery of the Hour Light the chalice
On our hearts Go round	5 min	– each person can say if something is on their heart tonight. Limit 1-2 sentences this is not a time for extended check-in
Gathering reading	3 min	Forged in the Fire of Coming Together
Connecting <i>go around.</i>	5 min	One question for each to answer. Who is the most courageous person you can think of and why are they courageous? 1-2 sentence answer,
Reading	5 in	Quotes from the basket
Activity	10-15 min	(Read the instructions from the paper, respond to any questions before you go into room 9 encourage them to choose their images in silence.) Have one facilitator come back to room 12 and one stay in 9 until all are out. Allow 10 minutes to pick out images and 5 min to respond to the questions.
Silence	2 min	May use bell or sound, timer or 12 deep breaths
Sharing	45- 60 min	Popcorn style, time limits controlled by facilitators, no dialogue, questions or comments
Silence	2 min	May use bell or sound (or 12 deep breaths)
Responding	10-15 min	Second opportunity for sharing, responding to others, no questions or dialogue. No one speaks twice before everyone who wants to, speaks once.
Take Away	10 min	Go around – one thing that you will take away from tonight’s session in a few words. For example: what moved you or what insights did you have.
Closing	2 min	Reading
Business	5 min	Final comments by facilitators, reminder of confidentiality and no unsolicited comments/advice. Date of next meeting. Make sure to collect all images and return them to room 9.
Singing	2 min	Trust the Light Within Your Heart Extinguish the chalice

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Session 2 Opening Reading

Forged in the Fire of Coming Together By Gretchen Haley

What's going to happen?

Will everything be ok?

What can I do?

In these days we find ourselves, too often,

Stuck with these questions on repeat:

What's going to happen? / Will everything be ok? /What can I do?

We grasp at signs and markers, articles of news and analysis,

Facebook memes and forwarded emails

As if the new zodiac

Capable of forecasting all that life may yet bring our way

As if we could prepare

As if life had ever made any promises of making sense, or turning out the way
we'd thought

As if we are not also actors in this still unfolding story

At this time we gather to surrender to the mystery

To release ourselves from the needing to know

To let go of the yearning to have it all already figured out

And also the burden of believing we either have all the control, or none

Here in our song and our silence, our stories and our sharing

We make space for a new breath, a new healing,

a new possibility to take root,

that is courage forged in the fire of our coming together

and felt in the spirit that comes alive in this act of faith:

that we believe still, a new world is possible

That we are creating it, already, here, and now

1/5/2020

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Session 2 Activity

Images of Faith

In Room 9 there are a variety of images. Silently browse these images and choose an image or images (2 max) that calls you in response to either of these questions:

When I feel troubled and afraid, I know I can count on _____
I have faith in _____

As you consider the questions, if an image calls out to you, pick it up without questioning why. The connection between the image and the question can be literal, or it may be emotional, metaphorical, aesthetic, or intuitive. It is OK to hold on to some images while you are deciding which to pick, but don't hold too many.

When you have selected 1 or 2 images, return to room 12.
Turns this sheet over for more instruction.

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Session 2 Activity

Questions for reflection

Reflect on your image and ask yourself the following questions in preparation for sharing:

- What is the image?
- What is happening in it?
- What is the context of the image?
- Is there anything surprising in the image?

How does the image connect to the questions?

When I feel troubled and afraid, I know I can count on _____

I have faith in _____

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Closing Reading

May our faith sustain us,
our hope inspire us,
and our love surround us
as we go our separate ways,
knowing that we will gather again
in this beloved community.

Jim Wickman