

JOURNEYS

Theme Packet for May 2015

The Unitarian Fellowship of Peterborough

Integrity



There is something in every one of you that waits, listens, for the genuine in yourself. If you cannot hear it, you will never find what it is that you are searching for. And if you hear it, and do not follow it, it was better that you had never been born. You are the only you that has ever lived. Your idiom is the only idiom of its kind in all of the existences. If you cannot hear the sound of the genuine in you, you will, all of your life, spend your days on the ends of strings that somebody else will pull.

~ Howard Thurman

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WONDERINGS *on the theme of* INTEGRITY

There is little doubt that C.S. Lewis was right when he wrote, "Integrity is doing the right thing even when no one is watching." Morality, honesty, knowing right from wrong - who of us would argue that these are qualities of a person with integrity? And, this take on integrity is a common first response to the question of integrity...that it is about living your principles, and acting on your convictions, even when it's hard. Integrity is about being right, and true and good.

And yet that is not the only meaning of the word integrity. It is also a word that describes wholeness, or the state of being undivided. Quaker theologian Parker Palmer wrote, "I now know myself to be a person of weakness and strength, liability and giftedness, darkness and light. I now know that to be whole means to reject none of it but to embrace all of it."

Embracing the many aspects of ourselves, and seeking wholeness just much as goodness, has long been the Unitarian Universalist take on integrity. Yes, keep growing. Yes, keep learning, Yes, keep working at making yourself better. But along the way please don't allow yourself to get so tangled up in perfection that you feel the need to hide those imperfect parts. To be people of integrity is to be truthful, and the honesty that seems to matter the most is the ability to hold an honest view of oneself. There is an integrity that comes from being who and what we are...our uniquely true and wonderful selves. So, when Palmer talks of "embracing it all" this is not a matter of somber resignation. There is a gladness involved. We can be whole without being perfect! To come to this realization is most surely a goal on any spiritual path.

The poet Rainer Maria Rilke captures it this way: "May what I do flow from me like a river, no forcing and no holding back, the way it is with children." Here the call of integrity is not "be perfect" or "be good" but "be yourself!" And be who you are joyfully!

Only you can be you. Only you can know what is at your center. Only you can connect to that spark, that seed deep within, that no matter what, remains the unbroken and unbreakable you. And the call of integrity is to live from that place. This doesn't mean abandoning the task of "doing the right thing when no one is watching;" it just means that you will know what the right thing is when a deep sense of personal integrity accompanies your choice.

in • teg • ri • ty

noun \ in'tegrədē \

1. the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles... "he is known to be a man of integrity"..."I never doubted her integrity"
2. the state of being whole and undivided... "the integrity of the federation"
3. a sound, unimpaired, or perfect condition... "the integrity of a ship's hull"

synonyms: (1) honesty, honor, good character, principle(s), ethics, morals, righteousness, morality, virtue, decency, fairness, scrupulousness, trustworthiness
(2) unity, unification, coherence, cohesion, togetherness, solidarity

STORIES *about* INTEGRITY

The Empty Pot by Demi (slightly abridged)

A long time ago in China there was a boy named Ping who loved flowers. Anything he planted burst into bloom. Up came flowers, bushes, and even big fruit trees, as if by magic!

Everyone in the kingdom loved flowers too. They planted them everywhere, and the air smelled like perfume. The emperor loved birds, and animals, but flowers most of all, and he tended his own garden every day.

But the emperor was very old, he needed to choose a successor to the throne. Because the emperor loved flowers, he decided to let the flowers choose.

The next day a proclamation was issued: all the children in the land were to come to the palace. There they would be given special flower seeds by the emperor. "Whoever can show me their best in a year's time," he said, "will succeed me to the throne."

Children from all over the country swarmed to the palace to get their flower seeds. All the parents and their children hoped they would be chosen by the emperor!

When Ping received his seed from the emperor, he was the happiest child of all. He filled a flower pot with rich soil. He planted the seed in it very carefully. He watered it every day. Day after day passed, but nothing grew in his pot!

Ping was very worried. He put the seed into a bigger pot with rich black soil. Still nothing happened. By and by a whole year had passed. Spring came, and all the children put on their best clothes to greet the emperor. They rushed to the palace with their flowers, eagerly hoping to be chosen.

Ping was ashamed of his empty pot, and knew the other children would laugh at him. One friend ran by, holding a great big plant. "Ping! You're not going to the emperor with an empty pot are you?" "I've grown lots of flowers better than yours. It's just this seed that won't grow." Ping's father overheard this and said: "You did your best, and your best is good enough to present to the emperor."

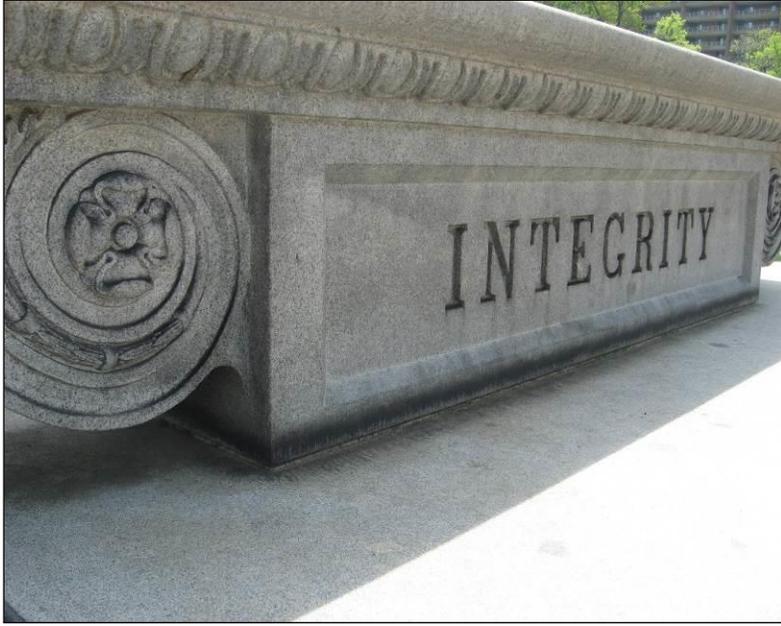
Holding the empty pot in his hands, Ping went straight away to the palace. The emperor was looking at the flowers slowly, one by one, and frowning. Finally he came to Ping.

Ping hung his head in shame. The emperor asked him, "Why did you bring an empty pot?" Ping started to cry and replied, "I planted the seed you gave me and watered it every day, but it didn't sprout. I tended it all year long, but nothing grew. So today I had to bring an empty pot without a flower. It was the best I could do."

When the emperor heard these words, a smile slowly spread over his face, and he put his arm around Ping. Then he exclaimed to one and all, "I have found him! I have found the one person worthy of being emperor! Where you got your seeds from, I do not know. For the seeds I gave you had all been cooked. So it was impossible for any of them to grow! I admire Ping's great courage to appear before me with the empty truth, and now I will reward him with my entire kingdom and make him the emperor of all the land!"



From National Public Radio's "This I Believe"



"I believe in integrity. It's a belief that's tested in those gut-wrenching moments when conflicting values pull me in opposite directions. Back in the early 1980s, [he wrote] I was in a training session for mental health workers who were volunteering to provide counseling to cancer patients who had a terminal diagnosis.

Each of us was given 16 index cards and asked to write on each the names of people, abilities, things, and values we hold dear. In the course of our imagined cancer, we had to surrender cards or somewhat abruptly have them taken from us.

At the end [of the exercise] I had two cards: One read "Integrity" and the other read "My Family." How could I choose between these two; such a choice was unfair and impossible. My initial thought was that I would give up my integrity, because I love my daughters and would want their comfort at my death. But then, I would realize that dying without integrity might be worse."

~ Dr. Bob Barret - professor emeritus at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and a practicing psychologist. He has written about issues facing people with HIV, and the gay and lesbian experience. Barret has three daughters and 10 grandchildren.

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=16832392>

QUESTIONS *for reflection on* INTEGRITY

- As a child or young adult, what did watching those around you teach you about integrity? Were they positive or negative lessons?
- Does integrity bring you joy? Or does it feel like work?
- In her poem, *Now I Become Myself*, May Sarton, writes, "Now I become myself. It's taken time, many years and places; I have been dissolved and shaken, worn other people's faces..." Are you aware of wearing other people's faces? What's stopping you from taking them off?
- Parker Palmer wrote of being a person of weakness and strength, liability and giftedness, darkness and light. What one thing could you embrace right now in order to feel more whole?
- Where in your life do you demand the most integrity, or the least? Where, or with whom, does your integrity most matter? Your workplace, your family, your marriage, your friendships, your spiritual life...?



INSPIRATIONS *on* INTEGRITY

Let yourself and not your words preach for you.
~ *Henri Frederic Amiel*

Have the courage to say no. Have the courage to face the truth. Do the right thing because it is right. These are the magic keys to living your life with integrity.
~ *W. Clement Stone*

The strength of a nation derives from the integrity of the home. ~ *Confucius*

A single lie destroys a whole reputation of integrity. ~ *Baltasar Gracian*

Real integrity is doing the right thing, knowing that nobody's going to know whether you did it or not.
~ *Oprah Winfrey*

Perhaps the surest test of an individual's integrity is his refusal to do or say anything that would damage his self-respect.
~ *Thomas S. Monson*

Integrity has no need of rules. ~ *Albert Camus*

Integrity is not a conditional word. It doesn't blow in the wind or change with the weather. It is your inner image of yourself, and if you look in there and see a man who won't cheat, then you know he never will.
~ *John D. MacDonald*

Integrity means that you are the same in public as you are in private.
~ *Joyce Meyer*

The impossible often has a kind of integrity which the merely improbable lacks.
~ *Douglas Adams*

You are in integrity when the life you are living on the outside matches who you are on the inside.
~ *Alan Cohen*

He who closes his ears to the views of others shows little confidence in the integrity of his own views.
~ *William Congreve*

If everyone were clothed with integrity, if every heart were just, frank, kindly, the other virtues would be well-nigh useless.
~ *Moliere*

There are also always those burnt, hard kernels at the bottom that don't pop. You know why they don't pop? They don't pop because they have integrity.
~ *Marc Maron*

Whoever is careless with the truth in small matters cannot be trusted with important matters.
~ *Albert Einstein*

They're certainly entitled to think that, and they're entitled to full respect for their opinions...but before I can live with other folks I've got to live with myself. The one thing that doesn't abide by majority rule is a person's conscience.

~ *Harper Lee, To Kill a Mockingbird*

I cannot and will not cut my conscience to fit this year's fashions.
~ *Lillian Hellman*

When you are content to be simply yourself and don't compare or compete, everyone will respect you.
~ *Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching*

I prefer to be true to myself, even at the hazard of incurring the ridicule of others, rather than to be false, and to incur my own abhorrence.
~ *Frederick Douglass*

It is easy to live for others, everybody does. I call on you to live for yourself.
~ *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Be faithful to that which exists within yourself.
~ *André Gide*

Lead your life so you wouldn't be ashamed to sell the family parrot to the town gossip.
~ *Will Rogers*

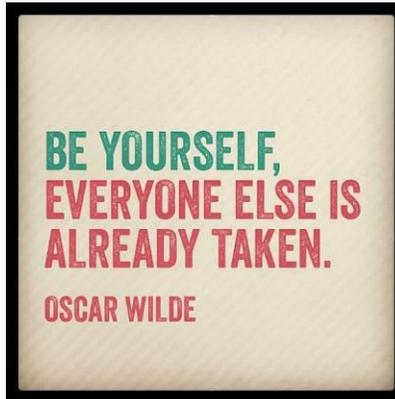
There is no such thing as a minor lapse of integrity.
~ *Tom Peters*

But there are times in this harum-scarum world when figuring out the right thing to do is quite simple, but doing the right thing is simply impossible....~ *Lemony Snicket, Horseradish: Bitter Truths You Can't Avoid*

Wisdom is knowing the right path to take. Integrity is taking it.
~ *M.H. McKee*

You are only afraid if you are not in harmony with yourself.
~ *Hermann Hesse*

On some questions, Cowardice asks the question, "Is it safe?" Expediency asks the question, "Is it polite?" And Vanity comes along and asks the question, "Is it popular?" But Conscience asks the question, "Is it right?" And there comes a time when we must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular, but we must do it because Conscience tells us it is right.
~ *Martin Luther King Jr*



Practicing INTEGRITY

1. A Resolution of Integrity

In light of this month's theme, make a resolution about holding onto (or remaining loyal to) yourself. Pick one thing that makes you distinctively you and then resolve to protect, celebrate or live into it for at least this month. Think of it as a "resolution to your integrity." Come to our group next month prepared to share why you picked the personal characteristic you did and how your resolution to honor it altered your day-to-day living this month.

2. What's The Big Deal about White Lies?

White lies regularly come up in conversations about integrity. Are they really that big of a deal? Spend this month figuring out the role they play in your life. Monitor when you use them. See what patterns emerge. Do you use them to protect the feelings of others? Or to hide something about yourself? Do they serve your sense of integrity or betray it? Come and share what you learned.



3. Person of the Year

Time magazine names of a "Person of the Year" every January. They choose someone whose impact stands out and whose influence dramatically shifted the events the past year. Likewise, we all have someone in our lives who shaped our sense of integrity just as significantly. Come to your group with the name and story of someone who was a model of integrity in your life.



4. Your Greatest Act of Integrity

All of us have it: that time in our life on the strength of our character stood out and we acted out of our deepest sense of what was morally right or most true to our core. Revisit and re-celebrate that moment by sharing it with your group. Spend some time before your meeting reflecting on how that moment of high resolve not only brought you pride but challenged you to live up to it again and again.

5. A Child's Integrity

One of the most sacred responsibilities of a parent or caretaker is to foster and protect their child's sense of integrity. If you have a child in your life (either as a parent, relative or mentor), use this month to be a bit more intentional about this precious task. Find at least one way to support their sense of integrity and true self.

6. Preserving Integrity

In *A Zebra is the Piano of the Animal Kingdom*, Jarod Kintz wrote, "I was able to preserve my integrity, in jars along with strawberries." Get a canning jar and label it "My Integrity." Then, during the month, as you experience your integrity, write a note about that experience and slip it into the jar. When the jar is full, imagine feasting on it. What does your integrity taste like? What kind of texture does it have? What nutrients does it offer to you?



Resources on INTEGRITY

Table Grace on INTEGRITY

~ Donald T. Marshall

May we come to know what is good in us, to use what is good in us, and to share what is good in us with one another. Amen.

ON THE WEB

The Calm Within - Dewey Bozella was locked up for 26 years for a crime he did not commit. This story is about one man's journey to reclaim his life and hold on to his integrity against all odds.

<http://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=2568>

A Christopher Hitchens Memorial

<http://www.upworthy.com/people-were-outraged-by-what-he-said-his-entire-life-but-right-before-he-died-he-was-still-at-it?c=recon2>

Building Integrity: Keeping Promises, Erick Rainey

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K8kQ2beNztw>

The Insufficiency of Honesty by Stephen L. Carter - An article exploring the meaning of integrity, and its differentiation from honesty.

<http://www.appbook.org/read-files/the-insufficiency-of-honesty-california-state-university>

Seeing Ourselves in the Hunger Games by Cynthia Landrum - How do we live with integrity amid our own dystopian future?

<http://www.uuworld.org/ideas/articles/220173.shtml>

Against Innocence by Rosemary Bray McNatt - Does our political integrity prevent us from compromise?

<http://www.uuworld.org/2003/06/feature2.html>

A Lesson in Academic Integrity: The cost of plagiarism

<http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/teaching-and-learning/a-lesson-in-academic-integrity-as-students-feel-the-injustice-of-plagiarism/>

"May what I do flow from me like a river, no forcing and no holding back, the way it is with children."
— Rainer Maria Rilke

MOVIES

Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory (1971 - G)

A poor boy wins the opportunity to tour the most eccentric and wonderful candy factory of all, but must prove himself in order to win the largest prize.

Frozen (2013 - PG)

Elsa, whose icy powers have trapped the kingdom of Arendelle, lives in fear of her own growing powers.

Locke (2013 - R)

A dedicated family man and successful construction manager, receives a phone call that sets in motion a series of events that threaten his carefully cultivated existence.

To Kill A Mockingbird (1962 - NR)

Atticus Finch, a lawyer in the Depression-era South, defends a black man against an undeserved rape charge, and his kids against prejudice.

The Shawshank Redemption (1994 - R)

Two imprisoned men bond over a number of years, finding solace and eventual redemption through acts of common decency.

On The Waterfront (1954 - NR)

An ex-prize fighter turned longshoreman struggles to stand up to his corrupt union bosses.

Dead Poets Society (1989 - PG)

English teacher John Keating inspires his students to discover their love for poetry and seize the day.

Thank You For Smoking (2005 - R)

Big Tobacco's chief spokesman, Nick Naylor spins on behalf of cigarettes while trying to remain a role model for his twelve-year-old son.

Milk (2008 - R)

The story of Harvey Milk, and his struggles as an American gay activist who became California's first openly gay elected official. (Check out the UUA study guide: <http://www.uua.org/lgbtq/discuss/125446.shtml>)

Two Days, One Night (*Deux jours, une nuit*) (2014 - PG)

A working-class mother suddenly finds herself laid off and sets out to talk to each of her co-workers one by one to bring them over to her side – struggling not only against their self-interest, but her own crippling self-doubt.

MUSIC

Same Love, Macklemore & Ryan Lewis

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mINGKrtG3iw>

I've Gotta Be Me, Sammy Davis Jr.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NI4SRVXgGiI>

The Integrity Song

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2RUWnfEFSK0>

Who Am I? Les Miserables (2012)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d2sanq2SM0k>

I Walk the Line, Johnny Cash

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KHF9itPLUo4>

I Won't Back Down, Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nvITJrNJ5IA>

Honesty, Billy Joel

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SuFScO4tb0>

Bang the Drum Slowly, Emmylou Harris

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TisTLFiz7BA>

BOOKS

A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward an Undivided Life by Parker Palmer

Palmer speaks to our yearning to live undivided lives – lives that are congruent with our inner truth – in a world filled with the forces of fragmentation.

Integrity: The Courage to Meet the Demands of Reality by Henry Cloud

Drawing on experiences from his work, a clinical psychologist, leadership coach, corporate consultant and nationally syndicated radio host, shows how our character can keep us from achieving all we want to (or could) be.

Integrity by Stephen Carter

Why do we care more about winning than about playing by the rules? Carter offers a vision of integrity that has implications for everything from marriage and politics to professional football.

On Lies, Secrets and Silence, Selected Prose by Adrienne Rich “We can count on so few people to go that hard way with us.”

<http://www.brainpickings.org/2013/07/02/adrienne-rich-honorable-human-relationship/>

Chalice Lighting *on* INTEGRITY

That Which is Worthy of Doing (adapted)
~ Steve J Crump

May the light we now kindle inspire to...
Create with our hands that which is worthy of doing,
Speak with a clear voice that which is worthy of repeating,
Hold in our hearts that which is worthy of remembering,
And to go and live that which is worthy of living.

Children's Books *on* INTEGRITY

The Empty Pot by Demi

The Day the Crayons Quit by Drew Daywalt

Ruthie and the (not so) Teeny Tiny Lie by Laura Rankin

Mr. Tiger Goes Wild by Peter Brown

Dear Mr. Rosenwald by Carole Weatherford

Bee-Wigged by Cece Bell

The Story of the Jumping Mouse by John Steptoe

The Young Artist by Thomas Locker

Is There Really a Human Race? by Jamie Lee Curtis

Mr. Belinsky's Bagels by Ellen Schwartz

The Emperor's New Clothes by Hans Christian Andersen

The content for these packets is a group effort. Service leaders and Covenant Group Facilitators work with Rev. Julie to incorporate the theme into our programming and services. Thanks to all who helped by suggesting resources and providing feedback. Your artwork and original writing is also most welcome!

We subscribe to "Soul Matters" a curriculum from Rev. Scott Taylor.

The Unitarian Fellowship of Peterborough
Sunday Services @ 10am @ 775 Weller St

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705-741-0968

Next month's theme: **BEAUTY**

Email your suggestions for resources to share in this packet to unitarianchurch@cogeco.net