

Leader Notes for G181 — Self-Care

Special Notes:

1. Just before the silence in this session, there is a leader-led meditation. The scrip for this meditation is on the back of this page. Practice reading it before the session.
2. The song for this session is “How Could Anyone Ever Tell You” from our new hymnal supplement. We have sung it in church, but if you aren’t sure of the tune, you can hear it on this website:

<http://www.uua.org/publications/music/recordings.html>

Preliminaries

Prior to beginning the session, take a few minutes to go over the announcements of the church events given at the last leader meeting or from a recent church bulletin. Remind members of the next meeting date and location. Get volunteers to light the chalice and read the poem.

Discussion

The discussion period is meant to allow group members to go deeper, to share things they may have forgotten to share, and to exchange ideas. It is important that people not comment on others' sharing except in a very supportive way.

Timekeeping

Use this timetable as an aid to keep the gathering on track. If it appears that portions of the session will run long or if you are also doing a Life Ritual, you can omit the discussion.

Preliminaries	2 minutes
Opening	2 minutes
Check-in	20 minutes
Reading	2 minutes
Meditation	5 minutes
Silence	5 minutes
Deep listening	60 minutes
Discussion	15 minutes
Singing	2 minute
Closing	1 minute
Total	114 minutes

Preparation for the Next Session

Make sure everyone gets a copy of the preparation sheet for the next session.

Practice reading this script aloud before coming to the meeting. Read slowly, pausing between sentences. The meditation should take about five minutes, followed by five minutes of silence.

Meditation Script

Close your eyes. Let your feet rest on the floor. Let your hands rest relaxed in your lap. Take three deep breaths. (*Take three deep breaths yourself.*) Feel stillness settling around you like a warm, soft blanket.

Now imagine that you're sitting in a place where you can feel perfectly peaceful, perfectly relaxed. It may be a real-life place in nature, a favorite chair in your home, or a place that exists only in your imagination ... just settle into the first spot that comes to mind. Feel the peace of this place. Relax into it. There is nowhere to go, nothing to do. All you need to do is feel the peace of this moment.

Now imagine that there is someone else sharing this space with you—a loving, calming presence. This presence feels like a kindly parent or a loving friend, someone who wants only the very best for you. That presence may put its arm around you or place a hand in yours. Relax into feeling this presence.

Now think of a stressful or troubling situation in your present life. Observe the situation as though from a distance or through a thick pane of glass. Then turn to the loving presence sitting with you and ask what you can do to take care of yourself as you deal with the situation. Don't ask for help in solving the problem. Don't ask for help in changing anything or anybody. Just ask the presence what you need to do to care for yourself in this situation. (*Allow a longer pause than you have been leaving between sentences.*)

If no answer comes, don't worry or feel anxious. Just feel the loving presence beside you, a presence that wants only the best for you, that wants you to care for yourself as much as the presence does. (*Longer pause*)

And now, as we enter the silence, imagine that you can be that loving presence for yourself. That you can be a caring parent or a best friend to yourself. That you know best of all how to care for yourself, whatever the situation.

Ring a bell or use whatever signal your group uses to enter silence.

After five minutes or so, ring the bell or give whatever signal your group customarily uses to return from the silence.