

Books

- *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, by Malcolm X and Alex Haley
- *Global Chorus: 365 Voices on the Future of the Planet*, edited by Todd McLean
- *The Great Spiritual Migration*, by Brian McLaren
- *Originals: How Non-Conformists Move the World*, by Adam Grant

Music

- 'Rise Up', by Andra Day
- 'Stay Alive', by José González
- 'Changes', by David Bowie
- Video meditation—A Change Is Gonna Come, by Sam Cooke: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wEBlaMOmKV4>

Articles, Videos &

Podcasts

- 'Shake My Future', by Dorothea Smartt, a poem to stir up our commitment to climate justice: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=st5c1GxZ75A>
- 'Today I Rise', a short film about women transforming anger and pain into power: <https://vimeo.com/122762336>
- Aha! Moments, times when people got it and made a shift in their lives: <http://www.oprah.com/omagazine/aha-moments>

Children's Books

- *Hope for the Flowers*, by Trina Paulus
- *Mole Music*, by David McPhail
- *And Then It's Spring*, by Julie Fogliano
- *Planting a Rainbow*, by Lois Ehlert
- *Ron's Big Mission*, by Corinne J. Naden and Rose Blue

April Theme

Transformation: The Practice of Change

April 2017

Our life is an apprenticeship to the truth that around every circle another can be drawn; that there is no end in nature, but every end is a beginning; that there is always another dawn risen on mid-noon, and under every deep a lower deep opens.

In nature, every moment is new; the past is always swallowed and forgotten; the coming only is sacred. Nothing is secure but life, transition, the energizing spirit. No love can be bound by oath or covenant to secure it against a higher love. No truth so sublime but it may be trivial to-morrow in light of new thoughts. People wish to be settled; only as far as they are unsettled is there any hope for them. ~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

Nature does not ask permission. Neither do you have to. Blossom and birth whenever you feel like it. ~ Clarissa Pinkola Estés

We have work to do. We can try on masks, we can hide behind masks, but I am asking you to look under the mask. Who is at the core? What [is waiting] to be transformed? ~ Linnea Nelson, UU Director of Religious Ed

La educación no cambia el mundo, cambia a las personas que van a cambiar al mundo. ~ Paulo Freire

Yearning for a new way will not produce it. Only ending the old way can do that. ~ Richard Rohr

If you see what needs to be repaired and how to repair it, then you have found a piece of the world that God has left for you to complete. But if you only see what is wrong and what is ugly in the world, then it is you yourself that needs repair. ~ Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson

Nature often holds up a mirror so we can see more clearly the ongoing processes of growth, renewal, and transformation in our lives. ~ Anonymous

It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change. ~ Charles Darwin

We are not meant to stay wounded. We are supposed to move through our tragedies and challenges and to help each other move through the many painful episodes of our lives. By remaining stuck in the power of our wounds, we block our own transformation. We overlook the greater gifts inherent in our wounds—the strength to overcome them and the lessons that we are meant to receive through them. Wounds are the means through which we enter the hearts of other people. They are meant to teach us to become compassionate and wise. ~ Carolyn Myss

Not everything that is faced can be changed. But nothing can be changed until it is faced. ~ James Baldwin

Nothing remains as it was. If you know this, you can begin again, with pure joy in the uprooting. ~ Judith Minty



All that you touch you change.
All that you change changes you.
The only lasting truth is change.
God is change.
~ Octavia E. Butler

All changes, even the most longed for, have their melancholy, for what we leave behind us is a part of ourselves; we must die to one life before we can enter into another.
~ Anatole France

What Does It Mean To Be A Community of Transformation?



Let mystery have its place in you; do not be always turning up your whole soil with the plowshare of self-examination, but leave a little fallow corner in your heart ready for any seed the winds may bring, and reserve a nook of shadow for the passing bird; keep a place in your heart for the unexpected guests, an altar for an unknown God.

~ Henri-Frederic Ariel

Make a bit of room. Leave a little space. That may not sound like anything radical or revolutionary. But it turns out that it is one of Life's favorite ways to make us into something new.

Be cautious with those cultural messages about aggressively tilling and turning up your whole soil. Watch out for all the heroic talk about striving and perfecting, struggle and control. Much of the time, transformation is a much subtler art. It's about stillness, listening and waiting to be led, not fighting with yourself and others to make sure you are in the lead.

In short, when it comes to transformation, the message of spirituality is "Be careful with what you've been taught and told because much of it takes us in exactly the wrong direction." Our challenge as a community of transformation is to remind each other to take a different tack. More often than not, it's about breathing rather than becoming better; patience not perfection; depth not dominance; attention not improvement.

That part about attention instead of improvement is especially important. It's so easy to get transformation mixed up with fixing. And fixing is transformation's biggest foe. Trying to purify or prove ourselves is the surest way to stay stuck. The pursuit of purity focuses us on our inadequacy and inferiority, causing us to overlook those unexpected guests that Henri-Frederic speaks of.

And, friends, we don't want to miss those unexpected guests! Those seeds brought by the wind and those passing birds are the partners that make transformation possible. They help us notice new paths. They invite us to walk with a new step. They awaken in us new songs. They remind us that transformation is not something we do alone. They assure us that transformation doesn't have to be a long and lonely struggle, but instead can be more like learning a new dance with a new friend. All we have to do is trust, take the hand of that "unknown God" and follow its lead.

So, friends, this month, leave some room on that dance floor of yours. Keep your eyes peeled. And when that unexpected guest reaches out its hand, don't be afraid.

~ *From the Soul Matters Sharing Circle. Author not cited.*

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Kids' Corner

Check out the book or video 'Maybe Something Beautiful: How Art Transformed a Neighborhood', by F. Isabel Campoy and Theresa Howell. <http://maybesomethingbeautiful.com/> Based on the true story of the Urban Art Trail in San Diego, California, *Maybe Something Beautiful* reveals how art can inspire transformation—and how even the smallest artists can accomplish something big. Pick up a paintbrush and join the celebration!

Draw some pictures here to give you inspiration for how you might use art to help to transform your neighborhood. Maybe it's putting up pictures, maybe it's making chalk art, maybe it's designing a sculpture for your yard—use your imagination! Then talk with your parents about getting some other kids where you live to work with you and create beauty where you live!



A Long Hard Look

Author Barbara Kingsolver is a master at celebrating the connection between perception, transformation, and healing. She writes,

"In my own worst seasons I've come back from the colorless world of despair by forcing myself to look hard, for a long time, at a single glorious thing: a flame of red geranium outside my bedroom window. And then another: my daughter in a yellow dress. And another: the perfect outline of a full, dark sphere behind the crescent moon. Until I learned to be in love with my life again. Like a stroke victim retraining new parts of the brain to grasp lost skills, I have taught myself joy, over and over again."

This exercise invites you to experience a similar gift of a "single glorious thing" from your own surroundings. Here are your instructions:

1. Take some time to identify a special "single glorious thing" that you have the opportunity to look at every day. Your daughter getting on the bus. The flower cart on your way to work. Your spouse brushing her hair or reading the morning paper. You will know it when you see it.
2. For at least 5 days in a row, use your phone/camera to take a picture of that glorious thing.
3. Make time to meditate on the collection of photos, either for a full hour of one day or 10 minutes for 3 days in a row. Pay attention to the differences and the similarities. Let the sameness and subtle differences enable you to see something new or appreciate it in a deeper way.
4. Share with someone what you discovered, and how this transformative looking "taught you joy over again" or "added color" to your world.



For some inspiration, watch this: Auggie's Photo Album, from Smoke

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JGV_h36uZ5E

Personal Reflection

Don't treat these questions like "homework" or a list that needs to be covered in its entirety. Pick the one question that "hooks" you most and let it lead you where you need to go. The goal of these questions is not to help you analyze what story means in the abstract, but to figure out what a deeper awareness of story means for your daily living. So, which question is calling to you? Which one contains "your work"?



Do you know what Life is inviting you to become? What's happened to your vision of what transformation looks like?

What were you taught in childhood about your ability to change yourself and/or the world? Are those lessons ones you need to remember or reject?

How is delayed gratification delaying your transformation?

How is believing "I don't deserve it" standing in your way?

Are you really longing to be transformed or could it be that your heart just wants to be understood?

Are you sure your transformation lies in following the light? Or might Life instead be calling you to befriend the dark? Is your challenge imagining what is possible or being honest about the past? Believing in your potential or accepting your shadow? *["One does not become enlightened by imagining figures of light, but by making the darkness conscious." - Carl Jung]*

Who needs you to quietly "sit with them among the shards and gently turn their face toward the light"? ([Jan Richardson](#))

What kind of thank you's do you need to say to your old life so you can walk into your new one?

What if we are the "last generation that can do something about it?" *["We are the first generation to feel the sting of climate change, and we are the last generation that can do something about it." - Jay Inslee, Governor of Washington]*

What's your question? Your question may not be listed above. As always, if the above questions don't include what life is asking from you, spend the month listening to your days to hear it.

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Unitarian Universalist
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Justice Corner

Unitarian Universalist Association Declaration of Conscience

As our congregation considers transforming into an active sanctuary congregation, take some time to consider for yourself what this means. How does it make you feel? What makes you excited about it? What scares you about it? What do you notice coming up for you?

Read these resources made available to Unitarian Universalist congregations as more and more churches around the country commit to offering safe haven to those trying to stay together with their families: <http://www.uua.org/immigration/witness/partners/newsanctuary>.

Once you understand more, think about ways you would want to be involved. It doesn't have to be for everyone, but there are so many different layers of involvement. Talk with someone from the Immigrant Justice Team about our church's process. Talk with someone involved with Faith in the

Valley's Rapid Response team about what's going on there and the efforts being undertaken city-wide to support those living in fear in the shadows.



FAITH
IN ACTION