

Books

- *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking*, by Susan Cain
- *Grounded: Finding God in the World*, by Diana Butler Bass

Articles, Videos & Podcasts

- 'The Shared Experience of Built Sacred Spaces', by Sarah Smarsh: <https://onbeing.org/blog/when-the-physical-becomes-secondary-the-shared-experience-of-built-sacred-spaces/>
- 'Embracing "Today's Body": How to shift from a 'fix it' mindset to approaching the body with more kindness and acceptance', by Christiane Wolf: <https://www.mindful.org/two-mindfulness-practices-get-back-touch-body/>
- 'How Trauma Lodges in the Body': <https://onbeing.org/programs/bessel-van-der-kolk-how-trauma-lodges-in-the-body/>

Children's Books

- *The Mangrove Tree: Planting Trees to Feed Families*, by Susan L. Roth & Cindy Trumbore
- *Amelia to Zora: Twenty-Six Women Who Changed the World*, by Cynthia Chin-Lee
- *Paths to Peace: People Who Changed the World*, by Jane Breskin Zalben
- *Tillie the Terrible Swede: How One Woman, A Sewing Needle, and a Bicycle Changed History*, by Sue Stauffacher

** All of these children's books are available in the Norelma Walker Youth Library.

May Theme

Embodiment: The Practice of Making Real

May 2017

Your body is welcome here, all of it.
 Yes, even that part. And that part. And yes, even that part.
 The parts you love, and the parts you don't.
 For in this place we come with all that we are
 All that we have been,
 And all that we are going to be.
 Our bodies are constantly changing, cells die and cells are reborn
 We respond to infections and disease
 Sometimes we can divorce them from our bodies,
 and other times they become a permanently part of us.
 Your body and all that is within it, both wanted and not wanted has a place here.
 Our bodies join in a web of co-creation, created and creating.
 Constantly changing, constantly changing us
 Scarred and tattooed, tense and relaxed
 Diseased and cured, unfamiliar and intimate
 Formed in infinite diversity of creation
 Your body is welcome here, all of it.
 So take a moment and welcome it
 Take a moment to feel in it.
 Take a moment, to be in it.
 ~ Rev. Sean Neil-Barron

Deep Breaths are like little love notes to your body. ~ Anon

If love were only spiritual,
 The practices of fasting and prayer would not exist.
 The gifts lovers give each other
 Are nothing but outward forms
 But they testify to invisible love,
 Just as outward acts of kindness
 Reveal a loving heart.
 ~ Rumi

If we join our dreams with the dreams of so many other people, real change is possible; and it is the task of our faith to link those dreams and make them a reality. -
 ~Abhi Janamanchi, Unitarian Universalist minister

We look forward to the time when the power to love will replace the love of power. Then will our world know the blessings of peace. ~ William Ellery Channing

The body is a sacred garment. It's your first and last garment; it is what you enter life in and what you depart life with, and it should be treated with honor. -
 ~ Martha Graham

Lack of respect and reverence for the body can lead to the abuse of ourselves, others and creation too. Too often our approach not only to our own bodies but also to other human bodies and the body of the universe is one of domination and violence. Is it not strange that in our spiritual explorations we seek for God in all things except in our own body, our true home, which remains largely unexplored territory? ~ Prashant Olalekar

Don't explain your philosophy. Embody it.
 ~ Epictetus

The purpose of life is not to transcend the body, but to embody the transcendent.
 ~ The Dalai Lama



The Way In

Sometimes the way to milk and honey is through the body.
 Sometimes the way in is a song.
 But there are three ways in the world: dangerous, wounding, and beauty.
 To enter stone, be water.
 To rise through hard earth, be plant
 desiring sunlight, believing in water.
 To enter fire, be dry.
 To enter life, be food.
 ~ Linda Hogan

What Does It Mean To Be A Community of Embodiment?



"I spend most time wondering if I should be somewhere else. Instead, I'm learning to shape the words "thank you" with my first breath each morning. My last breath each night. So when the very last breath comes, at least I will know I was grateful for all the places I was so sure I was not supposed to be."

- Sarah Kay, Poet, from The Paradox

We spend so much time in disappointment. We worry we're missing out. We long for something better. Focused on how imperfect or incomplete our current situation is, we hunger for elsewhere.

And if not embodied in disappointment, we at least try our best to live in that place called "on our way." We tell ourselves that the current situation is only temporary; we're really better than this and meant for something bigger. This current embodiment is only a stepping stone.

And, of course, any good psychologist, smart life coach, or savvy talk show host will tell us that, by doing this, we're missing out on peace. Striving for that "perfect life," we miss out on the solace of the present moment. It's a good message to pay attention to.

...the reason to
pay attention to
the present
moment is so that
we can better
hear what life and
our hearts are
trying to tell us!

But religion wants to push us a bit harder. It wants us to see how we are out of touch, not only with the present moment, but also gratitude itself. The way back into real embodiment, it says, is not just through the skill of attention but also Sarah Kay's skill of "shaping the words 'thank you' with our first and last breath."

And not just the skill of 'thank you,' but the skill of listening as well. Every religion worth its salt will tell you that the reason to pay attention to the present moment is so that we can better hear what life and our hearts are trying to tell us! Embodied living is not simply about being grateful for the unnoticed gifts in front of us; it's also about noticing that every moment and every context -- no matter how imperfect, messed up and incomplete -- is trying to talk to us! The reason we are called to sink into and care for our bodies is not just to relieve stress; it's so that our body's voice no longer gets drowned out by all the other noise. The reason we are called to allow nature to embody us is not simply so that we can feel our interconnectedness; it's so that we can allow that interconnectedness to tell us its wisdom. The reason to stop trying so hard to change our current circumstances is not simply to "be here now"; it's so that our current circumstances will finally be able to get a word in edgewise about where *it* *thinks* we should go!

And if we do this friends - if we shape our 'thank you's' and take listening seriously -- then that elusive gift of embodiment will be ours: that sacred sense of being exactly where we are supposed to be!

May this month's work help all of us stumble back to and better embody that wonderful space!

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

Kids' Corner

Mother's Day is this month! Draw a picture of your mom(s) or an important woman in your life. If you don't want to draw a picture OF that person, draw a picture FOR them of something you love about them or something you just love. Make sure you share it with them when you're done!



The Question We Embody



"Hearing about [others'] first, big question got me wondering about my own. What is the question that I asked as a little girl and have never stopped asking? How has asking that question defined, even if unconsciously, the choices I've made, the things I've created, the legacy I will leave behind?" -Courtney Martin

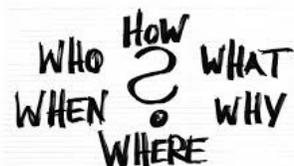
Courtney Martin sees our lives as embodiments of our "first big questions." This exercise asks us to take that proposition seriously. Instead of a complex set of steps, your instructions are simply:

Spend the month figuring out and articulating your "first big question" and identify one way it has shaped you and one way it is calling you to change or deepen.

So... What question have you been trying to embody your entire life? What question has embodied you whether you liked it or not? What is the question that you asked as a little kid and have never stopped asking?

Check out the rest of Martin's essay for more inspiration:

http://onbeing.org/blog/courtney-martin-what-was-your-first-question/?utm_source=On+Being+Newsletter&utm_campaign=88165ac167-20170311_bessel_van_der_kolk_newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1c66543c2f-88165ac167-69930665&goal=0_1c66543c2f-88165ac167-69930665&mc_cid=88165ac167&mc_eid=cb4e45abe0



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"?



Have you found a way to embody your deepest insight?

What family legacy are you embodying and living out? Is that legacy a blessing or a burden?

When was the last time you felt that "this is exactly where I am supposed to be!"? Have you found your place yet?

Have you embodied and embraced your shadow side as well as your light? (<http://www.wisdom-pills.com/2015/10/24/embodying-your-shadow-what-it-means-and-how-to-do-it/>)

When was the last time you listened to your body? What is your body saying right now?

When was the last time you "found God" through your body and senses?

Do you embody (embrace) or deny your pain? Do you embody or deny your joy?

Have you forgiven your body for letting you down? For betraying you? Have you thanked your body for all its carried and given you?

Have you allowed yourself to become embodied in and swallowed up by stress? (<http://www.radiolab.org/story/91580-stress/>)

What new story is your body trying to tell?

What might it look and feel like to embody silence and stillness?

What embodiment are you longing to break out of?

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.

Justice Corner

Healthcare is a Human Right

With all the people who are poised to lose healthcare coverage, the people whose premiums will go up due to newly identified pre-existing conditions, those whose coverage will be timed out due to lifetime limits, and all the other ways that this bill negatively affects people, we as Unitarian Universalists can recognize dignity and worth of all human beings and strive for the justice, equity, and compassion in human relations by arguing for healthcare as a human right.

As the Senate gears up to vote on the AHCA, make sure you're letting our Senators know how you feel about it, even if you're sure they're going to vote your way. It's important that they continue to know how we feel.

Kamala Harris
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Dianne Feinstein
(559) 485-7430, (202) 224-3841

Even though the House of Representatives has already voted, it's good for them to hear how we feel about their vote. They need to know that we're paying attention.

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Unitarian Universalist
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