

LISTENING

(– adapted from the session developed by Rev. Glenn H. Turner)

OPENING WORDS & CHALICE LIGHTING:

I like to talk with you.

I like the way I feel when you are listening, as if we were exploring something in ourselves:

The plunge into a silence and how you come up with words I tried to find:

The otherness about us which make conversation possible.

When I talk with you, the give turns into take, and borrow into lend.

Now and then, a phrase from you will kindle like a shooting star. - from Raymond Baughan

PURPOSE: We come together to build connections and talk about what deeply matters to us.

CHECK IN: What you share may be about your physical or spiritual health, cares or concerns for loved ones, issues you are facing. What are you leaving behind to be here today?

READING OF GROUP COVENANT

FOCUS: Listening

Each person in the group speaks uninterrupted; if time remains, general response and conversation are welcome.

Reading for Reflection:

When I ask you to listen to me and you start giving advice, you have not done what I asked.

When I ask you to listen to me and you begin to tell me why I shouldn't feel that way,
you are trampling on my feelings.

When I ask you to listen to me and you feel you have to do something to solve my problem,
you have failed me, strange as that may seem.

Listen! All I asked was that you listen, not talk or do - just hear me.

And I can do for myself. I'm not helpless. Maybe discouraged and faltering, but not helpless.

When you do something for me that I can do for myself, you contribute to my fear and inadequacy.

But when you accept as a simple fact that I do feel what I feel, no matter how irrational, then I can quit
trying to convince you and can get about the business of understanding what's behind this irrational feeling.

And when that's clear, the answers are obvious and I don't need advice.

Irrational feelings make sense when we understand what's behind them.

So please listen and just hear me. And, if you want to talk, wait a minute for your turn, and I'll listen to you.

- Ralph Roughton

Discussion: Have you ever felt like that? Examples?

Why do you think it is so hard to simply listen?

Who is the best listener in your life?

What can we do in this group to improve the quality of listening?

Note: you don't have to use all these questions.

CONFIDENTIALITY CHECK AND CHECK OUT: Is there anything that you shared here today that you would like held confidential? Otherwise, this is a reminder that we treat each other's sharing with kindness and respect.

CLOSING WORDS:

To communicate is the beginning of understanding. To feel is the beginning of self-growth.

To touch is the beginning of involvement. To love, the beginning of all that will ever be.

- Nancy Ceranowicz

May we learn to listen - to respond, to feel, to grow, to touch the life that is everyone, to love.