

Spirituality Discussion - Past

2023_03_05

From an early age we are told to maintain good health we need to: eat right, exercise and get a good night's sleep. Later we learn that things like smoking, drugs and alcohol are detrimental to our health. We heed these lessons to varying degrees. At some point our bodies fail and we seek medical treatment. If we receive treatment and are told to stop smoking now, but we do not heed that advice and continue to smoke, should society shoulder the costs of follow up treatment?

Where do the limits of personal responsibility and social responsibility meet?

2023_02_05

Wabi-Sabi - Beauty without Perfection

In this world of fashion magazines, fine dining, perfect smiles, exciting vacation opportunities, we get caught up in a belief that all things need to be perfect or they are flawed, inadequate, need to be fixed.

It is an easy perspective to fall into, yet how much we cherish that child's stick drawing, that chipped coffee cup dad used long ago, old black & white photos of our parents' wedding, the six toed cat.

2023_10_01

Think of a time when you felt like you belonged. Whether it was recently or long ago, as part of a small group or as part of a large system, or anything else. Bring the feeling and that moment to mind and write a bit about it. Be as specific about the details as you can. What did it sound like? What did it smell like? Name your feelings in those moments. (5 min).

Continue your remembering. What happened or was happening that led to your feelings? Were there people there who said or did something that helped you know you belonged? See if you can name the specific actions/environmental elements/words that contributed to that sense of belonging. (4 min).

2022_8 Plenty

America, the land of Plenty.

But, how much plenty is enough?

Can we be grateful for what we have without wanting more?

2022_06_05 - Dealing with Tragedy

It seems tragic events cause pain and suffering to people all around the world these days. As they suffer, so do we. How do you deal with your suffering caused by these events?

The following describes Steve Maraboli's way of coping:

"I have within me (as does every other human) an interface to the Creator - my Consciousness-Link. When I go inside myself and focus on my Consciousness-Link, I experience a oneness with the Creator and with all of Creation. This is especially important when I become aware of tragedies to other humans. I block everything else out, focus all my attention on what happened to the humans. When I believe I understand their tragedies, I go inside to my Personal Consciousness and (try to) empathize with their feelings. I "bind", or merge, (my perception of) the other humans' inner feeling to my Personal Consciousness broadening the oneness I experience. I wait until I feel my Personal Consciousness is connected to the Personal Consciousnesses of the other humans."

2022_04_02 Test of a Healthy Religion

There are many religions being practiced throughout the world. Many options for you to choose to follow. If you are shopping for a new religion, religious thought or spiritual practice, what criteria would you use to choose one for you to follow?

Here are some possible test questions:

- Does it build bridges or barriers between people?
- Does it stimulate or hamper the growth of person responsibility?
- Does it provide answers or does it inspire questions?

Is its primary concern for surface behavior or for the underlying health of the personality?

- Does it increase or lessen the enjoyment of life?
- Does it foster magical or mature religious beliefs?

What would your test questions be?

How does our UU practice meet your test? How could it perform better?

2022_03_06 Discussion



“When you plant lettuce, if it does not grow well, you don't blame the lettuce. You look for reasons it is not doing well. It may need fertilizer, or more water, or less sun. You never blame the lettuce.

Yet if we have problems with our friends or family, we blame the other person. But if we know how to take care of them, they will grow well, like the lettuce. Blaming has no positive effect at all, nor does trying to persuade using reason and argument.

That is my experience. No blame, no reasoning, no argument, just understanding. If you understand, and you show that you understand, you can love, and the situation will change.”

Thich Nhat Hanh

2021_11_07 Life After Delivery

The Parable: Life After Delivery

In a mother's womb were two babies. The first baby asked the other: “Do you believe in life after delivery?” The second baby replied, “Why, of course. There has to be something after delivery.

Maybe we are here to prepare ourselves for what we will be later.”

“Nonsense,” said the first. “There is no life after delivery. What would that life be?”

“I don't know, but there will be more light than here. Maybe we will walk with our legs and eat from our mouths.”

The doubting baby laughed. “This is absurd! Walking is impossible. And eat with our mouths? Ridiculous. The umbilical cord supplies nutrition. Life after delivery is to be excluded. The umbilical cord is too short.”

The second baby held his ground. “I think there is something and maybe it's different than it is here.”

The first baby replied, “No one has ever come back from there. Delivery is the end of life, and in the after-delivery it is nothing but darkness and anxiety and it takes us nowhere.”

“Well, I don’t know,” said the twin, “but certainly we will see mother and she will take care of us.”

“Mother?” The first baby guffawed. “You believe in mother? Where is she now?”

The second baby calmly and patiently tried to explain. “She is all around us. It is in her that we live. Without her there would not be this world.”

“Ha. I don’t see her, so it’s only logical that she doesn’t exist.”

To which the other replied, “Sometimes when you’re in silence you can hear her, you can perceive her. I believe there is a reality after delivery and we are here to prepare ourselves for that reality when it comes...”

How does this parable help you understand your perspective on life?

2021_1_3 - Fulfillment

Charles Eisenstein in his book *The More Beautiful World Our Hearts Know is Possible*, says that we are transitioning from a Story of Separation to a Story of Interbeing where we will be broadening our perspectives from our individual selves to one of community where we will gain as those around us gain and lose as those around us lose.

Recognizing that fulfillment is an important part of wellbeing, how will your means of achieving fulfillment change as we shift from a Story of Separation to a Story of Interbeing?

2021_05_02 Meaningful Journeys

Life involves various types of journeys: physical/geographical journeys, journeys in the mind through contemplation or exposure to written or pictorial material, spiritual journeys toward greater spiritual understanding, and creative journeys involving development of creative skills such as music, drawing or painting, and photography. No doubt there are other types of journeys. Each of these can involve "travel" from a point of origin to a "destination".

What journeys have you taken that have influenced you significantly? How have these changed you? What plans do you have for future journeys? Let's have an open and respectful discussion.

“What do you gain and what do you lose by getting older (in other words what are the advantages and disadvantages)?”

what does religion look like at its best?

2020_12 Penny - corona virus considerations behavior:

I think that the ethical and moral duty to avoid harming others is a well-recognized ethical and moral principle. But how do we persuade people that the principle applies to the mask-wearing situation?

Can we overcome the "personal liberty" argument that seems to be the basis for not wearing masks? The scientific details of how this virus operates are closely linked to this, and are complex. Is it important for people to understand some of those complexities?

2020_11_08 Our corporations, our government policies, our whole economy, our social system, our legal system, our healthcare system, our education system, our entertainment systems all of them should be measured as being efficient, rational and productive to the extent that they maximize love and caring, kindness and generosity, ethical and environmental sensitivity, enhance our capacity to act with social, economic and environmental justice, enhance our capacity to respond to other human beings as embodiments of the sacred rather than looking at other people primarily through the lens of what can you do for me? how can you support my needs? Rabbi Michael Lerner Dalai Lama's Global Vision Summit 2020

2020_10_11 If I privately told you at a social gathering that the man sitting in the corner was a crime boss and I privately told another person that the same man was a Nobel prize laureate, you would each have a different perspective of both the man and the entire social gathering.

Our life perspectives are influenced by people we know, books we have read, life experiences. How have spiritual readings, teachings and experiences influenced your perspectives?

1. We have all been given words of wisdom over the years coming from either scripture, parents, teachers, friends, children. Which are the words of wisdom that have most affected the way you live your life?

What purpose does religion serve?

2. Take Care of Yourself and Each Other

Care is one of the touchstones of everything we do. Care for others and the world we inhabit is the driving motivation behind most of our work. Self-care and community care are so easy to neglect in favor of things which feel more urgent and critical.

Lessons from Dirt Road Revival by Cloe Maxmin and Canyon Woodward

We will explore how we care for ourselves and our fellowship community and the consequences of neglect.

3. Faith

Once all villagers decided to pray for rain. On the day of prayer, all the people gathered, but only one boy came with an umbrella.

4.