

All Souls Church Unitarian

Covenant Group Guide

March 2016

“Resilience”

The truth will set you free, but first it will piss you off.

Gloria Steinem

It's not your projects and ambitions that need to endure—it's your values.

Susan Hanby, blogging about lessons learned from her time with the Apache people

If you are going through hell, keep going.

Winston Churchill

The world breaks everyone, and afterward, some are strong at the broken places.

Ernest Hemingway

The process of growth is, it seems, the art of falling down. Growth is measured by the gentleness and awareness with which we once again pick ourselves up, the lightness with which we dust ourselves off, the openness with which we continue and take the next unknown step, beyond our edge, beyond our holding, into the remarkable mystery of being.

Stephen Levine

Success is moving from failure to failure with enthusiasm.

Winston Churchill

Small change adds up. This is worth repeating: small change adds up. Empty your small change in a jar every day, and watch the total add up over time. Make small changes in your daily habits – such as your meals or snacks, your relationships, your work, or your leisure- and watch those changes gradually accumulate into a much healthier, happier, and more satisfying life.

An angle of only one degree is difficult to draw on a piece of paper. It is too small. If a flight from New York to Los Angeles is off course by just one degree, the plane will arrive closer to Tijuana, Mexico, than Los Angeles.

Small changes can get us back on course as easily as they can lead us off course.

Small Change, a book by Susan and Larry Terkel

Consider reading this entire blog post by Jerry and Debbie Sheridan for a beautiful example of the impact we can have on the resilience of others.

<http://onresilience.com/2013/08/27/the-magic-of-small-changes>

Resilience, Art and Philosophy

We rely upon the poets, the philosophers and the playwrights to articulate what most of us can only feel, in joy or sorrow. They illuminate the thoughts for which we only grope. They give us the strength and balm we cannot find in ourselves. Whenever I find my courage wavering I rush to them. They give me the wisdom of acceptance, the will and resilience to push on.

Helen Hayes

Henceforth I ask not good-fortune, I myself am good-fortune,
Henceforth I whimper no more, postpone no more, need nothing,
Done with indoor complaints, libraries, querulous criticisms,
Strong and content I travel the open road.

Rainer Rilke, Sonnet 29 from *Sonnets of Orpheus*

Quiet friend who has come so far,
feel how your breathing makes more space around you.
Let this darkness be a bell tower
and you the bell. As you ring,
what batters you becomes your strength.
Move back and forth into the change.
What is it like, such intensity of pain?
If the drink is bitter, turn yourself to wine.
In this uncontainable night,
be the mystery at the crossroads of your senses,
the meaning discovered there.
And if the world has ceased to hear you,
say to the silent earth: I flow.

Walt Whitman, *Song of the Open Road*

Faith is the bird that feels the light and sings when the dawn is still dark. In effect, the people who change our lives the most begin to sing to us while we are still in darkness. If we listen to their song, we will see the dawning of a new part of ourselves.

Rabindranth Tagore

For Reflection and Discussion

1. What are the sources of your resilience? Do you consider “resilience” to be a particular strength or weakness of yours? In what ways, do you do well? What are the challenges? Are there ways you and your loved ones could help each other be more resilient?
2. Consider sharing a story about a time that your resilience or lack of resilience surprised you.
3. Do you make art or engage with works of art when your resilience is tested? Are there musical selections at All Souls that particularly lift your spirit when you are distressed? Are there other songs, poems, works of art that are sources of strength for you?
4. How does AS contribute to your ability to be resilient? Could AS somehow help you more? Are there resources at AS that you could make greater use of?

Prepared for All Souls covenant Groups by Mary Beth Hatem