



## **THE JOURNEY: A Guide for Reflection**

### **Transformation**

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At a monthly dinner of Young Adults at our former home at 175 St. Clair West, conversation partners turned their attention to the antique frame containing the portrait of one of our congregation's founders, Joseph Workman. A physician whose efforts radically changed the field of psychiatry in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, his influence catalyzed improvements far beyond Toronto in the deplorable state of what were then called "lunatic asylums."

Workman's contemporary, Emily Stowe, after whom our board room was named, became the first woman physician in Canada. Facing repeated refusals to allow her to study in Ontario for her medical license, Stowe declared "the day will come when these doors swing wide open to every female who chooses to apply." As founder of Women's College Hospital, home to the only hospital-based research institute in the world focused on women's health with women comprising over 60% of its scientists and 53% of its physicians today, her legacy of perseverance and courage endures.

As the dinner companions absorbed the radical transformations that Workman and Stowe helped to make in the conditions of their times, a member of the group asked, "What are we allowing now that will seem as unevolved to those who come after us, that we need to get going on changing?"

At that moment, I imagined the portraits of this generation of Unitarian Universalists - more likely to be digital than rendered in oil paintings or bronze busts. Ordinary, faithful friends working together, wrestling freely with the truth and meaning of our history, listening to where our present is calling us, in a gradual process of transformation as we come to inhabit our new home in Oakwood Village.

Spirit of Ever Revealing Truth - Cultivate in us the gifts of patience and presence to sustain us in this ever-changing world. Together, in the always imperfect work of transformation, may we continue to build a faith worthy of our heritages of freedom, reason, courage and hope.

In faith and love,

Angela

## Questions to Live With



Photo by Daphne Richards, on Unsplash

1. 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?
2. Do you need to give thanks for your old life before you can walk into your new one?
3. What if your transformation lies in asking for what you need?
4. Who around you is trying to make a significant change and might benefit from your help or support?
5. What is today—this day—asking you to become?
6. If these questions don't address how you need to explore transformation this month, what is your question?

## For Inspiration

### “Winter Meditation”

Something has changed in me this winter.  
In the past I've focused on how long winter is,  
How miserable I find it, and how it seems so interminable.  
This winter, I find myself thinking instead  
That every day, every hour, every minute  
Brings us just that much closer to spring.  
We all experience wintry times,  
When things seem harsh and frozen,  
Or muffled by layered shrouds of snow.  
It is helpful to remember that each day that dawns bleakly,  
Each night that wraps its cold cloak around our hearts,  
Brings us closer to that time of warm and vibrant sun.  
It is perhaps helpful to consider that turning toward spring is an active thing,  
The earth which seems so stable in fact flies quickly through space,  
On its path that tilts us ever towards the Source.  
So, too, each memory we lay to rest,  
Each truth in ourselves that we encounter and accept,  
Each wrong act that we forgive, ushers us on towards our renewal.

- Tess Baumberger, minister/chaplain

It is not the length of a connection but the richness of encounter that awakens love for love is not a journey in time, rather a journey of transformation, a voyage of awakening in togetherness....

- Jayita Bhattacharjee

Problems cannot be solved with the same mindset that created them.

- Albert Einstein

You and I possess within ourselves at every moment of our lives, under all circumstances, the power to transform the quality of our lives.

- Werner Erhard



*Photo by Hakon Grimstad, on Unsplash*

It was all connected, this poetics of listening, word making, and dancing. There was power to transform, to lighten the heaviness of the burden of being human. That's how I came to understand the power of poetry and music. It was a tool, but more than a tool. Words and music evoked a state of mind that lifted us up when racial and historical despair threatened.

- Joy Harjo

If we can recognize that change and uncertainty are basic principles, we can greet the future and the transformation we are undergoing with the understanding that we do not know enough to be pessimistic.

- Hazel Henderson

## "Letting Go"

It is time to go.

I can smell it.  
Breathe it.  
Touch it.  
And something in me  
Trembles.  
I will not cry.  
Only sit bewildered.  
Brave and helpless  
That it is time.  
Time to go.  
Time to step out  
Of the world  
I shaped and watched  
Become.  
Time to let go  
Of the status and  
The admiration.  
Time to go.  
To turn my back  
On a life that throbs  
With my vigor  
And a spirit  
That soared  
Through my tears.  
Time to go  
From all I am  
To all I have  
Not yet become.

- Edwina Gateley

Becoming hurts.

- Kat Howard

Some people want it to happen, some wish it would happen, others make it happen.

- Michael Jordan

Analysis does not transform consciousness.

- Jiddu Krishnamurti

We do not grow absolutely, chronologically. We grow sometimes in one dimension, and not in another; unevenly. We grow partially. We are relative. We are mature in one realm, childish in another. The past, present, and future mingle and pull us backward, forward or fix us in the present.

- Anais Nin

Spiritual transformation is a death as well as a birth. The teachers who help us to grow know that it can't happen without this pain. They don't save us from it—in fact, what they do usually intensifies it.

- Rev Amy Zucker Morgenstern



*Photo by Sandy Milar on Unsplash*

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.

- Caroline Myss

Nothing gets transformed in your life until your mind is transformed.

- Ifeanyi Enoch Onuoha

Page describes surgery as something that, for him, has made it possible to finally recognize himself when he looks in the mirror, providing catharsis he's been waiting for since the "total hell" of puberty. "It has completely transformed my life," he says. So much of his energy was spent on being uncomfortable in his body, he says. Now he has that energy back.

- Elliot Page

Yesterday I was clever, so I wanted to change the world. Today I am wise, so I am changing myself.

- Rumi

When you become the image of your own imagination, it's the most powerful thing you could ever do.

- RuPaul

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 Schneersohn

An empty room can also be a catalyst for transformation. It was a reminder that I could now begin to shape the space around me exactly as I wanted, literally and metaphorically. By carefully choosing what I wanted to put into the space, by mindfully avoiding easy solutions, I could find myself.

- Ranjani Rao

Words ignite, actions transform.

- Amogh Swamy

This is how you change the world, the smallest circles first... That humble energy, the kind that says, 'I will do what I can do right now in my own small way,' creates a ripple effect on the world.

- Richard Wagamese

All change, even very large and powerful change, begins when a few people start talking with one another about something they care about.

- Margaret J. Wheatley

## Optional Spiritual Exercise

### The Gift of Your Many Homes

Moving to a new home is not just a transformation of place but also a transformation of our personhood. A new surrounding shapes one into a new you. So, this exercise invites you to explore how exactly your many homes shaped and created the “many yous.” Here are your instructions:

- **Identify an object** that represents each of your homes. It's fine to focus on the actual physical home/house in which you lived, but -if helpful- expand your reflection to also focus on the town and land surrounding your house.
- **Identify a story** that captures the most meaningful gift each home gave you. Focus yourself on who each home helped you become and how each home shaped a new you.

Come to your group ready to share 1-2 of these objects and gift stories.

## Join Us

### Join a Journey Group

Journey Groups are a great way to go deeper with our monthly theme by sharing with small group of people for a couple of hours each month. Groups meet online on Zoom and are scheduled at different times during the month.

For more information, visit our website [firstunitariantoronto.org/journey-groups/](https://firstunitariantoronto.org/journey-groups/) or look for the link in *First Light*.

### Upcoming Themes

April – Interdependence | May – Pluralism

## The Journey Team

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