

June Theme for Spiritual Practice
Passion: The Practice of Living Your Purpose

Love is the Spirit of this Church, and service its law. This is our great covenant: To dwell together in peace, to seek truth in love, and to help one another.

Introduction:

Our covenant affirmation (above) very much speaks to our shared purpose through shared aspirations. Oftentimes “the devil is in the (passion) details” when being in religious community. We do not all share the same passion(s) for types of social justice work, methods for worshiping together, etc, and we often do not have these details prescribed for us. Is it helpful to intentionally hold as passion and purpose living our aspirations with each other while working through the details together? Does this sometimes challenging engagement hold the fruit of expanded love, peace, justice and service as an evolving result of this commitment?

Let’s look to our Judeo-Christian roots, for rooting out the word ‘passion’. These days we often associate passion, like intimacy, with strong emotion or sexual desire. Originally the word passion meant that which must be suffered or endured, i.e. the passion of Christ leading up to his crucifixion. Jesus was moved to lead and live his life in a way that brought both great inspiration and great suffering for him and many of his followers. He was pushed along almost as if by an external force, many would say the voice of God.

An argument could also be made that our passion(s) are controlled by an inner voice instead of an external force. Effective leadership may stem from such an internal voice by which a purpose is identified and then pursued with a passion regardless of the pain and struggle this may entail. Martin Luther King’s life and work is an example of this kind of force/passion.

Questions:

1. Are we ever at risk, as Unitarian Universalists, of judging others’ passion for their faith as unreasoned and blind, driven by emotional response only?
2. How are you different when you’re living passionately? What is it like to live a life without it?
3. Is it possible to live a purpose unknowingly as something innate?

4. Is purpose something you're born with or do you create it? Does it change or evolve over time?
5. About what are YOU passionate? What inspires you? What gives you energy?
6. How do your personal passions and purpose align with Unitarian Universalism and within your engagement in our religious community?

Readings for Discussion and Discernment:

On life's vast ocean diversely we sail. Reason's the card (compass), but passion's the gale. ~ Alexander Pope

Every person born into the world represents something new, something that never existed before, something original and unique....If there had been someone like her in the world, there would have been no need for her to be born. ~Martin Buber

If you do follow your bliss you put yourself on a kind of track that has been there all the while, waiting for you, and the [life](#) that you ought to be living is the one you are living. ~ Joseph Campbell

This translation of the Lord's prayer came directly from Aramaic, Jesus's native language. The translator, Saadi Neil Douglas-Klotz, is the director of the Dances of Universal Peace.

O cosmic Birther of all radiance and vibration!

Soften the ground of our being
and carve out a space within us where your Presence can abide.

Fill us with your creativity
so that we may be empowered to bear the fruit of your mission.

Let each of our actions bear fruit in accordance with our desire.

Endow us with the wisdom to produce and share
what each being needs to grow and flourish.

Untie the tangled threads of destiny that bind us,
as we release others from the entanglement of past mistakes.

Do not let us be seduced
by that which would divert us from our true purpose,
but illuminate the opportunities of the present moment.

For you are the ground and the fruitful vision,
the birth-power and fulfillment,
as all is gathered and made whole once again.

Passion makes the old medicine new:
Passion lops off the bough of weariness.
Passion is the elixir that renews:
how can there be weariness
when passion is present?
Oh, don't sigh heavily from fatigue:
seek passion, seek passion, seek passion!

~ Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi

...Among the hills, when you sit in the cool shade of the white poplars, sharing the peace and serenity of distant fields and meadows -- then let your heart say in silence, "God rests in reason."
And when the storm comes, and the mighty wind shakes the forest, and thunder and lightning proclaim the majesty of the sky, -- then let your heart say in awe, "God moves in passion."
And since you are a breath in God's sphere, and a leaf in God's forest, you too should rest in reason and move in passion.... ~ Kahlil Gibran

Bill Moyers: Unlike heroes such as Prometheus or Jesus, we're not going on our journey to save the [world](#) but to save ourselves.

Joseph Campbell: But in doing that you save the world. The influence of a vital person vitalizes, there's no doubt about it. The world without spirit is a wasteland. People have the notion of saving the world by shifting things around, changing the [rules](#), and who's on top, and so forth. No, no! Any world is a valid world if it's alive. The thing to do is to bring [life](#) to it, and the only way to do that is to find in your own case where the life is and become alive yourself.

LOVE IS THE MASTER

Love is the One who masters all things;
I am mastered totally by Love.
By my passion of love for Love
I have ground sweet as sugar.
O furious Wind, I am only a straw before you;
How could I know where I will be blown next?
Whoever claims to have made a pact with Destiny
Reveals himself a liar and a fool;
What is any of us but a straw in a storm?
How could anyone make a pact with a hurricane?
God is working everywhere his massive Resurrection;
How can we pretend to act on our own?
In the hand of Love I am like a cat in a sack;
Sometimes Love hoists me into the air,
Sometimes Love flings me into the air,
Love swings me round and round His head;
I have no peace, in this world or any other.
The lovers of God have fallen in a furious river;
They have surrendered themselves to Love's commands.
Like mill wheels they turn, day and night, day and night,
Constantly turning and turning, and crying out. ~ Rumi