

Real Security

Why are we suddenly a nation and a people who strive for security above all else? In fact, security is essentially elusive, impossible. We all die. We all get sick. We all get old. People leave us. People surprise us. People change us. Nothing is secure. And this is the good news. But only if you are not seeking security as the point of your life.

Here's what happens when security becomes the center of your life. You can't travel very far or venture too far outside a certain circle. You can't allow too many conflicting ideas into your mind at one time as they might confuse you or challenge you. You can't open yourself to new experiences, new people, and new ways of doing things. They might take you off course. You cling desperately to your identity.

Of course now you can no longer feel what another person feels because that might shatter your heart, confuse your basic thinking, destroy the whole structure. Ideas get shorter — they become sound bites. There are evildoers and saviours. Criminals and victims. Those who are not with us are against us. It gets easier to hurt people because you do not feel what's inside them.

But all of this offers only a false sense of security. Real security means contemplating death, not pretending it doesn't exist. It means not running from loss, but feeling it, surrendering to sorrow, entering grief.

Real security is not knowing something when you don't know it.

Real security cannot be bought or arranged or accomplished with bombs. It is deeper. It is a process. It is the acute awareness that we are all utterly interdependent and that one action by one being in one town has consequences everywhere.

Real security is the ability to tolerate mystery, complexity, ambiguity — indeed hungering for these things.

Eve Ensler

READINGS AND MEDITATIONS

To Share with Family and Friends...

January 2015

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Corvallis

SOMEWHERE

As something is breaking,
somewhere something is being joined.
As something is joining, somewhere something is breaking.
As something closes, something opens.
As something opens, something closes.
Where there is dark, somewhere there is light.
And where there is light, somewhere there is dark.
When things go clear, somewhere things are thickening into
confusion. And when people are agitated, others are calm.
I don't understand this.
But as something is taken, something is given.
As something is given, something is taken.
As someone is cruel, someone is kind. And when kindness
appears, somewhere something cruel is poised to
sting. Then someone is lost, as another is finally at home.
And some are aware of this, while others are not.
The way things break and join at once, the
way people are cruel and kind at once, the way life
constantly opens and closes, how there is light and
dark in every soul, how we're clear and confused
just behind our heart, and lost and at home in
every breath—This is the river we're born into,
turbulent at the surface, swift in the deep.
This is what we try to make sense of and live through,
feeling it's all too much but needing more. So lift
your head and steady your heart, knowing, as you're
swept along, that Experience is the face of God.

Mark Nepo

READINGS, MEDITATIONS, AND PRAYERS-----

A Prayer Among Friends

Among other wonders of our lives, we are alive with one another,
we walk here in the light of this unlikely world that isn't ours for long.
May we spend generously the time we are given.
May we enact our responsibilities
as thoroughly as we enjoy our pleasures.
May we see with clarity, may we seek a vision that serves all beings, may we
honor the mystery surpassing our sight,
and may we hold in our hands the gift of good work
and bear it forth whole,
as we were borne forth by a power we praise
to this one Earth, this homeland of all we love.

John Daniel, from Of Earth

Singing in the Night

I love to pray, to go deep down into the silence:

To strip myself of all pride, selfishness, and
coldness of heart;

To peel off thought after thought, passion after
passion, till I reach the genuine depths of all;

To remember how short a time ago I was nothing,
and in how short a time again I will not be here;

To dwell on all joys, all ecstasies, all tender
relations that give my life zest and meaning;

To peek through a mystic window and look upon
the fabric of life—how still it breathes, how
solemn its march, how profound its perspective;

And to think how little I know, how very little,
except the calm, calm of the silence, and the
singing, singing in the night.

Prayer is the soul's intimacy with God, the ultimate kiss.

David O. Rankin

It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view.
The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent
enterprise that is God's work. Nothing we do is complete, which is a way of
saying that the kingdom always lies beyond us.
No statement says all that could be said. No prayer fully expresses our faith.
No confession brings perfection. No pastoral visit brings wholeness.
No program accomplishes the church's mission.
No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about.
We plant the seeds that one day will grow.
We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.

We lay foundations that will need further development.
We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.
This enables us to do something, and to do it very well. It may be incomplete,
but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for grace to enter
and do the rest.

We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the
master builder and the worker.

We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs.
We are prophets of a future not our own.

Archbishop Oscar Romero

The Wisdom of Insecurity

Let yourself breathe and trust.
It is only by a courageous letting go
that the heart becomes free.
This is called the wisdom of insecurity.

Security is mostly a superstition.
It does not exist in nature,
nor do children as a whole experience it.
Avoiding danger is no safer in the long run
than outright exposure.
Life is either a daring adventure
or nothing.

Helen Keller