

**Wisdom Circle – Sacred Wisdom**  
**December 2017**



**Chalice Lighting**

Optional Chalice Lighting:

The chalice lit amongst us is a beacon

A beacon of hope, in a world in crisis

A beacon of possibility, made manifest in community

A beacon of warmth through our interconnections

A beacon of light illuminating our shared wisdom

A beacon of connection by our being together

-Debra Faulk

**Check-In**

As you feel comfortable, take 2-3 minutes to share whatever you need to share with this group in order to be fully present. This is a time for sharing, but not for discussion.

**Business (approx. 10 min)**

Use this time for any new business: Welcoming new members; Scheduling future meetings; Revisiting the Covenant; Answering questions about Wisdom Circle processes; Etc...

## **Spiritual Exercise**

Share any insight, learning, lesson gained from doing or resisting this month's spiritual exercise. (Focus on your heart/emotions/spirit/personal experience). Because this is a section for personal sharing, attentive listening and no-crosstalk is recommended.

**Contemplation** - The invitation this month is to contemplate something. You choose the object or place: a song, a poem or prayer, the beach, a tree/flower/plant, a picture, an item. The point is to pay attention, in silence. Just sit with it for a while and repeat this exercise as many times as you can this month.

\*\*You could use one of the readings or quotes offered here for your exercise.

*How was this experience for you? What did you learn (if anything)?*

## **Discussion of Reading and Words of Wisdom**

Take turns reading the words of wisdom. Share about the one(s) that caught your attention. Discuss the reading and the questions below. Crosstalk can enrich your conversation here (avoid judging or wanting to “fix” things, and speak from your own experience, avoiding generalizations, and identifying who you mean when/if you use the word “we”).

### **Words of Wisdom**

“Science is not only compatible with spirituality; it is a profound source of spirituality.” -  
**Carl Sagan**

“The possession of knowledge does not kill the sense of wonder and mystery. There is always more mystery.” -**Anais Nin**

"Everything I know I learned by listening and watching. Nowadays people learn out of books instead. Doctors study what man has learned. I pray to understand what man has forgotten." - **Vernon Cooper**, healer of the Lumbee People of North Carolina

“Be patient with yourself. Self-growth is tender; it's holy ground. There is no greater investment.” —**Stephen Covey**

“Sell your cleverness and buy bewilderment.” - **Rumi**

“The desire to reach for the stars is ambitious. The desire to reach hearts is wise.”  
— **Maya Angelou**

“Wisdom cannot be imparted. Wisdom that a wise man attempts to impart always sounds like foolishness to someone else ... Knowledge can be communicated, but not wisdom. One can find it, live it, do wonders through it, but one cannot communicate and teach it.”  
— **Hermann Hesse**

“I believe that what we become depends on what our fathers teach us at odd moments, when they aren't trying to teach us. We are formed by little scraps of wisdom.” —  
**Umberto Eco**

## **Reading**

I like that our small groups are called “Wisdom Circles”. At first, when I was asked to write the reflections for the monthly meetings, I was unsure. I knew I could do the job, but I wasn't sure I could offer any wisdom to the group.

Then, one day, I understood why our groups were called wisdom circles and I realized what my role was; all I had to do was to start a conversation with you and that you were bringing your own wisdom to your group's discussions.

Each member of a wisdom circle brings with them a plethora of unique life experiences and insights that enrich each conversation. I have witnessed many of you experience “aha” moments while listening to each other.

But wisdom hides everywhere. Perhaps hiding isn't the right word, because I believe that wisdom is everywhere, readily available to us, but we are not always able to see it. Here's a folktale from Africa that explains why wisdom is everywhere.

Once upon a time, the sky god named Nyame gave Anansi the spider an unusual gift. It was a pot which had in it all the wisdom in the world. Nyame also instructed Anansi to share the gift of wisdom with everyone in the world.

The pot was filled with amazing skills and ideas. Anansi looked into the pot and learnt something new every day. He was extremely selfish and greedy by nature and hated sharing anything with anyone. He thought, “I want to keep all the wisdom in the pot just for me. I will hide it somewhere and not share it with anyone.”

One day, Anansi was looking for a place where he could hide his pot of wisdom. Finally, he decided to hide it at the topmost branch of a very tall tree. He made a strong rope using the vines from the tree. He then used the rope to tie the pot with his body. Anansi placed the pot in front of his stomach and tied it firmly using the rope.

He started climbing the tree very slowly but was facing a lot of difficulty. The pot was hanging against his stomach and kept bumping against the tree, hurting him in the process. The young son of Anansi was watching him from the bottom of the tree.

After a while, his son suggested, “Father, why don’t you tie the pot at your back? That way it will not bump against the tree and it will be easier and more comfortable for you to climb up the tree by holding it with your hands.”

Anansi followed his son’s suggestion and found out that it was indeed easier to climb the tree this way. Within no time, he reached the top of the tree. But Anansi was extremely angry. “What is the use of owning the pot of wisdom when even a young boy has more common sense than I do?” Anansi thought and dropped the pot of wisdom from the top of the tree.

The pot fell to the ground and broke into pieces. The gift of wisdom stored inside the pot started flying in different directions. People of the world found the bits and pieces of wisdom scattered everywhere. And they started picking up some for their friends and families.

Thus until this day, no one person has all the wisdom in the world. And all over the world, people share wisdom by exchanging ideas with one another.

**Optional reading:**

Thinking Like a Mountain by Aldo Leopold

<http://www.eco-action.org/dt/thinking.html>

**Suggested Questions for Discussion**

1. What does “sacred wisdom” mean to you?
2. Can you recall an “aha” moment?
3. Where do you usually look for wisdom?
4. What wisdom have you learned from others?

**Silence:** Take two minutes of silence to reflect on the group's session.

**Gratitude:** Share 1-2 things that have been meaningful to you from this session

**Extinguishing of the Chalice:**

The facilitator starts with

“As we leave this place, may we... (invite people to share a wish or blessing, it's always okay to pass)

We extinguish this chalice but carry with us the wisdom shared here today.

Amen