**Wisdom Circle – Intentional Inclusion**

 **October 2019**

 

**Chalice Lighting ,** by Erik Walker Wikstrom

We light this chalice for all who are here, and all who are not;
For all who have ever walked through our doors,
for those who may yet find this spiritual home,
and for those we can't even yet imagine.
For each of us and for us all, may this flame burn warm and bright.

**Silence**- Take three minutes to settle into this space, to fully arrive. You may also use this

time to reflect about the chalice lighting words above.

**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**

 Use this time for any new business: welcoming new members, scheduling future meetings, revisiting/reciting 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.

Choose one of the following spiritual exercises:

1. **Photo Contemplation–** Have your camera ready when you go out for a walk or to run errands. I invite you pay attention to all things around you. Take pictures of signs of inclusivity you can spot around you. Then, spend some time contemplating the pictures you take.
2. **10 min Meditation –** I invite you to listen to this guided meditation <https://soundcloud.com/ucsdmindfulness/10-min-wisdom-meditation-by-steve-hickman?in=ucsdmindfulness/sets/seated-meditation>
3. **Journaling** – Take some time to reflect and write about your own wisdom around intentional inclusion. What have you learned? How did you learn that? What are some of your growing edges around this topic?

*How was this experience for you? What insight did you gain?*

**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**

“Each human being, however small or weak, has something to bring to humanity. As we start to really get to know others, as we begin to listen to each other's stories, things begin to change. We begin the movement from exclusion to inclusion, from fear to trust, from closedness to openness, from judgment and prejudice to forgiveness and understanding. It is a movement of the heart.” **-Jean Vanier**

“Peace requires everyone to be in the circle - wholeness, inclusion.” ― **Isabel Allende**

 “You have a responsibility to make inclusion a daily thought, so we can get rid of the word 'inclusion.”   -**Theodore Melfi**

“In Scripture, Jesus is in a house so packed that no one can come through the door anymore. So the people open the roof and lower this paralytic down through it, so Jesus can heal him. The focus of the story is, understandably, the healing of the paralytic. But there is something more significant than that happening here. They're ripping the roof off the place, and those outside are being let in.”**― Gregory Boyle**

“We should indeed keep calm in the face of difference, and live our lives in a state of inclusion and wonder at the diversity of humanity.” **– George Takei**

**Intentional Inclusion** by Rev. Tania Márquez

One day in the Spring, as I arrived to meet with my group of Wisdom Circle facilitators, one of them invited me to leave a space open in our circle so that if anyone with a wheelchair were to come in, we would already have a space for them. I thought it was an excellent idea and a good reminder of the small changes we can make to create space for those who may be coming to join us.

Intentional inclusion is about those small changes and more. I’m thinking that the outward expression of our intent to include are the visible manifestation of something that has already shifted within.

If you subscribe to the On Being Project’s The Pause, every Saturday you get a short reflection on different topics. Yesterday when I read the email, I thought that it spoke directly to this theme of intentional inclusion. Here’s an excerpt of the email and the part that I believe directly relates to our theme of the month. The title of the message is “The Curiosity to Become Us” and it was written by Kristin Lin, one of the On Being editors. She writes:

“I’ve been thinking about what both story and encounter require from us. Story tugs at our ears and our hearts. And encounter asks us to open up — not just to remain curious to one other, but to also have the courage to close the space between us, to lean into what’s alive in us here and now.

And maybe it’s this curiosity that allows for something in us to shift, to be moved, or even to change. As [Elizabeth Gilbert](https://engage.onbeing.org/r?u=8PJfsSHPCCkfAn6dgMO60Q08h9lBlXwC9JYPDJGgviDeW2NMiE309FTF9jN8Jegr2SBhUKSDSNmosBT_zmjiWxtLWDE7HCwGiUv34XhDytZyKur73gfTp99qKSJIJLVI&e=728d545f97fb9845e44d80ff4ce0cac8&utm_source=onbeing&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=20190928_the_pause&n=5) says, “Curiosity is our friend that teaches us how to become ourselves.” And though she’s talking about the importance of curiosity to self-discovery, I think her words still hold true for “becoming ourselves” collectively — of getting more acquainted with the spaces between us.

So maybe this is all to say: Stories are important, but they’re not the same as the creative work of getting closer to one another.”

I find this invitation compelling, and it makes me wonder about the potential of who we can become, as individuals, as a community (local, national, and global) if we were to get on the task of getting closer to one another.

**Suggested Discussion Questions:**

1. Can you think of a time when you experienced the difference between listening to someone’s stories and having an encounter with someone?
2. What has your life taught you about inclusivity?
3. What are some of the challenges you, personally, face when attempting to be inclusive? What gets on your way?

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

**Extinguishing of the Chalice:**

Words by Ean Huntington Behr

You are in the story of the world.
You are the world coming to know itself.
May you trust that all you will ever say or do
Belongs in the story of the world.