

# THE JOURNEY

*A guide for reflection*

## POSSIBILITY

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First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto



*"To be hopeful means to be uncertain about the future, to be tender toward possibilities, to be dedicated to change all the way down to the bottom of your heart."  
- Rebecca Solnit*

In my childhood, when I would express frustration about some uncertainty or unsolved problem, my father would say "It has yet to be revealed."

At the time, I didn't always appreciate the wisdom in his gentle response. In my youth (and, admittedly, well into my adult years too) I wanted an answer to my questions, an immanent solution to my problems, or at least a clear sense of what was likely to happen next.

Now I see that Dad was onto something.

Truly, so much *was* yet to be revealed, and often it wasn't anything like what I had imagined. Sometimes things turned out better than I expected. Sometimes a challenge led to an unforeseen positive outcome. With my limited perspective, I couldn't see all the possibilities of any situation. All I could do was live into them.

In his own way, Dad was encouraging me to do what the poet Rainer Maria Rilke famously advised: "...to be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart and to try to love the questions themselves. Live the questions now. Perhaps you will then gradually, without noticing it, live along some distant day into the answer."

In uncertain times, it's human to want immediate answers and clear paths ahead. But as the writer Rebecca Solnit points out, hope is intimately connected to uncertainty. Our ability to "be tender toward possibilities" may help us shape our world and our lives in positive ways.

Even as we change what we can, as we strive for justice, may we remain open to the possibilities of life: the unexpected opportunities to love and to serve that reveal themselves to us through the living of our days.

Love,

Lynn

## Questions to Live With



- 1 What do you see as possible now, that you once thought was impossible?
- 2 How have you found it possible to live with the uncertainties of life?
- 3 What helps you to imagine possibilities when you are feeling stuck?
- 4 How has exploring possibilities been transformative for you?
- 5 If you were to follow your dreams, what new possibilities might open up for you?
- 6 If these questions don't address how you need to explore possibility this month, what is your question?

## For Inspiration

You do not need to know precisely what is happening, or exactly where it is all going. What you need is to recognize the possibilities and challenges offered by the present moment, and to embrace them with courage, faith and hope.

- Thomas Merton

All the possibilities of your human destiny are asleep in your soul. You are here to realize and honor these possibilities. When love comes in to your life, unrecognized dimensions of your destiny awaken and blossom and grow.

Possibility is the secret heart of time.

- John O'Donohue, *Anam Cara: A Book of Celtic Wisdom*

A dream is the bearer of a new possibility, the enlarged horizon, the great hope.

- Howard Thurman

All life is rife with possibilities. Seeds have possibilities, but all their tomorrows are caught by the patterning of their life cycle. Animals have possibilities that are greater than that of a fir tree or a blade of grass. Still, though, for most animals, the pattern of instinct, the patterns of their lives, are very strong. Humanity has a far greater range of possibilities, especially the very young. Who will children grow up to be? Who will they [love], what will they believe, what will they create? Creation is a very powerful seed of possibility.

- Patricia Briggs, *River Marked*

The function of art is to do more than tell it like it is - it's to imagine what is possible.

- bell hooks

Without leaps of imagination or dreaming, we lose the excitement of possibilities.

- Gloria Steinem

We often think that there is just one way to look at things - the way we always have. In fact, there are an infinite number of ways to look at most everything. An open mind allows for a multitude of perspectives from which to choose in any given moment. That suppleness of mind allows for true choice, and opens us to a whole new realm of possibility.

- Jeffrey R. Anderson, *The Nature of Things - Navigating Everyday Life with Grace*

A real conversation opens up new possibilities. By talking with one another, we can arrive at an answer we never anticipated, resolve a situation that's got stuck and decide on a new direction.

- Sarah Rozenhuler, *Life-Changing Conversations*

Reading and writing have always pulled me out of the darkest experiences in my life. Stories have given me a place in which to lose myself. They have allowed me to remember. They have allowed me to forget. They have allowed me to imagine different endings and better possible worlds.

- Roxane Gay, *Bad Feminist*



Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing.

- Arundhati Roy, *War Talk*

Hope is a passion for the possible.

- Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*

A thought, even a possibility, can shatter and transform us.

- Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche

It's strange how what drives us may abandon us midstream, how what tickles our ears with lies one moment may tell us truths that knock us on our emotional ass the next....Each of us explores possibility, hungry for sustaining adoration, yet we know enough to render ourselves helpless. We strive and strain, bellow and believe, we learn, and everything we learn tells us the same thing: life is one great meaningful experience in a meaningless world...We live, heal and attempt to piece together a picture worth the price of our very lives.

- Christopher Hawke

Curiosity creates possibilities and opportunities.

- Roy T. Bennett

Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves, like locked rooms and like books that are now written in a very foreign tongue. Do not now seek the answers, which cannot be given you because you would not be able to live them. And the point is, to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps you will then gradually, without noticing it, live along some distant day into the answer.

- Rainer Maria Rilke, *Letters to a Young Poet*

If nature has taught us anything it is that the impossible is probable.

- Ilyas Kassam

Nothing is impossible, the word itself says "I'm possible"!

- Audrey Hepburn

Never say that you can't do something, or that something seems impossible, or that something can't be done, no matter how discouraging or harrowing it may be; human beings are limited only by what we allow ourselves to be limited by: our own minds. We are each the masters of our own reality; when we become self-aware to this: absolutely anything in the world is possible.

- Mike Norton

The optimist turns the impossible into the possible; the pessimist turns the possible into the impossible.

- William Arthur Ward

Nothing paralyzes our lives like the attitude that things can never change...Outlook determines outcome. If we see only the problems, we will be defeated; but if we see the possibilities in the problems, we can have victory.

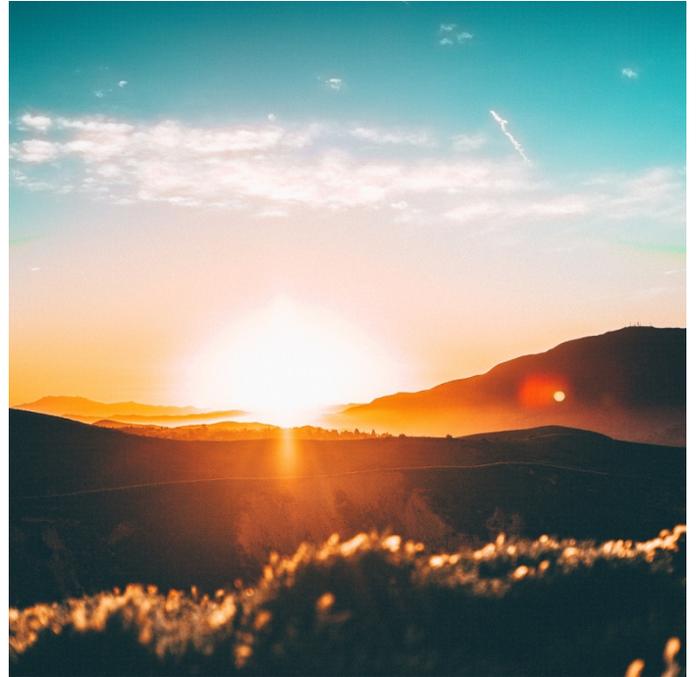
- Warren Wiersbe

I do have one intention, and that is to open your life up to a realm of infinite possibilities...It is my desire that you live free from the restrictions and limits, which the world and you have placed on yourself. It is my desire that you think like there never was a box to begin with.

- Hitesh Surujbally, *The Universe Has Not Decided*

Greet this [new] day the way it has greeted you; with open arms and endless possibility.

- Steve Maraboli, *Life, the Truth, and Being Free*



I believe people like you will do extraordinary things when given the chance, turning some of the most entrenched, seemingly intractable situations of our day into something hopeful, something... Possible.

- Stephan Bauman, *Possible*

### *Bright Light and Possibilities*

It has been dark for so long  
The air has been heavy and oppressive  
It's been difficult to hold one's head high  
Every day negativity oozed everywhere  
Like a heavy weight  
Everything became hard

Possibilities

In spite of it  
People kept trying  
People kept helping  
People kept caring  
Though they were tired  
But hope was diminishing  
Getting fainter

Possibilities

But, after some time  
A small sliver of light shone through  
In the darkness, it seemed even brighter  
People began to focus on it  
Watch it  
Fascinated  
They then started walking towards it  
The closer they came, the brighter it became  
Almost like a lighthouse beacon

The light was soothing  
It was also healing

Possibilities

Eventually the light increased  
Shining down everywhere  
Causing the darkness to finally recede  
Hope grew  
Faith grew  
The heaviness lifted

Possibilities

For the first time in a long time  
People saw possibilities  
They actually started to see the people around them  
Their neighbors, friends, co-workers  
And they were also seen  
They talked and were heard  
They listened and understood  
Empathy started to grow  
Care for one another grew  
It was a brand new day

Possibilities

- Barbara R Maxwell

## *Spiritual Exercises*

Optional ways you can explore this month's theme:



- Write your own "poem of possibility" and share it with your group.
- What images or symbols speak to you of possibilities? Collage, draw or paint your way to possibility.
- Photograph scenes, people or objects that suggest possibility to you. How do those images help you to see new possibilities?
- What music awakens possibility in you? Listen to a song or piece of music that inspires you today.

## Join Us

### Join a Journey Group

Journey Groups are a great way to go deeper with our monthly theme by sharing with a 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 <https://firstunitariantoronto.org/journey-groups/>, or look for the link in First Light.

### Upcoming Themes

November– Reconciliation and Racial Justice | December– Blessing | January– Intention  
February– Contentment | March– Money | April– Awakening | May– Beauty

### Upcoming Services

*Sundays at 10:30*

October 3: "Practice and Possibility" Rev. Lynn Harrison | October 10: "Saying Grace" Rev. Shawn Newton | October 17: "Possibilitarianism" Rev. Shawn Newton | October 24: "The Possibilities are Endless" Rev. Lynn Harrison | October 31: "The Lives that Made Our Lives Possible" Rev. Shawn Newton

### From New Horizons to The Journey

This fall, we're pleased to mark the evolution of First Unitarian's monthly reflection guide, as the title changes from "New Horizons" to "The Journey." The name "New Horizons" was an update on First's "Horizons" newsletter, which ceased publication some time ago. "The Journey" aligns with First's ongoing program of monthly Journey Groups for discussion of monthly themes, and reflects the ongoing journey of spiritual growth that we're engaged in as a congregation and as individuals. Best wishes for "The Journey!"

*New Horizons Editing Team:* Wendy Peebles, Jeanne Van Bronkhorst, Margaret Kohr, Josée Thibault, Rev. Shawn Newton, Rev. Lynn Harrison

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