

## THE JOURNEY: A Guide for Reflection

### Possibility

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“It’s the most wonderful time of the year” crooned the singer in the radio and TV ads for the leading retailer of school supplies in the late 1990s. The deliriously happy parent, gleefully tossing items into the cart, a sharp contrast to the two kids glumly shuffling several paces behind.

Whether we viewed this commercial spot as hilarious or “cringey”, it contains a powerful reminder that the same circumstance can be experienced quite differently depending on our position or perspective. Two things can be true at the same time.

Similarly, for us, as we approach the changing season. Some may revel in the arrival of autumn, finding it rich with possibilities, others experiencing more than a touch of melancholy, or a very natural mix of the two.

As we turn over a significant new leaf in the life of our congregation, we’re also mindful that the Summer of ’23 has held more than its share of heartbreak. The death, or departures, of beloved friends and leaders whose life force has been powerfully felt in our lives and within our wider UU circle, the ongoing strain of witnessing a changing world, lingering pandemic losses and all that each of us already carries, call us to an honest appraisal of what is now possible either in spite of, or because of, our circumstances.

As we begin this year together, we can hold in our hearts all who have helped to form and forge each of us, and our congregation, with reverence and gratitude. We can welcome the talents and perspectives of new companions while practising patience and compassion with ourselves and each other as new possibilities are slowly revealed.

Spirit of Life and Love – help us to steadily grow to delight in the humble spaces that open when we allow ourselves to be uncertain, holding our assumptions lightly, on the lookout for hidden truths beyond the familiar.

In faith and love,

Angela

## Questions to Live With



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1. Who taught you the most about defying expectations and unleashing your potential and possibility? How did their courageous living spill over into your own?
2. What do you know about the possibilities that live on the other side of grief?
3. What are others learning about living and leaning into possibility by watching you?
4. How have you found it possible to live with the uncertainties of life?
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

Impossible is just a big word thrown around by small people who find it easier to live in the world they've been given than to explore the power they have to change it.

Impossible is not a fact. It's an opinion.  
Impossible is not a declaration. It's a dare.

- Muhammad Ali

There is more to see in myself than just what I look for. There is more to see in my enemies than just what I look for. There is more to see in this country than just what I look for. I need this to be true. I need to stop looking for affirmation of what I already believe and instead see the world and others and myself through the eyes of a God who loves all of it madly.

- Nadia Bolz-Weber

A boat, even a wrecked and wretched boat still has all the possibilities of moving.

- Dionne Brand

Sometimes I believe it is best to take the child's approach to life, which assumes no limitation at all. Children set out to do things without knowing that they are not supposed to be able to do them.

- Les Brown

### “Anything is Possible”

If ever there was a time to dare,  
To make a difference, to embark on  
something worth doing,  
IT IS NOW. Not for any great cause,  
necessarily...  
But for something that tugs at your heart,  
something that’s your inspiration,  
something that’s your dream.  
You owe it to yourself to make your days  
here count.

Know, though, that things worth doing seldom  
come easily.  
There will be good days.  
And there will be bad days.  
There will be times when you want to turn  
around, pack it up, and call it quits.  
Those times tell you that you are pushing  
yourself, that you are not afraid to learn by  
trying.

The start of something new brings the hope  
of something great, ANYTHING IS  
POSSIBLE.

- Cheryl Barclay

It’s kind of fun to do the impossible!

- Walt Disney

It's been called different names and all these  
names rightly describe the age in which we  
live in. I call this era the age of possibility.

- Okorote Emmanuel

Who would have thought it would be possible  
to run across Canada on one leg, eh? I  
wanted to try the impossible and show that it  
could be done.

- Terry Fox

So many things are possible just as long as  
you don't know they're impossible.

- Norton Juster

### “You Have to Be Very Careful”

You have to be careful telling things.  
Some ears are tunnels.  
Your words will go in and get lost in the dark.  
Some ears are flat pans like the miners used  
looking for gold.  
What you say will be washed out with the  
stones.

You look for a long time till you find the right  
ears.

Till then, there are birds and lamps to be  
spoken to,  
a patient cloth rubbing shine in circles,  
and the slow, gradually growing possibility  
that when you find such ears  
they already know.

- Naomi Shihab Nye

### “Yellow”

There is a heaven we enter  
through institutional grace  
and there are the yellow finches bathing and  
singing  
in the lowly puddle.

- Mary Oliver

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



Credit: Terry Fox Foundation

*“V’ahavta”*

Say these words when you lie down and when you rise up, when you go out and when you return. In times of mourning and in times of joy. Inscribe them on your doorposts, embroider them on your garments, tattoo them on your shoulders, teach them to your children, your neighbors, your enemies, recite them in your sleep, here in the cruel shadow of empire:  
*Another world is possible...*

This is your sacred task.  
This is your power. Imagine  
...the exact smell of the summer streets in which no one has been shot, the muscles you have never unclenched from worry, gone soft as newborn skin, the sparkling taste of food when we know that no one on earth is hungry, that the beggars are fed, that the old man under the bridge and the woman wrapping herself in thin sheets in the back seat of a car, and the children who suck on stones, nest under a flock of roofs that keep multiplying their shelter.  
Lean with all your being towards that day when the poor of the world shake down a rain of good fortune out of the heavy clouds, and justice rolls down like waters.

Defend the world in which we win as if it were your child.  
It is your child.  
Defend it as if it were your lover.  
It is your lover...

Don't waver. Don't let despair sink its sharp teeth  
Into the throat with which you sing. Escalate your dreams.  
Make them burn so fiercely that you can follow them down  
any dark alleyway of history and not lose your way.  
Make them burn clear as a starry drinking gourd  
Over the grim fog of exhaustion, and keep walking.

Hold hands. Share water. Keep imagining.  
So that we, and the children of our children's children  
may live

- Aurora Levins Morales



Photo by Harli Martin on Unsplash

There are hundreds of ways to kneel and kiss the ground.

- Jalaluddin Rumi

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

May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith in yourself and others.

May you use the gifts that you have received and pass on the love that has been given to you.

- St. Theresa's Prayer



I do have one intention, and that is 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 was never a box to begin with.

- Hitesh Surujbally

I prefer keeping in mind even the possibility that existence has its own reason for being.

- Wislawa Szymborska (translated by Stanislaw Baranczak and Clare Cavanagh)

When you become comfortable with uncertainty, infinite possibilities open up in your life.

- Eckhart Tolle

I will just create, and if it works, it works, and if it doesn't, I'll create something else. I don't have any limitations on what I think I could do or be.

- Oprah Winfrey

In the measurement world, you set a goal and strive for it. In the universe of possibility, you set the context and let life unfold.

- Benjamin Zander

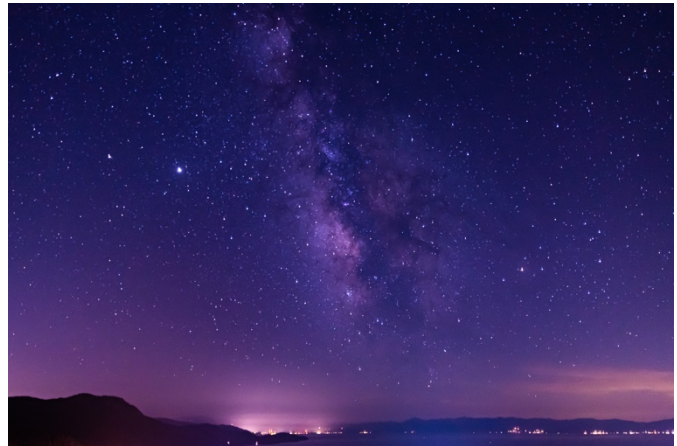


Photo by Tyler Clemmensen on Unsplash

## Optional Spiritual Exercise

### The Possibility of Putting it Down

In his possibility drenched poem, Things to Think, Robert Bly writes,

*When someone knocks on the door, think that they're about  
To give you something large: tell you you're forgiven,  
Or that it's not necessary to work all the time, or that it's  
Been decided that if you lie down no one will die.*

It's a reminder that it's possible for us to let go of many of the things that drain our spirit. It's also a reminder that putting things down opens up space for the possible. So what's draining your spirit?

- Working all the time?
- A friendship that's gone well beyond its shelf life?
- Picking up after everyone else in the house?
- Daily workouts that could be reduced to every other day?
- The role of organizing all the family events?
- An expectation of what you are supposed to do?

Whatever it is, this month try putting it down or letting it go. And watch what that makes possible!

## Join a Journey Group

Journey Groups are a great way to go deeper with our monthly theme by sharing with 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 [firstunitariantoronto.org/journey-groups/](https://firstunitariantoronto.org/journey-groups/) or look for the link in *First Light*. Registration for the 2023-24 congregational year is expected to open in early October.

## Upcoming Themes

October – Heritage | November – Generosity | December – Mystery | January – Liberating Love  
February – Justice & Equity | March – Transformation | April – Interdependence | May – Pluralism

## Upcoming Services | Sundays at 10:30 a.m.

Sept 3 | Awakening to the Stillness  
Rev. Danielle Webber, Guest Minister  
(online only)

September 10 | Everything I Need to Know I  
Learned in Ministry  
Rev. Lynn Harrison, Minister of Spiritual Care  
(online only)

September 17 | Water Communion  
Rev. Victoria Ingram, Senior Minister  
In person services resume at Oakwood  
Collegiate Institute

September 24 | The Sunny Hill  
Rev. Stephen Atkinson

October 1 | Full Circle  
Rev. Lynn Harrison, Minister of Spiritual Care  
Service celebrating Rev. Lynn's ministry

## The Journey Team

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