

Minister's Musings – February 2020

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This month's Soul Matters theme is Resilience. As part of my own deep dive into the theme, I was listening to an interview from the public radio show, On Being. Krista Tippett was interviewing Andrew Zolli. While their conversation focused on resilience, he said something that resonated deeply for me about Unitarian Universalism.

He said that in psychology, there is a field called "hardiness." Folks who are "hardier" have three characteristics:

1. they believe the world is a meaningful place;
2. they understand themselves to have a sense of agency – the ability to influence their immediate world; and
3. they believe we learn from both successes and failures.

These three traits allow a person to be able to be resilient in the face of trauma, adversity, and life's vagaries.

This makes total sense to me, though it's not what touched that part of me that is deeply Unitarian Universalist. It's what he said next:

This is one reason why some researchers postulate that systems of faith have been so resilient themselves in human history, and so prevalent, so sticky. Not because the individual content of the beliefs or any particular belief about, within those cosmologies is strictly true or not. But because believing in those kinds of things are the very kinds of things that confer psychological resilience upon us.

That is Unitarian Universalism's relationship to and with the concept of belief! We are inherently pluralist – we respect, honor, and celebrate many beliefs and many possibilities. It's not that we don't have beliefs. Or that, like the tired old UU joke says, that we don't know what we believe. That's not us at all. As a collection of individuals, we have many beliefs. And as a cohesive collective, what we prize and praise is the process of believing.

I wonder if this resonates for you as it did for me?

Resilience. I'll be preaching about how we might build more congregational resilience by paying attention our mission; about how we might group spiritual resilience through cultivating equanimity; and about how we need to grow our resilience in the face of the global ecological challenges we are facing.

Also, there's a Sunday I won't be at TUS, though I will be preaching. I'll be at Washington Crossing, enacting our part of a wider form of congregational resilience called the Leadership Leaves collaborative, which asks member congregations to help each other out when their minister goes on sabbatical.

Also, on a personal note, in February I will be focusing on corporeal resilience after I have minor foot surgery and will be spending February 5 -17 recovering and on a combination of medical and study leave.

I am blessed to be on this journey with you,

~ Rev. Karen