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# Community

May 2024



Unity Church-Unitarian Spiritual Practice Packet





# Community

Community is one of those words which, at first read, seems to be well understood. We tend to think of community as it derives from its Latin roots of *communitas*, meaning “the same,” or a “unified body of individuals.” And yet, we know from our own experience, that rarely are we a member of just one community, nor do we bring only one aspect of ourselves to the communities we participate in. Our lives overlap and intersect with multiple communities, all of which may have diverse foci. You have young children in school and aging parents; two different types of communities. You are part of the social justice community, the yoga community, the Rondo community, and the parents of young children who like to dance community. Those relationships can be meaningful and may hold a unique place in your life.

But let’s dig a little deeper, and explore not only the communities which we participate in, but why? Why do we seek out gatherings of people, some of whom we have much in common with, other times, the thread of connection is thin? At the heart of community is a desire to belong and to be known. Brené Brown defines belonging as “the innate human desire to be part of something larger than us.” We have within us this desire, this longing, to be part of something larger, something more.” And then she continues, “... and when we find a place where we feel at home, where we can be ourselves, that feels so good and encouraging and liberating, doesn’t it?” It does!

Of course, this doesn’t just happen by accident. Quaker Douglas Steere wrote about what builds community, “When the members of a fellowship know one another, care for one another, visit one another in their homes, consult one another, hold one another up in the silence and feel responsibility before [God] for one another, then when they meet together for worship they are truly open as a corporate group for the deepest working of the Spirit.”

This longing to belong requires much of us. It requires showing up in community, even when the sermon is not to your liking, or a child is noisy in the pew behind you or it’s Stewardship Sunday and you’ll be asked to make your gift to the church (again.) It requires patience with that person whom you know will talk your ear off because they are lonely, and Sunday is the only time they get to talk with another human being. And then—perhaps some Sunday—it’s you who needs that lifeline because you’ve had a terrible week and have no one to share it with. Or, it’s you who is wrestling with your family and you find at church just the right words to help you be in relationship with them. We bring both our gifts and our wounds to this place. When we are at our best in community, we make space for gifts and wounds—both our own and those of others. Neither define us, but both influence our understanding of how we could be together.

Community is a concept that feels great when we’re all getting along and loving each other. When it gets hard is when we disagree; when we realize we are not a collection of “like-minded individuals” (as we used to say about Unitarian Universalists) but a gathering of people with radically diverse life experiences, opinions, hopes and dreams. It can be surprising—even shocking—to realize that we don’t all see the world in the same way.

This is when we get to practice the skills of community building: of listening deeply, of being curious instead of judgmental, of being able to (and I'm borrowing from Christian language now) to see the face of God in every human we encounter. It is not easy. Sometimes it takes time to work through our own resistance, biases, anger or fear. But, in those moments when we can see the other as a manifestation of ourselves and as part of the larger Divine, that is the moment when Beloved Community truly comes alive. That insight—and acceptance—of how we are deeply and intimately interconnected is the mortar that builds a strong, resilient, and loving community.

Unity Church is such a place. It's been tested and tried—and, will be again! Yet at each testing, the church takes a deep breath, centers itself, and shows up again and again, living into the struggle with grace and gratitude for this wondrous and imperfect collaborative we build together—which we call community.

May we continue to live into this vision—this hope—and this reality.

Rev. Kathleen Rolenz with this month's theme team: Rev. Andrea LaSonde Anastos, Ahmed Anzaldua, Rev. Tom Duke, Drew Danielson, Rev. KP Hong, and Nelson Moroukian



# Spiritual Practices

## Option A

### Building Community Through Radical Hospitality

“Radical hospitality,” in the Benedictine tradition, refers to those things we can do to welcome people we don’t know and who may not be like us, without reservation and accepting each person as they are. As we’ve talked about at Unity for many years, this is not a job of a Welcome Team or a minister, but of all of us.

Instead of approaching people in terms of what they can do for us, radical hospitality calls on us to reach out to people with what we might be able to do for them. In church, that looks like reaching out to a stranger with the thought of how we might make them feel welcome and how the church might help them, instead of what they can do for the church.

This may be as simple as saying, “Hello,” to someone you pass in the hall instead of walking past as if they are not there. It may be offering, “Hello, how are you today?” to someone you don’t know or someone who is being ignored. Or, it may be as involved as reaching out to someone who seems troubled or suffering to say, “I just wanted to say, ‘hello.’ Is there something I can do for you?” Or, it may mean keeping an open mind about someone or giving someone the benefit of the doubt when you perceive a slight.

Radical hospitality is a way to bring people into and create community.

To Do:

Think about how you might practice radical hospitality: what are some ways that you could make people feel more welcome? What can you do to be more open to and open-minded about people? Do you tend to make quick judgments about people? If you are easily offended, consider whether the offense is real or just perceived? Do you tend to speak only to people you know and consider friends?

Then, on a Sunday, visit the Parish Hall after the service, and observe. Is there someone or a family you don’t know who may be standing by themselves? Is there someone you may have seen and maybe even spoken to before, but is not engaged with anyone today? Is there someone whom you have seen often but who doesn’t seem to be connected to anyone or anything at Unity? On a particularly busy Sunday, is there someone who seems lost in the crowd?

When you encounter any one of these situations, reach out with radical hospitality.

Later, reflect on what you did and didn’t do: what was successful at making someone feel welcome and included, and what might you do better next time?

For more information, read *Radical Hospitality: Benedictine’s Way of Love* by O.S.B. Homan. In the Anderson Library: 241 H.

## Option B

### What is Your Practice?

Reflect on your primary spiritual practice, whether it is meditation or prayer, time in nature, gratitude, reading, parenting, caretaking, justice work, making art, or something else. How does community intersect with your practice? Has this month's theme changed or enriched your practice? Bring your insights to Chalice Circle.



## Questions to Ponder

Read through the questions below and notice which ones resonate with you. One or more of the questions might seem particularly compelling—or some might stir resistance in you. Either of these reactions might make the question fruitful to consider. Choose just one and take time to consider it, over several days if possible. Write it down on a piece of paper you carry in your pocket. Or take a picture of that paper with your phone. Or record it in your journal—and spend some time, each day if you can, reflecting on it in writing or otherwise, noticing where it leads you and what you learn from it, and your response to it.

### Questions

1. What does community mean to you?
2. What communities have been most important to you? What made them so significant?
3. Has it been challenging for you to find community? What has your search been like for you?
4. Is community a spiritual practice for you? How?
5. Was community an important part of your growing up?
6. Do you belong to communities online? How are they valuable to you?
7. Have you ever been assigned compulsory community service, or felt pressured to perform community service? Did you get a feeling of helping a community, anyway?
8. Did the pandemic change your view of community?
9. When has being in community been challenging for you? When has it broken your heart? When has community been healing?
10. How many communities do you belong to? Name them. Make a list.
11. What aspect of yourself do you bring to each community you belong to?
12. Are there communities that you no longer belong to? Why not? Did the community change or did you?
13. As you think about the communities you belong to; how do you respond to aspects of a community that you don't like or do not agree with?
14. When have you forged a relationship across differences?

**What is your question?** Your question may not be listed above. As always, if the above questions don't name what life is asking of you now, spend the month listening to your heart to hear what your question is.

# Inspiration

## Recommended Resources

### For Personal Exploration & Reflection

Here you will find a variety of resources to help you take a deeper dive into the worship theme. These offer you several ways to engage with the theme that invite you to consider it thoughtfully, to inspire thinking, and open you to new insights. They are optional. As you browse the packet, consider trying out several that hold meaning for you and, possibly, one or two that may feel challenging.

## Word Definitions

### **community**—noun

1. A group sharing common characteristics, such as the same language, law, religion, or tradition.
2. A residential or religious collective; a commune.
3. (ecology) A group of interdependent organisms inhabiting the same region and interacting with each other.
4. (Internet) A group of people interacting by electronic means for educational, professional, social, or other purposes; a virtual community.
5. The condition of having certain attitudes and interests in common.

[Wiktionary.org]

### **community (etymology)**

late 14c., “a number of people associated together by the fact of residence in the same locality,” also “the common people” (not the rulers or the clergy), from Old French *comunité* “community, commonness, everybody.”

“Community service” as a criminal sentence is recorded from 1972, American English. “Community college,” one offering post-secondary instruction geared to local needs and interests, is recorded from 1947, American English. “Community chest,” fund made up of individual donations to meet the needs of charity and social welfare in a community is from 1919, American English. [Etymonline.com]

### **community (biology)**

an interacting group of various species in a common location. For example, a forest of trees and undergrowth plants, inhabited by animals and rooted in soil containing bacteria and fungi, constitutes a biological community. Among the factors that determine the overall structure of a community are the number of species (diversity) within it, the number of each species (abundance) found within it, the interactions among the species, and the ability of the community to return to normal after a disruptive influence such as fire or drought. [Britannica.com]

## Wise Words

“Humanity is like an enormous spider web, so that if you touch it anywhere, you set the whole thing trembling.... As we move around this world and as we act with kindness, perhaps, or with indifference, or with hostility, toward the people we meet, we too are setting the great spider web a-tremble. The life that I touch for good or ill will touch another life, and that in turn another, until who knows where the trembling stops or in what far place and time my touch will be felt. Our lives are linked together. No one is an island.”

—Frederick Buechner

“As you grow older, you will discover that you have two hands. One for helping yourself, the other for helping others.”

—Audrey Hepburn



“Human kindness has never weakened the stamina or softened the fiber of a free people. A nation does not have to be cruel to be tough.”

—Franklin D. Roosevelt

“Volunteers don’t get paid, not because they’re worthless, but because they’re priceless.”

—Sherry Anderson

“Some people think they are in community, but they are only in proximity. True community requires commitment and openness. It is a willingness to extend yourself to encounter and know the other.”

—David Spangler

“The purpose of life is not to be happy, but to matter—to be productive, to be useful, to have it make some difference that you have lived at all.”

—Leo Rosten

“I first began to understand how different monasteries were from any places I’d known when the monk who was training me as an oblate said one day, ‘It’s time for you to meet the rest of the community.’ We walked to the cemetery, and through it, and as we passed each grave, the monk told me stories about the deceased. Having been at the monastery for over sixty years, he’d known nearly everyone buried there.”

—Kathleen Norris, *The Cloister Walk*

“[M]y mother would say to me—her charge to me—‘Be your best self.’ And I would think, ‘Wow, what is that self? Where is it? Where is it tucked away? Where do I keep it when I’m not being it? And are you your best self? Is my teacher her best self?’ And that was just something intriguing to me, that we had more than one self that we could operate out of. And I think one nice thing about writing is that you get to encounter, you get to meet these other selves, which continue on in you—your child self, your older self, your confused self, your self that makes a lot of mistakes—and find some gracious way to have a community in there, inside, that would help you survive.”

—Naomi Shihab Nye, *OnBeing with Krista Tippett*, July 28, 2016.

“We have spent two years in isolation from one another because of COVID-19. Many of us have had to reconfigure how we think about connection, care, and community....COVID-19 and the pandemics of white supremacy, capitalism, transphobia, ableism, classicism, and all forms of oppression have challenged us to our collective core, pleading with us to prioritize one another, practice collective care, and consider our connection with all beings.

“Healing occurs when others witness us and when we witness each other. It happens when we know we are seen and when we deepen our ability to see others and be with them as they are—exactly as they are. It happens when we are in a circle with one another, singing, celebrating, sobbing, and questioning. It happens when we take a sacred pause and ask for what we need. When we are healing in community, the unraveling, unfolding, opening, and revealing occurs over time and in relationship with others.”

—Michelle Cassandra Johnson, *We Heal Together: Rituals and Practices for Building Community and Connection*

“It [the world] will not get well unless you and I learn to say ‘we’; and until you and I and Everyman awaken at last to the realization that our private well-being, our rightfully important self-interest is actually in the long run identical with the well-being of all men. This is what religion is all about.”

—Arthur Foote, “Pronouns,” a sermon delivered at Unity Church on June 13, 1965

“The whole point of religion is that it takes a man out of himself and reveals to him the vast network of human and cosmic relationships which alone give meaning to individual lives. Religion can never be a matter of private concern, because by its very nature it is social in the fullest sense of the word.... In a solitude that ignores or rejects the need for expressing in terms of fellowship the deep impulse

of the spiritual nature of man, you can never find or keep the unsearchable riches for which your whole being hungers. Only when you become part of such a fellowship can you discover and lay hold upon the fullness of spiritual life which you desire.”

—Frederick May Eliot, *Unitarians Believe*, 1939

“Whether the universe is composed of an infinite number of blind atoms or one all-seeing nature, two things are clear: first, I am a part of the universe governed by nature; and second, I am related in some way to the other parts like myself.... Because I am related to the other parts like myself, I will not seek my own advantage at their expense, but I will study to know what is in our common good and bend every effort to advance that good and dissuade others from acting against it. If I am successful in this, my life is bound to flow smoothly, as one would expect for the dutiful citizen who is always looking out for others.”

—Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*

#### You and Me

The interdependent web of existence is not just nature.

It is not just frogs in Central America or rain in South Asia.

The interdependent web of existence is you, and me; It is everyone we know and everyone we don't yet know, and everyone we will never know.

We pause in a moment of silence to feel those connections that tug on us. that pull at us, The connections that restore us to life.

—Michael Tino, Church of the Larger Fellowship

“Communion across the mortal divide is as easy as asking, as trusting. I believe it is something with which we have been endowed, a tool for our use, a reminder of the soul's responsibility and its continuance. Sometimes I imagine that an older, larger part of my own soul has come to my aid when called. Logic won't be of use in corroborating such an intuition, but the wish adds new terms to the scope of what I ultimately seek: hope. What will save

us? We will save us. We must. It is the work into which we are born. And I trust that we will not do it alone.”

—Tracy K. Smith, from *To Free the Captives*

<https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/706866/t-o-free-the-captives-by-tracy-k-smith/>

#### Poetry

##### Red Brocade (excerpt)

Naomi Shihab Nye

The Arabs used to say,  
When a stranger appears at your door,  
feed him for three days  
before asking who he is,  
where he's come from,  
where he's headed.  
That way, he'll have strength  
enough to answer.  
Or, by then you'll be  
such good friends  
you don't care.

<https://poets.org/poem/red-brocade>

##### How Do You Create Community? (excerpt)

Tad Hargrave

A thousand ways  
But,  
how do you kill community?  
I can tell you one thing  
sure to do the job.  
Be self-sufficient.  
Always have enough.  
Always have it together.  
Always be a giver.  
Always have all the tools you need.  
Never need to borrow a sewing needle.  
Never need a cup of sugar.  
Never tell anyone you're breaking down.  
Never need anyone...

<https://tadhargrave.substack.com/p/how-do-you-create-community-a-poem>

**A Community of the Spirit (excerpt)**  
Rumi (translation by Coleman Barks)

There is a community of the spirit.  
Join it, and feel the delight  
of walking in the noisy street  
and being the noise.

Drink all your passion,  
and be a disgrace.

Close both eyes  
to see with the other eye.

Open your hands,  
if you want to be held.

Sit down in this circle.  
<https://www.stillnessspeaks.com/rumi-community-spirit/>

**About Standing (in Kinship)**  
Kimberly Blaeser

We all have the same little bones in our foot  
twenty-six with funny names like navicular.  
Together they build something strong—  
our foot arch a pyramid holding us up.  
The bones don't get casts when they break.  
We tape them—one phalange to its neighbor for  
support.

(Other things like sorrow work that way, too—  
find healing in the leaning, the closeness.)

Our feet have one quarter of all the bones in our  
body.

Maybe we should give more honor to feet  
and to all those tiny but blessed cogs in the world—  
communities, the forgotten architecture of  
friendship.

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poems/155518/about-standing-in-kinship>

**Articles**

**“Building a Community of Accountability Through Restorative Justice” (excerpt)**

Lauren Jones, UMN School of Nursing, March 21, 2024

In a world where punishment often takes precedence over understanding and growth, it's time to rethink our approach to justice within our communities. Rooted in retributive systems, where punishment reigns supreme, our schools, workplaces, and even legal systems often fail to address the root causes of harm. As we witness the detrimental effects of punitive measures on individuals and communities, it's evident that there must be a better way forward. Restorative justice offers a paradigm shift, centering the voices of those impacted by harm and prioritizing accountability over punishment. In this post, I'll explore how we can build a community of accountability through restorative practices, fostering a space where learning, unlearning, and growth are embraced within the framework of the [Strategic Plan for Antiracism \(SPAR\)](#).

<https://www.sph.umn.edu/news/building-a-community-of-accountability-through-restorative-justice/>



Photo by Yan Krukau from Pexels.

**“What Is Community Anyway?” (excerpt)**

David M. Chavis & Kien Lee, *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, May 12, 2015

“Community” is so easy to say. The word itself connects us with each other. It describes an experience so common that we never really take time to explain it. It seems so simple, so natural, and

so human. In the social sector, we often add it to the names of social innovations as a symbol of good intentions (for example, community mental health, community policing, community-based philanthropy, community economic development). But the meaning of community is complex. And, unfortunately, insufficient understanding of what a community is and its role in the lives of people in diverse societies has led to the downfall of many well-intended “community” efforts.

[https://ssir.org/articles/entry/what\\_is\\_community\\_anyway](https://ssir.org/articles/entry/what_is_community_anyway)

### “The Key to Happiness Might Be as Simple as a Library or a Park”

by Pete Buttigieg, *New York Times*, Sept. 14, 2018  
Buttigieg reviews Eric Klinenberg’s *Palaces for the People: How Social Infrastructure Can Help Fight Inequality, Polarization, and the Decline of Civic Life* (Crown, 2018), which examines the influence of physical spaces on human connection and community.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/14/books/review/palaces-for-the-people-eric-klinenberg.html>

### “Thirteen Ways of Looking at Community (...with a fourteenth thrown in for free)”

by Parker J. Palmer, *Center for Courage and Renewal*, August/September 2018

According to Palmer, community is a gift to be received, not a goal to be built or achieved. We receive community by cultivating a capacity for connectedness. In failure, suffering, and loss, we penetrate the illusion of separateness and see that we need community; we need others for comfort, encouragement, support, criticism, challenge, and collaboration.

Community must expand to embrace strangers, even enemies, as well as friends. Hard times and conflict are not the death knell of community but the gateway to the real thing. Leadership in community involves suffering as it holds space for people to discover their resources.

<https://couragerenewal.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/13-Ways-of-Looking-at-Community-ParkerJPalmer.pdf>

### “The Importance of Community: Why Community Matters” (excerpt)

by MasterClass.com

#### What Is a Community?

A community is a social group where people share things in common, like their geographic location, culture, heritage, government, religion, values, identity, work, or other common interests.

Community is the thread that brings people together.

#### What Is the Importance of Community?

Community matters because it creates a sense of purpose, builds social connections, and offers a support network. Communities can also: Allow you to respond to change, Boost empathy, Bring fun into your life, and more.

<https://www.masterclass.com/articles/importance-of-community>

### “UU Congregations: A Community of Communities”

Paula Cole Jones, Unitarian Universalist Association, September 12, 2023.

A UU congregation is not so much a family, but more a community of communities. Jones says that if we can shift our thinking and plan using this metaphor, then we may be better able to avoid silencing the marginalized and even lift up underrepresented voices. Brief video accompanies the article.

<https://www.uua.org/leaderlab/community-communities>

### Prayers

#### A Chalice Lighting for the Dark and the Light

Frances Koziar, UUA Worship Web Library.

May we light this chalice this morning to remind us of the power and beauty of balance and contrast. It is darkness that can make the flame of a single candle so powerful, and light that deepens those shadows in turn. A chalice flame is the meeting point, the union of the refuge, safety, and incredible beauty of

darkness, and the warmth, the assurance, and the joy of light.

May this act of lighting our chalice this morning remind us that we are stronger together, in all the complexities and the disagreements of relationship, because we are different, and because we are one.

## Books

### *Station Eleven*

by Emily St. John Mandel. Vintage, 2015.

Twenty years after the collapse of civilization due to a flu epidemic, Kirsten moves between the settlements of the altered world with a small troupe of actors and musicians. They call themselves, “The Traveling Symphony,” and they have dedicated themselves to keeping the remnants of art and humanity alive. But when they arrive in St. Deborah by the Water, they encounter a violent prophet who will threaten the tiny band’s existence. And as the story takes off, moving back and forth in time, and vividly depicting life before and after the pandemic, the strange twist of fate that connects them all will be revealed.

<https://www.emilymandel.com/station-eleven>

### *Tribe: On Homecoming and Belonging*

by Sebastian Junger. Twelve, 2016.

Combining history, psychology, and anthropology, Tribe explores what we can learn from tribal societies about loyalty, belonging, and the eternal human quest for meaning. It explains the irony that-for many veterans as well as civilians-war feels better than peace, adversity can turn out to be a blessing, and disasters are sometimes remembered more fondly than weddings or tropical vacations. Tribe explains why we are stronger when we come together, and how that can be achieved even in today’s divided world.

<https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/sebastian-junger/tribe/9781455566389/>



Photo by David Clode from Unsplash.

### *The Art of Community: Seven Principles for Belonging*

by Charles H. Vogl. Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 2016.

This practical guide offers timeless principles for building supportive and inclusive communities with a strong sense of purpose. Discussing boundaries, initiation, rituals, space, stories, symbols, and inner rings, Vogl provides hands-on tools for creatively adapting these elements to any group—formal or informal, mission driven or social, physical or virtual.

<https://www.charlesvogel.com/>

### *Still Life*

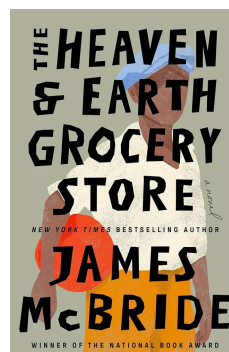
by Karen Winman. G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 2021.

Ron Charles of the Washington Post writes, “Sarah Winman’s Still Life is about a group of misfits and barflies who create their own loving community in the aftermath of WWII.”

<https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/670069/still-life-by-sarah-winman/>

### *The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store*

by James McBride. Riverhead Books, 2023.



In 1972, when workers in Pottstown, Pennsylvania, were digging the foundations for a new development, the last thing they expected to find was a skeleton at the bottom of a well; a long-held secret kept by the residents of Chicken Hill, the dilapidated neighborhood

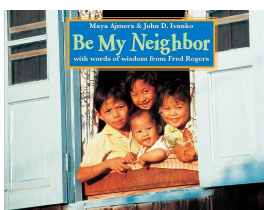
where immigrant Jews and African Americans lived side by side and shared ambitions and sorrows. As stories of Chicken Hill residents overlap and deepen, it becomes clear how much the people who live on the margins of white, Christian America struggle and what they must do to survive. When the truth is finally revealed about what happened on Chicken Hill and the part the town's white establishment played in it, McBride shows us that even in dark times, it is love and community—heaven and earth—that sustain us. In the Anderson Library: 813.6 M.

<https://www.librarycat.org/lib/UnityChurch/item/258694237>

### *The Book of Wilding*

by Isabella Tree and Charlie Burrell. Picador, 2018. How wide do we draw the boundaries of community? This detailed book for adults and older teens speaks about diverse landscapes and species, and the process of rewilding to respect the expansive community of the world. It is a detailed guide to engaging in rewilding and protecting biodiversity, but it is equally a fascinating way to begin to reclaim our relationship with mother earth and all creation. <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/38891828-wilding>

### Children's Books



*Be My Neighbor*  
from Global Fund for Children  
Books Series  
by Maya Ajmera.  
Charlesbridge, 2006.  
Around the world, children

live in communities with others, sharing homes, resources, and experiences with their neighbors. Through vibrant photographs and simple text, readers will see neighborhoods from Vietnam to the United States, Austria to Kenya and everywhere in between and learn what it means to be part of a community. In the Unity Children's Library, Nonfiction 307 A.

<https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/238674/b-e-my-neighbor-by-maya-ajmera-author-john-d-ivanko-author/>

### *Counting on Community*

by Innosanto Nagara. Triangle Square, 2015. Video. Counting up from one stuffed piñata to ten hefty hens—and always counting on each other—children are encouraged to recognize the value of their community, the joys inherent in healthy eco-friendly activities, and the agency they possess to make change. *Together* (Triangle Square, 2021) is another board book illustrated by Nagara, showing the transformative power of collective action.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lPsnYmvPYKw>

### *We Are Still Here!: Native American Truths Everyone Should Know*

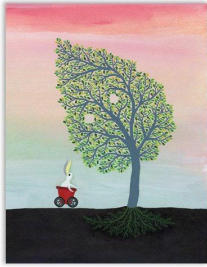
by Traci Sorrell, illustrated by Frane Lessac. Charlesbridge, 2021.

A beautiful, award-winning book, especially for children seven and up, discusses how indigenous people were harmed (ignored, defrauded, betrayed, unvoiced), and how they found ways to maintain community in the face of prejudice and settler greed. There is a section of information with a time line at the end of the book to provide further resources.

<https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/652007/we-are-still-here-by-traci-sorell-author-frane-lessac-illustrator/>



Photo by Quino Al from Unsplash.



### *Bunny & Tree*

by Balint Zsako. Enchanted Lion Books, 2023.

From the publisher: Bunny and Tree first meet when the tree observes a ferocious wolf threatening the bunny and comes to its protection. From that moment on, there is a bond

of trust between the two, which flowers not only into friendship, but amazingly, into a road trip adventure, when Bunny, who's looking for his rabbit friends, convinces Tree that it's time to uproot and see the world.

<https://enchantedlion.com/all-books/bunny-and-tree>

## **Movies**

### *In Jackson Heights*

Directed by Frederick Wiseman, 2015.

Jackson Heights, Queens, New York City is one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse communities in the United States and the world. The subject of this film is the daily life of the people in this community—their businesses, community centers, religions, and political, cultural and social lives—and the conflict between maintaining ties to traditions of the countries of origin and the need to learn and adapt to American ways and values.

<https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/films/reviews/view/28048>

### *Won't You Be My Neighbor?*

Directed by Morgan Neville, 2018

A documentary that explores the life, lessons, and legacy of children's television host Fred Rogers.

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt7681902/>

### *The Rescue*

Directed by Jimmy Chin and Elizabeth Chai Vasarhelyi

Occasionally, a situation captures the attention of the world, and people respond as one world community. Such was the case in 2018 when a Thai boys soccer team and their coach became trapped

deep in a cave as it flooded from monsoon rains. An against-the-odds rescue was engineered and carried out by Thai Navy Seals, the US Air Force Special Tactics, and expert cave divers from Great Britain and Australia while the world watched. From National Geographic Documentary Films.

<https://films.nationalgeographic.com/the-rescue>

## **Videos**

### **“What Makes A Good Life? Lessons From the Longest Study on Happiness”**

Robert Waldinger. *TEDxBeaconStreet*, November 2015

What keeps us happy and healthy as we go through life? If you think it's fame and money, you're not alone—but, according to psychiatrist Robert Waldinger, you're mistaken. As the director of a 75-year-old study on adult development, Waldinger has unprecedented access to data on true happiness and satisfaction. In this talk, he shares three important lessons learned from the study as well as some practical, old-as-the-hills wisdom on how to build a fulfilling, long life.

[https://www.ted.com/talks/robert\\_waldinger\\_what\\_makes\\_a\\_good\\_life\\_lessons\\_from\\_the\\_longest\\_study\\_on\\_happiness](https://www.ted.com/talks/robert_waldinger_what_makes_a_good_life_lessons_from_the_longest_study_on_happiness)

### **“Rabbi Sharon Brous: The Amen Effect—Ancient Wisdom to Mend Our Broken Hearts and World”**

The 92nd Street Y, New York.

In a time of loneliness and isolation, social rupture and alienation, what will it take to mend our broken hearts and rebuild our society? In *The Amen Effect* (Avery, 2024), Brous makes the case that the spiritual work of our time, as instinctual as it is counter-cultural, is to find our way to one other in celebration, in sorrow, and in solidarity. To show up for each other in moments of joy and pain, vulnerability and possibility, to invest in relationships of shared purpose and build communities of care. This kind of sacred presence is captured by the word amen, a powerful ancient idea that we affirm the fullness of one another's

experience by demonstrating, in body and word: “I see you. You are not alone.”

An acclaimed preacher and story-teller, Brous pairs heart-driven anecdotes from her experience building and pastoring to a leading-edge faith community over the past two decades with ancient Jewish wisdom and contemporary science.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SnGhRFJ9Un8>

## Podcasts

### “How to Not Go It Alone”

Julie Beck interview with Mia Birdsong. *How to Talk to People*, *The Atlantic*, June 26, 2023.

Mia Birdsong, author of *How We Show Up: Reclaiming Family, Friendship, and Community* (Hachette, 2020), explores how the injustices baked into our country’s history have limited our ability to connect with one another and our understanding of community, arguing for the quiet radicalness of asking for help and showing up for others.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/podcasts/archive/2023/06/building-community-in-individualistic-culture/674493/>

## Music

“Community” Spotify Playlist

<https://spoti.fi/3JE03xJ>

“Nothing Without You” —Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan

“Helplessly Hoping” —Crosby, Stills & Nash

Contributors: the Spiritual Practice packet team—Merrill Aldrich, Rev. Andrea La Sonde Anastos, Lizabeth Bougie, Shelley Butler, Mike Funck, Lia Rivamonte; with staff support from Rev. Kathleen Rolenz, Rev. KP Hong, and Martha Tilton.

“We Walk the Same Line” —Everything But The Girl

“Someday We’ll Be Together” —Diana Ross & The Supremes

“Longing in Their Hearts” —Bonnie Raitt

“Reach Out I’ll Be There” —Four Tops

“Gotta Get Up” —Harry Nilsson

“Hold Me Now” —Thompson Twins

“Working on a Building” —Cowboy Junkies



Photo by Antenna from Unsplash.