



Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network

INTROVERT, AMBIVERT, or EXTROVERT?

Small Group Conversations, Anne Bailey coordinator

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(TOPIC READINGS start on p. 4)

OUR SMALL GROUP MISSION

These Small Group conversations are offered as a way to get to know each other better, as we explore the various topics selected by our Small Group Team, related to our life experiences, questions, joys, and challenges. We are free to share our thoughts and feelings, joys and struggles, as we choose, and are here to listen to and care about each other. (We are NOT here to be a therapy group ~ or to tackle “church politics”!)

We look forward to building closer connections with each other, as we spend this time together, and form new or deeper friendships and build our sense of community.

OUR SMALL GROUP COVENANT

As members of this Small Group of the Universalist Church, we covenant with each other to help make this experience both personally and spiritually rewarding, to nourish our sense of community, and to learn and practice right relationship.

We will try to arrive before the beginning of each session so that it can start on time. We will try to attend all of the meetings of our group unless we are ill or away, and will let the group know in advance when that will occur or by contacting the facilitator:

Facilitator Contact information:

We use these guidelines for sharing, as a pathway to a caring community:

- We will deeply listen and ask honest and open questions.
- We will respect confidentiality. What is said here stays here, unless we agree to share something outside of our group.
- We will allow others to speak without interruption.
- We will not try to fix, save, advise or correct.
- We will honor time for reflection and quietness and respect a member’s right to remain silent, as they choose.
- We will treat others with respect and without judgment.
- We will honor the diversity of thought and feeling and values among us.

CHECK IN

Check-in is a time to deepen our connections with each other by sharing joys, sorrows, challenges, and changes in our lives. Sharing is not required. Only share if you are comfortable. What is shared in group is confidential.

Connection is the energy created between people when they feel seen, heard, valued and understood. One of the goals of small group is to move out of our heads and into our hearts in order to deepen our connections with one other.

Authentic sharing from a place of honesty and vulnerability allows us to build a community of trust, caring, and belonging. The connections we build with one another become contagious. They grow and spread and infuse our larger church community with life and vitality.

1. WELCOME / INTRODUCTIONS :

Let's remember to **Silence cell phones! Speak up clearly, so all can hear.**

Remind folks to let us know and to remind us if they have a hearing issue or if we aren't speaking up enough, so we can be aware.

• At FIRST SESSION of the series: Let's introduce ourselves:

"Tell us a bit about yourself, for example:"

- Your name, where you live and how long you've been in this area
- How long have you been a UU, coming to our church
- Your family, what you do (or did) for work, any special passions or hobbies
(Model this by starting with yourself.)

Distribute MISSION/COVENANT/CHECK IN handout.

- **Read the MISSION statement orally - volunteers read COVENANT**
- **Remind folks to contact the facilitator if you are unable to come to a session** (if not included, give them your contact info. to add to their copy)
- **Read the CHECK-IN orally, in turn.**
- "Since time has been spent on introductions today (tonight), **we'll keep our check-in short**"; ex. "**Might you have a joy or feeling of gratitude you can share with us?**"

2. CHECK IN: (at 2nd and later sessions: repeat names again, if needed, and read the following aloud, as you choose):

Check-in is a time to deepen our connections with each other by sharing joys, sorrows, challenges, and changes in our lives. Sharing is not required. Only share if you are comfortable. What is shared in group is confidential.

Some **CHECK-IN PROMPTS:**

- *How have these past couple of weeks gone for you?*
- *Can you share some of your 'highs' and/or 'lows'?*
- *Has anything brought you a sense of gratitude or accomplishment? - of joy - or sorrow?*

3. OPENING: Use "chime" or bell to quiet folks; **LIGHT CANDLE:**

(3 reading choices below, you might vary this from session to session)

- *May "our separate fires kindle one flame" as we gather in this circle—bringing our stories, our reflections, our hopes and our struggles.
May our candle flame lend light and promise for our time together.*
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- *May we know once again that we are not isolated beings, but connected, in mystery and miracle, to the universe, to this community and to each other.*  
~~~~~
- *May our time together bring learning, understanding, compassion, encouragement, and hope as we share about our life journeys and passions.*

4. CENTERING: *In preparation for our conversation, let's take a few moments to center ourselves and be thankful for this time we have together in community.*

Please get comfortable, place both feet solidly on the floor, rest your hands on your thighs and let your shoulders drop. Gently close your eyes or focus on a spot a few feet in front of you on the floor. Bring your attention to the flow of your breath.

*Breathing in I calm my body.
Breathing out I smile.*

*Dwelling in this present moment,
I know this is a wonderful moment.*

Our life's path is not one we travel alone. We are in it together, and the company of spiritual friends helps us feel our interconnectedness.

Ring the chime: *"Slowly open your eyes."*

5. DISTRIBUTE READING:

Ask for **volunteers to read the paragraphs aloud, in turn.** You might include a **pause after the reading,** to allow time to reflect before responding.

6. POSE QUESTIONS to prompt sharing, invite folks to respond if and as they choose; If you choose, you can **split readings into sections,** with questions/conversation as you go along (some readings are already done this way).

Encourage silent spaces between reflections; be comfortable with silence.

You might prompt: **"Take some time to think about that."** - or the like.

FEEL FREE TO ADJUST or ADAPT THE QUESTIONS PROVIDED

You may not get to all of them, or you may want to modify them slightly or skip around a bit, even make up a new question, depending on what comes up in the conversation, to keep it moving along.

KEEPING YOUR GROUP ON TRACK: If a group member should go on and on, or responds inappropriately so that **conversation needs redirection,** gently ask that they give others an opportunity to share or say something like:

- **"Let's reconsider the question"**
- **"Let's stop now and take a moment to reflect."**
- **"Thank you for sharing your thoughts. Now let's move on".**

You can also make reference to the covenant.

(If you are co-facilitating, work out a collaboration system with your partner, such as: when the other is facilitating, feel free to help guide the conversation, step in if you see a need to redirect.)

If the conversation has slowed down, you as facilitator can model responses to help the conversation along. **Some prompts could be:**

- **What are your thoughts about that?**
- **Can you say more about that?**
- **How does it make you feel?**
- **What does it make you think of?**

If the topic is really not going well, turn it back to the group:

- **"What do you want to do with this topic?"**

TOPIC READINGS start on next page:

INTROVERT, AMBIVERT, or EXTROVERT?

Do you know where you fall on the introvert-extrovert spectrum?

Introverts and extroverts are like an emotional ying and yang. The interactions that drain an introvert energize an extrovert. Introverts gain their energy from their alone time. Extroverts energize through social interaction.

We live in a live-out-loud think-out-loud society. Being an extrovert is praised and admired and being an introvert is often viewed as a problem that needs to be overcome or pitied, particularly in childhood. The invaluable benefits of being introverted are often overlooked when people don't look deep enough.

Because we're often taught as children to be ashamed of our introverted nature by society, we grow up constantly fighting against ourselves instead of maximizing our strengths.

"If you are an introvert, you are born with a temperament that craves to be alone, delights in meaningful connections, thinks before speaking and observes before approaching. If you are an introvert, you thrive in the inner sanctuary of the mind, heart and spirit, but shrink in the external world of noise, drama and chaos. As an introvert, you are sensitive, perceptive, gentle and reflective. You prefer to operate behind the scenes, preserve your precious energy and influence the world in a quiet, but powerful way." ~ *Aletheia Luna, Quiet Strength: Embracing, Empowering and Honoring Yourself as an Introvert*

"Solitude matters, and for some people, it's the air they breathe"

~ *Susan Cain, Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking*

"I'm not mad or depressed or antisocial or shy. I just need to not talk to anyone for a while and that's ok." ~ *Jennifer Kahnweiler, The Introverted Leader, Building on Your Quiet Strength*

"Don't think of introversion as something that needs to be cured. Spend your free time the way you like, not the way you think you're supposed to." ~ *Susan Cain*

"Let's clear one thing up: Introverts do not hate small talk because we dislike people. We hate small talk because we hate the barrier it creates between people."

~ *Laurie Helgoe*

"Most people in politics draw energy from backslapping and shaking hands and all that. I draw energy from discussing ideas." **Al Gore**

"I like cancelled plans and empty book stores. I like rainy days and thunderstorms. Most of all I like the small joys that a simple life brings."

"Introverts want company just as much as extroverts do, but they prefer it in either short doses or with people they know well."

(If you haven't done so yet, **you can take this 10 question test at home** to find out which you are: <http://www.quietrev.com/the-introvert-test/>)

QUESTIONS on next page:

QUESTIONS:

- Do you think you're an introvert, extrovert, or ambivert? Are you an introvert in some situations and an extrovert in others?
- What about the important people in your lives—your partners, your friends, your kids?
- If you're in a relationship, how does your temperament compare to that of your partner? How do you handle areas where you're not compatible?
- Can you think of a time in your life when being an introvert proved to be an advantage?
- The book *'Quiet'* talks about “restorative niches,” the places introverts go or the things they do to recharge their energy. What are your favorite restorative niches?
- If you're an introvert, what do you find most challenging about working with extroverts?
- If you're an extrovert, what do you find most challenging about working with introverts?
- Do you think your job suits your temperament? If not, what could you do to change things?
- In her book “Quiet” author Susan Cain reframes introverted qualities that often are looked at as weaknesses... as strengths. In your life, have you reframed qualities about your personality that you used to see as weaknesses, as your strengths?

If time allows, you might explore the survey questions below. Otherwise, folks can do so at home.

EXTROVERT ~ INTROVERT ~ AMBIVERT Survey:

<http://www.quietrev.com/the-introvert-test/>

- I quickly feel drained when in a large crowd of people.
- I am a cautious decision maker.
- I feel drained after being out and about, even if I've enjoyed myself.
- I don't take risks unless I've done some careful research or evaluation first.
- When I was a child, people described me as “quiet.”
- In large social gatherings, I often feel a need to seek out space to be by myself.
- I don't rush decisions.
- Too much exposure to noise or light leaves me feeling drained or spacey.
- I am patient about finding out all the facts before making a decision.
- I do my best work in a quiet environment.

AMBIVERTS

That means you fall smack in the middle of the introvert-extrovert spectrum. In many ways, ambiverts have the best of both worlds, able to tap into the strengths of both introverts and extroverts as needed. See below for information on introverts and extroverts; you'll likely see part of yourself in both.

INTROVERTS

Given the choice, introverts will devote their social energy to a small group of people they care about most, preferring a glass of wine with a close friend to a party full of strangers. Introverts think before they speak, have a more deliberate approach to risk, and enjoy solitude. They feel energized when focusing deeply on a subject or activity that really interests them. When they're in overly stimulating environments (too loud, too crowded, etc.), they tend to feel overwhelmed. They seek out environments of peace, sanctuary, and beauty; they have an active inner life and are at their best when they tap into its riches.

EXTROVERTS

Extroverts relish social life and are energized by interacting with friends and strangers alike. They're typically assertive, go-getting, and able to seize the day. Extroverts are great at thinking on their feet; they're relatively comfortable with conflict. Given the choice, extroverts usually prefer more stimulating environments that give them frequent opportunities to see and speak with others. When they're in quiet environments, they're prone to feeling bored and restless. They are actively engaged in the world around them and at their best when tapping into its energy.

Why does it matter?

It matters because introversion and extroversion lie at the heart of human nature. One scientist refers to them as "the north and south of temperament." When you make life choices that are congruent with your temperament—and allow others to do the same—you unleash vast stores of energy.

Conversely, when you spend too much time battling your own nature, the opposite happens: you deplete yourself.

As CONVERSATION comes to an end, you might ask for **last thoughts on the topic**:

"Do you have a thought from this conversation that you will carry home with you?"

CLOSING: Ask volunteer who brought a Closing, to read it to the group.

RING CHIME and EXTINGUISH CANDLE (Choose one of these or one of your choice)

As our time together comes to a close, we give thanks for one another, for the chance to share our lives, and to renew our spirits in the company of friends. May we go forth enriched by our gathering, committed to living life fully, to loving life with more passion, and to supporting one another.

OR

Remembering that the universe is so much larger than our ability to comprehend, let us go forth from this time together with the resolve to stop trying to reduce the incomprehensible to our own petty expectations, so that wonder -- that sense of what is sacred -- can find space to open up our minds and illumine our lives.

OR

May we value our shared reflections and take away new understandings of ourselves, each other, and our being together. Thank you for sharing your story. Thank you for creating a place of safety. Thank you for listening with appreciation.

ANNOUNCE NEXT SESSION'S TOPIC: (unless last session)

Ask for a volunteer to bring in a CLOSING reading (if needed) for this next session (It can be something they particularly like, doesn't necessarily have to relate to the topic.)

if providing SNACKS, ask for a volunteer