

Chalice Circle: Friendship

Opening Words

When we honestly ask ourselves which person in our lives means the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of given advice, solutions, or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a warm and tender hand. The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing, not curing, not healing and face with us the reality of our powerlessness, that is a friend who cares.

--Henri Nouwen

Check In

- Current state of physical or spiritual health
- Joys or concerns about loved ones
- Concerns/excitement about what is happening in our lives

Break

Discussion

1. When, if ever, did you learn that you had to give your friends space to be themselves: When, if ever, did you feel that you needed more space: If you have ever had to ask for better boundaries in a relationship, how did the other person respond?
2. Is there a time you were hurt deeply by a friend or hurt a friend? Did you work through the hurt?
3. Instead of giving advice and fixing our problems, some friends are able to listen with an open heart. If you have experienced this kind of friend, how did those moments feel? If you have tried to be that kind of friend, how did that go?
4. How has major life circumstances altered friendships, i.e. marriage, children, divorce, illness, career, relocation...

Check Out

What did you like about this meeting? What do you wish had been different?

Closing Words

For none of us ever really walks in another's shoes or knows the innermost rooms of a person's heart. None of us truly knows the lonely places of another's journey or the causes of the lines around another's eyes. Therefore, let us be gentle with one another. Let us listen more than we speak and accept more than we judge. Let our open outstretched hands reach and touch that we may walk along together for a little while in friendship and in trust.

--Elizabeth Tarbox

For the Journey

Simple Meditation: Try this meditation from the Dalai Lama. As you breathe in, say, "May I cherish myself." As you breathe out, say "May I cherish others." Spend five minutes on this meditation at the beginning of each day. Notice that in this meditation and the one that follows, you start with loving yourself, and then move to loving others.

Loving Kindness Meditation: This meditation can be used any time—as a way to start the morning, at night in the quiet of your bedroom, while vacuuming, walking the dog, exercising, pulling weeds. Say to yourself three times:

May I be filled with loving kindness.

May I be well.

May I be peaceful and at ease.

May I be happy.

Then replace the word "I" with "you," thinking of a friend, and say it three times. You may want to repeat this round over and over, thinking of various friends or someone you are struggling with. Finally, substitute the word "we," thinking of a group you are a part of.