

STUDY GUIDE

THIS BOOK can be studied in a congregational context using a format similar to that of covenant groups and allowing for cross-talk. Each session focuses on a different chapter, using the discussion questions that follow it. Allow about ninety minutes for each session. When discussing in a group, remember not to share names or identifying details unless the person you are thinking of has explicitly given you permission to do so in this setting.

Overall session structure

ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION
Opening words and chalice lighting	<p>Suggested opening words:</p> <p><i>“Even when our hearts are broken by our own failure or the failure of others cutting into our lives,</i></p> <p><i>even when we have done all we can and life is still broken,</i></p> <p><i>there is a Universal Love that has never broken faith with us and never will.”</i></p> <p>—Rebecca Ann Parker, #184 in <i>Lifting Our Voices: Readings in the Living Tradition</i> (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 2015)</p>
Check-in (optional)	If you think you will have enough time, you can ask each person what they are bringing into the meeting.
Silent reflection	
Reading	Select a 3- to 4-page passage from the chapter to read. For short chapters such as the introduction, this may include the entire chapter. For longer ones, choose from the beginning text or one of the subheadings.
Discussion	Use the discussion questions that follow each chapter.

ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION
Check-out	Ask the group, “What will you bring with you from this meeting?” Invite each person to express thanks for specific things they heard or learned.
Closing words	<p>Suggested closing words:</p> <p><i>“Take courage, friends.</i></p> <p><i>The way is often hard, the path is never clear, and the stakes are very high.</i></p> <p><i>Take courage.</i></p> <p><i>For deep down, there is another truth: you are not alone.”</i></p> <p>—Wayne Arnason, #698 in <i>Singing the Living Tradition</i> (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993)</p>