

## **1.1 There is no such thing as a “safe space”, by Beth Strano**

Review the poem [here](#)

Updates on restorative justice process and when to seek permission:

<https://www.facebook.com/faithmattersnetwork/>

<https://www.facebook.com/peoplesupper/>

<https://www.facebook.com/beth.strano.12>

## **1.2 Four Agreements of Courageous Conversations about Race, by Glenn Singleton and Curtis Linton**

### **Four Agreements For Our Time Together**

We are sailing in relatively uncharted waters. To support our time together, I want us to consider four agreements – community gifts or norms -- that we might make. They are based on the work of a colleague, the African-American Educator, Glenn Singleton from Washington, DC. He invites us to:

#### **Stay Engaged**

Staying engaged means “remaining morally, emotionally, intellectually, and socially involved in the dialogue.”

#### **Experience Discomfort**

This norm acknowledges that discomfort is inevitable, especially, in dialogue about “sensitive” subtexts such as religion, race, and politics. It invites participants to make a commitment to bring issues into the open. Singleton’s belief is that divisiveness is created by not talking about these issues. The divisiveness already exists in the society. It is through dialogue, even when uncomfortable, that healing and change begins.

#### **Speak Your Truth**

This means being open about thoughts and feelings and not just saying what you think others want to hear.

#### **Expect And Accept Nonclosure**

This agreement asks participants to “hang out in uncertainty” and not rush to quick solutions, especially in relation to religious, racial, and political understanding, each requiring ongoing dialogue.

*from Glenn E. Singleton & Curtis Linton, Courageous Conversations about Race: A Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools. 2006. pp.58-65. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.*

### 1.3: Identity-Based Reflection Groups

What are identity-based reflection groups? What opportunities are created when we include them?

Identity-based groups provide an intentional way for those who share an identity to talk with others who share the same identity. These are often called caucuses, because the origin of the concept of identity-based groups was for the purposes of planning actions, sometimes in the public, political sphere, and sometimes in the context of an organization. In Unitarian Universalist circles, the purpose of identity-based gatherings has evolved to include mutual support and spiritual sustenance as well as planning for action. Because of the multi-faceted nature of the identity-based gatherings in this module, they will be called reflection groups rather than caucuses. Depending on the number and identities of participants, module leaders may propose offering identity groups based on race, gender, ethnicity, or orientation.

Read this piece about race-based identity groups, written by Dr. Mark Hicks and included in the curriculum, [\*Building the World We Dream About\*](#).

*Race-based identity groups, or caucuses, provide a chance for people to talk in a structured format with others from their own ethnic/racial group, an opportunity that is rare, even for those who regularly participate in multicultural dialogues. This kind of within-group talk more often than not surfaces a different type of conversation, both in tone and content, than does multicultural dialogue. In racial affinity groups, people who identify as White or of European ancestry are able to ask questions and raise issues without the fear of offending People of Color and people from racially or ethnically marginalized groups. People socialized in racially or ethnically oppressed groups find that they can talk about issues without the burden of rationalizing and proving the validity of their experience to White people.*

*There may be discomfort among some who believe this sort of exercise is divisive or unnecessarily painful. Some may resist moving into such groups. This may be true (for different reasons) for both White people and people from*

*marginalized racial and ethnic identities. White people, for example, might say, "I want to hear/learn from People of Color." People of Color and from racially or ethnically marginalized groups may have a need to affirm their universal humanity and say, "I prefer not to wear a racial hat." Biracial and multiracial people may find it difficult to "make a choice about which group to join." Other issues and concerns may be voiced.*

*Acknowledge concerns and explain that the intent of the exercise is to deepen and broaden the perspectives of participants to produce new ways of thinking, because creating a different type of group can create a different kind of conversational outcome. In addition, emphasize that the purpose of racial identity group dialogues is to support multicultural community by helping groups "do homework together before encountering other cultural communities." (Eric Law) This exercise is intended to further encourage the development of spiritual practices that support the doing of antiracist/multicultural work. Note that all the other workshops have offered conversations across racial lines and that there will be more opportunity for multicultural and multiracial dialogue in future workshops.*

*When participants divide into racial identity groups, emphasize that the decision about which group to join is up to the individual. Congregations in which there are no racially/ethnically marginalized groups should still participate in this activity. There will be opportunities in later sessions to explore issues related to this particular project. Although there may be a variety of different racial/ethnic identities among those who identify as People of Color and from racially or ethnically marginalized groups, suggest that they form one "racially or ethnically marginalized identity" group. In some cases, participants may choose to form a fourth group for people of a particular ethnic or racial identity.*

What are some resources on the history of caucusing in a Unitarian Universalist context?

Read "[Honor Thy Womanself: The Caucus](#)," written in 1973 by the Arlington Street Church Woman's Caucus and published in the *Honor Thy Womanself* program by the Unitarian Universalist Woman's Federation, 1973.

Read "[The Empowerment Tragedy](#)," written by Mark Morrison-Read, and published in the *UU World*, Winter 2011.

## **1.4 “The Religious Educator of Color” from *Centering: Navigating Race, Authenticity, and Power in Ministry***

*by the Rev. Dr. Natalie Maxwell Fenimore and Aisha Hauser, MSW*

One challenge for the religious education professional of color is the tension between being a prophetic voice and maintaining a pastoral role for people of color in a mostly White denomination. The prophetic role is to build multiracial, multi-cultural, anti-oppressive Unitarian Universalism by teaching it, preaching it, and modeling it in our faith development programs and our faith development community culture. The pastoral role is to stand with individuals of color who are hurting, questioning, angry, and rejoicing about finding a Unitarian Universalism that is not yet the beloved community it seeks to become.

At the outset of their ministry to children, youth, and families, the religious educator is often particularly concerned with how to minister to White people as a person of color. While the minister of color, whose primary role is as a preacher, has to face the projections and perceptions of the White members of the congregation as well, the religious educator has the added layer of being in a ministry that encompasses the area of family making. Family making brings a particular intimacy into the relationship between religious professionals and congregants. To be called to be with people as they grow their souls and seek meaning over a lifetime is a gift—and a great responsibility. Issues of race, culture, and class complicate this journey in so many ways, for both the professional and those they try to serve.

*There are some girls in our congregation who are now seniors in high school, and they just launched. They're biracial. There's this intimacy of knowing we have a lot in common, but how do we broach the subject? We've done a lot of things together. This is really a vulnerability on my part. We have a relationship and we love each other, but I feel like there's this huge missed opportunity, and I don't know what to do with that inherent intimacy that feels almost awkward.*

*Rev. Lauren Smith*

Religious educators and ministers and members of Unitarian Universalist congregations and communities have to push back against stereotypes of themselves and of others. The religious educator of color must contend with the images of servant, mammy, and caretaker, which have negative and derogatory connotations in American culture, while trying to do the good work of a helping profession. It can be necessary for the person of color to consider whether to be seen cleaning up after a congregational event or whether to cook for the holiday party. A White male minister may get credit for doing these things, but how will a Black woman be seen if she does these same domestic tasks? And will there be confusion and even anger if she refuses?

As with the dominant culture outside our congregations, UU congregations may not adequately honor the importance of working with children, youth, and families. The professional religious educator may be labeled, consciously or unconsciously, as doing traditional “women’s work,” which has for so long been unpaid and unheralded in the church, the home, and the wider community.

Unitarian Universalist communities and staff and ministry structures must strive to present images that can counter those so very present in society at large. That is what our religious education programs do in the ways that we develop curricula and set up learning experiences; for instance, we present multicultural images of families, including LGBT families, telling stories from many cultures, honoring many religious traditions. But this work is only partially successful if we do not counteract how religious education professionals are treated in UU communities. Is the work honored? Are duties, salaries, and benefits comparable?

When the religious educator of color is also the only, or one of the few, religious professionals of color in the congregation or other UU community, this dynamic is compounded. It is not unusual for the religious professional of color to be identified as the support staff or facilities staff and not as a professional staff member.

*We have to be clear that when we invite people of color in, we’re inviting them into a difficult place where the options available to them are both a gift and a curse. They can*

*do and be anything they want. What the religious educators of color and the ministers of color can provide is more information about the system. We can say, for instance, "Fine, don't connect your children of color to anybody else of color, but I can tell you how that's probably going to play out for you. If that is your choice, that is your choice, and this community will walk that walk with you and help you pick up the pieces, but there will be pieces that have to be picked up."*

*Rev. Natalie Maxwell Fenimore*

In congregations with hierarchical governance models, the religious education lay professional is often not a part of the executive team. While this may appear to be an objective management decision, it can, in fact, amplify the perception that the religious education professional of color is not a decision-making leader. The religious educator can feel marginalized and disrespected—and unable to bring the issues of families of color to the leadership table.

A question we don't often ask ourselves but that is as important, if not more important, than the question of ministering to Whites, is this: How do I, as a person of color, minister to other people of color within Unitarian Universalism? What are my relationship and my obligation going to be to the spiritual health and faith formation of people of color within Unitarian Universalism? This is a critical question for all ministers and religious professionals of color in Unitarian Universalism, but it is especially critical for the religious educator of color because the religious education community within our faith movement is the location of the most diversity. Our religious education programs and communities attract families longing for a place that welcomes and reflects the diversity that they may have in their own families— interracial, intercultural, multicultural families formed through birth or adoption—as well as families of color with young children developing racial identity within an overwhelmingly White religious community.

And so we find ourselves as religious educators, in what is often the most diverse population in our congregations, engaged in ministering to families of color who are trying to grow vital and healthy souls in what can look like an unwelcoming, non-inclusive environment. The religious educator of color is often walking alongside people

of color who are members of the congregation or in the youth group, or whom they meet at camps and conference centers and in online forums. We are orienting them to Unitarian Universalism and interpreting it, and providing a space to explore the cultural and racial contexts of our faith tradition.

*If we have more variety in our professional ministries, we give our families more information, more examples, more resources, more people to walk different roads with them. There are roads with them I can't walk. I can learn about them. So that means that I do feel obligated to be trained, to be aware of multiculturalism. I was able to tell a parent about Korean Lunar New Year, something she didn't know even though she was Korean American, because she had dropped all that to assimilate. It's my ability as a professional to give that as a gift back to her family as an option, and that's what our ministries can do. We can help people to be whole in some very serious ways by giving them back their ability to claim parts of themselves they had to drop along the way to be successful Americans. So for me as a person of color, that's something that perhaps comes to my awareness differently than for a person of European descent. So that's what I think that we can do, especially in religious education, because people are at such a vulnerable place. They're trying to figure out what their faith can offer them for a lifetime going forward, and in my role as a lifespan religious education professional, I'm responsible for the people from the nursery to the grave.*

*Rev. Natalie Maxwell Fenimore*

This is a mixed bag of experiences. While on the one hand, our faith professes solidarity with the oppressed and marginalized, Unitarian Universalism's demographics do not reflect the diversity of society at large. Religious educators of color find themselves invited to represent the welcome of diversity into Unitarian Universalism with their very bodies—their physical presence is the invitation to others. We carry the welcome. We embody the multicultural vision and the commitment of the faith to that vision.

*I got a call a couple of weeks ago from another religious educator of color, and they said, "Well, the parents want to talk about race with the youth," and I said, "First you have to talk about it with the parents, because the parent is the primary religious*

*educator. That's true. If we're lucky, we get them for four hours a week, maybe two hours." Aisha Hauser*

We are often quickly invited into the personal life of the parent of a child of color in a Unitarian Universalist community. We can find ourselves in intimate and gut-wrenching decisions about child rearing—and in some funny moments too.

Parents of color might ask the religious educator of color to work with them to incorporate the history, theology, and traditions of their racial and cultural groups into the UU community. Families of color might ask, “Can I still honor Jesus? My parenting is more conservative than what I see here. Why is that? Why don't you dress up for church? Why don't you have a basketball court? How do you treat your elders? Why aren't the children in the worship service more? Help me—my young Black son was stopped by the police!”

People in multiracial or multicultural families have asked religious educators of color such questions as, “How do I comb her hair? Should I take her to Chinese school? My husband is from a Muslim family; will you teach anything about Islam?” There are so many stories. White parents have told religious educators that they feared they would never completely connect with their children of color. White parents have found themselves completely unprepared for the isolation their children of color experience at Unitarian Universalist camps and conference centers where they have no peers of color. White parents have confessed their discomfort with their children dating those from Muslim backgrounds. The religious educator of color sits and listens to these stories— sits with the pain of the parents and the children involved. It is not unusual for the same parents who did such deep sharing to then pull away because they are embarrassed and afraid of their own revelations. When parents move to push aside the relationship and not acknowledge professionalism in these interactions, it can be hard for the religious educator of color not to experience them as painful spiritual domestic work.

The professional may have to organize people of color groups or caucuses or small group ministry or reading groups. When they do this work, they have to be wary of becoming the focus of the confusion and even anger of some White members of the community who may be shocked at not having their interests at the center for the first time. Does supporting families of color put our jobs at risk? Maybe.

The professional religious educator is often the advocate for children, youth, and young adults of color—forging racial identity development and faith development. This work gives rise to a myriad of emotions for everyone—anger, confusion, sadness, frustration. The religious educator of color is often a bridge, stretched in all directions, trying to connect everyone through our faith. It can be exhausting.

For religious educators of color, there is also the role of “representing race” in Unitarian Universalism. People come in different shapes, sizes, and colors. On the face of it, there is no problem with that—it is an opportunity to celebrate the expansive genius of creation. However, human cultures put greater value on some sizes, shapes, and colors than others. Seeing a person of color as a religious professional in UU congregations is an announcement to the world that we are antiracist and multicultural. As a lay leader of a UU congregation said, “It would be great for our young people to see a person of color in the pulpit as an example.” While people are often told that they can be themselves—individuals in UU community—the minister or religious educator of color is often denied that individuality and asked to represent race instead. This can be spiritually draining and sometimes insulting. It does not take into account the individuality of the person.

Ministers and religious educators of color are individuals. We have different and specific backgrounds. We cannot be all things to all people. One person cannot represent all the ways that Black, Latinx, Middle Eastern, Native American, Asian/Pacific Islander people—or anyone—move through Unitarian Universalism. For the religious professional of color not to be recognized as an individual is painful. For Unitarian Universalist congregations and communities to learn to relate to people of color in their uniqueness, while also acknowledging their historical cultural context, is both a learning opportunity and a spiritual exercise.

For religious professionals of color to do all that we must do as religious educators—to offer a prophetic and pastoral voice—we must have continuing professional development. The congregation, community, supervisor, and Unitarian Universalist Association must provide supportive learning experiences in workshops, classes, gatherings, and trainings. Time and financial support are essential. So much must be learned—information about different cultures and how-tos in multicultural learning, pastoral support, and identity development. The professional is challenged to move outside their comfort zone as much as any member of a congregation and community where they find themselves.

*I'm constantly struggling with which response to choose. Early on in my ministerial development, I had a really difficult interaction with a powerful person in our denomination who was referring to me as Ayatollah.*

*I wasn't exactly sure what to do. One mentor of color advised me to choose a pastoral response. That was smart advice as it is a brilliant ministerial tool to use. But I couldn't swallow it. Now I'm finding more and more in my ministry that I am less and less willing to engage with that kind of thing. There are people I actually refused to be with one-on-one anymore, which was a really difficult boundary to set because it erodes my sense that ministry "meets people where they are at." It is a constant tension in the context of racism— the need to decide which skill or tool to use in what situation and the criteria with which to make that decision.*

*Rev. Mitra Rahnema*

Self-care is a term that is used often and almost casually in Unitarian Universalist professional circles, but it is essential to the survival of the religious education professional of color. The ministry they provide in our communities is a ministry of presence, of accompaniment, of attentiveness. This ministry invites in the whole person. It is not easy; our buttons get pushed very, very often.

It is possible to swallow your feelings in order to get the job done, to assist others, or to see the emotions of others as being more important than your own. It is also the case that the dominant White culture and UU culture can view expressions of emotion by

people of color as unprofessional, overwrought, or not intellectually valid. So where do you go for relief and support? Find a place or make a place. Be with colleagues of color; find a UU community of color separate from the place where you work. Be clear with those in communities that you serve that you cannot be everything to everyone in the religious education community. Invite other professionals on staff to be present in the religious education community. White colleagues can be a resource for White families struggling with questions about race, class, and culture. White colleagues can teach and preach about issues of race, class, and culture. We must share the work in order to maintain our spiritual health.

While they can be diminished by the challenges of the role, the purpose and joy that exist for the Unitarian Universalist religious educator/minister of color make this a wonderful and fulfilling ministry.

## 1.5 Cummings Identity Map Worksheet

Print or save and fill in Rev. Dr. Monica Cummings' Identity Map:

Cummings' Identity Map
Year Born/Age—significant cultural events:
Geographic areas lived: childhood/adult:
National Identity:
Ethnicity/Race, first language, language spoken at home:
Religious/spiritual orientation; childhood/adult:
Socioeconomic status; childhood/adult:
Disabilities:
Sexual orientation:
Gender:

Part of [Building the World We Dream About](#)

From a 2008 dissertation, "An Educational Model of Pastoral Care to Support Racial and Ethnic Diversity in Unitarian Universalist Congregations," by Rev. Dr. Monica Cummings. It was adapted from P. A. Hays, "Addressing the Complexities of Culture and Gender in Counseling," in *Journal of Counseling and Development* 74 (March/April 1996), 332-38: Copyright American Counseling Association. Used with permission.

## 1.6 Two Types of Covenant

[\(YouTube, 2:32\)](#)

Transcript:

Unitarian Universalism is historically a covenantal, rather than a creedal, faith tradition. Beginning in the spirit of covenant can enable a space for community care and deep listening, even during challenging discussions.

In this module we would like you to consider two ways of developing covenant.

One, behavioral covenant; two, community covenant.

A behavioral covenant often focuses on actions which promote order and comfort. Consider and list items which you would include in a behavioral covenant for this group. Some suggestions include arrive on time, and if online, test your equipment before you gather, read materials in advance, take notes that may be helpful to you in discussion, read the posts of others before the next session, be aware of your level of participation, both speak and listen.

A community covenant emphasizes brave space, mutuality, and community making. When creating a covenant for how we are to be together, a community covenant may include these discussions:

- what are our intentions for this time together,
- what do we need from one another to be successful in this time of learning,
- what do we have to offer to each other in this gathering,
- in what ways might we be of mutual aid?

Can you speak or list what you would like in a community covenant?

## 2.1 Always Calling

by Sean Parker Dennison, published in *Breaking and Blessing: Meditations* (Skinner House Books, 2020).

I have been called countless times,  
just this morning, just this moment.

This breath that I am holding for  
one extra heartbeat is calling.

This tiny speck of dust floating  
above me in the light is calling.

This child with sticky hands  
that wants me to look! look! Is calling.

This task, this thought, this plan  
that crowds my overcrowded mind is calling.

This day rushing through hours toward  
dishes and chores before bed is calling.

This dream of before you died and longing  
for one more time, more time is calling.

This deeper sleep, dreamless, empty  
time of repair and healing is calling.

This joy and that sorrow, the tear  
that mingles both with compassion is calling.

This place and this whole world full  
of suffering and beauty is always calling.

## 2.2 What is Privilege?

from *So You Want to Talk about Race* by Ijeoma Oluo, p. 59-61 (495 words- it is fair use if under 500 words)

So what is privilege? It is, many fear, “good shit you should feel bad about having so that other people can feel better about not having it?” No, it’s not. But that’s not to say that understanding privilege won’t make you feel bad. It might make you feel very bad, and I’m convinced that is why so many of us are quick to dismiss discussions on privilege before they even get started...

...Privilege, in a social justice context, is an advantage or set of advantages that you have that others do not.

These privileges are not due 100 percent to your efforts (although your hard work may indeed have helped), and the benefits of these privileges are disproportionately large or at least partially undeserved when compared to what the privilege is for. These advantages can often be ascribed to certain social groups: privilege based on race, physical ability, gender, class, etc. But these privileges can also lie in areas you may not have considered, like sexuality, body type, and neurological differences. It is in these advantages and their coupled disadvantages that the health and well-being of large amounts of people are often determined...

Let’s use a bit of my privilege as an example: I have a college degree in political science. I worked very hard for my degree, studying at all hours of the night while also taking care of a small child. I probably worked harder than many of the other students in my class, being the only black female single parent there. I also worked hard to get into college in the first place, maintaining my grades while working every evening to help my single mom make ends meet. I’m proud of my degree and the effort that I put into it. While I do have a right to be proud of my degree, it would be dishonest of me to pretend that this degree is 100 percent owed to my efforts. I was raised by a college-educated mother who taught me that a degree is important. I grew up as a neuro-typical, nondisabled child whom school was designed to serve and for whom teachers were willing and trained to dedicate their time and efforts. My grade school curriculum was

free and open to people of all genders and economic classes. I had enough security in my home and nutrition as a child to be able to concentrate on my studies. I live in a country that provides at least some college grants and loans. I grew up in an area that allows and supports the advanced education of women. I did not have to drop out of school to help support my family. I am a documented citizen and therefore eligible for financial aid. These are just some of the many ways in which privilege helped me get my college degree. To look at this list and say, “anybody could do this if they just work hard enough” would be a lie.

## **2.3 Anti-Blackness and White Supremacy**

from *Widening the Circle of Concern: Report of the UUA Commission on Institutional Change, June 2020*, p, 142-143 and 148

### **Anti-Blackness**

Anti-Blackness is not simply the racist actions of a white man with a grudge nor is it only a structure of racist discrimination- anti-blackness is the paradigm that binds blackness and death together so much that one cannot think of one without the other. When one thinks of dying, we think of “fading to black”-when we think of Death (Grim Reaper, Devil, Angel of Death), we think of a being cloaked in blackness. And in the popular imagination, when we think of black people (children, women, men), a dead body will come to mind.- Nicholas Brady

The opposite of the constructed white/black binary.

Blackness is defined as corrupt, degenerate, evil, criminal, and ultimately associated with death.

The identification of Black people and “Black” as “other” and “less than” the identity of whiteness.

Black people are redefined as slaveable objects for the use, gratification, and power of white males, primarily; white identified people in general; and by extension anyone within white dominated systems.

This extends to language that assigns negative associations to darkness and positive associations with lightness.

### **White Supremacy**

The belief that the white race is better than all other races and should have control over all other races.- Merriam-Webster Dictionary

## 2.4 Oppressions and Linked Oppressions

[\(YouTube, 3:26\)](#)

Transcript:

Oppression is defined as prolonged cruel and unjust treatment or control.

Can you brainstorm or list those communities or individuals you consider oppressed?

Oppressions are linked, whatever their form in these ways:

One, they have similar origins in bias, fear, ignorance, and the desire to preserve power.

Two, they confer unearned advantage to some and impose disadvantages on others.

Three, they limit and deprive people through roughly the same devices like physical violence or the threat of physical violence, economic discrimination, political underrepresentation, unequal access to education.

Four, oppression divides us against one another because they rest on assumptions that our differences are more important than our similarities and commonalities and that our interests are better served by competition, rather than cooperation with one another.

Five, oppressions can reinforce each other by supporting the myth that one minority in the human population is the norm and other minorities are deviant. For example, when heterosexual male is the norm, both female and gay are deviant, and sexism and heterosexism reinforce each other. If the norm for female beauty is young, slim and Caucasian then ageism, sizeism and racism reinforce each other.

There is no hierarchy of oppression.

Each oppressed group or individual has a lived experience, which is to be respected. However, some events and incidents, both present and historical, call us to be attentive to the needs of particular groups and individuals as the primary focus at particular times.

Oppressions lead us to form relationships based on scarcity rather than abundance.  
Oppressions thrive on a belief that there must be competition for limited resources and power.  
Oppression interferes with our will and ability to develop a beloved community in which we generously make room for all.

## **2.5 How Anti-Racism Is a Treatment for the Cancer of Racism**

*By Ibram X. Kendi and Robin DiAngelo*

[\(PBS, 9:06. Video and Transcript\)](#)

## 2.6 Introduction to Kinds of Power

[\(YouTube, 3:37\)](#)

Transcript:

Dr Martin Luther King wrote, "Power properly understood is the ability to achieve purpose."

As we talk about the purposes we want to achieve in leading congregational change, it's important to understand all of the ways power can be accessed and used in service of that change.

In 1959, social psychologists, John French and Bertram Raven, identified five different types of power. That initial work has been adapted over the years by many different people and it provides a good model for understanding the kinds of power that one might hold and one might exercise in order to achieve purpose.

Resource 2.6 identifies eight different types of power, some formal or based on your position and some informal. So I am going to share screen while you find resource 2.6 Kinds of Power.

Power related to your position includes: supervisory power, which is the power you hold when you supervise a person or project and have decision making authority. It also includes coercive power which allows you to inflict a negative consequence on a person who does not do what you ask. For example, you might require that there always be two adults working with youth. Violation of this directive could result in negative consequences for the violators. Third, reward power, which allows you to grant a perk of some kind to someone who who does as you ask. For example, you may use budget funds to reward volunteers with a gathering or with small gifts. And fourthly, resource power, sometimes known as gatekeeping power, which gives you control over access to resources, systems or training. For example, you may use your gatekeeping power to screen those who will be trained to lead Our Whole Lives.

Informal power includes these types: referent power, which allows you to influence others through charisma or relationship. If you are trusted, you may be able to persuade people to take a desired course of action. Expert power is power you hold due to your expertise in a particular area, such as music or preaching or education. Connection power or networking allows you to connect people who share a particular vision or support a similar course of action in order to amplify their influence and yours. You may also be able to take advantage of networks with which you are connected in order to achieve a purpose. And fourthly, information power. What information do you hold about available resources or programs or curricula or community groups that might lead others to act in a way that helps to achieve the purpose you envision?

During the group time you will talk about how to use different kinds of power as a toolkit to help you lead change.

*Power, properly understood, is the ability to achieve purpose.* ~ Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

In 1959, Social psychologists John French and Bertram Raven identified five different types of power. That initial work has been adapted over the years by many different people, and provides a good model for understanding the kinds of power that one might hold or exercise in order to achieve purpose. Below is a chart of those types of power:

Chart:

POWER RELATED TO POSITION	INFORMAL POWER
<i>Supervisory</i> power- ability to require someone to do something	<i>Referent</i> power- ability to influence others through charisma, charm, or personal relationship

<p><i>Coercive</i> power- ability to inflict a negative consequence on someone who does not do what you ask</p>	<p><i>Expert</i> power- ability to command respect due to knowledge and skills</p>
<p><i>Reward</i> power- ability to grant a reward or perk to someone who does what you ask</p>	<p><i>Connection</i> power, also known as “networking”- ability to use your links to others to support your own purpose</p>
<p><i>Resource</i> power, also known as “gatekeeping” - ability to control access to systems, people, or needed resources</p>	<p><i>Information</i> power- ability to control the information that others need to accomplish something.</p>

## 2.7 Journaling Questions on Power

- How does power impact your relationship with your colleague(s) and coworkers, whether or not one of them is your supervisor?
- What power, formal and informal, do they hold, particularly in areas which touch on your area of responsibility?
- What metaphor or image would you use to describe your relationship with your supervisor [or with the Board, if you are head of staff]? With your ministerial colleague(s)?
- Where, and how, are you self-sabotaging in this relationship?
- How does understanding and appropriately exercising power help you move more fully into a stance of cooperative, collegial understanding?

## **2.8 Imagine and Create**

Continue your "Imagine Unitarian Universalism" project!

## 2.9 Taraxacum

by Teresa I. Soto, published in *Spilling the Light: Meditations on Hope and Resilience* (Skinner House Books, 2019)

Even though they are edible, someone  
decided that dandelions are weeds, stragglers  
to destroy, to uproot. But dandelions  
never got the memo, never  
thought to care. Busy instead  
with dropping roots, flinging seeds, unfurling  
shoots. And persistent in digging in that  
taproot to depths of two or three average  
adults end to end, the tiny yellow flower  
survives.

You are not less resilient, reaching  
both down to the strength that holds you,  
and up, up to the light, out with your beauty.  
And you know, having sunk your effort into  
the cool, damp earth- that while dandelions  
can be clipped and fought, uninvested  
in anyone's opinion they throw their  
sparkling futures onto the wind, tomorrow tucked

into seeds, and grow all the way back, strong and bowing  
at the very same time.

## **3.1 Unitarian Universalist Professional Organizations**

### **Websites and Mission**

[LREDA \(Liberal Religious Educators Association\)](#)

[Vision and Mission](#)

[UUMA \(Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association\)](#)

[Mission and Vision: Why, How, What](#)

[AUUMM \(Association for Unitarian Universalist Music Ministries\)](#)

[Mission, Purpose, and History](#)

[UUAMP \(Unitarian Universalist Association of Membership Professionals\)](#)

[Mission Statement, and About UUAMP](#)

[AUUA \(Association of Unitarian Universalist Administrators\)](#)

[Mission Statement](#)

### **Codes of Professional Practice**

[LREDA Code of Professional Practices](#)

[UUMA Guidelines for the Conduct of Ministry](#)

[AUUMM Code of Professional Practice](#)

[UUAMP Code of Professional Conduct](#)

[AUUA Code of Professional Practices](#)

### **3.2 Report of the Shared Ministry Task Force (excerpt)**

Why are we doing this work? We are listening for what new thing Spirit is calling us to do as a people of faith. "We are building a new way, feeling stronger every day." We are building upon strengths and healthy trends in our religious life, and seeking to encourage them in an intentional way. We recognize the pain that has been caused for religious professionals, and for the congregations they serve, when relationships among ministers, religious educators and musicians have not been respectful and supportive. There are relationships of authority and accountability among us and with the people we serve. Against an historical backdrop of power over, oppression, and ignorance, we encourage a rigorous re-examination and re-formulation of relationships that are respected, tended, and framed in a spirit of justice as well as in the shared goal of mutual support. This requires being mindful of the use of formal and informal power and an acute awareness of power dynamics. In shared ministry, we work together to bring out the best in one another. For professionals, an abundantly life-giving shared ministry is covenantal, contextual, and developmental. These are attributes that are discernible in any particular aspect of a healthy, collegial relationship. They are not three distinct characteristics, though in some cases it may be more self-evident how a particular aspect bears one of the three attributes. Inherent in our shared ministry is mutual accountability – to one another as colleagues, to the people and organizations/communities we serve, to the Sacred. Our linked ministries are interdependent and are framed within and guided by a shared mission.

### **3.3 Engage: Cross-Staff Conversations**

Before Session 3, talk with each person on your staff team and make notes:

- How do they describe what they do?
- Together, talk about how the work you do touches or interacts with the work they do.

### **3.4 Imagine and Create**

- Continue your Imagine Unitarian Universalism creative project
- Using clay, pipe cleaners, or a drawing, create one representation or visual metaphor for the way your relationship is now with your supervisor.
- Using art supplies, create another tangible representation or visual metaphor for your hopes for how your relationship with your supervisor could be.

*Note: if you are head of staff, create a representation of your relationship with the governing board, as it is now and your hopes for how it could be.*

## **4.1 Widening the Circle of Concern: Report of the Commission on Institutional Change**

[Religious Professionals \(Audio and Text\)](#)

[Educating for Risk-Taking Audio and Text\)](#)

[Innovations and Risk-Taking \(Audio and Text\)](#)

“Centering Theology: A Conversation about Faith, Race, and Liberation, Part 1” by Sofia Betancourt and Centering Theology: A Conversation about Faith, Race, and Liberation, Part 4,” by Elías Ortega, both found in the [Theology \(Audio and Text\)](#) chapter of *Widening the Circle of Concern*.

## 4.2 **“Centering the Marginalized: symphony and triptych”**

*by CB Beal*

[\(blog post\)](#)

### 4.3 The Problem-Saturated Story

*from "The Problem Trap: A Narrative Therapy Approach to Escaping Our Limiting Stories," by Lawrence Peers. Used with permission.*

One of the primary kinds of stories that takes hold in congregations and makes change difficult is what is known in narrative therapy as the "problem-saturated story," or one in which the focus is on who or what is or has been wrong.

A problem-saturated story has a dynamic of its own. Often when we are telling a problem-saturated story about our congregational situation it has a trance-like effect. The story is reinforcing. We "see" only those things that reinforce the story. Whatever is contradictory to this problem-saturated story goes un-storied and is not "seen."

You can recognize the problem-saturated story when you're in a group where someone offers an example of how difficult or awful something is in the congregation and before you know it the rest of us can't help but chime in with more evidence for how truly bad and impossible the situation is. We can almost hear ourselves saying, even if the words aren't verbalized, "You think that's bad, let me tell you how it is even worse than that!"

Problem-saturated stories have the impact of being taken as fact rather than as a narrative created by a particular sifting of facts.

As leaders, we can easily succumb to the power of the problem-saturated story and, in fact, can become the main storyteller—if not the main character—in many of these stories. I have often noticed in clergy groups that a pastor or rabbi will tell a story about his or her congregation and seek support from others. In response to some well-intentioned advice from colleagues, the clergyperson often goes deeper into why these suggestions wouldn't work—or delves into more of the problem story. At this point even the helpers may chime in with sympathetic remarks about how desperate and despairing situations like this can be.

In moments like these, I help to spoil the pity party. I ask questions like, "What would someone else in the congregation say? What would the newest or longest member of the congregation say about this situation?" "What would a child say?" or, better yet,

“What would someone who disagrees with your version of events say about this situation?”

## 4.4 Narrative Theology and Frances Ellen Watkins Harper Story

[\(YouTube, 5:33\)](#)

Transcript:

Narrative theology is a liberal Christian theological concept. It focuses on a narrative representation of faith rather than a systematic theological method.

Systematic theology seeks to achieve an orderly, rational, coherent account of faith.

Narrative theology finds religious claims and meaning embedded in the stories found in scripture. Narrative theology asserts that we can relate to the divine through exploration of religious stories and that religious narratives connect us past and present.

Our faith journeys together when we broaden and deepen the stories we tell about our faith community to include everyone. We are reflecting an inclusive theology. All are part of the religious story and so when we put the marginalized into the center of our religious story we can redefine or refocus the story of our faith.

One example of how to use narrative theology to reframe how we teach and learn about Unitarian Universalism is to lift up the story of historical Unitarian Universalists of color. Do you know the story of Francis Ellen Watkins Harper? Francis Watkins was born a free black woman in Maryland in 1825 at a time when slavery was still legal in Maryland. After her parents' deaths, she was raised by her uncle's family. William Watkins was an AME minister and an abolitionist who had a school she was able to attend.

At 14 she left school to become a domestic servant for a Quaker family who owned a bookstore. She found treasure in that house. The family gave her full access to a wonderful library. She began to read and to write poetry, and at the age of 20, published her first collection of poems called "Forest Leaves."

In 1850, the passage of the fugitive slave law made it dangerous for free black people to

remain in Maryland. She moved to Ohio to be a teacher, then to Philadelphia. Where, by 1854, she had become active with the community of black people who organized part of the underground railroad and dedicated themselves to the abolition of slavery. She became well known as a writer and speaker for the cause and a popular lecturer. She published the second book of poems connecting her strong Christian faith with her demand for the abolition of slavery.

Soon Francis Watkins was engaged as a traveling lecturer for the Anti-Slavery Society of Maine, traveling through northeastern US and Canada. She supported the free produce movement which rejected the use of products grown using enslaved labor and refused to wear cotton clothing. It was Frances Watkins who provided emotional support to Mary Brown during the trial and execution of her spouse John Brown.

In 1860, she married Fenton. Harper became Francis Ellen Watkins Harper and left the lecture circuit. He died four years later, leaving her with a daughter to support. She went back to the lecture circuit and traveled with her daughter in the post-civil war times.

Her topics included women's freedom and equality, as well as support for education for black people. She spoke of the development of both character and intellect as crucial parts of education.

In 1866, she spoke at the national women's rights convention. She also took a strong stance against lynching.

Harper had a dual religious affiliation. She joined First Unitarian in Philadelphia in 1870. She found in that congregation partners in some of her justice work. She also maintained strong ties to the African Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia, where she taught Sunday school. She continued to write and publish poetry and novels, writing for two different discreet audiences. Some of her work was intended mainly for the black community and other work for a more general, largely white audience.

In 1896, Francis Harper co-founded the National Association of Colored Women with Mary Church Terrell and Ida B Wells Barnett.

She died in 1911 at the age of 85, and her funeral service was held at First Unitarian Church in Philadelphia.

Hearing this story, does it make a difference to learn that a black Unitarian woman could be at the center of our learning and knowing about Unitarian abolitionists and creative thinkers in the 1800s?

## 4.5 The Black Empowerment Controversy

Learn about the “Black Empowerment Controversy,” if you do not already know this information. Sources include:

- [Wilderness Journey \(YouTube, 1:16:01\)](#)
- *Revisiting the Empowerment Controversy*, book by Mark D. Morrison-Reed (2018, Skinner House Books)
- “[Responding to Calls for Black Empowerment](#),” Workshop 12 of Resistance and Transformation, a Tapestry of Faith adult curriculum by Colin Bossen and Julia Hamilton
- “Love Calls Us On,” sermon by William Sinkford at the [2016 Service of the Living Tradition](#) (Vimeo, reading and sermon begin at 1:26:30; total service length is 2:21:01)

## 4.6 Using Your Influence

Try using your influence with this hypothetical activity. Choose one:

- Write a ministerial internship reference
- Write a performance evaluation for a youth advisor or other program staff person
- Write a plan to support a staff member/minister of color you supervise  
(acknowledging that there may be particular pressures and challenges for Black, Indigenous and Person of Color religious professionals)

This will not be a finished product; spend no more than 20 minutes on this activity.

Focus on the points you want to make rather than on elegance of language. Do not draft something to be given for an actual person you are working with, although you may have a “composite” person in mind that has some characteristics of a real person(s). Ask yourself: How will this reference, evaluation, or support plan strengthen the person’s skills and presence as a religious professional?

## 5.1 Instructions for Small Group Presentations

Instructions: Prepare a 5-minute presentation that identifies one problem-saturated story that is holding your congregation or organization back from needed cultural change work. You may use any presentation technique that works for your group, such as powerpoint, video, or verbal presentation.

Presentation time allowance: No more than 5 minutes. [Hint: aim for 4 minutes, and come in under 5 minutes] Of this 5 minute time allowance, presentation of the “problem” should take no more than one minute. Focus instead on the moves you make to help change the story.

Expected time commitment for this project: 1 hour, 45 minutes for individual and small group work

### *As individuals*

1. Revisit your collage or imagination piece about the Unitarian Universalism that can be.
2. As individuals, consider the problem-saturated story/ies that are keeping your congregation/organization stuck.

### *With your small group*

1. Share what insights you gained based on your collage or other imagination project.
2. Explore the problem-saturated story(ies) that are keeping your congregation or organization “stuck.”
3. Choose one story and adapt it to make a composite story that fits with all of the individual congregations/organizations represented in your group.
4. Talk about next moves that you can make to change the narrative. How can you use your power to effect change? What allies and co-conspirators will be helpful? How can you engage members of your staff team and key lay leaders in this work?

5. Prepare to present your “problem-saturated” story and your next moves toward a new narrative and cultural change.

#### Accountability Group possibility

If you choose, your small presentation group can continue as an accountability group.

See 5.1 Accountability Group Suggested Questions/Actions/Procedures for suggestions about how an accountability group might proceed.

## **5.2 Accountability Group Suggested Questions / Actions / Procedures**

1. Begin with theological conversation – how is culture change faith-based?
2. Develop joint ritual: chalice lighting, opening words, music, etc.
3. Enable shared leadership
4. Ask how changes are interconnected? Who can benefit?
5. Set monthly action/goal to create uu culture change and discuss implementation successes/challenges
6. Discuss power/privilege
7. Have group do a common read
8. Have group create an art project, write poetry
9. Develop worship resources together