

SO YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT BECOMING A RELIGIOUS INNOVATOR

UUA General Assembly | June 20, 2019



ABOUT BECOMING A RELIGIOUS INNOVATOR

OUR SPEAKERS:

Rev. Brock Leach, UUA Innovative Ministries

Rev. Emily DeTar Birt, Unitarian Universalist Church of Staten Island

Rev. Meg Riley, Senior Minister, Church of the Larger Fellowship UU



HUGE NEED, HUGE OPPORTUNITY IN THE 'MEANING SECTOR'

Need:

- Epidemic of alienation, distraction, and loneliness.
- Tectonic change in climate, work and technology.
- Loss of individual nurture and community connection.

Opportunity:

- Help individuals find identity, grounding and purpose in communities that foster meaning together.



WE UU'S ARE UNIQUELY POSITIONED TO MEET THIS NEED

- Focus on purpose and meaning-making rather than belief systems.
- Collected spiritual and intellectual resources gathered from all forms of knowledge.
- Clear, highly relevant values grounded in our tradition and centuries of human experience.
- We are present and deeply engaged in communities across the nation as individuals and as congregations.



IT WILL REQUIRE NEW FORMS OF COMMUNITY

- That meet the needs of people who are not present in representative numbers, like:
 - People of Color
 - Young Adults
 - Families with Young Children
- Are more intentional about helping people find purpose and meaning together
- Do it better than commercial alternatives

BREAKTHROUGHS MOST OFTEN COME FROM THE LEAST SATISFIED



NEW UU COMMUNITY INNOVATIONS

UU Community Cooperatives creates a structure and a community of mutual support for people to make the daily decisions that put our values and our faith into practice.



UUCC Forbes Under 30 Summit Video



[UUCHC Video](#)

UUCommunityCoops.org

NEW UU COMMUNITY INNOVATIONS

BLUU Beloveds invites UU's who identify as African American or of African descent into a community of service, support and participation.



NEW UU COMMUNITY INNOVATIONS

Sacred Fire UU offers a unique UU methodology for social transformation since and in-depth program to train theologically-grounded, professionally-equipped social justice leaders in our congregations.

Welcome to

SACRED FIRE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

ABOUT THE TRAINING

NEW UU COMMUNITY INNOVATIONS

JUUST Living is a unique model of holistic living, creating community free from the ravages of addiction by empowering people to become their own solution.



NEW UU COMMUNITY INNOVATION

No Child Goes Hungry provides grant money and mentorship so that community organizations can build hunger advocacy programs locally.



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"We can do no great things. Just
small things with great love."

Mother Teresa

Rev. Kären Rasmussen

NoChildGoesHungry.net

NEW UU COMMUNITY INNOVATION

EvoVR (Pronounced Evolver) brings spiritual practice and community to the Virtual Reality space.



BREAKTHROUGH INNOVATIONS IN CONGREGATIONS



Power of teen leadership and community sustainability in Carlisle, MA



DuPage Unitarian Universalist Church

SMILE Project: A summer work experience and mentoring program for underprivileged youth in Naperville, IL



Unitarian Universalist Church in Reston

Spirit. Service. Justice. Love.

First ever community-wide LGBTQ Pride event in Reston, Virginia



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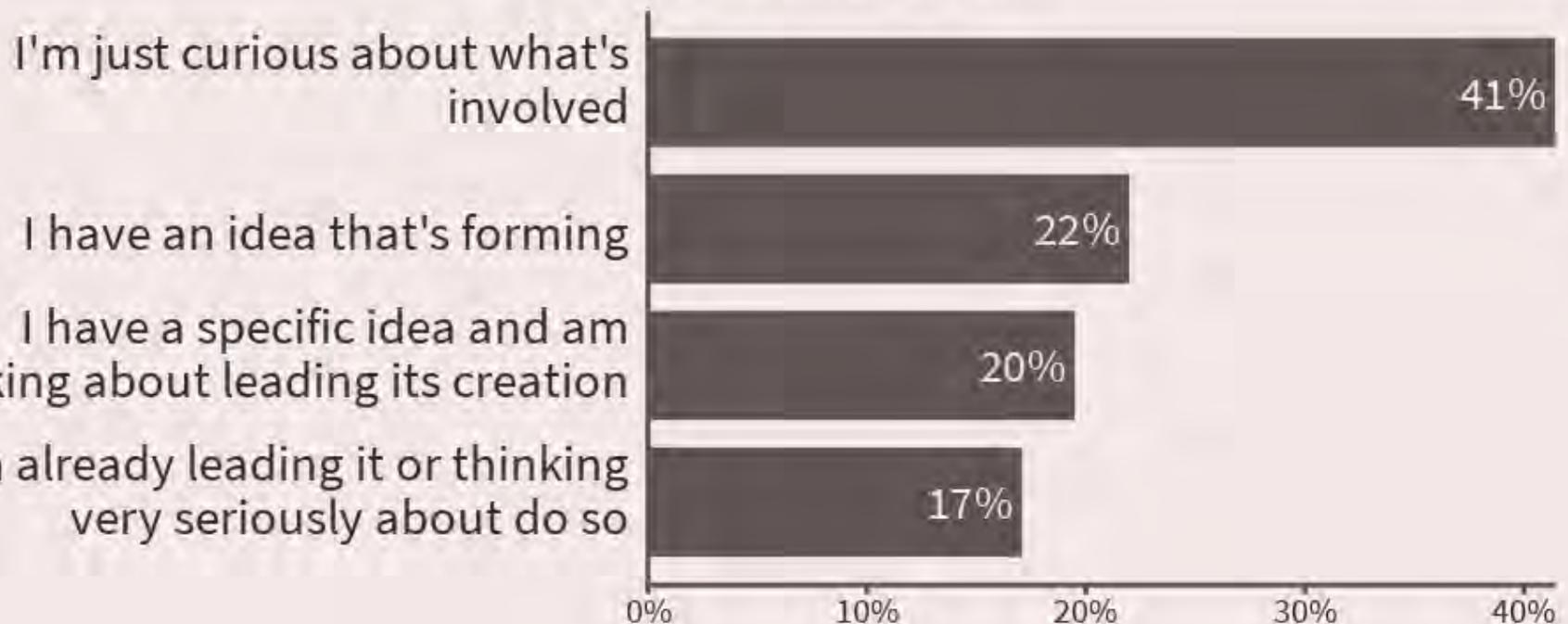
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I'm thinking about becoming a religious innovator AND...

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I'M THINKING ABOUT BECOMING A RELIGIOUS INNOVATOR AND...

I'm just curious about what's involved **A**

I have an idea that's forming **B**

I have a specific idea and am thinking
about leading its creation **C**

I'm already leading it or thinking
very seriously about doing so **D**

WHAT'S IT TAKE TO BE A SUCCESSFUL RELIGIOUS INNOVATOR?

- A lot of hard work and persistence– i.e. passion/calling.
- Getting beyond your “hunch idea” and yourself:
 - From a **team** of stakeholders at the start.
 - Identify specifically **who you intend to serve**.
 - Understand **their needs and ideas**... deeply, empathically and practically.
 - **Co-create solutions** that meet their needs.

Design Thinking or Human-Centered Design

OUTLINING YOUR IDEA

Who do you intend to serve (whose needs are not currently being well met)?

What do you imagine are **their unmet needs**?

What's your "hunch idea" that will address those needs?

Let's Take Three Minutes

AN EXAMPLE

Who do you intend to serve (whose needs are not currently being well met)?

College-age students struggling to identify their purpose in life.

What do you imagine are **their unmet needs**?

Getting clear on what matters in life, understanding where their talents and passions intersect, helping them enact their purpose in the company of others.

What's your "hunch idea" that will address those needs?

An alt-college ministry that introduces them to the elements of well-being, the key sources underlying the seven principles, a personal exploration of purpose, and shared justice experiences.



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WHO DO YOU INTEND TO SERVE?

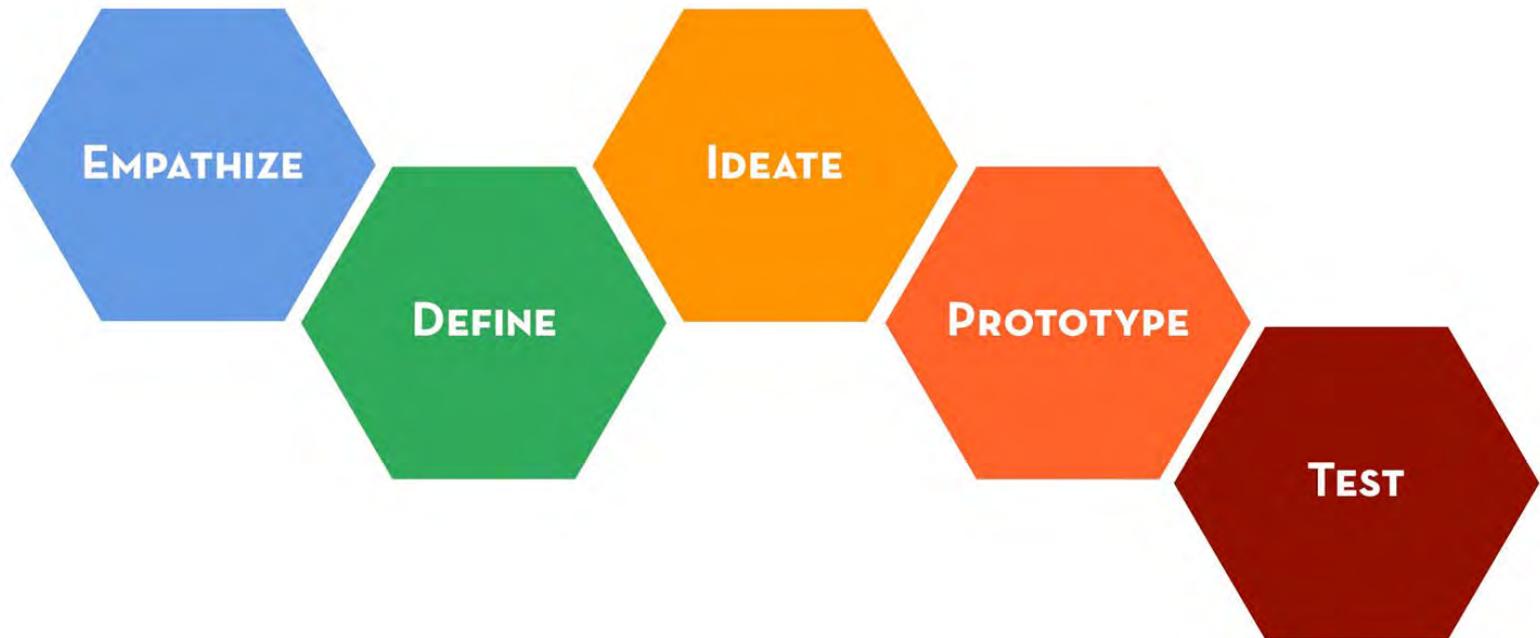
- 2 Creating learning communities with learning leaders
- 3 RE app that is accessible to kids and fortifies their developmental stage and senses that are appropriate according to Rudolph Steiners 12 senses indica
- 4 UUs motivated to live out or 5th principle and want to make a difference at the federal level
- 5 Communities of color
- 6 New members looking for opportunities
- 7 SBNRs
- 8 Uu young adults
- 9 People looking for opportunities to serve right in their neighborhoods
- 10 Teens and college students
- 11 Adults in re-start mode after a major life upset
- 12 Church boards and ministers
- 13 Organizations to reconceive their mission and/ identity
- 14 Queer families
- 15 Homeless youth
- 16 Congregation who fail to attract younger people
- 17 Families
- 18 Next person who comes to a service for the first time
- 19 Young working families
- 20 Elderly UU congregants with pastoral care needs
- 21 Congregations looking to improve their relationships among their congregants
- 22 Military recruits in basic training
- 23 Activist community and the unhoused, both groups suffer from enormous unaddressed trauma and wishing to feel seen, heard
- 24 Families with young kids
- 25 Emerging youth/young adults
- 26 UUs in my community and church looking for a broader range of spiritual experiences
- 27 Hungry kids
- 28 Homeless in Napa. Only fed between Monday morning and Friday afternoon.
- 29 Young adults in tech community in our city
- 30 The differently abled, especially invisible disabilities
- 31 Congregation members
- 32 people who want to die with dignity
- 33 Youth of our congregation
- 34 Knowledge seekers who thrive in covenantal community with spiritual focus
- 35 Faith-curious Young Adults
- 36 College and young adults
- 37 high school students of color
- 38 Social activism networks
- 39 Young Families
- 40 Spiritual but not religious
- 41 Independent UUs who don't want/can't access a congregation
- 42 Unitarian Universalists
- 43 Homeless youth
- 44 transgender young adults
- 45 Women in reentry.
- 46 Young families
- 47 Families with young children
- 48 Young adults 24-35
- 49 Elementary School Children
- 50 LGBTQ
- 51 Busy young adults

THE POWER OF WE

"Humans rarely think for themselves. Rather, we think in groups. Just as it takes a tribe to raise a child, it also takes a tribe to invent a tool, solve a conflict, or cure a disease... What gave *Homo sapiens* an edge... is our unparalleled ability to think together in large groups."

-- Yuval Noah Harari, *21 Lessons for the 21st Century*

DESIGN THINKING STEPS



ESSENCE OF DESIGN THINKING

- Focus on **who** you intend to serve
- Deep understanding of **their needs**
- A process of **failing fast and frequently** through a process of prototyping rough solutions and testing and improving them in rapid succession.

To Learn More:

- Next workshop here at 4:30 today.
- Two-part Design Thinking webinar, August 20 & 22 at 2pm Eastern. Register by email to brock.leach@icloud.com

ARE YOU A RELIGIOUS INNOVATOR?

- A lot of hard work and persistence– i.e. passion/calling.
- Getting beyond your “hunch idea” and yourself.
- Getting clear about your boundaries, motivations, and the depth of your call:
 - What am I willing to invest in time and money?
 - Am I willing to fail for the sake of learning?
 - Am I motivated by making a difference or having autonomy?
 - What is my purpose in life that beckons me to this work?
 - What resources can I draw on to renew that sense of calling?

DISCERNMENT EXERCISE

Kareem Aboulenaga's Six Questions:

- Why is this work important to society?
- Why is this work important to you?
- Why are you the right person to be carrying out this work?
- Why is this work important to society **right now**?
- Why is this work important to you **right now**?
- Why are you the right person to be carrying out this work **right now**?

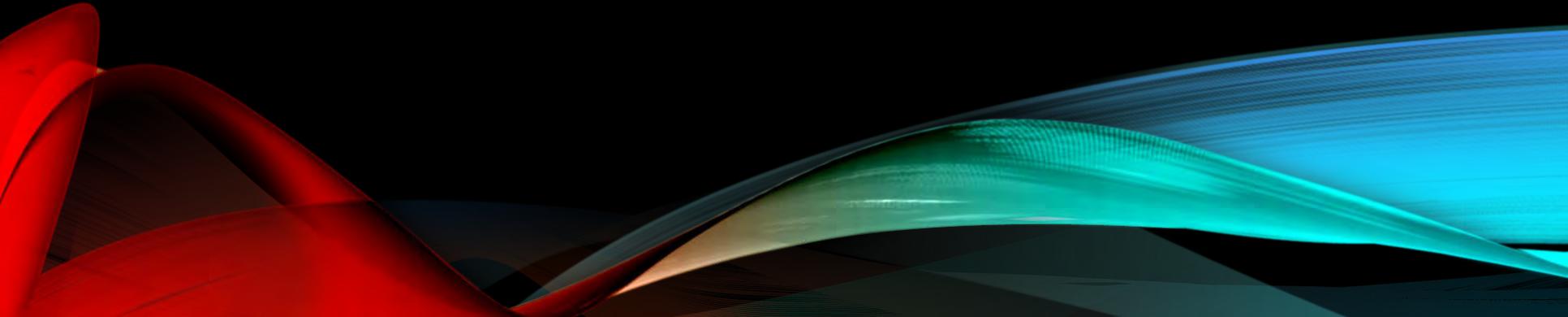
AVAILABLE SUPPORT FOR INNOVATORS

- **Further Learning:**
 - Innovation and Implementation courses at no/low cost
 - Accelerators and incubators
- **Early Stage Funding:** The 4F's– UU Funding Panel, Faithify, Friends and Family
- **Navigation, Connection, Mentoring:**
Contact Brock at brock.leach@icloud.com
- **Religious Innovators Network** in partnership with CLF:
Contact Network Coordinator Eli Snider at esnider@clfuu.org

See FAQ's and Key Resources handouts here
and on the UUA GA app.

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Q&A + PANEL CONVERSATION





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WHAT QUESTIONS DO YOU HAVE?

- 2 Thank you for this space
- 3 UU Talks is like TED talks for UUs serves UU Congregations and groups with Fundraising, Outreach and Publicity
- 4 I am an accredited interim minister and I spend much of my time creating the space and opportunity for congregations to innovate- so it is not 'my' inno
- 5 Do you have any knowledge or experiences with creating an app?
- 6 Is there already a way to connect a UU to another UU with a similar enough idea so that possibly can synergize the idea
- 7 Do you know if an organization like Faithify would help fund an idea that takes the principles of UUism and take them out into the larger world, but isn'
- 8 Do you help religious initiatives abroad
- 9 www.tinyurl.com/UUcrowdfunding
- 10 Could we have brainstormed ideas? 5 members of my congregation are here.
- 11 Amy Climer is an inspired consultant that is another great resource for creative innovation
- 12 What is your advice to someone with a project in mind that is so large, it will be too expensive to fail, such as the first Unitarian Universalist University?
- 13 Are you aware that the DuPage UU Church are here in the room?
- 14 Is it better to start out under an established 501c3 or begin pulling one together yourself?

YOU CAN DO THIS!

- Pick-up FAQ's and Key Resources handouts here or on the UUA GA app.
- Sign up here to join the Religious Innovators Network
 - Or contact Network Coordinator Eli Snider at esnider@clfu.org
- Contact Brock for help with navigation, connection, and mentoring:
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