

“The Power of Memory, A Harvest of Grace”
Dianne M. Daniels; UUCN, October 27, 2024

Prelude: #6 – Just as Long as I Have Breath
<https://youtu.be/mVA8WiT-hsg?si=1cDjQSUqZyNGcGsE>

Welcome and Announcements

Opening Words – Here We Re-member Ourselves by Rev. Gretchen Haley

Give up the fight for some other moment,
Some other life than here and now.
Give up the longing for some other world.
The wish for other choices to make, other songs to sing, other bodies,
other ages, other countries, other stakes.
Purge the past; forgive the future - for each comes too soon.

Surrender only to this life, this day, this hour,
not because it does not constantly break your heart,
but because it also beckons with beauty and
startles with delight - if only we keep waking up.

This is the gift we have been given:
these “body-clothes,” this heart-break, this pulse,
this breath, this light, these friends, this hope.

Here, we re-member ourselves,
All a part of it all - Giving thanks and centering joy.
Come, let us worship. Together.

Opening Hymn: Breaths by Sweet Honey in the Rock – 4 min
<https://youtu.be/YwLgxyVjwk4?si=AbUSBAY98Fqg4-3K>

Chalice Lighting:

Our Chalice Lighting was written by Amarette Calloway and is entitled **In Memory of All the Flames**

In memory of all the flames that didn't die—
in the midst of darkness,
in spite of the darkness,
we light this flame today.

"The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness did not overcome it."

Joys & Concerns

This is the time in our service when we share the joys that have lifted our hearts and spirits over the past week and the concerns that are active in our lives and that weigh on our hearts and spirits.

May the joys be multiplied and expanded, and may the strength of this community and its kindred spirits strengthen those dealing with concerns.

Thank you all for sharing. For all the joys and concerns that remain unspoken here in the sanctuary, may you find exactly what you need – to celebrate, express gratitude, remain strong in the face of challenges, and may your strength continue to sustain you throughout your perfectly imperfect, delightfully human life.

Our next hymn is #34 in the gray hymnal.

***Hymn: #34 – Though I May Speak with Bravest Fire**

<https://youtu.be/0OIOz60ZZLQ?si=oqTrhYWK9patxwaL&t=2>

Meditation: I want to share with you a reading entitled “**A Harvest Time Prayer**,” written by Rev. Max Coots:

Harvest time is an attitude, not a time of year. So maybe we’ll be wise enough to feel a sort of litany of gratitude:

For seeds - that, like memories and minds, keep in themselves the recollection of what they were and the power to become something more than they are. . .

For soil - that accumulation of lives piled up by death that gives a safe space for new life to grow and prepare. . .

For the justice of the earth - that gives me about as many weeds and wilt and bugs as flowers but, in the end, gave me enough for what I and my garden needed. . .

For hands - those miracles on the ends of my arms that let me tend my flowers and pull my weeds, and for mind and sight enough to know the difference between the two. . .

For calluses - life's defense against the softness that makes survival difficult. . .

For the ability to work and the will to work and the work to do, and the time to do it in...

And, finally, for that sense of kinship to it all, that singleness, that unity that is the basis of faith...

May we be grateful for these gifts that are the harvest of our lives.
Amen.

**Hymn before the sermon: #1051 –
“We Are” by Ysaye Barnwell (Teal Hymnal)
performed by the GW Vibes**
https://youtu.be/hDW6v5DqpMU?si=O68BSB8St_4QGVb-

**Sermon: “The Power of Memory, A Harvest of Grace”
by Dianne M. Daniels
Remember to SLOW DOWN**

*Acknowledging our ancestors means we know we did not make ourselves. -
Alice Walker*

SECOND READING from Maya Angelou

*We, unaccustomed to courage, exiles from delight, live coiled in shells of
loneliness,*

*Until love leaves its high holy temple and comes into our sight to liberate
us into life.*

*Love arrives - and in its train come ecstasies, old memories of pleasure,
and ancient histories of pain.*

And if we are bold, love strikes away the chains of fear from our souls.

We are weaned from our timidity.

In the flush of love's light, we dare to be brave.

And suddenly, we see that love costs all we are and will ever be.

It is only love which sets us free.

*We are each part of a larger story of those who came before us and those
who will come after us. Remembering our past and grappling with the
difficult truths that the past might contain is a part of living and shaping
our life stories. – Rev. Joan Javier-Duval*

The Truth About Memory and Giving Yourself Permission to Forget

We've all been there: kicking ourselves because we can't remember someone's name or an "important" date like a friend's birthday or anniversary. You might be pleasantly surprised to learn that forgetting isn't so bad.

The reality is that it's just not possible for most of us to remember every specific detail of every single day. There are actually some reasons why it's good to forget things from time to time.

Consider these points regarding adopting a new philosophy on forgetting:

1. Your brain isn't "made" to remember everything.

According to some memory experts, the human brain has evolved to remember events related to your five senses: taste, touch, smell, hearing, and vision.

- In other words, if you experienced something while tasting a wonderful new dish or a fine wine for the first time, you'll likely remember the experience.
- When you saw the images of John Lennon's death or Princess Diana's wedding on television, you can likely remember where you were and whom you were with.

- Images, emotions, and experiences are all important when it comes to remembering.

2. **Dates and faces will likely be forgotten.** You'll likely only remember things that have a relation to one of your five senses and that have special meaning to you.

3. **Forgetting helps clear your brain.** Sometimes, it's necessary to make some room in your brain. Imagine that your memory is like a giant file cabinet. When you have too much "stuff" filed, finding the items you need to reference is much more difficult.

- You have a lot of memory and information "files" to sift through, and when you forget, it's like taking some of the old, unnecessary files from the cabinet and putting them through the shredder. Then there's less info to sort through the next time.

4. **Some individuals do remember everything.** However, remembering everything isn't all it's cracked up to be. Some people have super autobiographical or photographic memories. These individuals can remember details of everything that happened to them, specifically by day and date. Their memory is like a giant calendar where no event is omitted.

- However, some of these people admit this is not a good thing because, in addition to the positive, they also remember every detail of all negative situations they've been through.

- Many acknowledge that it's quite uncomfortable to never forget when a partner wronged them. Or what it's like, reliving every moment of a past trauma or feeling the emotions associated with the death of a loved one from years ago.

5. **Forgetting helps you move on.** As difficult as it might be, you can permit yourself to forget about lost love. If you don't, it isn't easy to move on.

- Let go of those feelings and memories of your former love and make a true effort to forget.

6. **We forget minutiae every day.** If you were able to store every single experience in your memory, your mind would become bombarded with some pretty unimportant stuff. It's certainly not necessary to remember every piddling thing that happened the last 24 hours.

Instead of beating yourself up for not remembering every little thing or event that happened to you during any given day, give yourself a break and consider the following:

Give yourself permission to fully let go of trying to remember everything. Free your mind by happily writing down important things for safekeeping.

Writing down appointments, errands, work schedules, meetings, and even fun events like a movie date with your significant other or a night out can help you keep track of everything you need to remember.

This allows you to stay focused when you work and relax heartily during your leisure time.

If you've ever struggled to remember everything that's going on in your life, and you've missed meetings or appointments, it can make you feel bad to realize you've forgotten things and even worse if you've caused someone you care about distress because of your forgetting.

You can let go of the need to remember everything and make yourself stronger and more efficient by writing things down to feel more accomplished and organized. Writing can happen with a physical tool like a calendar or notebook or an electronic calendar or notebook. You might even consider dictating audio notes to yourself to help your memory. By writing down or recording the things you need to remember, you can prioritize your life better and schedule things appropriately.

Writing down the important things in your life gives you freedom. It frees your mind from unnecessary clutter and stress and leaves room for more significant thoughts. It also prevents wasted time and allows you more time for pleasure.

Before you think I'm recommending you forget **everything** from your past, hold on a moment. I want to strongly suggest that you **should** remember your roots.

As you go about your daily activities, remember your roots. They will help you to get and stay grounded, which helps you to stay calm and productive.

Your roots are in your home, family, community, and faith. When you reflect on what your parents and grandparents have taught you, consider the lessons from your childhood that have helped you to deal with challenges in your present life. You learned to make friends by caring about others and sharing your possessions. You learned to use your education to find and maintain a meaningful career, and if you're very fortunate, you can carry on the positive and meaningful holiday traditions and family rituals you learned.

You decided to be guided by your faith, realizing that your spiritual roots help to fill your life with purpose. Studying inspirational teachings and gathering with others for worship encourages your continued spiritual and personal development. You developed values and goals based on your roots.

Your roots steady you during changing times, so your foundational principles remain constant despite difficulties. They enable you to connect with others on a deeper level. Knowing yourself gives you the security to share your thoughts and feelings as you make your own decisions while welcoming constructive feedback.

Today, you can appreciate and recognize the benefits of returning to your roots. You can feel strong knowing that you stand on firm ground.

There's one more aspect of our past that we should be careful of – hanging on to hurt and anger.

Although negative situations have likely occurred in your past – I know they have in mine – we are able to move on from those experiences. You have the power to classify those experiences as distant memories that holds little relevance to who you are right now.

Begin by deciding to forgive everyone who ever wronged you. Know that holding onto anger makes you bitter and sad. I've heard it said that when you refuse to let go of past hurts, it's as if you are drinking poison and expecting the person who hurt you to die. You'll feel lighter and happier when you do what's necessary to let go of those negative experiences and emotions. Kick them out of your memories and make room for new, positive experiences to fill your life.

Forgive yourself for the missteps you have made over the years - learn from your mistakes, let go of the negative emotions, wipe those negative memories away, and then move on.

Decide to be excited about your future. Past negative events have no power to affect what happens next unless you give it to them. You can leave them behind. Instead, think about your future and plan for an exciting and positive one. Plan for the future, but live in the present.

Living in the present allows you to participate fully in your wonderful, perfectly imperfect life and avoid missing out on anything. I will keep my attention on today—here, now, in the present moment. Live your life today and make that where your focus lies.

Today, release your past pain and focus on today. Free yourself from past negative experiences and emotions. Your past is now history, and you have the power to let go of the past.

The past is simply a memory; you can refuse to hold onto it. Instead, release all negative thoughts about the past and consciously decide to live in the present moment.

Let go of fear and worry – what's gone is gone. If you're holding on to an identity as a victim or an aggressor, let it go and move on.

Instead, when you think back to your past, see how much courage it took to grow and overcome each challenge - see how far you have come.

Appreciate and value how much change and growth you've exercised throughout your life – how much has been and continues to be within your capacity. Accept your past as part of your history and don't allow it to define who you are now.

We all have to move on through the stages of growth in life. Sometimes, the lessons are painful, but each lesson expands our consciousness and guides us toward greater wisdom.

Believe that we must learn from our past and put it behind us before moving forward - choose to change today so that tomorrow can be even brighter. Give yourself room and permission to heal and transform. Release all negative thinking and emotional baggage from the past, and release those toxic relationships that caused you to suffer.

Today, I want to encourage you to understand that you have many choices in life. You have the power to decide how to respond to challenging situations, and in each case, you can choose to be happy, confident, and hopeful - to love yourself and be kind to yourself.

Choose to leave the negatives and the pain behind and instead decide to harvest the grace you've developed for yourself and your life. Grace can be defined as an underserved favor – and if you're willing to show kindness or compassion to others, be just as willing to extend that same favor to yourself.

Treat yourself kindly, extend goodwill to yourself, realize that you acknowledge what happened in your past without dwelling on it or beating yourself up for it.

Grant yourself the grace that it's okay to not be okay. None of us are perfect, and that's okay. Slow down, be kind to yourself, look at how much you've already accomplished. You've managed to adapt and become resilient – give yourself grace, and more than a little credit. None of us perfectly imperfect human beings have completely figured out this thing called life.

Forgive your mistakes, allow for the lapses in judgment, and let go of resentment for hurtful behavior...no one is perfect, but we can all partake in a Harvest of Grace.

Closing Hymn:

#168 – One More Step

<https://youtu.be/t4WxTCSLOyw?si=jhWjd2uXllJhakSv>

Closing Words – To Re-Member the World

We go with the call and the challenge to “re-member” the world.
May we do our part to restore what has been broken,
to return trust where doubt and betrayal now live, and
to repair hearts whose hope has been lost.

And as we give ourselves to this sacred work of healing and
wholeness,
May we find ourselves re-membered as well.

Have a beautiful week ahead. Choose what you wish to remember,
and keep tending your garden so that you can look forward to a harvest
of grace now and forever more.

Thank you for your time and attention.