

First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany

Soul Matters

Purpose

The Soul Matters program is designed to:

- Foster connection and caring
- Encourage personal growth and spiritual development and
- Strengthen the fabric of our community.

Agreements

1. Non-Judgmental Attitude

Good group members listen and respond in an open, empathetic way. This involves suspending our attitudes and personal prejudices and reacting without censure, even though we may disagree with another's views. We need to focus on finding common feelings while respecting the differences in each other's experiences.

2. Confidentiality

An effective group provides a forum for the expression of its concerns. While members wish to discuss with members important issues raised in a group, we agree to safeguard each other's anonymity. Trust among group members is vital to a good group experience.

3. Speaking from the "I"/Speak Your Own Truth

We stay with our own feelings and avoid focusing on third parties. When we tell another's story, we risk misrepresenting his/her feelings and motives.

4. Use of Group Air Space

We recognize and respect every group member's need to speak and be heard. However, time limitations require us to guard against monopolizing group air space. It is also recognized that group members have a right to be silent and not respond to every issue.

5. Responsibility of the Success of the Group/Keeping Focus

The group direction and conversation flow is the responsibility of everyone present. Group members have a right and are encouraged to suggest topics, air hurt or angry feeling and offer constructive criticism of the group experience. The group is a non-hierarchy: facilitators and group members learn from each other and share responsibility for group effectiveness. Facilitators are not professionals but peers who have learned some group skills that they will model in group.

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