

# Living into the Ends Statements

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What does it mean to be part of a community with a driving set of written ends statements? What does it ask of us? What are we willing to give up for it? These are questions we explored this Thursday.

At the beginning of the meeting we played a few icebreaker games. It was a welcome change of pace from the thick atmosphere that comes with the deep sharing typical to our meetings. This playful attitude reminded me of teaching swimming lessons and how, even when I am at the deepest part of my depression, the playful and patient work of teaching children manages to pull me free. This same idea is mirrored in larger communities. In a recent sermon there was a story about a church that had been caught up in an internal struggle for a decade. Only once the congregation took on a mission in the larger world was it able to heal its wounds and move forward. This healing and freedom that comes with turning outwards has expanding, fractal-like symmetry with the healing of the self and the community driving healing in the nation and the world. As the Young Adult Group turns outward as it lives into Unity's ends statements, I look forward to the growth it will bring to our group and to the broader community.

As the group read through the ends statements together we seemed to be collectively drawn towards the values of wonder, open-hearted engagement, and courageous action. We had many concerns, including our tendency to explain Unitarian Universalism as if it's a joke when under social pressure and our struggle to live openly as religious people in an increasingly secular world. We had doubts about why we let small obstacles get in the way of our efforts to give generously and advance justice in the world. We had fears that we had let cynicism rob us of our wonder and open-heartedness. I hope that these ends help us move past these insecurities and grow together.

As we neared the end of the meeting, we confronted the question of what is asked of us and what we give up for these ends. Should we even view the work of living out the ends as "giving something up?" In this individualistic society, maybe what we are giving up is our self, at least for a while, in pursuit of a larger whole.

