

Resilience

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With the coming of autumn, many members of the Young Adult Group face transitions: the start of college, grad school, and gap years; the start of teaching or new jobs; promotions. Such change is almost always accompanied by some level of uncertainty and anxious butterflies. It was an opportune time to discuss insecurity and resilience.

We often try to build up security as individuals as a means of creating certainty, perhaps by hoarding material goods, developing marketable skills, or striving for financial security. But is there another way to feel secure in a world in which we can know nothing with absolute certainty? Robert Walsh answers this in his poem *Fault Line*:

Did you ever think there might be a fault line

Passing underneath your living room? [...]

When the great plates slip

And the earth shivers and the flaw is seen

To lie in what you trusted most, look not

To more solidity [...]

Trust more the tensile strands of love that bend

And stretch to hold you in the web of life

That's often torn but always healing.

Could we really see love as our greatest source of security? People die. They move away – or we do. We grow apart from one another. Despite these realities, I think Walsh is right. I'm reminded of a quote by Barbara Kingsolver in her novel *Animal Dreams*: "You can't replace people you love with other people ... but you can trust that you are not going to run out of people to love." I think we can trust not only in our capacity to love, but also our ability to remind each other how to love when we forget.

With love, can we also learn to live with the emotional insecurities we may face – the fears that others are judging us, that we’re making too many mistakes, or that we are in some way “not enough” or “not worthy?” During our gathering, we discussed stories of resilience from religious traditions, including the story of Satan tempting Jesus in the desert. Satan tells Jesus that if he truly is the Son of God, he should be able to turn stones into loaves of bread – yet Jesus doesn’t feel the need to prove himself. *Where does such self-regard come from?* we wondered. How can we strive to grow without needing to “prove our worth” to others?

Perhaps we’re all still coming to know this self-regard, this kind of love. But I think I’ve experienced it during times when I’ve been held accountable for my mistakes with grace. In these times, I feel reassured that someone can see all the messiness inside me and still love me anyway. When I’m met with disapproval for my mistakes at other times, I return to these moments of grace.

May we embrace our insecurities with the knowledge that, by not trying to fix them, we take away some of their power. May we embrace opportunities to learn our areas of growth while trusting that these never call into question our own worthiness. May we find resilience rooted in love.