



## James Reeb Unitarian Universalist Congregation

**Sermon Notes: Our Need to Connect with God**

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God as something greater than ourselves

God as something that transcends our own personal limitations

...as something that reassures us when things are bad

UU's often frame our spiritual experience in the "negative"

We're non-creedal

We don't believe this or that

We're not Christian, not Muslim, not Unity.....

Framing in the negative only succeeds in reinforcing the negative,  
not in building up the positive

"I'm not Lisa"

I wind up knowing a lot more about Lisa, than Julie, whose name I  
had to think about a while to come up with.....I don't even know  
the colour of her eyes!

The other way we often frame our experience is the "throw away"  
framing

"Oh we can believe anything we want"

Again, this reinforces other traditions, because they have  
something important enough to believe in.....

The truth is that we have broad shared values which we covenant with each other to affirm and promote----our purposes and principles

And we have a road map about how to do that, which offers a variety of sources to explore---these are the sources for Living Tradition----which means it's not stagnate, it's organic and changes for with time, and circumstances so that it best fits an individual's needs.

A spiritual journey is about CAA

Finding Connections with others, and something greater than ourselves

Becoming our most Authentic selves....finding our strengths, addressing our growing edges and coming to terms with our limitations

Seeking Answers to life great questions....why I am here, where did I come from, where am I going and what does it all mean?

All of the world's religions try do these three things.....

Let's look at these issues I've raised now in the context of a UU spiritual journey....

UU positive framing is---

We are a community of people from a variety of backgrounds who come together to explore life's great question. We agree to some very basic principles as a foundation for our spiritual journey---our principles. We believe that there are many great sources to help us with our journey and list some of them as possible paths to explore these questions. We provide a community because we understand that everyone needs connections and

support. We do so loosely though, because we also acknowledge that individual needs require a variety of ways to connect with others. Our community is about support, growth and challenge...but most of all it's about love and acceptance.

That's called an "elevator speech" because if you got on an elevator and in conversation someone were to ask you what is Unitarian Universalism-----it's the answer you can give before one of you has to get off the elevator!

There's more than one elevator speech.....Because of our plural nature....our personal elevator speeches will all be somewhat different.....

I encourage everyone to think about this during the week and try coming up with your personal elevator speech about what Unitarian Universalism is.....remember to frame it in the positive rather than the negative.....remember they want to know about "Julie" not "Lisa"

Another important aspect of Spiritual Quest----and our need to connect is "expectations"

It's always important that we communicate, especially about expectations.....

Many times I hear someone wanting something more from their community....be it their family, or here at Reeb, or somewhere else.....

Often times what they're wanting is so broad that I don't understand exactly what it is they need or are missing....when I ask for clarification....I sometimes see a squirm come across their face.....they can't put in clear terms.....

It's hard to get our needs met if we can't state them clearly....it's impossible most times if we ourselves don't understand what it is we're looking for.

Expectations are positive tools, when we are clear about them within our own selves first, and then clearly share them with our community they serve us well. Even then---it's important to negotiate our expectations with others. Sometimes we're not going to get exactly what we want because it doesn't work with that specific person, or at that specific time. We may need to try to get that need met with someone else or in some other way.

The other thing to remember is there are two parts to every spiritual quest---individual practice and communal observance. Again, because of our diversity, and plural religious expression.....a particular need I may have around my spiritual journey may best be served individually rather than communally or vice-versa. And at times, can be served both individually and communally.

For example----incense-----individual  
Sharing a joy or concern-----communal  
Meditating-----both individual and communal

Expectations are also best when framed by the positive----  
Coming here---expecting chairs in the rain  
Yee of little faith  
I had faith----negative faith!

Community, spiritual quest, is a  
gift\_\_\_\_\_

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