

One Spiritual Practice for Community Ministers: Letting Your Little Light Shine

By Rev. Cat Cox
UUSCM Good Officer

I titled this column carefully. The words of the song we all know so well, "let your little light shine" subtly imply that this is a one-time-done-deal kind of decision - and also that we know how. The word "letting" captures it better: discovering our gifts and allowing them to be fully seen is a profound and ongoing spiritual practice. What "lights us up" changes over time. Are we willing to pay attention?

For most of us in ministry, it goes deeply against the grain to stay fully connected to our own sense of fulfillment. The important teaching we have all received -- that our ministries must be about meeting the needs of those we serve -- can leave us feeling guilty about focusing on our own satisfaction. We may be unclear or reluctant to acknowledge that there are important needs of our own which are properly met in the context of ministry. Some important needs of our own that our ministries should meet include our needs to make meaningful contributions, to use our best gifts, to find fulfillment through service, to build strong and nurturing collegial relationships and to live from (and model) a strong sense of self-worth, self-awareness and self-care.

We need an alive, full acceptance of these as appropriate needs to bring to our ministries in order to engage in the discernment process that "letting our light shine" requires. Each of us has unique gifts to offer. Rumi writes: "There is one thing in the world that you must never forget to do... Human beings come into this world to do particular work. That work is the purpose and each is specific to the person. If you don't do it, it's as though a priceless Indian sword were used to slice rotten meat." Strong words I think we need to hear.

In the face of all the world's incessant demands, what is the work that you are called to do, the work that is yours alone, that will truly let your light shine? Can you allow the rest to fall away? Rumi again: "If you forget everything else, and not this, there's nothing to worry about, but if you remember everything else and forget this, then you have done nothing in your life." I reread this passage often because, like everyone else, I sometimes lose my focus. Then I remember my core spiritual practice: to align with the Sacred as it is moving through me, in as many moments of my life as I can remember, and return to finding that alignment again and again.

I know when I am there because I can feel it: I can feel my light shining through my actions. When I am fully there, even when there is intensity and focused effort, there is a sense of an inner "yes" that propels me. Take a moment to check in with yourself. Are there new choices you need to make to fulfill your purpose? To feel your own light shine?

Blessings on Your Ministry -
Rev. Cat Cox, M.A.T., M. Div.
UUSCM Good Officer
The Path of Joy:
Resolving the Tension Between Your Soul and Your Life

www.revcat.net
revccat@revcat.net