

Session 3

Bear-ly Getting Along!

The objectives of this session are:

- to consider how courage, and loyalty are necessary during times of great strife
- to examine the idea of forgiveness and why it is important
- to explore the personal attribute of pride and how this can be either constructive or destructive
 - to examine how our choices and actions affect our lives and also the people around us
- to embrace the concept that we are responsible for determining our own destiny or path
- to consider that everyone has various responsibilities; to ourselves, our families and community.

Materials and supplies you will need:

- DVD of the movie, *Brave*
- DVD player and TV monitor
- at least one of the UU hymnal, *Singing the Living Tradition*
- a chalice and matches or lighter
- a deck of ordinary playing cards
- pencils/pens for each person
- Copies of Resource #3A for everyone
- one copy of the Resource #3B - Quotes
- scissors

Things to do ahead of time:

- locate the DVD or rent it if necessary
- watch the movie in its entirety (even if you have seen it before)
- If you will not be watching the whole film, use the DVD menu to cue up scene #18 (Cauldron Message.) in which Merida & her mother (now a bear) try to find the witch
- Cut apart the quotes and arrange them face down on the table before the group arrives

Session Outline

Entering Activity: Check-in and sharing quotes (10 min)

Premiere: Watching the selected excerpt of *Brave* and discussion (45 min)

Rising Action: Making Choices (10 min.)

Plot Point: How Proudful are you? (5 min)

Wrap Up: Final thoughts and Closing Words. (5 min)



Entering Activity

Light the chalice (or invite someone to do so) and share with the group the following reading:

“May we know once again
that we are not isolated beings
but connected,
in mystery and miracle,
to the universe,
to this community
and each other.”

– Anonymous

Spread the quotes out on the table face down so that the participants can't see them as they enter. As the participants arrive, ask each person to choose one of the quotes, including the advisors. Once all the participants have a quote, ask them to check-in with their name, share the quote they picked and how they think this quote might be useful for them in the year ahead. (**Note for Advisors:** Please keep in mind that not everyone may be comfortable reading out loud to the group. Remember that anyone

always has the right to pass during times of sharing.)

Premiere

Watching Brave

Introduce the video by telling the group you will be watching an excerpt from the movie, *Brave*. Ask if anyone has already seen it and if someone has, ask them if they would be willing to share the premise of the film with the group. If not, introduce the video yourself by saying something to the effect of the following:

Set in Scotland in a rugged and mythical time, the rebellious Princess Merida is a skilled archer, raised by her mother Queen Elinor in accordance with the traditions of the Kingdom of Dun Broch and her father King Fergus. The King lost part of one of his legs after battling the ferocious bear Mor'du and dreams of slaying the vicious animal one day. Now that Merida has grown up, it is time for her to become engaged. In accordance with their customs, the first-born sons of the lords of her kingdom are to fight for her hand in a competition of her choosing. Merida is not happy at all with this situation and appeals to her mother to reconsider forcing her to marry. Queen Elinor explains to her daughter that the clans must be kept in harmony, or chaos may reign. She relates the story of how the clans were descended from four brothers, but one of them wanted more power than the others, and caused the balance of power to crumble. Even so, this does little to quell Merida's resentment of the betrothal. Soon the lords bring their sons to vie for the princess in a competition among them. Merida eagerly suggests an archery competition. When it comes to the sport, almost none of the sons are good at the sport, but everyone is shocked when Merida appears before everyone, claiming that since she's a first-born as well, so she'll be 'fighting for her own hand.' Elinor demands

that Merida stop, but she defies her mother, and makes a bulls-eye on each of the targets.

Elinor feels angry and humiliated at this, and both mother and daughter have a heated conversation in her room later on. Merida claims she does not want to be like her mother, and in anger, slashes a tapestry depicting the family, slicing a hole between her and her mother in the piece.

Queen Elinor loses her temper, too, and throws Merida's bow in a fireplace nearby.

Upset by this, Merida flees the castle.

Unseen by Merida, her mother regrets what she has done a few moments later, and manages to retrieve the bow from the fire.

Merida rides off into the forest where several spirits called will-of-the-wisps guide her to the cottage of a woodcarving witch.

She asks the witch for a spell to change her mother and her (Merida's) fate. The witch prepares a small cake to give to for Merida to give to her mother. When her mother eats a slice of the cake, she is turned into a bear and Fergus mistakenly takes her as being Mor'du. (Her little brothers also eat the cake and are turned into bear cubs.) Now Merida has to undo the spell the witch has cast and she has only two sunrises to bring her mother and brothers back to normal.

Begin the video and watch scenes #18 (Cauldron Message) through #36 (the end) Stop the video when the credits begin to roll.

Begin the discussion by asking for general impressions, and things which occurred to the group as they were watching the video. Then, if no one brings it up, ask the group to consider the following questions:

Do you think that it is fair for the Queen to expect Merida to conform to how she (Queen Elinor) thinks a princess should behave? Can you think of a better way for Merida to have expressed her desire to determine her own future, rather than entering herself in the archery contest? How would better communication between

Merida and her mother have changed things in this story? How would clearer communication between Merida and the Witch have changed things? What responsibilities does Merida have as a princess? What could happen if Merida refuses to accept these duties? In order to break the spell and return her mother to human form, Merida must “mend the bond torn by pride.” What bond? Whose pride damaged the bond? Is pride always a negative character trait? When is pride a positive thing? At the end of the movie, Merida says that “Our fate lies within us – you just have to be brave enough to see it.” What does this mean to you?

Rising Action

Making Choices

Shuffle and deal out the playing cards, giving one card to each person. Encourage the participants to look at their card, but not to show it to anyone else. Invite the person to your left to start by deciding to either keep the card or pass it to the person on their left. Let them know that the person with the highest card “wins”. (If the first person passed their card, then give that person a new card from the deck.)

After the first participant decides to either keep their card or pass it, then the next person takes their turn. If they received a new card, then they must decide which card to keep and which one to pass. If they did not receive a new card, then they must decide whether to keep the card they have or pass it on to the next person.

Play continues on around the circle until everyone has had a turn and everyone has only one card. Encourage the participants to reveal their cards. Who has the highest card? Who made the correct choices?

Collect the cards and pass out another round of cards, one to each person. Now

announce that the lowest card will “win” and everyone has the same options to keep or pass.

After everyone has a chance to decide, reveal the cards. How did it turn out? Collect the cards and deal out one more set of cards, one to each person. Now tell them they don’t know what will be the determining factor for winning, but they still need to choose whether they will keep their card or pass it on.

Once everyone has had a turn, reveal the cards. Announce that the winner is the person with the card closest to the number six.

Quickly process the game. How did their choices work? How did they make the choice when they didn’t know what the outcome would be? Now that they know, would they choose differently? How would that change affect the rest of the game?

Plot Point

How Proudful Are You?

Once Merida swallows her pride and tells her mother how much she regrets her actions and truly loves her mother, the spell is broken. Her mother has also changed her mind about a lot of the demands that she made on Merida and the two forgive each other. As Unitarian Universalists, our 6th principle states that we affirm and promote “the goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all.” How can forgiveness help us to live up to this principle? How does harboring anger and resentment or being too proud to forgive cause us to act in ways that violate any of other principles? (By acting in ways that are hurtful and mean toward those who wronged us we are violating the 1st principle.) Pass out the copies of Resource #3A and pens or pencils and invite the participants to take the quiz. Was anyone surprised at their result?

Wrap Up

Closing Words.

Invite a participant to extinguish the chalice and read #658, “To Risk” by Robert Eller-Isaacs from Singing the Living Tradition. .

“To laugh is to risk appearing the fool.
To weep is to risk appearing sentimental.
To reach out for another is to risk exposing our true self.
To place our ideas – our dreams – before the crowd is to risk loss.
To love is to risk not being loved in return.
To hope is to risk despair.
To try is to risk failure.
To live is to risk dying.”

~Anonymous

Taking It One Step Further:

If your group will be watching the entire movie rather than just an excerpt, here are some additional ideas to expand the experience:

More Discussion

Explore the concept of forgiveness a little further. Can we truly love or forgive anyone else if we don't love or forgive ourselves first?

More Activities

Have a forgiveness release party – ask the participants to take a slip of paper and write something that they want to forgive themselves for on that paper. In a large fireproof container, place a candle and light it. Invite each person to come forward and put their paper in the flame. Watch as the smoke carries their guilt or regret away.

Resource #3A

How Proudful Are You?

Circle the choice that best describes your reaction. (Please answer honestly.)

1.) You've done something to upset a friend of yours, but you don't think you're in the wrong. So instead of saying you're sorry, you're likely to say nothing.

Always Often Sometimes Rarely Never

2.) You've had an argument with a friend and upon reflection, you know that they are right, so you apologize to them immediately or the next time you see them.

Always Often Sometimes Rarely Never

3.) You think of clerks, waiters, hairdressers, and maids as people who are beneath you.

Always Often Sometimes Rarely Never

4.) If something great happens to you, you tell everyone you know.

Always Often Sometimes Rarely Never

5.) Charity work or community service is something you try to avoid.

Always Often Sometimes Rarely Never

6.) You work hard to be very good looking. It's important for you to be as attractive as possible.

Always Often Sometimes Rarely Never

7.) You silently judge other people as "trashy" or "redneck".

Always Often Sometimes Rarely Never

8.) You love to show off the latest flashy clothes or gadgets that you've bought.

Always Often Sometimes Rarely Never

9.) You'd rather have a job with long hours and a fancy title than a regular job with an unimpressive title.

Always Often Sometimes Rarely Never

10.) Its a bit fun to make people jealous of you.

Always Often Sometimes Rarely Never

Scoring the quiz:

For each time you circled “Always” give yourself 10 points

For each time you circled “Often” give yourself 8 points

For each time you circled “Sometimes” give yourself 5 points

For each time you circled “Rarely” give yourself 2 points

For each time you circled “Never” give yourself 0 points

How many total points do you have? _____

Interpreting your score:

0 – 25 Points: You are the furthest thing from prideful. People who know you probably describe you as being truly humble; you don’t consider anyone or anything beneath you.

26 – 50 Points: You are a little prideful but nothing out of the ordinary. Like everyone, you enjoy a little attention now and then, but you’re also good at sharing the spotlight. Welcome to “I’m only human” club!

51 – 75 Points: You have your prideful moments but you’re also likely to reflect on them and feel a little ashamed of them, too. Don’t be too hard on yourself – it’s perfectly normal to want to make a stellar impression. Again, welcome to “I’m only human” club!

76 – 100 Points: Wow! You might really want to review out 7 UU Principles. The people you know probably describe you as being proud, vain and arrogant. And let’s face it; you probably think you’re too good for this quiz. You might also want to remember what it says in the Bible (Proverbs 16:18) that “pride goeth before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall. (If that doesn’t make you think about changing your ways, then hopefully you have a really reliable parachute!)”

It is better to lose
your pride with
someone you love
rather than to lose
that someone you
love with your
useless pride.

Forgive and forget.

Un-forgiveness is
like taking poison
and expecting the
other person to die.

Temper gets you into
trouble. Pride keeps
you there.

No one ever choked
to death swallowing
his pride.

The weak can never
forgive. Forgiveness
is the attribute of the
strong.

To err is human, to
forgive – divine.

Pride is the mother of
arrogance.

There is no love
without forgiveness,
and there is no
forgiveness without
love.

Love hath no pride.