

NOVEMBER MONTHLY THEME: INTERDEPENDENCE

The current UUA 7th principle affirms “Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.” In the proposed new language, *Interdependence* remains as one of seven inseparable, shared values of Unitarian Universalist congregations. The proposal asks congregations to “covenant to cherish Earth and all beings by creating and nurturing relationships of care and respect. With humility and reverence, we acknowledge our place in the great web of life, and we work to repair harm and damaged relationships.” Valuing interdependence calls us to the dual roles of fostering life-giving relationships and addressing the ways we hurt one another. Such work emerges in all levels of our relationships including intimate partnerships, congregational dynamics, and political systems at the city, national, and global level.

Questions for reflection and discussion:

1. How and when are you aware of being a part of an interdependent web? On whom do you depend? Who depends on you?
2. Think of an experience you have had with the tension between independence and community. How was it resolved? What did you learn?
3. Think of a time when you felt deeply connected with the interdependent web of the universe. What impact did this experience have on you?

Wise Words:

Our seventh Principle, respect for the interdependent web of all existence, is a glorious statement. Yet we make a profound mistake when we limit it to merely an environmental idea. It is so much more. It is our response to the great dangers of both individualism and oppression. It is our solution to the seeming conflict between the individual and the group. — Rev. Forrest Gilmore

Do you already know that your existence--who and how you are--is in and of itself a contribution to the people and place around you? Not after or because you do some particular thing, but simply the miracle of your life. And that the people around you, and the place(s), have contributions as well? Do you understand that your quality of life and your survival are tied to how authentic and generous the connections are between you and the people and place you live with and in? — Adrienne Maree Brown

If interdependence is the inescapable reality of our relationships to one another and to the earth, then true democracy is both a spiritual and political practice of honoring that interconnectedness. —Ashley Horan

Our shared work to advance human rights is rooted in our belief that all people have inherent worth and that we are interdependent, indeed dependent upon one another for our survival. —Mary Katherine Morn, UUSC

Things are highly interdependent. The very concepts of “we” and “they” are becoming irrelevant. War is out of date because our neighbors are part of ourselves. We see this in economic, educational and environmental issues. —Dalai Lama XIV

Did you ever stop to think that you can't leave for your job in the morning without being dependent upon most of the world?... Before you finish eating breakfast in the morning, you've depended on more than half the world. This is the way our universe is structured. It is its interrelated quality. We aren't going to have peace on earth until we recognize this basic fact of the interrelated structure of all reality.

— Martin Luther King Jr. (*Christmas Sermon on Peace, 1967*)

Because whatever has happened to humanity, whatever is currently happening to humanity, it is happening to all of us. No matter how hidden the cruelty, no matter how far off the screams of pain and terror, we live in one world. We are one people. —Alice Walker