

Even; Someone Like Me

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MUUF

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When Lindy sent me the link for the Sample Actions for the Unitarian Universalists Association's 40 years of Earth Day; 40 Days of Commitment; 40 UUs in our Congregation standing up for the Earth, I was honestly, so relieved to read the first recommendation – 1. Skip fast food for 40 days. I was relieved not because I've done any reading about how this industry minimally employs workers without providing health care insurance, or what the fats in the food does to my veins or even what the trucks that deliver the food are doing to the environment; I was relieved simply because I thought "Oh, I can do that".

My relationship with fast food is a pretty long standing one. Not only have I very recently eaten it; but as a teen I worked for Burger King in Waterville for a couple of years, which in fast food world is like being a lifer. There were good things about working there. We all dressed the same so no one made fun of any one else's clothes. It gave me an opportunity to start to think about my interest in college for many reasons and ... not to brag but I did win Burger King of the Month one time. But here I am far from my teen years with yet a different relationship with fast food.

"Where ever we are is our point of entry". Words from Mimi Bornstein, Unitarian Universalist and Director of the Midcoast Community Chorus. This statement has not only made it possible for me to join the chorus, since prior to joining I had only sung in my car, in the shower and occasionally in church; but this statement and

understanding has made it ok for me to admit that sometimes I'm just starting at the beginning and have lots to learn and change.

I realize that there are people who are way ahead of me, some of you here today are wayyyy ahead of me, in your knowledge base, in your practice and awareness. There is room though, I believe for us to join together in the effort to create more care for the Earth and its inhabitants. At the 2008 General Assembly; which is the UU's big meeting of UUs from around the United States, the issue of Ethical Eating: Food and Environmental Justice was chosen as the four year study and action focus for member congregations, of which we are one. Some of the other focus areas have included peace-making, global warming, civil liberties and interfaith cooperation. Rev. Mark Hayes stated in his 2008 sermon on this issue of Ethical Eating that "the purpose of having this as our study/action issue for four years is to encourage our exploration and growth, both as individuals and as a congregation. He continues; our journeys will differ: we begin in different places, proceed along different paths at different rates, and may arrive at different ends."

As a social worker I'm always trying to consider kinder ways for change; Marsha Linahan, therapist, teacher and author writes in one of her manuals an approach for this. She recommends that we consider what is working and what is not working instead of getting caught in the many incarnations of the thought "I or you didn't do that right, good or well". This really can free us up to just plain old problem solve approaches instead of shaming and blaming ourselves or others when a need for change arises.

Last week I felt such honor as I sat around the children's circle with Ella, Nora, Leim, Finn, Audrey, and Conrad, as we learned about Henry David Thoreau from Mimi.

I enjoyed listening to the ways the children connect with the earth through gardening, and wood. I look out today at all the children here, including my niece Anna and it causes me to pause and stretch beyond where I am, to work toward social, economic and environmental justice. What am I here for? How much am I willing to learn and change?.... What are you here for? And What are you willing to learn and change? When Anna next asks me, “what do you want to do Auntie Donna?”; I will take that question very seriously. I invite you to do the same when you are asked by a child in your life, what do you want to do? So, 40 years of Earth Day, 40 simple steps and 40 days of commitment; I’m willing to cut out my trips to McDonalds’; will you join me in taking one or more of the simple actions?

In closing, as I reflect on Rev. Hayes words I’m taken with how, although he’s talking about the path of Ethical Eating; he could be talking about our congregational life path. We come here together beginning in different places, proceed along different paths at different rates, and may arrive at different ends. And Rev. Hayes goes on to say...

AND THAT’S OK!