

## 2024 January Chalice Circle: Bravely

### Opening Words and Chalice Lighting

"We believe in ordinary acts of bravery, in the courage that drives one person to stand up for another." Veronica Roth

Song: "[The Tide is Rising.](#)" by Rabbi Shoshona Meira Friedman and Yotam Schachter; recorded by Sandi E.

Lyrics:

The tide is rising, and so are we! (3x)

This is where we are called to be (2x) !

G - D - / D C D - / 1st / D Am Bm - / C D G -

Verses:

The task is mighty...

The land is holy...

The storm is raging...

The sun is shining...

The world is ready... (repeat v.1)

### Reading 1

"Being brave means knowing that when you fail, you don't fail forever."-- Lana Del Rey

**Check-in:** Without crosstalk or interruption, briefly describe where you are in your life now, and notice what needs to be shared in order to be fully present in our circle.

### Reading 2

"You cannot swim for new horizons until you have courage to lose sight of the shore."-- William Faulkner

### Reading 3

Today we share in a blessing for losers, risk-takers, all failures far and wide....

Blessed are they who fall in the mud, who jump with gusto and rip the pants, who skin the elbows, and bruise the ego,  
for they shall know the sweetness of risk.

Blessed are they who make giant mistakes, whose intentions are good but impact has injured, who know the hot sense of regret and ask for mercy,  
for their hearts will know the gift of forgiveness.

Blessed are they who have seen a D or an F or C or any letter less than perfect, who are painfully familiar with the red pen and the labels as "less than,"  
for they know the wisdom in the imperfect.

Blessed are they who try again, who dust off, who wash up, who extend the wish for peace, who return to sites of failure, who are dogged in their pursuit,  
for they will discover the secret to dreams.

Blessed are they who refuse to listen to the naysayers,  
for their hearts will be houses for hope.

Blessed are they who see beyond the surface of another,  
for they will be able to delight in the gift of compassion.

Blessed are they who stop running the race to help a fellow traveler, who pick up the  
fallen, who stop for injured life,  
for they shall know the kindness of strangers.

Blessed are they who wildly, boldly abandon winning,  
for they shall know the path of justice.  
--Adapted from Robin Tanner

### **Questions to Consider**

1. What does acting bravely mean to you?  
Do you find times that it is harder to act brave? What about easier? Why do you feel that is?
2. Recall an instance of someone acting bravely, in real life or in fiction. What stands out most to you about the memory??
3. Do you feel that Unitarian Universalism calls us to act bravely? What informed your answer?

**Sitting in Silence:** We will sit in silence for 3-5 minutes. Take this time to reflect on the readings, questions, and theme. Center yourself and consider what you want to share with the group.

**Sharing/Deep Listening:** Please share your own experiences and thoughts about the topic and readings with no crosstalk or interruption. Please ensure everyone gets an equal opportunity to share.

**Additional Thoughts/Crosstalk:** As time allows, after listening to others, do you have additional thoughts to share?

**Checkout:** What are you taking with you as you leave the circle? How can we support you in the month ahead?

### **Closing Words/Extinguishing the Chalice**

Spirit of Life, God of Love, grant me the courage to love boldly in the face of my greatest fears. Grow me in your wisdom and let my actions speak when silence threatens justice and indifference disturbs peace. When gossip, hate, and cruelty arise among friends or in public places, help me bravely walk forward with love. When I defensively assert certainty in the presence of the unknown, grant me the courage to live comfortably in the unanswerable questions of life. Bless me with the eternal gift of not knowing and let it take root in me until it pushes forth shoots of understanding and branches of humility.  
--Stephen M. Shick