

Good Morning! My name is Gay Phillips and I have been attending Wildflower since 2005 and became a member in 2006.

This process of defining what I believe has been a real soul searching experience. It would have been simpler to tell you what I do not believe. I feel my spiritual path is not unique. My Evangelical Lutheran background has made a significant impact on my spiritual life. Going to Sunday school, being confirmed in the church my grandfather helped build, gives you a feeling of belonging as a child. As a teen it provided a community in which I was accepted. It was all so convenient. One mile from my family homestead with all the relatives within short distances made going to church every Sunday a requirement. However, this safe place did not provide me the solace I needed as an adult.

My marriage and giving birth changed my world and the direction of my spiritual path. Along with the joys of motherhood came the trials and tribulations of an abusive marriage, which ended in divorce. When I needed it, the church creed was not relating to me and I questioned everything. I found nothing to give me the peace of mind I so disparately needed.

My past religiosity was a habit. Spiritual cleansing was necessary, the church had engrained in me that I was a sinner and needed to be forgiven. Guilt is like a shackle weighing so heavy on you that you feel undeserving of any happiness.

Then, I met Bill and he opened my eyes to real love. Bill showed me how to face the world with confidence by believing in me and giving me opportunities to experience life anew. I drank it all in and he continues to quench my thirst after 26 years.

My spiritual journey continued when Bill decided to reestablish his relationship at First UU in San Antonio.

The lack of a creed and the typical dogma was attractive to me. My spiritual rebirth was beginning.

When we attended I found each sermon connected with my spiritual core. I was aware of something happening emotionally . One Sunday, I felt scrubbed, peeled back if you will, my damaged-self, exposed. I literally wept.

The energy I felt was like nothing I had ever experienced in a church. As I sat hearing about total acceptance of who I am, with the freedom to be the best I can be went to the very core of my being that I was spiritually awakened. The organ music seemed to be playing just for me. My “aha” moment still rocks my soul.

I decided that Sunday to be a member of the 1st UU church community which practiced compassion, graciousness, kindness and above all acceptance. UUs seek what is sacred, truths in other religions, and we respect the whole self . I no longer felt like a sinner. The healing process had begun. Now, how to define my new belief.

I had experienced this real energy inside me and at that moment a presence. I now believe the presence, this so called “truth” is **me**. Therefore, **My being is truth**. Buddhist call this your Buddha nature. For Hindus it is **Atman**, the indwelling God. Being in touch with it, all your actions and relationships will reflect the oneness with all life. This is love.

According to Eckhart Tolle, author of “ A New Earth”, there are three words that convey the secret of the art of living; the secret of all success and happiness; One with Life. Being one with life is being with the now. I realized that you don’t live life but life lives you. Tolle said “non resistance, non-judgment, and non attachment are three aspects of **true freedom and enlightened living.**”

We have all heard the saying “This too shall pass” which is telling us to be aware of the fleetingness of every situation. Everything has its cycle. Which means once you accept the transience of all things, and the inevitability of change you can enjoy the pleasures of the world while they last without fear of loss or anxiety about the future. Through this detachment, as well as non-judgment, and inner non-resistance, you gain access to another dimension, **inner space**. From this inner space comes a **peace**. This is the peace I needed so disparately. I have learned that you can enjoy and honor things without giving them an importance and significance that does not exist.

In the past I have placed unreasonable demands on others to **fulfill me, make me happy, make me feel safe and tell me who I am.** Now enjoying simple things, like seeing the true beauty of clouds moving across the sky and for that moment, I am experiencing a sense of well-being and peace. This feeling may vary with intensity, the old sages of India called it “Ananda”, **the bliss of being**. This sense of contentment, peace and aliveness is created by the **simple, slightest of sights and gentlest of touches**. The key is **to be still**, being fully present and accepting responsibility for your state of consciousness, and for all life.

Just **being** and taking the **time** to restore my tattered soul within the inner space, I found a place of peace and am one with life. My “**aha**” moments are experienced over and over again.

My state of consciousness has been transformed. **I had been** spiritually unconscious, I had been totally absorbed by my past, my upbringing, my memories, of roles I had played without knowing and the compulsive habit of faultfinding and complaining about others. A long-standing resentment and the negative emotional energy has been replaced with connectedness and a oneness with all life. Only being present at the moment can undo the past and transform your state of consciousness.

I believe that this **oneness** with and deeper connectedness to all that exists is our purpose. This consciousness or awakened doing must have energy flowing with **acceptance, enjoyment and enthusiasm** in all we do. The joy of being is the joy of being **conscious**. I believe there is no time like the present and heaven is here and now, in the midst of you. This I believe.