

# Thanks for Dirty Dishes and Taxes

- Research shows that deliberately counting blessings or keeping “gratitude lists” has a host of mental health benefits, and a habit of gratitude reduces negative affect like irritability, stress and depression.
- *“Lord, I thank You for dirty clothes, muddy shoes, messy rooms, a dusty house, tired legs, aching knees, and taxes. I thank You that I have clothes, shoes, a room to make a mess in, a house to get dirty, legs that work, knees that bend and a free country in which I can pay taxes.”*

# Valerie Tarico: Thanks for Dirty Dishes and Taxes

- There, children were attempting to learn math, reading and writing without such basics as textbooks and paper. I've had a Canadian attitude toward taxes ever since.
- As one who has received so many benefits from this country, it pains me sometimes how much of our national conversation is about taxes. We put so much emotional energy into nursing resentment about those so called "burdens" that we sometimes forget how much we have received, both from those who came before us and from this extraordinary land.

# Valerie Tarico: Thanks for Dirty Dishes and Taxes

- Cultivating gratitude leads to better sleep, greater goal attainment, better relationships, more mutual support, and a stronger love life.
- I wonder what it would mean to our country if more of us said, to a God or to the universe, I thank You that I have roads to maintain, schoolbooks to buy, a sewer to mend, rivers and mountains to protect and a free country in which I pay taxes.
- Valerie Tarico is the author of *Trusting Doubt: A Former Evangelical Looks at Old Beliefs in a New Light*.

# My political speech

- The hatred of taxes is the greatest single threat to democracy and good government.
- Taxes are the price we pay for civilization.

# Gratitude in UU sermons

- The heart of our faith: Gratitude should be the center of Unitarian Universalist theology. By Galen Guengerich, 2007.
- Unitarian Universalism should be defined by gratitude.
- Why gratitude? Two dimensions of gratitude make it fitting as our defining religious practice. One has to do with the discipline of gratitude, and the other has to do with an ethic of gratitude. The discipline of gratitude reminds us of how utterly dependent we are on the people and world around us for everything that matters. From this flows an ethic of gratitude that obligates us to create a future that justifies an increasing sense of gratitude from the human family as a whole. The ethic of gratitude demands that we nurture the world that nurtures us in return. It is our duty to foster the kind of environment that we want to take in and therefore become.

# Galen Guengerich cites Alfred North Whitehead

- Everything is constituted by its relationship to other things.
- “*We are dependent on the universe for every detail of our experience.*”
- Nothing—not people, not rocks, not galaxies—is what it is in isolation. The first principle of the universe is not independence, but its opposite, utter dependence. Everything that exists is made up of constituent parts that are borrowed from, shared with, and related to others outside it. As humans we are dependent upon the parents that conceived us, the plants and animals who daily give their lives for our nourishment, the trees that reverse our cycle of taking in oxygen and giving off carbon dioxide, and the sun that warms the atmosphere and lights our path. In every respect, we are utterly dependent.

# Guengerich: The heart of our faith

- If the first principle of all existence is utter dependence, then the deadliest of all sins is the effort to negate or disregard that principle through the myth of self-sufficiency. In this state of sin, salvation comes through gratitude.
- Put another way, the discipline of gratitude connects the present with the past, while the ethic of gratitude connects the present with the future.
- The discipline of gratitude is about knowing how much we have been given and acknowledging the scope of our dependence. It's about saying "thank you" to the people we love, to the world we enjoy, to the universe we inhabit, and to the God who holds us all in a divine embrace.

# Practice Gratitude

- Like hope, trust and love, gratitude is both a feeling and a spiritual practice. By Christine Robinson and Alicia Hawkins. 2009
- You may have thought that religion is primarily an affair of believing, and if you were not sure how a person goes about “believing,” you may have thought you were not a religious person. Gratitude, on the other hand, is something that all of us can practice, and that makes us all religious.
- If you don’t believe in a “thankable” God, you may wonder how to develop gratitude. But you don’t have to believe there is a Divine Someone out there collecting praise to experience gratitude. “Thank you, Universe!” you might say, if “Thank you, God” doesn’t work for you.
- We can make a practice of gratitude that will sustain us in both the wonderful and difficult times of our lives.



# Gratitude as UU Spiritual Discipline

- Rev. Sam Trumbore, Nov. 24, 2008
- Suggesting gratitude be the central spiritual practice of Unitarian Universalists is a bit of a departure from our rugged individualistic approach to religion. I don't believe gratitude is an automatic response for most of us.
- We don't want to be dependent on any authority outside ourselves for our religion. We don't trust authority. Many have felt betrayed by religious leaders. We want to figure out our religion by ourselves.

# More from Trumbore

- The more we learn about the effects of our andro-centric approach to domination of the biosphere, the more we realize it is unsustainable and profoundly destructive. Every corner of our planet is groaning with the burden of supporting our lifestyle. We gobble up everything in our path and enslave others to create the lifestyle we enjoy. These patterns of consumption and exploitation are rooted in an unwillingness to recognize our dependence. World consumption patterns are even more deeply rooted in a lack of connection and gratitude.
- Gratitude is a natural organic response to the core Unitarian Universalist spiritual experience of awe as we behold the wonders of the natural world.

# Gratitude—Blue Lotus, 2009

- Henry David Thoreau observed, “Gratitude is not only the greatest of all virtues, but the parent of all the others.”
- Reflecting on Thanksgiving, it is tempting to make a list of things we are grateful for. Gratitude listing is a good daily practice that would benefit us on a year-long basis.
- An essential rule of gratitude is: See everyone and everything as if it was the first and the last time you will ever see it. As Thoreau observed, “Heaven is under your feet as well as over your head.”

# Gratitude and Giving by Christine Robinson and Alicia Hawkins

- Everything I have—by which is meant not only things but relationships—is a gift. The intent of religious traditions is to remind us to be humble about what we have, to remind us to be grateful for what we have, and to remind us to be generous with the gifts we have been given.

# A thought of my own

- In one way at least, gratitude is like forgiveness.