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DATE

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DURATION

24m 24s

4 SPEAKERS

Speaker1

Speaker2

Speaker3

Speaker4

START OF TRANSCRIPT

[00:00:00] Speaker1

The following is a message from Wellspring's congregation.

[00:00:05] Speaker2

Good morning, Wellspring's. It is good to be with you again. One of the most concise ways that I describe Unitarian vs. them is by reaching back to the words of someone who was not even technically a Unitarian Universalist, but was kind of a fellow traveler with us, Walt Whitman. He wrote over one hundred fifty years ago, we do not say that Bibles and scriptures are not divine, we say they are divine and they have come from you and they will come from you still. What I love about that is it gets right at the heart of progressive spirituality, which says that we are open to any and all sources of spiritual wisdom and tradition, and that the Book of Revelation is not sealed. It's still here. In fact, we are inscribing ourselves and we are writing ourselves into that book of life and the book of our lives, each of us in every age and in every era. I believe that each of us, we're all the sole authors of our lives and that in the book of our lives, there are many, many sources to footnote. I think there are many contributors, even if it is incumbent upon each of us to write our own stories, I think of this quote and the fact that ultimately the truest text of our lives is the one that we write, each of us. I think of this quote in connection with this current message series, Heirloom Connections, bringing together people from wellsprings of different ages and stages into conversation with each other as video pen pals. And so I'm going to share two of these pen pals with you today, Evan, who is 14, and Micah, who is thirty five.

[00:02:21] Speaker3

Hi, Micah. Hi, Evan.

[00:02:23] Speaker2

Who are engaging in a series of conversations videotaped and then exchanged with each other and shared with me first and now part of it with all of you. What I do want to say is that honestly, in these conversations with with Evan and Micah, I wish I could have done a whole series worth of material. So I focus in on just kind of one consistent theme that I heard regularly throughout the series of video messages that they exchanged with each other. I just want to thank Evan and Micah for bringing such thoughtfulness and such heart. And you will see that right from the beginning here in just a moment. They go big. They are grappling with some really important questions and particularly to hear them reflect on a question of the series of questions. I was asked them to help frame up their conversation. They talk about their Ows and their wows. They talk about some of the things that kind of sit on their hearts and break their hearts and also the things that cause wonder and offer them to kind of come to life and the connections between the Ows and the Wows.

[00:03:39] Speaker3

Existence itself, just existing, is probably one of the most. Wow, and owl type of thing, the fact that we're here is, again, very all inspiring, but also can be painful because we're here and we have to exist through it, that's all. So. Now, I don't know what to say about that, so I think I do have a lot of other consistent sources of WoW's. You know, hearing stories of people overcoming challenges are very. Wow, being in nature, watching a squirrel. Honestly, I love watching squirrels. I'm almost like a dog, but I love watching them gather things. I hate to see them when they're dead on the road. But animals, anything like. The whole. Perception of existence and going through things and seeing the activity of life is kind of wow.

[00:05:00] Speaker4

Well, I guess I'll start with Ows and some you really grappled with some heavy topics for this stuff I never would have thought of and were really occasionally I think of this. And then I just said that, like I said back in my chair sometimes and just think, what is the meaning of it all? And we are so. Not to be a downer, but we are so insignificant in this vast space, like, honestly, it scares me because we are little people on a massive planet, in a massive solar system, in an endless universe. And we're so small and it just doesn't really like it's so weird to think about and grapple that there's so much beyond us.

[00:05:50] Speaker2

So, yeah, what I love about Evan and Micah's conversation, they're being pen pals is, you know, they they go big right from the start, right. That the most powerful, profound cosmic questions existence itself. What are we doing here? What wakes us up? What allows us to really get in touch with our lives and our place in the overall order and meaning of things? I got the sense in listening to this part of the conversation that I was looking through a telescope at the night sky. And just getting in touch with that sense, as you know, as they both pointed to the vastness of all of this and also that we are loved, that even put it this way, we are so small and yet. Here we are alive with this precious opportunity to make sense of our lives. To not just have our birth, the fact of our birth be here, but that we are truly able to make something of meaning and purpose within our lives. In part of the pen pal videos that I'm not showing you today, Micah quotes from a song that actually we're going to do here real soon. One of our favorite songs of Wellspring's The Greatest Magic Trick is that there's anything here at all.

[00:07:31] Speaker2

And what I love is that, as you'll see just a few minutes from Micah and Evan is they don't just stay at that place of the kind of biggest, broadest perspective, but they start to kind of dial it in almost as if they they move gradually from the telescope of the vastness to the mightiest microscope of what is here at home in and with our hearts. And they do that by starting to focus on something that they find out they both have in common, which is a love of superheroes. And so Evan starts out the next place of our conversation by referring to Superman and Micah speaking about comics that he really likes. And I'm about to say something very controversial, which is that between DC and Marvel, which is a conversation that Micah and Evan carry on with each other, I don't really have a dog in that hunt. I'm not particularly partial to either, to be honest with you. But we're going to let here I'm going to let Evan kind of start to talk about who and what is it that allows him to make sense of what being alive is really all about.

[00:08:55] Speaker4

And then you had mentioned your hero like comic book Superman or movie Superman, and I guess I understand where you're coming from, where he's this in these non-human being. And he's someone you can look up to. He's this perfect guy who has the power to see evil in everyone, but chooses to see the good. But the problem is he doesn't face and this is why he was never really my idol is he doesn't face human problems. He's from these extraterrestrial. And it just he just feels dislocated. That's why I've always seen several Marvel superheroes as more heroes, because some of the problems they face, you can relate to more, with the exception of really Captain Marvel, which even in the movies, they did a fairly good job of making her more human. Like you look at Captain America and he's this interesting guy and he even gets the point where, well, I was fighting like I brought up before I was fighting in World War Two. And it was the idea of. Well, clear cut, good and evil, and I knew what to believe in, but now I no longer know what to believe in and I'm sure a lot of people are facing that today.

[00:10:13] Speaker3

Sadly, I always did like the tenants of. The faith I was growing up in that I love God with all your heart and love your neighbor just as much as you love yourself. And I probably follow that second commandment a lot, I tend not to hate people, even those who deserve it sometimes. I. Don't. I know how to hate. But I don't want to because it is the most toxic, poisonous thing you can eat every day. And so I always love that idea of loving other people as much as you love yourself, because for a time I didn't love myself. Not one bit, I didn't like my voice, I didn't like my face, I didn't like a lot of things about me being a teenager with low self-esteem does wonders on you. But over time. I learned to love myself and through that love other people. I love it whenever I see somebody smile just to be able to know that whether they're faking it or not, it's a happy moment for them. And over the years, you know, having stepped away from that faith, I started to go through the process of discovering new ways of being and practicing some very. I like to think of myself more into Buddhism. In the past few years, a nonpracticing budos, but. I like the idea of being aware of things because quite often I am not a good example of, you know, how tired I am. I was handing a juice cup to my dog this morning thinking it was my son and she was just staring at me like, what the heck are you doing? Dad. And so this idea of being aware of things, you know, that's a simple one, right, distracted mind not thinking clearly early in the morning versus being aware of the reality of life and everything around you.

[00:13:11] Speaker2

Evan and Micah's conversation reminds me of a treasured and beautiful quote by the Hindu teacher, Sri. Who writes wisdom tells me that I am nothing. And love reminds me that I am everything. System tells me that I am nothing and and love tells me that I am everything and between these two. My life moves. I adore that quote, because it kind of starts in that similar place where Evan and Micah started the vastness of it. Of all of it and what are we so small, seemingly so insignificant and yet. With awareness and love of self and other. How fully we can come alive and enter into true. Vivid, beautiful connection with this life. I think this is where we find as human beings, not a Superman superpower, as Evan said, I think that's why in some way Superman I totally agree with them. Superman isn't that relatable because he's not really fully human. So I think the actual superpower we as human beings can have is as Michael points to attention. Are we paying attention and our inattentiveness may not all involve household pets and juice boxes, but I think we know exactly the kind of scenarios in our own lives that make a point to do so honestly and and humorously. If love is a verb, not just a thing or noun, but a verb, a way of being, then attention is love's most fully realized form. Through that attentiveness, through paying attention, we get to realize ourselves as part of the vast, interconnected web of this life, not separate out, but intrinsically apart, as everyone and everything is. So much here and connected, and this is the the next kind of step in that Mike and Evan take, which is building on this sense of tension, attentiveness towards the people in their lives who are there and have been their most powerful kind of demonstrators of of love, have taught them to love, have offered them love, and the people who in their lives are the closest thing they know to their superheroes.

[00:16:15] Speaker3

My own mother, who. You know, going through a divorce and working at least 16 hours a day just to keep. In an apartment with cable, you know, all the amenities and, you know, they each had their own struggles and they each certainly have their own flaws, but they also have their own qualities that make them kind of superhuman a little bit. You know,

[00:16:46] Speaker4

You had brought up how you're more modern or more real figures that you look up to. You are your mom and dad and then be I'm sorry that you went through a divorce, I. No, it's not something you generally know about someone from looking at them, I guess, and then I guess it really showed an idol when you had said your mom, where it was willing to work 16 hours a day just to make sure there was food on the table. There was cable, there was everything you could need. And I think that's truly is a loving parent and that's important. That's sort of why my personal idol is my ah, one of my personal life. My real life idols is my grandfather, because he decided that when he so he faced a decent amount of hardship when he grew up, came from a poorer family, and he decided he would work his butt off to make sure that his children didn't face the same problems he did. Yes. Does that mean. Yes, it does mean a little bit of work. But and as you're like as your mom working 16 hours a day, it means a decent amount of work to say that you're sacrificing for the ones you love.

[00:18:01] Speaker2

For me, what Evan acknowledges here is one of the best parts of the series, what it is to learn someone else's story, like Muriel Rukeyser said a long time ago, that the universe is not really made up of atoms. It's made up of stories and heavens empathetic acknowledgement of Micah's experience as a child of divorce and Micah sharing with heaven and with us his experience of his mom and what she has meant to him, and how this leads to Evan reflecting on the meaning of his grandfather to him, and also recognizing, of course, that today is Mother's Day. And I've been a preacher on so many mother's days over the last number of decades here as a minister, to know that this day is not one thing for everyone. For so many people, this is a day of joy and of rightfully being honored. And for many people, this is a day of of some regrets or sadness or grief, loss, anger. And so this is my wish for all of us on this Mother's Day. I recognize my own complexity of this day mixture of grief and love for my long departed mother. That each of us would receive and offer exactly what we need to on this day. And so enter into a deeper, caring intimacy with ourselves and with each other on this Mother's Day. This sense of intimacy with ourselves and with life, real, honest, deep connection. It ran all throughout my watching of the video exchanges, the pen pals between Mike and Evan, and it brought to mind someone who just recently left this life, Michael Collins, some of you know, died about a week ago at age 90.

[00:20:11] Speaker2

It was one of the three astronauts on that first moon landing, Michael Collins, who was the astronaut who circled in the capsule around the moon and didn't set foot on the moon and has been the human being furthest from earth ever. He was once termed the loneliest person in the world because no one has been more alone, farther away from Earth than him. But if you know anything about Michael Collins story, you know that his experience of their floating in that capsule, waiting to pick up eventually the other two astronauts walking on the moon surface, you know that his experience was anything but lonely. He has some just beautiful quotes spiritually, I think enlightened quotes about that experience of what it was to look at the Earth from the perspective of the moon by himself and this little blue green orb floating there in the vast blackness of space. And how rather rather than feeling lonely. It opened up with him in a tenderness, he actually wished that all the warring politicians in the world could have this same perspective that he had. Of seeing the Earth float there in space. And the awareness birth in him was a kind of fragile tenderness for this entire human existence, all of us.

[00:21:50] Speaker2

For me, this brings it full circle from where Evan and Micah started, and I want to thank both of them particularly for offering this to her from the skies and the stars right here down to the ground under our feet. And to the people that we share this life with. On this day, I hope we can all take some time, as Evan and Mike have modeled for us and invited us to do, to wonder at the complexity, the beauty, the pain, the ow and the wow and the love of this life that is our birthright that all of us share. Amen, and may you live in Blessing. I ask if you would please join your heart with mine in prayer. This breath, this spirit, ageless and yet giving birth to our age, this very moment. We all give ourselves the gift of being able to step back from our lives. To wonder at the wonder of it all, to feel both the awe and the awfulness to allow our hearts to open again and again. So that we might know this precious human birth, this opportunity to be alive as we know it right here and right now. That this experience of being alive may be as full with life, our lives and other people's lives as it can possibly be. And we breathe in. And may we breathe out? And we know that this moment here we are, and it is something beyond words. Miraculous. Amen.

[00:24:12] Speaker1

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END OF TRANSCRIPT



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