

## Spirituality Group Meeting Notes March 5, 2013

We were all delighted to welcome Andrea back to 'the fold.' We missed Dennis, who was at home nursing a cold. Richard served as facilitator, calling us to a moment of quiet, meditation, or prayer, as each attendee preferred.

This meeting concentrated on the topics of tolerance and bigotry. Esta began by describing tolerance as an openness to differences. She discussed the Civil Rights movement's connection with other types of intolerance such as attitudes toward women's rights and homosexuality. She spoke to how parents can teach tolerance to their children. The tolerance level that parents (or grandparents) possess naturally teaches the same message. Children closely watch and imitate us, even before they can speak. Kids will mirror the values and attitudes of those they love and look up to. The 2007 movie, "Freedom Writers" with Hilary Swank was recommended by several of those present.

Rita concentrated on how we can help to eliminate bigotry by pledging to have respect for people whose abilities, beliefs, culture, race, sexual identity, or other characteristics are different from our own. Some in the group commented that people who express beliefs different from ours (i.e., religious, political) present the most difficult challenge. Civility is sorely lacking in our society--we need to find ways to encourage the practice.

Rita shared some wonderful quotes--a few are included below.

Albert Einstein: What a sad era when it is easier to smash an atom than a prejudice.

George Gordon Byron: Those who will not reason, are bigots, those who cannot, are fools, and those who dare not, are slaves.

Toni Morrison: In this country, American means white. Everybody else has to hyphenate.

Emma Golden: Someone has said that it requires less mental effort to condemn than to think.

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Lyndon B. Johnson: Books and ideas are the most effective weapons against intolerance and ignorance.

**NOTE:** Helen is arranging for a guest discussion leader at our next meeting, **April 2**. Please note the date on your calendar--this will be a unique opportunity. Details will be included in the reminder announcement sent a week prior to our meeting.

Blessings to all,

Maureen