

# Unitarian Universalist Church Newsletter

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The Newsletter of Unitarian Universalist Church, Surprise, AZ is published monthly except August.

**Minister:** Rev. Terry Sims

**Minister Emeritus:** Rev. Dr. Walt F. Wieder

**President:** Pat Lindgren



40th Anniversary 1975 - 2015

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January 2017

## From The Minister's Desk

Last summer I spent quite a lot of my vacation visiting my sister, Ronda, and her family in Iowa. During that stay, I told my nephew J.P., Ronda's and John's son, that it bothered me that so many people express opinions or beliefs that are not grounded in anything but speculation. J.P. then asked, "But isn't speculation important? Doesn't science depend on speculation that creates a hypothesis that can then be empirically investigated? Isn't speculation related to wonder and doesn't that play a part in human endeavor and achievement?" I had to admit he had a point.



So I retreated to a modified position that I didn't like opinions based on idle speculation, that is, guesses or beliefs formed by people who have not investigated a particular subject and have no intention of investigating it. For the remainder of my visit, our discussion became a standing joke between us. Whenever J.P. considered expressing an opinion on a subject he had little information about, he would say something like, "I'd say what I think, but since I have not investigated the subject sufficiently and have no intention of doing so, Uncle Terry would object."

According to one on-line article on the history of philosophy, "Metaphysics asks: What are space and time? What is a thing and how does it differ from an idea? Are humans free to decide their fate? Is there a first cause, or God, that has made everything and put it in motion? Because the answers to such questions cannot be arrived at by

observation, experience, or experiment, they must be products of the reasoning mind. Such matters are very close, in fact, to the province of religion, and in Asia the answers to these questions are normally put in a strictly religious framework. In much 20th-century Western philosophy, metaphysics has been dismissed as pointless speculation that can never achieve positive results. Nevertheless, metaphysics has many defenders who still explore notions put forward by Plato and Aristotle. . . ."

"Auguste Comte founded the philosophy called positivism. Positivism rejects pure speculation as a form of self-indulgence. It says that assertions must be subject to verification. Comte attempted to apply the methods of the natural sciences to the discovery of social laws. . . . Those who are determined that philosophy be scientific and those who are devoted to metaphysical speculation go their separate ways." [edited by "PHILOSOPHY, An analysis of the grounds of and concepts expressing fundamental beliefs", edited by Robert Guisepi, <http://history-world.org/philosophy.htm>.]

When I first encountered theology, I understood it as the study of God. Later, I came to understand theology as the study of what is Ultimate. We must admit that any kind of theological examination is based on metaphysical speculation that is not subject to any verification. Great thinkers have spent their lives building staggering superstructures founded on such speculation.

Indeed, as someone who told my nephew that I was opposed to idle speculation, I've spent a fair amount of time myself speculating about metaphysical questions. I cannot demonstrate that my time so spent has produced definitive answers,

even for me, or indeed that my speculations have not been self-indulgent. And yet it feels like asking those questions and seeking their answers is and has been worthwhile.

I guess I need to re-examine how I really feel about speculation, which may just be the natural result of wonder. Wonder about the nature of things. Wonder that leads to scientific hypotheses and investigation. Wonder that pushes us forward, at least toward new questions, if not definitive answers. I wouldn't want to give any of that wonder up.

Some of us will be building our own theologies this month on January 2, 9, 16, and 30, starting at 6:30 p.m. We will wonder and speculate individually and together about the most important questions there are, something we come to church to do. And, since we'll be intentionally investigating those questions, it won't be idle speculation! I hope many of you will want to join me.

Faithfully yours,



## President's Letter to Congregation

*Pat Lindgren, President*

I shared this on Facebook a week before Christmas because it is such a Unitarian Universalist sentiment:

***Being an atheist is okay.***

***Being an atheist and shaming religious and spirituality as silly and not real is not okay.***

***Being a Christian is okay.***

***Being homophobic, misogynistic, racist, or an otherwise hateful person in the name of Christianity is not okay.***

***Being a reindeer is okay.***

***Bullying and excluding another reindeer because he has a shiny red nose is not okay.***

I also liked it because I have always had a problem with the Rudolph story. I have been told that the lesson children learn from the story is that helping others will make people like you. However, I always think that the lesson of the story is that it is not who you are that counts, but who you know. I will just have to accept that the children know better than I do.

Speaking of children, by the time you read this you will have seen our wonderful Christmas pageant

put on by Debby and our choir and Lisa and our children. I have seen two rehearsals as of this writing and am excited to see the finished product. I was very touched that Lisa asked me to be the voice of Lucy. She is my second favorite character in the Peanuts strip. Linus is my very favorite. Somehow, I identify with Linus a lot. Charles Schluz described Linus as "Linus, my serious side, is the house intellectual, bright, well-informed which, I suppose may contribute to his feelings of insecurity." That is so me.

We are coming up on the very busiest part of our church year, January thru April. Please be sure to read the bulletin that is emailed to you every week to keep up with what is happening. We have some very interesting things coming up in January; a jazz concert on January 7th, Terry doing a four-week course on "Building Your Own Theology" in January, the auction on March 4th. I hope to see a lot of all of you the next four months. I will not see you for Christmas. For over 30 years I have spent Christmas in Minnesota (yes, very cold this year) with my siblings, their spouses, their children and their children's spouses. We always celebrate together on Christmas eve. Then on Christmas day my siblings celebrate with their spouse's families who also live in Minnesota. Since I don't have a spouse, I go with my sister and brother-in-law to his family on Christmas day.

If you have not yet turned in your pledge for 2017, please do so. You can put it in the collection basket or mail it to the church. In January, we will be contacting all those whose pledges we don't have recorded to be sure that we did not miss any. Remember, this church and its activities depend on your generosity to keep going.

I intend to see you all on Sunday, January 1. Our new Social Activities Chair, Danean Mitchell is preparing a special good luck soup for us for after the service. Remember, if you are a Rose Parade watcher like me, the parade will be on Monday, January 2. The Rose Parade Association signed a deal with the churches of Pasadena in 1898, that the parade would never be on Sunday so as not to interfere with Sunday services.



*Hope you all had a wonderful holiday, whichever holiday, or holidays you celebrated at this time of year.*

## ***Music, Music, Music...Music!!!***

*Debby Bullins, Music Director*

Shake off those January blues and join the Music Department for a month of music, music, music and music.



Start the month off with a lovely evening of jazz and refreshments on Saturday, January 7 at 7:00 PM with the Izotov, meier, thiefain, michel Jazz Quartet. Drawing on the spirit of jazz, minimalism, folk music, and rock n' roll, this group sows a unique sound in contemporary music. Each composition is a vignette exploring a specific idea, mood, or texture. Each member's improvisation illuminates a different aspect of the topic at hand.

Tickets \$15 online at <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/2716964>, \$20 at the door. Reception (appetizers/beverages for purchase, cash only) at 6pm. Please contact Debby Bullins, [debbyb@uusurprise.org](mailto:debbyb@uusurprise.org), 623-826-4784 for more information.



Wake up early on Sunday, January 8 as our friend and pianist, Walter Hartman, joins us for Special Music beginning at 10:00 am. We are so excited to have Walter back at UUC Surprise and have him share his wonderful talent with us. Come early for a good seat.

On Sunday, January 15, our own Terry Sims, cello, joins his sister, Rhonda Marshall, violin, and Kent Trostel, piano, for our Special Music at 10:00 am. They will introduce you to a beautiful "Trio Sonata" by Loeillet DenGant that you won't want to miss.

Special Music, Sunday, January 22 at 10:00 am welcomes a new member, Ernie Kassian, violin, with Connie Jahrmarkt, piano, to our month of music. Ernie plays with symphonies in Canada and has graciously offered to share his gifts with us.

Let us begin your New Year 2017 with these gifts of music, music, music, music. I promise your heart will be joyful by the month's end.

## **"Building Your Own Theology" Workshop in January**

Come "*Build Your Own Theology*." Maybe the one facet of Unitarian Universalism that is most responsible for making us unique among religions is the freedom individual UU's have to explore widely and come to our own understandings of what theology (the study of the Ultimate) is. Indeed, our Fourth UU Principle makes this an expectation of UU's: "A free and responsible search for truth and meaning." On Monday evenings, January 2, 9, 16, and 30, (please note that there will be no meeting on January 23) starting at 6:30 p.m., Rev. Terry will lead the workshop entitled "*Building Your Own Theology*" designed by the Rev. Richard S. Gilbert. Please join us for this exciting way for each of us to come face-to-face with the Ultimate and discover more deeply what Unitarian Universalism is and can be.

## **Circle Suppers**

Join with other members of our Congregation for some food and conversation. Circle suppers are potlucks held in someone's home. It is a fun way to get to know your fellow UUs. One real advantage of potlucks nowadays is that delis have a great selection so you don't even have to cook if that's not your thing.

There were two circle suppers in November. Participants had a good time and we hope to have even more people for the next suppers. These are being planned for the last weekend in January (27, 28, 29). Please indicate your date preference on the sign up sheet in the social hall.

Further information is printed by the signup sheet or feel free to call one of us.

*Susie Cole 406.600.8857 or Nancy Flann 623.583.4636*

## **Surprise Elementary Volunteers**

Surprise Elementary, our church's adopted school, is looking for more volunteers. There are numerous jobs they could use help with. You decide how much time you have and when you are available. There is an application and security check required before you can volunteer. If you would like to join those church members now having a wonderful time with this work, contact Julie Wambach at [azwambach@icloud.com](mailto:azwambach@icloud.com) or see her Sundays after church services.

# The Monthly Book Report

MaryAnne Balzer

Our Library season of thanksgiving and renewal continues with this great list of books recently gifted for your enjoyment. Let's get right to it:

**"Happy in a Hostile World,"** by Carl Patrasso, shelf number 152.4PAT. A good book on the principles of happiness.

**"Speak Peace in a World of Conflict, What You Say Next Will Change Your World,"** by Marshall Rosenberg, shelf number 303.6ROS. An excellent read on the subject of speaking the truth of peace.

**"The Gift of Years, Growing Older Gracefully,"** by Joan Chittister, shelf number 200.84CHI. A book for us all.

**"Don't Know Much about History? Everything You Need To Know About American History But Never Learned,"** by Kenneth Davis, shelf number 973DAV. The popular book still good for our times and for perspective.

Four titles were donated, authored by the popular philosophical UU Minister Robert Fulghum, all located at 814.54FUL:

**"Words I Wish I Wrote, a Collection Of Writing That Inspired My Work"**

**"Uh-Oh, Some Observations From Both Sides Of The Refrigerator Door"**

**"Maybe (Maybe Not), Second Thoughts From a Secret Life"**

**"It was on Fire when I Lay Down on it"** More insights, Fulghum style.

**"The Bondwoman's Narrative, A 'Novel' by Hannah Crafts,"** edited by Henry Gates Jr, shelved as F (Fiction) GAT. While our Library does not have fiction titles, this special book has a fascinating history. It turns out on further detection by the web that it is likely to be a true account.

**"Peace Pilgrim, Her Life and Work in Her Own Words,"** A special collection compiled by Peace Pilgrim's friends, shelf number 327.1FRI

**"Treasury of Women's Quotations, Wit and Wisdom From Women Through The Centuries"** by Carolyn Warner, shelf number 082WAR.

**"Margaret Fuller, A New American Life,"** by Megan Marshall, shelf number 818.3MAR. A terrific biography by this Pulitzer winner recounting Fuller's trailblazing life. She was Thoreau's first editor, Emerson's close friend, and daring war correspondent, dying tragically in a ship wreck.

**"Return to the Springs,"** by Jacob Trap, a collection of essays and sermons from this much loved UU Minister, shelf number 252TRA.

*Happy New Year Everyone! And have a blessed day shared with a good book!*

## UU Movie Night

Linda Vitale

UU Movie Night will feature **"The Best Democracy Money Can Buy"** on Tuesday, January 17th at 7 pm. The subtitle of this must-see movie is: **"A Tale of Billionaires & Ballot Bandits."** Greg Palast, the most important investigative reporter



of our time, gives you the scoop on how this and prior elections were indeed 'rigged'!!! Palast takes a deep dive into the dark operation of the Republican Party's program known as "Crosscheck", which was designed to steal millions of votes. The program's goal is

to eliminate voters suspected of voting twice - in the same election. 7.2 million in 29 states, to be exact! Most of these "suspects" are minorities and of course, the list is 'confidential'.

Palast and his side-kick, uncover this "lynching by laptop" scheme and hunt down some of these so-called "duplicate voters". Next, they hunt down the billionaires behind this elaborate scheme to disenfranchise millions of voters. This real life detective story is told in a film noir style, utilizing hidden cameras, some animation, secret documents and a little help from some Hollywood actors. Palast's film exposes the darkest plans of the uber-rich to steal America's democracy! So, don't miss this one!!!!

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Please have information for the Newsletter submitted by Noon on the 15th of each month to the Editor, Charlie Mannino at [newsletter@uusurprise.org](mailto:newsletter@uusurprise.org)

## BUUK Circle

*Julie Wambach*

The BUUK Circle meets on the third Thursday 2 – 4 pm in the Social Hall. Join us, whether you've finished or even started the book. Next time we will also be selecting books for February and March. For more information, contact Julie Wambach at [azwambach@icloud.com](mailto:azwambach@icloud.com).

**January 19, 2017:** *"The War on Science: Who's Waging It, Why It Matters, What We Can Do About It"* by Shawn Lawrence Otto.

Discussion Leaders: Jeff London and Sally Thomas.

The publisher writes "Shawn Otto's compelling new book investigates the historical, social, philosophical, political, and emotional reasons why evidence-based politics are in decline and authoritarian politics are once again on the rise on both left and right, and provides some compelling solutions to bring us to our collective senses, before it's too late."

## UU Surprise Fundraisers

*Linda Vitale*

I wanted to follow up on both the Valley View Foodbank fundraiser and our adopted school, Surprise Elementary fundraiser. We raised \$980 in cash and checks for the Valley View Foodbank and collected several bags of non-monetary food donations as well. We collected \$2,965 for Surprise Elementary School, via the Dysart School Tax Credit.

Both totals were way down from the prior year, especially the school one! We collected \$4500 in 2015 for our adopted school. So, I'm hoping that those of you who took the forms home with you will follow through and either mail in or bring your check to the Dysart Unified School District office on 15802 N Parkview Pl in Surprise. The max donation for Single filers is \$200 and \$400 for Married filers.

I will leave more blank forms on the table in back of the Social Hall for both the foodbank and the school fundraisers. Don't forget that even though you may not be an AZ resident, you can still make a donation and use it as a tax deduction on your federal tax return, but only IF you can itemize your deductions.

See me if you have any questions about these two tax credits and also see me if you do NOT receive a receipt from the charity, to use for your taxes. Many THANKS to all those who made contributions.

## Great Decisions 2017 U.S. Foreign Policy Discussion Series

*Bonnie Saunders*

How can you make sense of what is happening in the world? You can join thousands of Americans who participate in Great Decisions Discussions on U.S. Foreign policy, many of whom send in their opinion ballots in an attempt to sway opinion in the State Department. Join Bonnie Saunders in February and March for these discussions.

In January, Bonnie will have the briefing books available in church for \$16 each - you will need to read the article on each topic before the discussion. If you don't want to drive at night, Bonnie teaches this course on Thursday afternoons at Sun City Grand in February and March (non-residents can take courses there for a fee) and on Wednesday afternoons at R.I.S.E. in March and April. If you don't see her at church, e-mail her at [Bonniesaun@aol.com](mailto:Bonniesaun@aol.com).

Topics and dates for these discussions will be at 7:00 p.m. on the following Mondays:

2/6:..... The Future of Europe  
2/13: ..... Trade and Politics  
2/20: ..... Conflict in the South China Sea  
2/27: ..... Saudi Arabia in Transition  
3/6:.....U.S. Foreign Policy and Petroleum  
3/13: ..... Latin America's Political Pendulum  
3/20: ..... Prospects for Afghanistan and Pakistan  
3/27: ..... Nuclear Security

## Play Reading Group

*Joan Carlson*

The play reading group will meet on Wednesday, January 11 from 2:00-4:00 PM. We will be meeting in the church choir room. We will be reading the play, *Glory in the Flower* by William Inge which is in our book of 24 Favorite One Act Plays. We will also be completing the play, *A View From the Bridge* by Arthur Miller. I have copies we can share.

## We Are Here To Be Of Assistance!

*Lay Pastoral Care Committee*

If you, your family or another member of our congregation are experiencing illness, hardship, isolation or are in need of support, please contact Janet Kafel (530-340-3230), Lenore Gaudin (623-933-0186) the church office (623-875-2550) or speak with any of the committee members on Sunday at church. We wear a second name tag that says LAY PASTORAL CARE.

## Happy 2017!

Lisa Lawrence, DRE

I hope you all enjoyed our holiday play “A Charlie Brown Christmas”. With all of the speaking characters it was much more involved than previous years. I'd like to thank all who helped make this production possible. It was a lot of fun.



We start off 2017 with a request for a volunteer to catalog the contents of our children's book cases. We have many useful resources that go primarily unused, and I'd love to turn it into a lending system to support our families. We will also again be needing individuals to assist as teachers and classroom assistants. Please let me know if

this is something you are able to assist with as I will begin winter/spring scheduling soon.

In the down time between the holidays and the second half of the RE season, I'd like to share some tips with you provided by UUA's Asst. Minister for Spiritual Growth & Development, Rev. Cassandra Hartley. Given our recent election and upcoming inauguration, here are some of her helpful post-election ideas for families to help deal with questions, intense emotions and anxiety:

**Family Motto or Mission Statement** - This is the perfect time to engage your family in a discussion about what your values are, what you believe in and what you aspire to be. Find words or phrases that summarize what's most important to you and then find ways to incorporate that motto/mission statement into your daily life. For example, you can print it up on a poster and hang it in a central room, or you can repeat it to your children before you send them off to school in the morning. For more ideas, read Bruce Feiler's *The Secrets of Happy Families*.

**Random Acts of Kindness** - It may seem trite, but doing small acts of kindness as a family can be healing for adults and sends a powerful message to children about our values. Ideas include: 1) tape money onto a vending machine with a note that says “buy a drink on us!” 2) Draw/write cards and let kids deliver them to their friends' houses 3) Pick up 20 pieces of trash around town 4) Decorate new boxes of tissue and bottles of hand sanitizer and then donate them to the hospital to brighten up the nurses' stations. 5) Involve your kids in making a

homemade dinner for someone who is struggling. The possibilities for helping others are endless!

**Media Sabbath** - It's natural to turn on the TV or computer after a major event, but it can also exhaust us. Take a break from all screens for a day or even a week. Explain to younger kids that just as we need to feed our bodies healthy food and limit the junk food, we need to feed our minds and hearts healthy experiences and limit the junk that often comes through the screens.

**Peace Corner** - create a comfortable space in your house that all ages can retreat to for peace. For younger children, make glitter jars, lavender-scented playdough, stress balls, and emotion cards (a Google search will provide instructions for these). For family members of any age, provide writing journals, art supplies, a music player and headphones, inspirational readings, meditation tools, etc.

## New Social Activities Chairperson

Danean Mitchell has volunteered to be the Social Activities Chair person. She invites you to start off the New Year, 2017, with your church family and a come together after Sunday Service in the Social Hall for a cup of New Year's Day Good Luck soup and cornbread. Danean will be preparing her traditional soup. We will also have a Vegetarian version. Share last years' success stories with this years' resolutions. Extend your hand in friendship and invite a friend to church to share the wish for good luck and good fortune.



### *The story of the soup. . .*

The black eyed peas are for good luck. The collard greens are for lots of money in the new year. All the other beans and tomatoes are for good health. The sausage is for wisdom. This soup is always made with much love which means when you have a cup you are also being wished much love and happiness in the coming year.



Danean is anxious to hear any ideas and thoughts for the upcoming year you might have. Please share them with her so that she might be able to make them happen. Need some help in the kitchen on New Year's. If you are able, please contact or call 623-546-6050 and thank you in advance.

# WhaleCoast Alaska 2017



**What:** Four Unitarian Universalist Fellowships in Alaska invite you to our awe-inspiring, 24th annual Alaska tour program.

**Tour #1:** National Park Tour, June 10 to 20 -- \$3,156

**Tour #2:** All-Alaska Tour, July 7 to 19 -- \$3,823

**Where:** From the coastal waters to the sunny Interior, from wilderness to modern cities. We experience the best of Alaska: Fairbanks, Denali Park, Anchorage, Juneau, Sitka, Seward

**See:**

- Wildlife: whales, seals, bears, moose, caribou, & more.
- Glaciers, islands, fjords, and mountain ranges.
- Native American artists and dancers.
- Alaska's finest museums.
- Spectacular travel by train and plane.

**Stay:** Real Alaska! UU homestays, meals, & dinner parties with Alaska UUs who treat you like friends.

**Director:** Dave Frey, longtime Fairbanks UU

**More information:** [www.WhaleCoastAK.org](http://www.WhaleCoastAK.org)

**Email:** [dfrey@WhaleCoastAK.org](mailto:dfrey@WhaleCoastAK.org)

**Address:** 675 Gold Vein Road, Fairbanks, AK 99712

**Telephone:** 907-322-4966

*Hurry! Each tour sells out when 40 guests register*



Take advantage of Presidents' Day weekend to engage with U\*U women from around the world at the Third International Women's Convocation, Asilomar Conference Center, CA, February 16-19, 2017. Connect, share, grow, celebrate, and empower in the unspoiled surroundings of this tranquil retreat. Registration is \$350. Bring one, two (or ten!) friends from your church and you qualify for a group discount of \$50 off each!

An additional \$50 discount is available for UU ministers. Young adults aged 18-40 can register at a special all-inclusive package rate. If you are interested in offering a workshop, please fill out our workshop request form online. Visit [IntlWomensConvo.org](http://IntlWomensConvo.org) for all details.

## UU Endowment Fund

Naming the Endowment Fund of the Church as a beneficiary of your estate or a specific asset, such as an IRA or life insurance plan, provides a simple way to begin your legacy now by providing for our church work in the future. If your circumstances change, you can alter your plans at any time.

For further information call:  
Brooks Marshall at 623-362-1195.

## Name Tags

*Janet Kafel*

Magnetic name tags are now available for purchase through Janet Kafel. They are \$5.25 each. To order yours, see Janet on Sundays at the table by the front door of the Social Hall or contact her at [janetkafel@gmail.com](mailto:janetkafel@gmail.com) or 530-340-3230.

When you see a name badge with a green dot, it signifies a new member. Take time to say hello, and welcome them to our congregation.

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First Class Mail

## **Affirmation**

*Love is the spirit of this church*

*And service is its law.*

*This is our great covenant:*

*To dwell together in peace,*

*To seek the truth in freedom,*

*And to help one another.*

**Join us for Sunday service at 10:30 am**

*If you are not a member but would like to receive church announcements by email,  
please send your email address and full name to [uucsaz@aol.com](mailto:uucsaz@aol.com).*

## **Sermon Titles For January 2017**

*The Theme for January Is "Courage"*

- 1/1 - Rev. Terry Sims ..... The Courage to Be**  
This is the title of an important book written by existentialist philosopher and theologian, Paul Tillich. Today, as we begin a new year, we will explore what we are legitimately afraid of and how to be brave as we continue to live an examined existence.
- 1/8 - Rev. Terry Sims ..... The Courage to Choose**  
"Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the judgment that something else is more important than one's fear." This quotation from James Neil Hollingworth reminds us that no matter how fearful we are, we cannot avoid making choices: choices to act or not act; choices to speak or to stay silent; choices to play it safe or to risk being wrong.
- 1/15 - Rev. Terry Sims ..... Getting Real**  
I sometimes think that being "real" with each other is overrated. After all, our authentic selves contain our worst as well as our best. On the other hand, if we are not who we truly and fully are, what is left for us to be with each other? It takes courage to be who we really are.
- 1/22 - Emrys Staton ..... The Religion of Antiques Roadshow: Authenticity as the Highest Value**  
Relying on highly-trained specialists, Antiques Roadshow allows us to watch as the authentic pieces are separated from the fraudulent or imitation work. The search for what is deemed real and genuine ultimately leads to what is seen as valuable. How has a similar search for authenticity shaped the development of faith and Unitarian Universalism?
- 1/29 - Rev. Dr. Cathy Corbin Mannino ..... The Courage to Choose Unconditional Happiness**  
Michael Singer in his New York Times bestseller, "The Untethered Soul" asks the question, "Do you want to be happy regardless of what happens?" When you commit to unconditional happiness, you begin the "surest spiritual path to awakening that can possibly exist."