

F33 Our Search for Meaning – Session Four

Plan for Session Six

Survey of course -or- Material omitted -or- Personal discoveries -or- Retire to a local pub -or - ????

Sense of Self

Our sense of self depends on social context, including learned use of language. Interesting aside: Third Age members may/will be frustrated if they have not adjusted their sense of self.

Cultural Animals

We're social animals, but that hardly makes us unique. We're also cultural animals. And culture is a critical feature of our social context. Culture is also a singularly effective way for us to “evolve”. Culture and how it has changed goes far towards explaining how we are different from those that preceded us. It may not always be “progress”, but it can be called “evolution”.

Transcendence

Many of us want to value our lives using something more than personal pleasure. That “more”, for me, is “community”, specifically communities that I value and contributions I make to those communities. Which leads me to Responsible Communitarianism.

Small Group Discussion

Does it add up? Do you buy the communitarian argument? What's the alternative?

Next Week

Possible contributions; importance of Place; opportunities for Placemaking.

Responsible Communitarian Platform - Preamble

American men, women, and children are members of many communities--families; neighborhoods; innumerable social, religious, ethnic, work place, and professional associations; and the body politic itself. Neither human existence nor individual liberty can be sustained for long outside the interdependent and overlapping communities to which all of us belong. Nor can any community long survive unless its members dedicate some of their attention, energy, and resources to shared projects. The exclusive pursuit of private interest erodes the network of social environments on which we all depend, and is destructive to our shared experiment in democratic self-government. For these reasons, we hold that the rights of individuals cannot long be preserved without a communitarian perspective.

A communitarian perspective recognizes both individual human dignity and the social dimension of human existence.

A communitarian perspective recognizes that the preservation of individual liberty depends on the active maintenance of the institutions of civil society where citizens learn respect for others as well as self-respect; where we acquire a lively sense of our personal and civic responsibilities, along with an appreciation of our own rights and the rights of others; where we develop the skills of self-government as well as the habit of governing ourselves, and learn to serve others-- not just self.

A communitarian perspective recognizes that communities and polities, too, have obligations--including the duty to be responsive to their members and to foster participation and deliberation in social and political life.

A communitarian perspective does not dictate particular policies; rather it mandates attention to what is often ignored in contemporary policy debates: the social side of human nature; the responsibilities that must be borne by citizens, individually and collectively, in a regime of rights; the fragile ecology of families and their supporting communities; the ripple effects and long-term consequences of present decisions. The political views of the signers of this statement differ widely. We are united, however, in our conviction that a communitarian perspective must be brought to bear on the great moral, legal and social issues of our time.