



## UNIVERSALIST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF HAVERHILL

---

“Why Are We Here?”  
a Beltane sermon given by Rick Baillargeon  
on May 1, 2011

Igitur Vita (For this reason Life)

When doing research for this sermon I did stop by the local Barnes & Noble. I approached the lady behind the desk and asked her where the self Help section was. She replied “Now that would be defeating the whole purpose, wouldn’t it?”

Since the dawn of time, people have questioned life. Why are we here? Who are we? And ultimately, what created us? I will say that many years ago I discovered the answers to all these questions, however I forgot to write them down.

Many years ago an ancient king set out to discover the meaning of life...  
SURVIVE

I believe that this is true for most of life, but I would like to hallucinate that humankind has a higher purpose.

First, lets realize that we are all individuals, just like everybody else.

When I was a child I remember we always had plenty. I knew this because each time I would ask for seconds at the dinner table my mother would say “oh, no...you had plenty”. Unrelated to this fact I must say I was raised into a Christian family. I was not born with any belief of my own, no one is. Beliefs, are fed to people as they grow older with time. Ideas are nurtured into people’s minds. In a simpler world, everyone would be the same, but because of different ethnicities, different cultures, and different religions, none of this is possible. People are born nothing; they are raised something. As I was growing up I was raised Christian. But, like all things in life, you have a choice to let others make your decisions for you, or you can take the bull by the horns and make your own decisions. As Geddy Lee of the rock group Rush sings, “When you choose not to choose, you still have made a choice”. Keep in mind if you don’t want to figure this out for yourself there are multitudes of Politicians, Spiritual Leaders and Advertising Executives all lined up and willing to tell you what to believe. It’s been said, when you don’t stand for something, you fall for anything.

Either way, you control your own destiny, you are your own worst enemy, you are your own best friend. What you are is the result of your efforts, and what no one else has made you to be. If I squeeze this orange, what comes out? You are what is inside you, nothing more or less.

Look around at all the colors in the room

There are 2 lessons to be learned from this exercise: The first is when we speak about God or Religion, some of us see only one color. We are missing the Big Picture of an Omnipotent, Omniscient God.

The second is that you choose what you focus on. As a matter of fact, those of you like myself who tend to suffer from OCD and are what our friends call Control Freaks, guess what? Control is just an illusion! I know this news can be a little upsetting to those of you who are a little less secure about themselves, but there is no control in life. All you have control over is what you focus your attention on. BUT, that is all you NEED to have control over, because you get from life EXACTLY what you focus on. Focus all the time on “Why don’t I have enough \$ to pay my bills?” and what do you get? More “not enough \$ to pay my bills”. We all get caught in this trap sometimes, what I sometimes tell my wife “looking for the cloud in front of the silver lining”. I once knew a recovering alcoholic who used to say “when I was drinking I was so miserable I was having the time of my life”. Time to learn some new dance steps maybe?

I’m not saying people want to be poor, sick, overweight, addicted or whatever, nor am I implying things like poverty, racism, disease and the like don’t exist. I am saying you get what you focus on most, plain and simple. Yes, you have the BROWN colors in the room, but you also have the greens, blues, reds and purples, all the colors of the rainbow.

Still not convinced? Recent discoveries in physiology and psychology have shown us that most memories are NOT stored in the brain. They are actually stored in the cells of the body that were most active at the time the memory was created. BUT, there is a theory that says that all beings of the same species share the same memories. This may seem a bit like magic, but wouldn’t it appear to be magic if you were to take a tape recorder or flashlight back in time to the middle ages? In the interest of time I’ll spare the details, but an experiment was done with monkeys a while back on some remote Japanese islands. Monkeys of a specific species were given sweet potatoes and taught to wash and eat them in a specific way. When enough monkeys had learned to wash and eat the potatoes in this way, monkeys of the same species but on different islands, totally removed from the original group began exhibiting that same behavior.

What does this mean to us? It means that if you learn nothing else in your life, you have an OBLIGATION to be happy and think positive thoughts, because when you get depressed you may be upsetting someone in Uruguay!

Getting back to choices, some believe as I do, that you even chose the life you are currently living before you were even born. You chose the time, you chose your parents, all because there was something you felt you needed to learn. What I’m talking about here is RESPONSIBILITY, or The

ABILITY to RESPOND. Again, you have no control over others, but you do have control over how you respond.

When looking at the importance of Spirituality, let's consider a baby, in the womb of its mother. It is growing arms and legs which don't seem to be of much use. It can exercise them but it doesn't get anywhere. But, if the baby doesn't develop arms and legs properly, it will be handicapped and find life to be more difficult when it is born into this world.

In the same way, we need to grow spiritual arms and legs while we are here, because we will need these when we get to the next world. For those of you who question whether there is a "next world" I respect that. For me however, it is like having a beautiful songbird in a cage and saying that because the cage is broken the bird is dead. I believe we all have souls that continue on long after the mortal body is returned to carbon.

The Spiritual Arms and Legs I speak about are the qualities, such as honesty, generosity, truthfulness and kindness. It might seem at first that these qualities are not very useful to us in this world. If, instead, we lie and cheat, we might gain more money or power, but in reality we will not be happy because we will always want more. If everyone thought only of themselves, then no-one would be happy.

Life only makes sense if we see it as a training ground for the next world. Questions like, "Why do innocent people suffer?" are answered. It is only through adversity, and the way we handle it, that we can develop ourselves. We don't all start off with the same amount of money, good looks or other worldly things, but we do all start off with the same chance of improving ourselves. We are all born with different strengths and weaknesses and it is up to us how we use our strengths and overcome our weaknesses. Everyone has a soul, so every person is of value. We are all in the same situation, so we should accept one another's faults and concentrate instead on removing our own faults.

So it is up to each of us to figure out what why we are here, we each have our own unique destiny. We will find that answer by learning to listen to the Great Spirit. We do this by being the best we can be. Here are my guidelines on how to be the best you can be:

The first is the hardest, so if you aren't able to do this, please skip the next one. Engender a belief within yourself that there is no such thing as "Cant". There is "Don't know how", there is "Choose not to if the cost is too great" but there is no cant. The funny thing about "Don't know how" is that you don't need to know how. You just need to know WHAT and WHY, the universe will figure out the HOW for you, even when you can see no possible way. Try it sometime.

The second is to Eliminate the Have To's. There are only 2 things you have to do in life, Die and LIVE until you DIE. Everything else someone made up. You do things because you want to, choose to, like it, love it.

Third, Eliminate the word Problem, replace it "opportunity for growth."

Finally, replace the word Should with Could. Should implies that something was done incorrectly, and nothing is incorrect.

God has created a limitless abundance in the universe, of which she wants us all to share. And she has given us the choice to take as much or as little as we want, and do with it as we please. Let's realize that contrary to popular bumper stickers and Tee Shirts, the Universe is INFINITELY FAIR, we just need to realize it.