

Our Seekers Group conversation on October 27, 2014 began on the theme of **Gratitude**. We were struck by the thought that gratitude requires us to be *in the present moment*. It often comes when we slow down and pay attention. Various teachings and authors have been helpful to us in learning mindfulness, from Thomas Kelley (*The Eternal Now*), to Thich Nhat Hanh, Jon Kabat-Zinn, and Joan Chittister. The word *happiness* is connected to *happenstance*, or *happening*. Perhaps being “happy” involves us letting go of control or widening our vision. When unexpected circumstances arise in our day to day lives – i.e., missing the train – what is needed in order to remain in that place of gratitude? Trust or faith seems important.

Being happy, in a deeply centered and peaceful sense, is not connected to material comfort, though we often mistakenly think so.

We shared some tender personal stories of pain and suffering and our journeys toward acceptance, healing, and gratitude. Many of us struggle with the idea that God is in charge of everything – including who has to go through pain or suffering. We found a lot of commonality in how we find Love or God helpful in times of such pain or suffering, though. We have all experienced loss, sometimes deeply, and though we wouldn't choose the suffering, we have felt gratitude for the lessons, closure, or openings that have come through grieving.

We are deeply grateful for people in our lives – including those in this circle.

Our next meeting will be Monday, December 1, 2014 at 7pm. Our topic will be *Patience and Happenstance*. All are welcome to join us!