**Visualization for Removing Obstacles**

**Introduction:** This week, we explored finding meaning and purpose in our lives. This visualization is designed with the intention of removing obstacles that hinder us from finding and achieving our purpose – whatever that purpose is or will become (as we may find more than one purpose over time).

In some cases, we may not know what our purpose is and, therefore, we seek to remove confusion or lack of clarity. For others, the obstacle may be fear. Fear can come in many forms: fear of failure, fear of success (and the responsibility that brings), fear of criticism, fear of the unknown. Lastly, another common obstacle is doubt: self-doubt or doubt that circumstances will give us the support we need to accomplish our goals.

In our visualization, we are likely to find and confront our primary obstacle or else we will find our greatest *tool* for overcoming that obstacle. We ask that you approach this exercise with an open mind and without expectations of any particular outcome.

**To begin:** For this exercise, facilitators should read the meditation below for participants. An alternative to these meditations are group-led prayer circles led by clergy, with a focus on overcoming fear and doubt as well as a reflection on a biblical verse or spiritual quote.

Ask participants to sit comfortably in a chair with feet planted on the floor, legs uncrossed and hands resting on the tops of their thighs. Participants are also welcome to sit cross-legged on the floor or even lay down on a comfortable beach towel. Choose a quiet room or outdoor space with limited distractions. Read the following text slowly, softly and calmly, pausing for a few deep breaths between each line.

**Meditation to be read aloud:** (Approx. 15 minutes)

**Line 1:** Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths, in and out, through your nose. With each exhale, allow yourself to sink into your chair, feeling completely supported.

**Line 2:** Take a moment to scan your body from head to toe. If you notice any areas of tension, see if you can soften those muscles with each exhale.

**Line 3:** You may notice thoughts going through your mind. Gently acknowledge these thoughts without judgment and then return to your breath. If they come back again, simply acknowledge them once again and again return to your breath.

**Line 4:** Today, we begin by setting an intention. That intention is to overcome obstacles; in particular, obstacles that keep us from finding and achieving our purpose.

**Line 5:** Keeping your eyes closed, I’d like you to imagine that you are walking along a desolate sidewalk. There is no one else around, but you do not mind because it is a safe and comfortable place.

**Line 6:** As you walk, notice the landscape around you. Is it daytime? Evening? Are you in a city surrounded by tall buildings, a small suburb surrounded by houses or perhaps in a rural town with rolling hills or flat planes? Observe your environment and keep walking slowly along the sidewalk.

**Line 7:** Begin to take in any sounds associated with this place – birds singing, the sound of the wind blowing, a car driving in the distance. Or, you may hear nothing at all.

**Line 8:** Notice any smells around you, if there are any.

**Line 9:** As you continue your walk, you begin to see a tall object blocking the sidewalk far ahead of you. You cannot quite see what it is, but you can tell that it is large and it covers the sidewalk so that you are unable to see what’s on the other side of it.

**Line 10:** Keep walking. As you near the object, you begin to realize that is actually a brick wall. The wall seems to reach up to the sky and far out from side-to-side. Going over it or around it is not an option.

**Line 11:** Getting closer, you see that there is something written on the wall. You can’t quite make out what it is … As you get closer, you begin to see that it is a word – a single word.

**Line 12:** Walk up to the wall and silently read the word to yourself.

**Line 13:** This word represents one of two things: your obstacle or your source to overcome it.

**Line 14:** Place your hands on the wall and notice what it feels like. Feel the texture of it. Is it smooth or rough? Notice if the wall is warm or cool.

**Line 15:** As you stand, with your hands placed against the wall, your fingertips begin to tingle. Next, you feel energy in your palms … You realize that, on the count of three, you will be able to break through this wall.

**Line 16:** When we get to “three,” you will push against the wall and break through it. One … two … three.

**Line 17:** Break through the wall and watch it crumble to the ground, away from you and out of harms way.

**Line 18:** Look at the path in front of you. What do you see?

**Line 19:** Take a few deep breaths as you slowly return to our room. As you bring your presence back to the current moment, you may choose to stretch your arms overhead, loosen up your neck by turning your head from side to side, or even gently twist your body in one direction and then the other.

**Line 20:** Now that you are fully present … open your eyes.

**Follow-up questions:**

*Would anyone like to share their word?*

*If your word was something “negative” such as “fear,” “doubt,” “pride” or something else, how did you feel breaking down the wall?*

*If your word was something “positive” such as “courage,” “strength,” or “confidence,” how did you feel breaking down the wall?*

*Was there anything that surprised you about this visualization?*