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**Open Doors: Spiritual Matters**



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Members of the Neighbourhood Unitarian Universalist Congregation at their private audience with the Dali Lama.

**How a community becomes 'beloved'**

**REV. WAYNE WALDER**  
 Neighbourhood Unitarian Universalist Congregation

**BELOVED COMMUNITY** is not always beloved. There are people who can push your buttons, step on your toes, ruffle your feathers and generally rain on your parade.

The person who coined the phrase, beloved community, at first probably said, "darn that community!", (or worse).

Community, as a spiritual practice, is second level spirituality. It is second level because it encourages you to be gracious. It asks you to consider best intentions. It expects you to reflect on your motives. Courage is

required to do any of these things.

I remember a time someone came into the congregation thinking it was the perfect place to learn how to be loving. "There were so many kind and thoughtful people", they said.

Within a month someone had asked them to be on a committee, someone had interrupted them in the middle of their thoughts, spilled coffee on them, and a member who looked a lot like their estranged sister, had asked them out on a date. They questioned how loving the community really was!

Community reveals how we interact with others, do we use control, power, shyness. It reveals how we judge others. It reveals how much we want to be liked and re-

spected. There is no "spiritual bypass" around learning how to work within a community. Our foibles, our judgments, and our habits are challenged in community.

As a spiritual practice community is not easy. It might be why so many aspire to be Spiritual but not Religious. But, when we learn how to navigate through those shadows, a funny thing happens. Community begins to offer a beauty we may not have expected.

We can become vulnerable and this opens our heart, it frees us. We can learn how to be engaged with others without losing a part of ourselves. We can share our humanity so it reveals how similar we are. We notice there are ways of handling conflict

better than shouting or shutting down. We become aware there is more than one "high road". This is when community becomes beloved.

"Beloved" because as social creatures we need each other.

"Beloved" because we cannot solve the problems of this world alone.

"Beloved" because, at some time or another, we will need to solve the problems of the world, and our lives, together.

**Spiritual questions or practice:** Try approaching someone you do not know and strike up a conversation. See if you notice how you act, cautious.....overconfident....controlling.....fearful? Ask yourself, how did I act, was I inviting/open, what did I say?

**Dental Matters**

**When do you need orthodontic treatment?**

**ORTHODONTICS IS** the branch of dentistry which deals with proper alignment and positioning of both teeth and jaws for ideal function and optimal appearance.

Orthodontic treatment can be carried out by a general dentist, a paediatric (children's) dentist or a certified orthodontist. In large ur-

ban centres such as Toronto, the most common scenario would be for the general dentist to identify the need for orthodontic treatment and then refer to an orthodontist.

Orthodontic treatment can be carried out during adolescent, teen or adult years. Although there are some advantages to doing orth-

**DR. ALLAN KATCHKY**  
 is a dentist who practises in the East End



odontic tooth movement during the "growth years" (adolescents and early teens), adults can also be treated with good success. In fact, most orthodontists currently report that almost half of their patients are adults.

But who in fact "needs" orthodontic treatment?

The short answer is that the word "need" might be too strong a word, and perhaps the question should be who "could benefit" from orthodontic treatment. To put it simply, the evolution of human teeth and jaws over the last 100,000 years has seen jaws getting smaller and ever increasing crowding of teeth. As a result, 90 per cent of the child and adolescent population today has some indentifiable "malocclusion", or misalignment of the teeth and or jaws. Not all of these young individuals "need" orthodontic treatment. The role of the general dentist is to identify and point out


to young patients and their parents any misalignment or developing issues, discuss potential benefits (and risks) of orthodontic treatment, and then let the family decide if they want to pursue treatment.

Attitudes towards orthodontic treatment and the perceived benefits have also shifted dramatically in North America over the past 100 years. At one time, orthodontic treatment was considered to be for the "elite". Now, orthodontics is not only common but almost endemic in North America. The shift has been largely driven by public demand rather than professional recommendations. Keep in mind that orthodontic recommendations are simply "recommendations".

Although there are many potential benefits to health and function, many orthodontic treatments are done for primarily cosmetic or appearance reasons. Once the dentist or orthodontist has given their recommendations, it is then up to the patient or family to decide what is best for them.

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