

Navigating Hope

Wednesday 1-2:30

This popular class has been meeting for five years now. As the class leader Donna explains, "Navigating Hope is talk about issues and problems, but with optimism. We try to see what can be gained, what's the silver lining, where's the opportunity for growth."

Donna starts the discussion with announcements, and goes around the table and anyone who wants to can make their own announcement or share something with the group.

Harvey pipes up when it is his turn: "My wife and I have been married for 53 years. People ask how can that be? I say, there are two problems people have when they're married: sex and money. We don't have either, so we don't have any problems!"

After sharing is over, Donna starts things off by handing out an article. Class members take turns reading aloud with pauses to discuss what is being read. For example, the subject is how in our society youth is more at the forefront as opposed to indigenous cultures where age and wisdom are venerated. "If our society doesn't revere the elderly, is that why our children don't seem to?" one member wonders.



The class discusses how our family members are spread out now and there is less of an immediate connection. One member puts in, "my kids and

grandkids work so much — 16 to 18 hour days! It's hard for them to have time for me." So much has changed, the class decides.

More is read from the article and talk turns to what it means to be an Elder. Not elderly, but an Elder. It is noted that being an Elder is not just a physical state but rather a state of mind and heart. Donna points out that it is a way of relating to the world, about being able to recognize and accept mortality while still continuing to grow. "Learn from the past, live in the present, plan for the future," one participant advises. "Ooh, that's good," another class member says. "I'm going to write that down."