



You must do the one thing that you *can* do

Canadian UUs, gathered here at our Annual Conference and Meeting, welcoming friends from far away, we have come from across the country to form “One Warm Line” like the Stan Rogers song says, “through a land so wild and savage.”

Our religion chooses to bend that warm line into a circle that expands ever outward, including all who would share in a vision of One World, because you see, it doesn't interest me whether you are a fellowship of 50 or a church of 500. It doesn't interest me whether you are old or young. It doesn't interest me whether you are a Unitarian or a Universalist, a Christian, a Pagan or a Humanist, a Muslim, a Buddhist or a Jew. And it doesn't interest me whether you call it God or Goddess, Spirit of Life, Human Conscience, Mother Earth or the Universe.

I just want to know how you are going to stand in the service of something greater than yourself, and make your life matter. I just want to know (like Mary Oliver), “what it is you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?”

UU Edward Everett Hale said “I am only one. But still I am one. I cannot do everything. But still I can do something. And because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do the something that I can do.”

As Canadian Unitarians, we are a statistically small group of people. In fact, we are tiny. (Okay, actually, you need an electron microscope to see what we are doing most of the time!) But that is no excuse in the world of faith, which is an ephemeral endeavour. We cannot do everything, but we can do some things, and because we cannot do everything, we cannot refuse to do the things we can do.

We begin by claiming our power as Canadians and as Unitarians, and we do that by not playing small, by starting a

new tradition. Our playing small as a religion doesn't serve the world. So we need to dream bigger dreams if we want to really, “be the change we want to see.”


I don't know what your one thing is, but that's your job, that's your one thing – to figure it out. And this Unitarian community exists to companion you while you find out what it is. Maybe it's a very small thing, a tiny random act of kindness or senseless act of beauty that will make all the difference in someone's life. There *is* more love somewhere; just keep on till you find it.

I don't know what it is you need to do. I only know that we need each other to get through this life, because *life is a wild ride*. It takes you from the sublime to the ridiculous, from the sacred to the mundane, often in dizzying order.

We live and reason between a world of order and chaos, a world that's messy and frayed and torn around the edges, and you never know what is around the

corner. You lose your job, you lose your way, you lose your mind. You find a friend, you find hope – you find a lump. You try your hardest and fail. You're dealt the unthinkable diagnosis, the irreparable tear, the endless defeat.

But somehow, *somehow*, some radical love finds you in your family of friends, in your spiritual home, in the world community and calls to you, and because you cannot do everything, you cannot refuse to do the thing you *can* do.

When we unwind the warm line we have formed this weekend, and you go back to your people, I hope you will take with you a radical hope, a radical vision, a radical love for this faith of ours and for this world. I hope that you promise to do the one thing that you and your people can do. 

You can find the full version of this address at: www.cuc.ca/conference/2005/sunday_worship.htm

