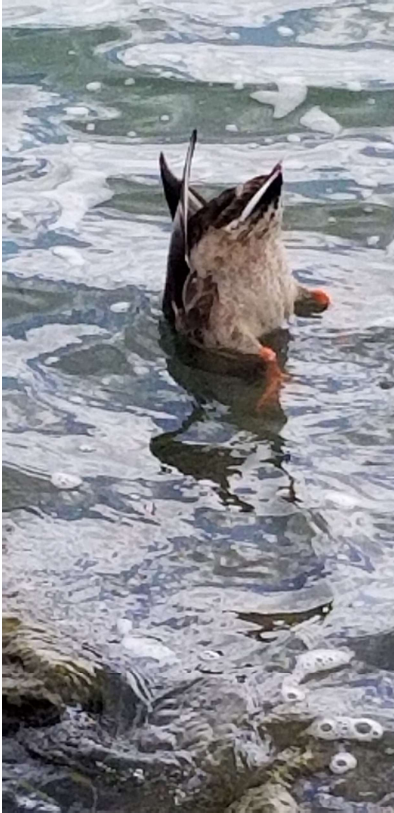


TFW (That Feeling When...)

Unitarian Universalist Church of Olinda

Rev. Rodrigo Emilio Solano-Quesnel

22 November, 2020



As we've been online for a while, I've been sprinkling some "internet-speak" expressions on our sermon titles – the kinds of shorthand that you might find on social media, or those standard abbreviations that you might use when texting on a cell phone. This month, I'm going to talk about the initials *TFW*.

Now, I should note that these three particular letters can indeed be used in three distinct orders in "internet-speak" – and each of those abbreviations have distinctly different meanings... so I don't recommend mixing them up! For instance, the order *FTW* can mean "*For the Win!*", as in, "Meeting together, apart – for the win!".

There is also the infamous *WTF*, which... I won't spell out here, because... this is a church. But if you're still curious, I'm sure someone in your family can clarify its meaning.

Today, our winning combination is *TFW* – *That Feeling When... (dot dot dot)*.

It's often used in expressions that denote a strange, yet identifiable, feeling – often a situation that is awkward, such as "That feeling when... someone points out the parsley on your teeth – *after* coffee hour is over". It can also be used in an affirming way, as in "That feeling when... you come home from the field and get to take your boots off". And it can also include situations when there are conflicting emotions,

as in “That feeling when... you make your bed perfectly, and now must sleep in it, and ruin it all”.

Perhaps the phrase is so ubiquitous on social media because it is helpful in describing emotions that can be tricky to fully describe, yet we also know that they will be familiar to anyone who’s been in a similar situation.

This year has brought up a lot of “feels”. In Canada, the past eight months have certainly been quite strange, yet many of us might share a lot of the same feelings about it, alongside the rest of the globe.

Many of us have named “that feeling when... March *suddenly* turned into November, but it still felt like ten years”

For many in our community, the last *month* has brought up a wide array of strange, yet commonly shared feelings.

On his opening monologue for Saturday Night Live, on Nov. 7, American Comedian David Chapelle remarked on that feeling he had four years ago... that feeling when the election didn’t go as he had hoped – as he remembered that time four years ago, he asked “remember how bad that felt?” and then he remarked about the present in the United States: “remember that half the country, right now, still feels that way”. His was a reminder that everyone can hurt, even when it’s for different reasons. That everyone can feel disappointment – grief and anger – perhaps even fear, when facing defeat. And that those feelings can be a cue to work towards healing, to act graciously, and remain humble in success. Because everybody feels.

Indeed, 2020 has probably offered us enough feelings to process for the rest of the decade. And while some of these feelings might feel odd, or confusing, or simply... complicated, they are also... oddly normal. And whatever bizarre emotions may be happening with us, as part of the shared reality of 2020, it can be comforting to know that others are sharing this reality with us, and that we are not alone in it.

There can be that feeling when... you see your community come together, stay together, be together – and hold each other.

Not only does sharing in a community allow us to navigate those strange feelings when reality feels odd, but it also allows us to acknowledge and celebrate those feelings when something remarkable happens.

Small, yet significant moments, such as that feeling when... music speaks to us, when art gives us chills, when skill gives way to awe.

I recently watched musician Carolina Eyck's rendition of *The Ecstasy of Gold* (which is one of the themes from the movie *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*) playing it on the unusual instrument, the theremin. Watching Carolina Eyck's performance certainly gives me *that* feeling. And our individual tastes might differ, so I can't expect it'd do the same for all of you, but I suspect some of you might share in that feeling, when hearing her play something special.

Each of you will have encounters of beauty that bring you that same feeling. And, what's more, there will very likely be others who share that experience. And even when it doesn't come from the same experience, there will be others who experience that *feeling*, when someone's skill can offer transcendence or ecstasy.

We can also share optimism in the midst of extensive hardship.

That feeling when... the end of the pandemic suddenly seems within grasp.

It's a complicated feeling... a cautious feeling. With multiple vaccine candidates on the way, yet likely months till all who need it can get access to it. There can be a mixed sense of celebration, maybe even an anticipation of relief, alongside a grim anxiety that it may not be fast enough for everyone who is at risk, or everyone who is still struggling.

That feeling when... lightning speed can still be agonizingly slow.

And still, my friends, we can share those strange and complicated feelings when not everything makes sense, or when something special happens, or when we can look forward in anticipation, along with all the risks that lie ahead. My friends, here we can name, together, that feeling when... life happens.

Because, my friends, we are not alone. We are not alone in this community. We are not alone in the wider communities that we are part of. And we are not alone as beings that can experience... all the feelings.

And, my friends, we can also *build* those special experiences together. We do that every Sunday, or whenever else we maintain our links, even when apart. To remind each other that: we get it, that we can get each other, that we can hold each other – when that feeling comes up. And we can cultivate those times *when* that feeling can present itself, making space for special connection.

That feeling when... we connect through worship, in all the ways that we can.

May we continue to build that space, for that feeling when... we embody the church.

So may it be,
In Solidarity,
Amen

Suggested hymns:

Opening Hymn #57 All Beautiful the March of Days

~)-| Words: Frances Whitmarsh Wile, 1878-1939

Music: English melody, arr. by Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1872-1958

used by perm. of Oxford University Press

FOREST GREEN

Hymn #108 My Life Flows On in Endless Song

Words: Traditional, Verse 3 by Doris Plenn

Music: Robert Lowry, 1826-1899

SINGING

Closing Hymn #100 I've Got Peace Like a River

W: vs. 1-3 Marvin V. Frey, 1918(?) -1992, © 1974 Marvin V. Frey,

vs. 4-6 Anonymous

M: Marvin V. Frey, © 1974 Marvin V. Frey

WHITNEY