

Sermon: Outdoors or Out of Doors-What's the Difference

October 8, 2023

All Faiths Unitarian Congregation

By:CL Minister Alberita Johnson

10/8-Outdoors or Out of Doors-What is the Difference? When one door closes another one opens. What is it that keeps us from turning the knob to our own freedom?

It is a strange thing doors, they are Gateways to whatever is on the other side. And there are thousands of them, made from many types of materials from natural materials like wood and metal to plastics, cords and twine. Some are manual, others are automatic.

They allow us to come and go as we please, they are also metaphors for making decisions. To find out what is behind them we must first decide, then open and enter or exit. It does not matter going or coming there is always something, someone on the other side.

Often we may not realize the many doors before us and the many we have passed through, I consider them through the lens of dualism_ to be a bridge or a barrier, acceptance or rejection. They are before us and we make a decision at their thresholds.

However we must be cognizant and realize that we can go through some doors and not others. We must make a decision each and every time one is before us.

As we move through our doors we are also moving through destiny, shaped by the decisions we make, or the doors we choose to open and or those that remain closed before us. We make choices.

Doors do not come free, each and every time we choose whether to walk through, or past...destiny is waiting and the choice will sometimes cost you.

There is a lesson here, we simply cannot go through every door we encounter. Discernment is

key as our choice is crucial to our destiny.

Choosing the wrong door can be disastrous and extremely difficult to get back on the path we favor if we go through the wrong door. We may in fact get lost.

In the Christian Bible there are over 50 references to doors or thresholds here is one I would like to share with you today.

Deuteronomy 30:15: "Now listen! Today I am giving you a choice between life and death, between prosperity and disaster"

Again it's about choices. Not whether or not we are in the closet but when to open the door and come out.

You see doors may represent different things. Sometimes a door represents good opportunities. Other times they are a distraction from other doors although they may appear to be good doors they may not be at all.

People often believe a shut door is a problem. Like losing a job, or a relationship ends. And we're devastated. But with time we may come to the realization that the shut door was a metaphor teaching us that this place, person or thing is no longer working, no longer the best for us. In these instances a shut door is for our own good.

All Faiths Unitarian Congregation is a tremendous blessing for us. My time here has not been long but I have found the most beautiful space here at All Faiths. You have opened a door for me and I am blessed because of it. I now wish to do the same, I look for ways to open doors for others. And have found the more doors I open for others, the more doors open for me.

Today we will talk briefly about the concept of Out-doors versus Out of Doors.

Many of us here today, have passed through the doors of what is considered the closet. Not a

literal closet, but for a few minutes let us discuss the contents of a genuine closet. Is that okay with you?

In a closet we may find clothing, shoes, hats, mops, brooms, dust pans etc. But for now I want to focus on clothing, as you know the main purpose of clothing is to cover what is underneath or hide what is underneath, but when one finally exits and comes out of the closet they have removed their clothing, their trappings you see they can now be true to themselves, they are naked and not ashamed. The christian bible states in *Genesis 2:25* that Adam and Eve were naked and not ashamed, there was no shame in their Being. So there was no need for clothing. Keep in mind this is not a full exploration of the term naked and not ashamed referenced in the bible. The phrase is powerful and can mean so much more. Perhaps we will revisit it at another time.

But clothing is also a closet to many in the LGBTQ+ community. I know many lesbians who will not wear a dress or skirt and many gay men who would like to wear the dresses and skirts rejected by the gals.

That was the femme/butch world but now the younger generations are not so. Clothing is no longer a barrier to identity anymore, in fact clothing never really defined us.

Oh but today we celebrate national coming out day! And when we know when we do come out, there is no turning back. Some may creep out while others, if I may be so bold as to say, leap through the doors in a tutu found in the closet. While others come out with their breasts wrapped and attired in suit and tie emerge. And like a butterfly we are finally strong enough and courageous enough to risk life, liberty and justice, relationship to friends and family to be authentically ourselves and live fully.

But how many times must we come out of the closet? Some say we are always coming out. Because there will always be new people, new friends, new neighbors, new acquaintances that we trust enough to share our true selves with, while in the back of our mind we wonder if this "news" will change their opinion of us.

I would like to think it shouldn't—and it more than likely won't—but it serves as a reminder of why we recognize and celebrate this day every year. Awareness is needed, acknowledgment is crucial. And representation matters.

I stand before you today as a threat to the status quo. A Woman, a black person of color, a lesbian whose partner is caucasian. We have traveled together and been fearful in certain areas of the country and out of the country.

This should not be so, but it is, you can be in and out of the closet whenever you want, but not if you are a person of color there is no closet...my

complexion is always ever present. POC's cannot hide.

I have gone out-doors and believed I was safe in my Being and have gone to places that had many doors and yet not one door was open for me.

When that happens...

I am out of doors, you see there is a difference between being out-doors, walking about downtown, in the park, at the beach. But when one is out of doors, there are no doors open to you.

When I realized I was lesbian the closet became my best friend and I judged myself terribly..., why am I thus I would wonder. I was scared and became terrified as I matured. In fact I was my own harsh judge and sent myself straight to closet jail, where I felt safe. And there I remained for years. I did not seek help or look for a refuge. I was hiding in full sight. It was a difficult time for me. And lasted far too long.

Today, I am living my authentic self and still find times when I fear my Being, but refuse to live in the closet anymore. Although for safety reasons I might revisit. Freedom in our community is a gift, and we are proud.

So today won't you join me and celebrate coming out. If you are ready and are here today or watching via FB or Youtube and are in the closet, I invite you to come out, find your way here to All Faiths Unitarian Congregation, here you are welcome just as you are, the doors are already open.

When I was a young girl in the Baptist church an invitation to join was given right before the benediction...the minister would say "the doors of the church are open, whosoever will let them come."

Isn't that a beautiful invitation...whosoever will. Come, my brothers, come my sisters, come siblings we are waiting to welcome you and yours.

We are thankful for those who blazed a trail before us. Who came through doors that were once close.

And now my prayer is that we may be a light, a beacon for all those who have yet to come out. As the hymn we sang earlier reminds us ...how can anyone ever tell you that you are less than whole, you are love, you are loved and you are loveable. Come out when you are ready and be fully you.

In closing, there will always be doors.

I pray you'll have the discernment to know which ones to walk through, to find the courage to do so, and the generosity to share your story and perhaps others will open their doors and begin again. It is never too late.

The doors of All Faiths Unitarian Congregation are open, whosoever will let them come. Amen and Ashe

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When one door closes another one opens. It is only fear that keeps us from turning the knob to our own freedom.

It is a strange thing doors, they are Gateways to whatever is on the other side. And there are thousands of them, made from many types of materials from natural materials like wood and metal to plastics, cords and twine. Some are manual, others are automatic.

They allow us to come and go as we please, they are also metaphors for making decisions like in my poem Room of Doors. To find out what is behind them we must first decide, then open and enter or exit. It does not matter going or coming there is always something, someone on the other side.

Often we may not realize the many doors before us and the many we have passed through, I consider them to be a bridge or a barrier, or acceptance or rejection. They are before us and we make a decision at their thresholds.

However we must be cognizant and realize that we can go through some doors and not others. We must make a decision each and every time one is before us.

As we move through our doors we are also moving through destiny, shaped by the decisions we make, or the doors we choose to open and or those that remain closed before us. By choice of course.

Doors do not come free, each and every time we choose whether to walk through, or past...destiny is waiting and the choice will sometimes cost you. There is a lesson here, we simply cannot go through every door we encounter. Discernment is key as our choice is crucial to our destiny. Choosing the wrong door can be disastrous and extremely difficult to get back on the right path if we go through the wrong door. We may in fact get lost.

The Rev. Dr. Rick Warren studied the concept of doors in the Christian Bible and made a list of over 50 here is one I would like to share with you today.

Deuteronomy 30:15: *"Now listen! Today I am giving you a choice between life and death, between prosperity and disaster"*

A door may represent different things. Sometimes a door represents good opportunities. Other times doors are a distraction from other doors. Although they may appear to be good doors they may not be at all.

People often believe a shut door is a problem. Like losing a job, or a relationship ends. We're devastated. But come to find out with time that door was no longer working, no longer the best for you. In these instances a shut door is

for our own good.

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Today we will talk briefly about the concept of Out-doors versus Out *of* Doors.

Doors are hinged or movable barriers that allow ingress or (entry) into and egress or (exit) from an enclosure, thus creating a doorway or portal.

Many of us here today, have passed through the doors of what is considered the closet. Not a literal closet, however inside a genuine closet we usually find clothing, shoes, hats, mops, brooms, dust pans etc. Let us focus on clothing for a moment, as you know the main purpose of clothing is to cover what is underneath or hide what is underneath, but when one finally exits and comes out of the closet they have removed their clothing, their trappings and can be true to themselves, they are naked and not ashamed. The christian bible states in Genesis 2:25 that Adam and Eve were naked and not ashamed, there was

no shame in their Being. So there was no need for clothing.

Clothing is also a closet to many in the LGBTQ+ community. I know many lesbians who will not wear a dress or skirt and many gay men who would like to wear the dresses and skirts rejected by the gals.

Oh but when we come out, there is no turning back. Some may creep out while others, if I may be so bold as to say, leap through the doors in a tutu found in the closet. And others with their breasts wrapped and attired in suit and tie emerge. And like a butterfly we are finally strong enough and courageous enough to risk life, liberty and justice to be authentically ourselves.

But how many times must we come out of the closet? Some say we are always coming out. Because there will always be new people, new friends, new neighbors, new acquaintances that we tell, while in the back of our mind we wonder if this “news” will change their opinion of us.

I would like to think it shouldn't—and it more than likely won't—but it serves as a reminder of why we recognize and celebrate this day every year. Awareness is needed, acknowledgment is crucial. And representation matters. Friends let us be mindful of our siblings. There is no law against love, only who you love. Which should be against the law. I stand before you today as a threat to the status quo. A Woman, a person of color, a lesbian whose partner

is caucasian. We have traveled together and been fearful in certain areas of the country and out of the country.

Additionally, you can be in and out of the closet whenever you want, but not if you are a person of color. I need not say why.

I have gone out-doors and believed I was safe in my Being and have gone to places that had many doors and yet not one door was open for me. When that happens...

I am out of doors, you see there is a difference between being out-doors, walking about downtown, in the park, at the beach. But when one is out of doors, there are no doors open to you. In fact doors have been closed to me, and yes I do take it personally.

When I realized I was lesbian the closet became my best friend and I judged myself terribly..., why am I thus I would wonder. I was scared and became terrified as I matured. In fact I was my own harsh judge and sent myself straight to closet jail. Where I remained for years. I did not seek help or look for a refuge. I was hiding in full sight. It was a difficult time for me. And lasted too long. Today, I am living my authentic self and still find times when I fear my Being, but refuse to live in the closet anymore. Although for safety reasons I might revisit. Freedom in our community is a gift, and we are proud.

So today won't you join me and celebrate coming out. If you are here today or watching via FB or Youtube and are

in the closet, I invite you to come out, find your way here to All Faiths Unitarian Congregation, here you are welcome just as you are, the doors are open. When I was a youngster the minister used to say at the end of the service, “the doors of the church are open, whosoever will let them come.” Come, my brothers, come my sisters, come siblings we are waiting to welcome you and yours.

In closing this morning we are thankful for those who blazed a trail before us. Who came through doors that were once closed before us and now my prayer is that we may be a light and a beacon for all those who have yet to come out. As the hymn we sang earlier how can anyone ever tell you less than whole, Come out and be fully you.

In closing let us remember there will always be doors, thresholds portals. I pray you'll have the discernment to know which ones to walk through, and find the courage to do so, and the generosity to share your story and perhaps others will open their doors and begin again. It is never too late.

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Amen and Ashe

****[National Coming Out Day 2023: What It Is, Why We Celebrate - Parade: Entertainment, Recipes, Health, Life, Holidays](#) **HISTORY**