

You Can Relax Now by Susan McCullen,  
Sung by Shaina Noll

You can relax now  
C'mon and open your eyes  
Breathe deeply now  
I am with you  
Oh my sweet child  
Who do you think you are  
You are a child of God  
And that will never change  
You had a dream, you misunderstood  
You thought you were separate  
But now you hear my voice and  
You can relax now  
C'mon and open your eyes  
Breathe deeply now  
I am with you  
You are the love of my life  
You are my one creation  
You are eternity  
And that will never change  
(repeat from You had a dream)



## Becoming Free



Our prayer is characterized by silence ~

Be still and know that I am God!

In that silence we listen for a new word.  
God is present in all our lives.  
God cares for us, and  
our life experiences are a source  
of deepening knowledge of God and self.

Inspired by God's Word in the silence  
we share from our hearts.

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Thank You For Joining Us!

Prayer Leader:

Ginny Schiros  
7/5/2016

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**To Ponder:** "Love as the Practice of Freedom" excerpts from a speech by bell hooks at the Unitarian Universalist Conference on Social Justice, June 5, 2016

A culture of domination [the opposite of freedom] is anti-love. It requires violence to sustain itself. To choose love is to go against the prevailing values of the culture. Many people feel unable to love either themselves or others because they do not know what love is. In his essay "Love and Need: Is Love a Package or a Message?" **Thomas Merton** argues that we are taught within the framework of competitive consumer capitalism to see love as a business deal: "This concept of love assumes that the machinery of buying and selling of needs is what makes everything run. It regards life as a market and love as a variation on free enterprise." Though many folks recognize and critique the commercialization of love, they see no alternative. Not knowing how to love or even what love is, many people feel emotionally lost; others search for ways to sustain a love ethic in a culture that negates human value and valorizes materialism. **M. Scott Peck** defines love as "the will to extend one's self for the purpose of nurturing one's own or another's spiritual growth. Everyone in our culture desires to some extent to be loving, yet many are in fact not loving. I therefore conclude that the desire to love is not itself love. Love is as love does. Love is an act of will—namely both an intention and an action, and implies choice. We do not have to love. We choose to love." His words echo **Martin Luther King's** declaration, "I have decided to love," which also emphasizes choice. King believed that love is "ultimately the only answer" to the problems facing this nation and the entire planet. We must reaffirm our genuine commitment to a vision of what he referred to as "freedom and justice for all." This love ethic emphasizes the importance of service to others. To serve another I cannot see them as an object. I must see their "subjecthood." The moment we choose to love we begin to move against domination, against oppression. The moment we choose to love we begin to move towards freedom, to act in ways that liberate ourselves and others. That action is the testimony of love as the practice of freedom.

**Reading:** — Ginny 7/1/16

### **Living as a Child of God**

Morning rises and there is silence  
And You are there,  
Though nothing finds itself in You, in the heart still sleeping.  
Birds call, sunbeams stretch, the living greenness yawns before us  
and we sleep, still, though we rise too.  
What a sadness can fill the heart in these hours  
when our stubborn, sleeping souls resist.  
Until we are ready for the Truth, we keep to our own ways,  
our own concerns, sleeping as we walk.  
Yet You don't give up.  
You love us into awakening.  
You send the scent of cut grass as we open a window.  
You summon a sparkle upon dewy petals as we walk to the car.  
You invoke the heavens in the call of friends  
longing to share companionship.  
You are near in Love, though we mask it, ignore it and often miss it.  
Yet You don't give up.  
The Ocean of Awareness is below the waves of thought.  
You are there.  
The Sky of Knowing is above us, though the clouds distract.  
You are there.  
The Wind of Spirit touches our lives  
even if we miss the cues to dance.  
You are always there inviting us,  
Never leaving us, Always with us,  
And somehow,  
we then know Who we really are,  
right here.

Sharing...  
a word...  
a phrase...  
a reflection...

