



The Lens of Gratitude

by Hugh Taft-Morales, Ethical Leader

My opening talk this program season at the Ethical Society focused on *gratitude*, a sentiment that is all too fleeting in our lives. While I try to nurture it in myself, too often I fall into a “scarcity mindset” where I become preoccupied with what I **don’t** have. In my case – having the privilege of living a materially abundant life – what I feel that I don’t have enough of is *time*. The limits are clear, both regarding the number of hours in a day and the number of days in a lifetime. On both the mundane and existential level time is a most precious resource.

I wonder if this was what motivated one of my historical heroes, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, to write, “In normal life we hardly realize how much more we receive than we give, and life cannot be rich without such gratitude. It is so easy to overestimate the importance of our own achievements compared with what we owe to the help of others.” I wonder if his sense of what he owed to others was intensified due to his profound **separation** from them. You see, he wrote that phrase in a letter from prison where he spent his last days before being executed by the Nazis.

Bonhoeffer was a German pastor and founder of the Confessing Church who refused to stay silent about Nazi danger. After escaping to safety in the United States, he returned to Germany to comfort those persecuted by Germany. He was imprisoned in Flossenbug concentration camp only to be executed, hung two weeks before his camp was liberated. The grace and dignity he exhibited in his life seemed to flow from a heart full of gratitude. What a gift he both received and shared in his life.

It’s a bit presumptuous even to *consider* comparing ourselves to such a person. But that is what we do with heroes, isn’t it? We are inspired by their ethical characteristics. Their moral commitment is ground on which we stand. They provide us with the strength to try to bring out the best of others and thus in ourselves.

While it is hardly sufficient, in this newsletter I want to express gratitude to the founders of Ethical Culture, Felix Adler and those who embraced his vision. By establishing a movement celebrating human goodness, Alder and others provided



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SUNDAY PLATFORMS 10:30 a.m.

Our weekly meetings begin with lively, informative talks given by a wide range of knowledgeable, notable speakers. A question/answer and discussion period follows, giving those attending a chance to question the speaker, discuss the issues, and present their own opinions. At the end of the discussion period, there is a coffee hour which gives members, newcomers, and visitors the opportunity to socialize.

Visit bmorethical.org for a listing of upcoming platform topics.

ETHICAL HUMANIST SUNDAY SCHOOL

Individualized programs for preschool children and school aged students.

TODDLER CARE

Separate supervision provided for children up to age two.

SUNDAY SNACK SCHEDULE

All are invited to bring snacks for our coffee hour following platform. Snacks are especially welcome from those whose last names start with:

A to F	First Sundays
G to L	Second Sundays
M to R	Third Sundays
S to Z	Fourth Sundays

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Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader

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On the web at bmoreethical.org

Community Potluck Dinner



These BES members are enjoying a community potluck dinner at the home of Kathryn Merrill and Thomas Higdon. If you would like to host the next community dinner please email Joanna at Joanna108@yogahealth.us.

NAVIGATORS USA CHAPTER 43

The Baltimore Ethical Society is proud to sponsor Navigators USA Chapter 43, an all-inclusive, co-ed, secular scouting group. We meet the first and third Sundays and may have optional "flex" meetings some months.

Our chapter is a family scouting group. Families are expected to participate in the activities – no drop offs. Email baltimorenavigators@gmail.com if you have any questions.



SMART RECOVERY MEETING

Every Saturday, 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., downstairs

SMART Recovery (Self-Management And Recovery Training) is a free peer-support group for individuals who have chosen to abstain, or are considering abstinence from any type of addictive behaviors (substances or activities), by teaching how to change self-defeating thinking, emotions, and actions; and to work towards long-term satisfactions and quality of life. SMART is not a 12-step group like Alcoholics Anonymous. For more information about SMART, visit www.smartrecovery.org.

PROGRAM COMMITTEE MEETING

Fourth Sundays, 12:30 p.m.

Join the Program Committee and help choose speakers for our Sunday morning meetings! Visitors are also welcome to provide thoughts and speaker suggestions, or just to listen.

Join AEU at World Humanist Congress in Miami

American Ethical Union invites you all to join our 2020 Assembly at the Humanists International World Humanist Congress, August 5-9, in Miami! The theme is “Beyond Borders: Our Vibrant Global Humanist Culture” and the weekend will be filled with talks, workshops, performances, special guests, and receptions. The Future of Ethical Societies (our 18-35 year old affiliate) will also hold their gathering at the event.



The AEU State of the AEU and business meeting will be on Wednesday, August 5 and attendees will be invited to join American Humanist Association special programming on Thursday, August 6 or explore Miami. Events continue Friday to Sunday afternoon.

Register before January 15th for early-bird prices. To register, go to www.humanism2020.org.

TABLETOP GAME NIGHT

First Fridays, 7:00 p.m.

Join us in the library as we play a variety of unusual pen and paper roleplaying games. We meet from 7:00–10:00 p.m. on the first Friday of each month. No gaming experience necessary

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a non-theist alternative to religion that supports our yearning to live an ethical life. As with others who have died, however, they can no longer hear our “thank you.” Our expressions of gratitude can only be experienced by the living. Let’s not wait until our final days to offer similar appreciation. Personally, I intend to try to see the world more

continuously through the “lens of gratitude.” As my mother would tell me, each day is a gift, that’s why they call it the present. To my mother, and to all of you who support our community of moral inquiry and ethical responsibility, I offer my profound gratitude. Thank you for contributing to this noble quest for a better life for all.

HUMANIST improv GROUP

First and Third Tuesdays,
6:15 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Did you know that a central tenet of humanism and good improv is *bringing out the best in others brings out the best in ourselves*?

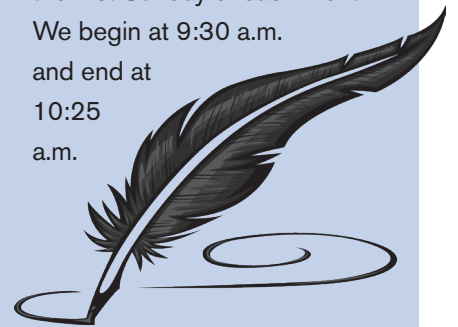
One goal of our group is to see if improv can be used to explore social justice issues. Another is to have fun and be silly for a little while.

We meet twice a month to do improv exercises and work on improv skills and maybe even to perform.

poetry SALON

First Sundays, 9:30 a.m.

The Baltimore Ethical Society’s Poetry Salon is dedicated to the appreciation of all types of poetry. You may read your own poems or you may read the poems of others. We meet on the first Sunday of each month. We begin at 9:30 a.m. and end at 10:25 a.m.





BALTIMORE ETHICAL SOCIETY
2521 Saint Paul St., Baltimore, MD 21218

NEWSLETTER

Please do not delay!
TIME VALUE

ETHICAL ACTION MEETING

Third Sundays, 12:30 p.m.

Come help plan the Ethical Action
strategy for the Baltimore Ethical Society!

NEWCOMERS MEETING

See Website for Dates, 12:30 p.m.

New to the Society and interested in learning more?
Come to the Newcomers Meeting, held following the
Platform once each month, and find out more about
Ethical Culture and our Society - its history, its philoso-
phy, and its organization. Meetings last about one hour
and are recommended for anyone who's curious about
membership. Please attend at least one Platform before
going to a Newcomers Meeting. Contact Wayne Laufert
or Janey Solwold for more information.

MINDFULNESS

meditation

Second Sundays, 9:30 a.m.

Mindfulness is a tool we can use in our daily lives to act
in a more ethical way. We practice mindfulness medita-
tion so that it comes naturally in stressful times. Join us
as we sit (on chairs) and breathe (just the way it comes
naturally) and listen to the words of Thich Nhat Hanh,
one of the world's best-known teachers of mindfulness.

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Facebook, Twitter, and MeetUp.com @bmorethical

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like to subscribe to the online version of this newsletter, sign up at bmorethical.org. Thank you.