

Ask Anything.



Growing up in a family of seven children in northern California, Renee Trudeau knows something of living in a chaotic environment. “My emotional well-being was entirely dependent on what was going on around me,” she says. “I was never taught that it’s possible to experience inner peace even in the midst of disequilibrium.” The experience taught her how to create peace and harmony in her life, and she’s now a life balance teacher/speaker and author, recently publishing *Nurturing the Soul of Your Family*. She lives in Austin, Texas, with her husband and son. To find out more, go to www.ReneeTrudeau.com.

In each issue we pose spiritual questions to a luminary in the Unity movement. To suggest a person for us to interview, send an email to lapptm@unityonline.org.

What word do you love the sound of?

Mandala, because it sounds both lyrical and meditative. I am very drawn to the “ah” sound, which means “from God.”

What is your concept of God?

I experience God as a constant, loving presence—an energy that is deeply compassionate, creative, alive and everywhere at once: flowing into and from me, beneath me, beside me and moving through all the cells in my body. I also experience God as a deeply intimate, personal force that is as close as my breath.

Where do you go to pray?

Everywhere. In the morning before work, I begin each day with a 20-minute meditation on my purple *zafu* cushion in our sun-filled living room. Throughout the day I pray in the car, at yoga, at dance class, while I’m cooking ... and anytime I need to be reminded of my true nature and connection to others.

How did you find Unity?

When I was a girl, my grandmother (Nonnie, who died at 94) used to read *Daily Word* to me and teach me to say “I am healthy, wealthy and wise.” Right after my dad died in 1996 of a heart attack at age 56, I felt a strong pull to Unity Church, where he had been attending. I felt enormous comfort and solace the first time I walked through the doors and could feel my dad’s presence so strongly during those months following his death. I feel he guided me to Unity.

What is your favorite Unity book, author or passage?

Every night when I tuck my son into bed, we say together, “The light of God surrounds us; the love of God enfolds us; the power of God protects us, and the presence of God watches over us. Wherever we are, God is, and all is well.” Our whole family loves the “Prayer for Protection” (by James Dillet Freeman).

What is your favorite Unity moment?

The first time I attended a service at Unity Church of Austin led by Rev. Linda Pendergrass and really “got” that “I’m an expression of the Divine.” It made me think, Wow, what would it be like to raise a child who heard this message from the time they’re in utero? When I got pregnant, my husband and I created a framed piece of art that still sits in my son’s room. It says, “You are an expression of the Divine: you are perfect physically, mentally, emotionally and are loved deeply and wholly by mommy and daddy.” We said these words to baby Jonah every day.

When do you feel most connected to God?

In nature—hands down. Hiking, sunning on rocks, swimming in springs, daydreaming in fields, meditating near the ocean, studying snakes and snails with my son. And when I’m dancing and doing yoga for pure pleasure and joy.

What one prized possession would you grab if your house was on fire?

After my 11-year-old son and my husband, probably nothing. I’d take it as a sign to release, let go, and start fresh. ■