

My Life growing up in a Unitarian Community

Brendan Swogger

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I was born into the Unitarian Church, so I really can't compare to other religions. What we do here is what I consider normal. It might not seem normal to someone else, but it is to me. So, when I hear people talking about Jesus and the Bible. Or heaven or hell, it just seems weird to me because I've never really had much exposure to that. I can believe what I want to believe, so reading the bible from cover to cover seems kind of pointless to me. But, of course, if that's their religion, that's their religion. They can believe what they want to believe and I can believe what I want to believe. Being born into Unitarian Universalism has taught me to be more accepting and open minded than some of my friends. Being open minded has also helped me along in school. I have more ideas and opinions that I want to share. And being in this welcoming community that we're all gathered in today, it really makes me feel comfortable knowing that if I believe in something different, you won't look down on me. Another thing that makes me feel a lot more comfortable being in this church is that I can wear whatever I want. I sometimes see people get dressed all nice for church. You know, "Church clothes". Well, here, I can wear a tank-top and some shorts to church. That's just normal to me. It makes me feel good being open minded, non-judgmental and accepting of other people. It's also made me appreciate nature more. The Earth is beautiful. It's just amazing! I love to go out and see what beauty the Earth has to offer. Life itself is just amazing. Some of my friends think that doing environmental projects is just a waste of time. I say different. We should all take a part in this. The Earth is our home and if we don't take care of it, we'll end up living in a worldwide dumpster. I don't think I'd like that very much. And not only would it help us, it would help all the animals as well. It would help them stay in existence. Outside of church, I sometimes feel uncomfortable being around friends that are more Christian than

anything. Sometimes, they'll talk about gays like it's a bad thing. They'll make jokes about it. I usually just laugh along, but inside I feel kind of uncomfortable. There's nothing wrong with it. So, it's not nice to be making jokes about people who are different. It's very prejudice. When my friends ask me what church I go to, I'll say Atkinson Memorial Church. Of course, they don't know what that is. I don't really feel comfortable talking about my religion. Sometimes, I'm afraid that if they know what church I go to, or what religion I am, or what I believe in. I'm afraid that they'll say that that's not what I'm supposed to believe and that I'll go to hell. I know I should just be more open about it though. But it's just not comfortable talking about with some of my friends, especially my very religious Christian friends. I myself do believe that there is a greater power out there. Something is making the world go 'round.

One way I've been able to connect with that is meditation. My Dad has been showing me breathing techniques. So, when I'm stressed out at school, or maybe I have some homework that's getting me a little frustrated, I just think. I sit down, clear my mind, and just listen to my breathing. It seems as if afterwards, I feel awake. I feel better. Being a child growing up in a Unitarian Church has really helped me along in life. It's helped me find the place where I'm most comfortable. And I feel that if doing so has helped me along in my life.