



Junior Yearly Meeting 2026 Minute

There is communal strength to be found in mutual vulnerability and openness. We feel that the key to openness is ignoring or deconstructing preconceptions; allowing oneself to listen free from judgement and with a sense of genuine curiosity for the experiences and wisdoms of others. By trusting the process of listening and talking, allowing the conversation itself to be the goal, being fully present in each discussion we have, and being willing for our minds to be changed, we can find ways to build bridges between communities, and foster a great sense of mutual respect. We were encouraged to look beyond our own prejudices and focus on the intent behind people's actions, rather than the actions themselves. We feel that moving through life with a general willingness to hear others fully is especially important in a world where people seem to have stopped listening to each other, as it allows us to begin to overcome divisions, on small and large scales, and to have real empathy for everyone, including those with very different perspectives.

It is important to acknowledge the differences between acceptance and belonging. It is felt that acceptance is more easily found and can be more easily fostered through the simple act of living one's values fully, whereas belonging requires more effort to find, as it requires some shared values or experience. It is important to accept that not everyone can find a sense of belonging in every group or community, but that it is crucial for all individuals to have spaces where they do belong. It may be that these communities form naturally over time, but it is equally important to consider building spaces where belonging can be found to be an active choice, and that communities can be created with intention.

Within the community of Junior Yearly Meeting, we found hope in the small purposeful acts of acceptance, and the vulnerability that people were willing to show when sharing thoughts or personal experiences. It was greatly reassuring to many to see the act of a community being built, and to witness divisions and differences being overcome, even on a small scale. We believe that small acts of kindness are the foundation of building connections and community on a global scale.