

The Unseen Power of Presence

Rev. Patricia Tummino, Minister Emeritus, Middleboro

Unitarian Universalist Church

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He volunteered with a dying patient
expecting to go through the five stages of grief at the first meeting.
Instead she talked about hooking rugs:
the needle, the thread, the cloth,
the rhythmic movement of the hands.
He tried other matters in conversation - she talked of hooking rugs.

On the next visit she spoke of the intricacies and hardships of ice-fishing that her husband had done
before his death. Week after week, hooking rugs and ice-fishing.
Angered, he said to friends,
"I can't go on with this
interminable hooking rugs
and ice-fishing."
One day as they sat
in the nursing home cafeteria,

she going on, he bored and vexed
with hooking rugs and ice-fishing,
the room
went silent, air turned
a luminous shade of green, hooking
rugs and ice
fishing stopped. She leaned over and said, "I could not have done this without you,"
then on again with hooking rugs
and ice-fishing. Soon after she died. At the funeral relatives said to him, "Thank you, all she ever
spoke about was you."