



The Garrison-Martineau Project gets its name from the unlikely friendship between William Lloyd Garrison

and Harriet Martineau in the mid-1800's. Garrison was a staunch Christian and a tireless advocate for the equality of African Americans in the United States. Martineau was an avowed atheist and the first female sociologist as well as an activist for a variety of causes in England, including women's rights and better treatment of the poor. In 1848, after Martineau openly embraced atheism, Garrison, a member of Martineau's literary circle wrote her a letter expressing his respect for her character, her skepticism and her search for the truth.



Today, The Garrison-Martineau Project aims to create the next generation of Garrisons and Martineaus by enabling ordinary people across the theological spectrum to come together face-to-face and have "the conversation mother warned you about" in a facilitated, productive and friendly manner. No barriers. No audience. Just people talking to one another.

The heart of The Garrison-Martineau Project is a simple idea: 2 believers, 2 nonbelievers and a trained facilitator getting together for a few hours, sharing food and conversation.

The first hour is dedicated to allowing each person to tell the story of their own personal theological journey, the experiences that brought them there and have continued to bring light and satisfaction to their lifepath. Although we cannot always understand the conclusions others have reached, we can relate to the human experiences they went through along the way. Who among us has never felt sad, happy, excited, angry, fearful, exhilarated or triumphant at some point in their lives?

- 2 Believers
 - 2 Nonbelievers
 - 1 Trained Facilitator
- One Conversation**

The second hour is dedicated to concerns regarding the role of religion in public life (either not enough or too much...) Once again, the focus is on the personal experiences which informed those concerns.

Why?

People on both sides of the so-called "culture war" chasm often feel like no one is listening to their concerns. They feel isolated and alienated.

The Goal:

In the short term, we feel that participants have an opportunity to hear and be heard. This is an empowering experience which can enable all of us to be more effective advocates for issues we care about.

In the long term conversations with ordinary people, if done often enough and over the course of a generation can create a sea change of opinion where all of us are considered integral members of society.

We do not expect people to leave with sympathy for the *political proposals* of the "other side", but we do hope to foment empathy for the human fear, anger and hope behind these proposals as the first step to developing creative solutions in the future which can address all of our human concerns.

What is a session like?

A typical session includes 25 people. We break into 5 groups of 5 people, each with 2 believers, 2 nonbelievers and a trained facilitator. It's kind of like a three hour seminar with a personal touch.

How do I find one near me? Visit

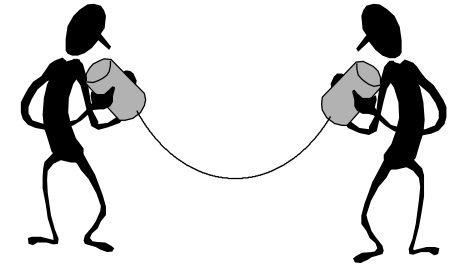
www.garrison-martineau.com/RSVP
or contact us at (650) 949-3192 or
coordinator@garrison-martineau.com.

Consider running your own session! We have materials and people available to help you make your session a success! More info at www.garrison-martineau.com

Who started this Project?

The Garrison-Martineau Project is an independent organization. It is not an appendage of any atheist, humanist or Christian organization. The brainchild of Chris Lindstrom, a bay area atheist and the former secretary of Atheists of Silicon Valley, the first pilot of The Garrison-Martineau Project was due to the cooperative efforts of pastors from Santa Clara First Baptist Church, Thornton Avenue Baptist Church and the executive director of the local humanist community.

Introducing...



*The
Garrison-Martineau
Project*

For more information, visit
www.garrison-martineau.com

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"Evolution of democracy is not possible if we are not prepared to hear the other side." - Mahatma Gandhi