

## Weekly Meditation, February 3, 2010

By Rev. Teri Lubbers

### Forgiveness

*Each of us is worthy of love, and each of us is doubly blessed when we are able to dig down past our grievances and resentments, no matter how justified we may feel in harboring them, and find within ourselves the recognition of that part of the other person that is and always will be lovable. How better could we learn that we ourselves are eternally and irrevocably lovable than by recognizing that same quality in everyone around us?... Forgiveness is no favor. We do it for no one but ourselves. We simply pay too high a price when we refuse to forgive ... Shame never liberated a single spirit. And self-righteousness never softened a heart. ~ How Alanon Works*

I have been thinking about forgiveness. Sunday night I participated in an informal memorial service for one of my patients. He was only 33. He had shared with me that a co-worker of his had once had a near-death experience. I got to meet her Sunday night and was fascinated by what she said it was like when she “died.”

She said there is a life-review of sorts but that what was asked of her was very simple: what did your life teach you about love and forgiveness? Simple. Not, what theological ideas or doctrine did you believe in, but what did you learn about love and forgiveness?

I do not believe in “cheap” forgiveness, although I have offered it up as the real thing more times than I care to admit. Cheap forgiveness is something we do to avoid conflict and confrontation; it’s when we say, “oh, that’s okay, don’t worry about it” when we are really feeling something very different inside: anger, hurt, bewilderment, betrayal. True forgiveness isn’t pretending that something painful hasn’t happened, or that you are supposed to be a doormat for others to walk on.

Forgiveness affirms that the painful thing that has happened does not get the last word, that the painful thing – no matter how awful – does not have the power to quench love. There is a deep connection between forgiveness and unconditional love. Forgiveness reminds us that we are *eternally and irrevocably lovable*, and so is the other guy.

**Prayer: Creator, release me from all the hurts and resentments I harbor, free me from every critical and judgmental thought. Remind me that I share a common humanity with every person I meet and that you love us all unconditionally. No exceptions. Amen.**