

Weekly Meditation May 5, 2010
By Rev. Teri Lubbers

Open Spaces

What makes a fire burn is space between the logs, a breathing space. Too much of a good thing, too many logs packed in too tight can douse the flames almost as surely as a pail of water would...We only need to lay a log lightly from time to time. A fire grows simply because the space is there with openings in which the flame that knows just how it wants to burn can find its way. ~ Judy Brown, from the poem "Fire"

My life has been a constant battle...I keep trying to pack ten pounds into five-pound bags...there's always stuff left over...I always feel bad about what doesn't make it into the bag...Instead of stopping to assess things, instead of making peace with my own finitude, I have tended to pack harder, get busier, believing it will all somehow magically fit in if I only try harder. I am not always aware of what drives that need to fill every waking moment. Is it a need to be productive? Feel useful? To achieve? To feel worthy? To stay distracted so I don't listen to my deepest longings? I'm still working on that.

Turns out that packing too many logs on a fire smothers the fire (as the occasional camper can attest). Fire needs breathing space. People do too. We need open spaces, out-of-doors, in our schedules, in our lives. We need to be surrounded by natural things instead of fabricated things.

I have returned to a practice – which I had gotten away from in recent years – of walking in the mornings. Early morning walks have been a practice woven in and out of my life since I was in my 20's. Yesterday I was out before dawn. There was mist rising from the river that made it feel magical. Reminded me of a postcard that Brenda Hunt sent me from UK many years ago, which I keep hanging in my study...it is a picture of standing stones, a huge tree, dawn light and mist surrounding everything. Her note says, "There is always a mist around holy places..."

Create some open space today. Be intentional about it. It might just be that nothing else is more important.

Prayer: Creator, you are the God of open spaces, of morning light, of gathering mist. You are the flame that knows just how it wants to burn in me. Help me build open spaces, in my own life and for those whose path intersects mine this day. Amen.