

Weekly Meditation by Rev. Teri Lubbers

Words are Not the Thing

One reason we don't perceive people clearly is evident – our emotions get in the way, our conditioning, our likes and dislikes. We've got to grapple with that fact. But we've got to grapple with something much more fundamental – with our ideas, with our conclusions, with our concepts. Believe it or not, every concept that was meant to help us get in touch with reality ends up by being a barrier to getting in touch with reality, because sooner or later we forget that the words are not the thing. The concept is not the same as the reality. They're different. ~ Anthony DeMello, "Awareness"

Our own needs, desires, obligations and obsessions are like a big paint brush coloring the world we live in. Let's say you go to a party where you don't know anyone. Are you an introvert, shy and retiring? Are you outgoing, chatty and witty? Are you comfortable, ill-at-ease, or indifferent? Maybe you will talk about the latest book, the latest movie, the latest episode of your favorite TV show. It's kind of like fishing and you hope you hook something. And the other folks at the party, don't you often make a pretty quick judgment about who they are, whether you like them or find them interesting? What's all that about? We are constantly defining ourselves in terms of others, and others in terms of ourselves.

We see the world not as it is, but as we are. Even if we try really hard to be present, to listen, to see what's right in front of us we will eventually find ourselves wandering off on some side road again because our conditioned opinions, concepts or belief systems tell us "turn at the next corner – I know a shortcut." Our words, our concepts, even our beliefs and understanding of Spirit, God, and the universe are not the same as the reality, and frequently the very words and concepts to which we are so attached, become a barrier to that which we seek. There aren't any shortcuts to enlightenment. No travel guide books to awareness. There is only showing up. Showing up with openness and compassion for ourselves and others, with at least a willingness to set aside what we think we know so that there is room for a deeper kind of knowing that goes beyond our limited ideas about how things are or ought to be. Show up. Show up with a sense of wonder. What is real will find you...

**Prayer: God, just for today help me to keep things simple, and to see things with the innocence of a trusting child and the patience of a loving grandmother.
Amen.**