

Weekly Meditation by Rev. Teri Lubbers

The Gift of Deep Listening

***We hear one another into speech.* ~ Nelle Morton, “The Journey is Home”**

Over the weekend, I spent time with two sets of aunts and uncles – my mother’s brother and sister and their spouses. I had not seen them since we were all together for my mother’s memorial service in Idaho almost two years ago. I remember when we were last together how comforting it felt to be part of a family. I have spent most of my life living at least a thousand miles away from any family members... It was a survival skill that developed in youth and that served me well for many years. But in recent times it is a skill I no longer need. Yet as I prepared for this visit, there were a couple of days when I experienced a nebulous unsettled feeling – anxious energy – that sort of nibbled at the edge of my consciousness. Moving into new territory can be scary.

It turned out to be a most enjoyable time and, during the visits, I got to experience Nelle Morton’s words. Sometimes others can hear us into speech. There are things we never verbalize until we know that someone is really listening, that someone really values us and our story. These deep listeners can be the catalyst for our finding new ways to access and tell the stories of our most authentic selves, or for helping us to recover those parts of ourselves we thought were lost forever. We discover new ways to think about how we have been in the world and how we might like to be in the future.

We might be lucky enough to have deep listeners in our own families, but even if not, we can find those individuals whose presence in our lives invites us to share openly and honestly. And it is a gift that we can give to another, to listen in such a way that what a friend has never spoken out loud before – even to himself or herself –can finally be expressed. Listen...

Prayer: God, you remind me that deep calls to deep. Remind me of my own depths today and that I am both the recipient and the giver of the gift of deep listening. Thank you for listening. Amen.