

Weekly Meditation, July 8, 2009
By Rev. Teri Lubbers

There Is No Interruption

The path includes all experience, both serene and chaotic. When things are going well, we feel good. We delight in the beauty of the snow falling outside the windows or the light reflecting off the floor. There's some sense of appreciation. But when the fire alarm rings and confusion erupts, we feel irritated and upset. It's all opportunity for practice. There is no interruption. We would like to believe that when things are still and calm, that's the real stuff, and when things are messy, confused, and chaotic, we've done something wrong, or more usually someone else has done something to ruin our beautiful meditation. As someone once said about a loud, bossy woman, "What is that woman doing in my sacred world?" Pema Chodron, Start Where You Are

I am on vacation from my chaplain work this week. Well, almost... I made a commitment to a family a couple of weeks ago that I would conduct a graveside service if the patient died while their pastor was out of town. (I suppose this might be seen as a lack of boundaries on my part; maybe it is. But it felt like the right thing to do at the time.) Of course that means my stay-at-home-vacation is being interrupted ... by death no less.

So I went to sleep last night knowing that today I have to plan a funeral today or tomorrow. It feels like an interruption. It wasn't on my agenda or in my plan for this week off. And yet somewhere inside I know that it's the real stuff – the poignant, often painful, stuff of life. The quote above reminds me that everything in my day, everything in my life can either be seen as an interruption or as an opportunity for practice.

It's easy to be calm when everything is going the way I want it to. It's easy to be compassionate when everyone is pleasant and polite and smells good. It's easy to feel good about myself when I have done something wonderful and folks are complimenting me right and left. But what about those days when I am running late and get out to the driveway to find a flat tire? What about that annoying person at work who only talks about himself and never uses deodorant? What about when you totally forgot you had a meeting and get a call that they've been waiting on you for almost 30 minutes?

Whatever is irritating you today, whatever makes you feel like chaos just barged into your peaceful abode dressed like a storm trooper, stop and breathe. Spirit hasn't abandoned you. Let the uninvited intrusion be an opportunity for awakening. In fact, instead of going into resistance or attack mode, stop and put out a welcome mat. Imagine that this unwanted situation is a spiritual teacher and ask what the lesson is today. Patience? Flexibility? Compassion? Humility? Trust? Transformation? Every situation bears Spirit's gift...

Prayer: *God, help me to see through every event of this day as if it were a window directly to you. In the midst of the unexpected remind me to look for you and help me be awake enough to see you. Amen.*