

Weekly Meditation, August 12, 2009
By Rev. Teri Lubbers

Courage to Change

Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference. ~ Reinhold Niebuhr

The serenity prayer is part of a much longer prayer that was written by a German theologian during WW II. I will never forget the first time I heard it. It suddenly struck me how much of my life's energy was spent trying to change things that were completely beyond my control. Like what family I had been born into, whether the people around me would ever be emotionally "safe" for me, whether my children would make good life decisions. I kept wishing people and life were some other way. I wished it for over forty years of my life and allowed my sense of happiness and wholeness to depend on what others did or didn't do.

Where does change start? From acceptance of how things really are – acknowledging reality without denial or drama. To accept something doesn't mean I have to like the way it is, or that things are the way I would like them to be, but it frees me up from spinning in a hamster wheel that never takes me anywhere. Acceptance is the bedrock of change.

It takes courage to change anything. Every single change in our lives – personal or corporate – means that we are letting go of something and embracing something unknown or unfamiliar. Scary and exhilarating all at once; our lives as living, growing human beings are a series of "first times." The image that comes to mind is how you feel on a roller coaster ride when your car has just reached the crest of the tallest peak. There's no escape. You can wish you were somewhere else or you can lean into it, raise your hands, yell your head off and enjoy the ride!

Prayer: Teach me today how to accept and how to change. Give me wisdom to know what is mine to do and what I need to leave to someone else. And stay close to me when I feel uncertain. Thank you that you are closer to me than my next breath. Amen.