

Weekly Meditation by Rev. Teri Lubbers
August 17, 2011

The Tension of Ambiguity

Whether it's ourselves, our lovers, bosses, children, a local Scrooge, or the political situation, it's more daring and real not to shut anyone out of our hearts and not to make the other into an enemy. If we begin to live like this, we'll find that we actually can't make things completely right or completely wrong anymore, because things are a lot more slippery and playful than that. Everything is ambiguous; everything is always shifting and changing, and there are as many different takes on any given situation as there are people involved. ~ Pema Chodron, "The Pocket Pema"

When I was in my thirties, I went faithfully to a therapist every week for almost three years. It helped a lot. But now, over two decades later, you know the one line I remember my therapist saying? "Maturity is the ability to live in the tension of the ambiguities of life." I don't like tension, I prefer calm. I don't particularly care for ambiguity either but slowly its reality has begun to nibble around the edges of my consciousness and now I don't always run away.

I love Pema's line: *it's more daring and real not to shut anyone out of our hearts and not to make the other the enemy.* I have the hardest time with this when I get to thinking about politicians. Surely it's ok to bash some of them isn't it? Or how about that person at work who is a thorn in everyone's side, the one everyone complains about when that person isn't around? Or the family member who has hurt us so many times before that we wish we could disown them? You mean I don't get to shut ANYONE out of my heart?

What I am learning is that, in the end, it really takes more energy to try to keep life and people at bay than it does to open my heart and let all the messiness of life wash over and through me. Life becomes too small and narrow if I keep shutting doors instead of opening them, if I forget that everyone is my neighbor, even the strangers and cranky people I meet along the way. It turns out that life is far more slippery and playful than I have yet begun to imagine. And that is a very good thing.

Prayer: Beloved, here I am again, still struggling with the same old struggles but a little more awake today. Help me be open-hearted. Help me be kind. Help me. Amen.