

Weekly Meditation by Rev. Teri Lubbers

Just Say No

“I have done this many times: not wanting to say no, not wanting to miss an opportunity, not wanting to be seen as less than totally compassionate. But wherever I cannot bring my entire being, I am not there. It is like offering to bring too many cups of coffee through a crowd. I always spill something hot on some innocent along the way. ~ Mark Nepo, “The Book of Awakening”

Maybe there are people in the world for whom saying “no” is easy, but that would not be me. I have learned to say no – out of self-preservation more than anything else - but I have never found it easy. I hate to let people down. It turns out, though, that I am not the answer to every need, the solution to every problem. I can only juggle so many cups of coffee in a crowd before someone gets burned. To be authentic and true to oneself may sometimes mean disappointing those who have expectations of us.

It’s a pretty subtle thing, don’t you think? How often have you done something, not out of the conviction of your heart, but because of what people expected from you? Then this crazy cycle can happen where the things that people affirm you for are the very things that make you feel more distant from yourself. It’s easy to get caught up in doing things because we want to protect – or project – an image of who we think we ought to be.

Jesus and other spiritual teachers emphasize coming clean and being honest with ourselves. They encourage us to pay attention to the things we can be fully present to, the things to which we can bring our entire being and our whole heart. That’s where we will find our sense of authenticity. Every life has some “have-tos” in it, but you might be surprised to find that they are fewer than you think.

Prayer: God, quiet my busy heart and mind. Teach me what the important things are for me to do, and help me discover who you are calling me to be. Amen.