

Weekly Meditation by Rev. Teri Lubbers

Healing and Hospitality

Making one's own wounds a source of healing, therefore, does not call for a sharing of superficial personal pains but for a constant willingness to see one's own pain and suffering as rising from the depth of the human condition which all men [and women] share. ~ Henri Nouwen, "The Wounded Healer"

Have you ever listened in on a conversation between two people competing for who has suffered the most, who has had the hardest lot in life? As if pain could be compared, quantified, or calculated...

Currently I do three bereavement support groups a week and I swear that at least once a week someone in one of the groups will wonder out loud: Whose loss is greater, the person whose child died or the one whose spouse of 50 years died? In asking, sometimes they imply their pain is worse than others, sometimes they take comfort that their pain is less than someone else's. I know they are just trying to make sense of the senseless, make meaning of the loss, and find hope to keep going another day. They keep coming back and continue to share their stories because there is power in recognizing that they are not alone, and that someone understands them.

The wounds we experience in life can be a source of deep despair, or profound healing. To the degree that we isolate and pull back, to that degree we will find despair. To the degree that we reach out in compassion to other hurting people, so they are not alone, to that degree we discover a paradoxical healing. There is healing in the shared story of our vulnerability. There is hospitality "which allows us to break through the narrowness of our own fears and to open our houses to the stranger, with the intuition that salvation comes to us in the form of a tired traveler. (Nouwen)"

Prayer: Jesus, you are a wounded healer in our midst. Teach us to be likewise. Amen.