

**Weekly Meditation by Rev. Teri Lubbers**  
**July 27, 2011**

**Just Be Kind**

***You should never have expectations for other people. Just be kind to them...setting goals for others can be aggressive – really wanting a success story for ourselves. When we do this to others, we are asking them to live up to our ideals. Instead, we should just be kind. ~ Pema Chodron, “The Pocket Pema Chodron”***

When I read this quote my mind immediately starts thinking about exceptions to the rule. I mean, shouldn't parents have expectations of their children? That they be polite, responsible, attentive, kind...? What if you are an employer? Don't you have a right to have expectations of those who work for you? How about your spouse? Aren't there some things we should be able to count on and expect? Hmm...well, yes and no. When young children are in our care we do have a responsibility for their safety, for their socialization, for their nurture. But the best way to teach them is to always be kind, an unwavering kindness and compassion that models for them who they can be.

I know of what Pema speaks. I know the kind of life I wish for my co-workers, friends, family, church, adult children. I also know when I get too “helpful” or “curious” about events or details of my sons' lives my middle son warns me, “Don't nag, Mom!” And inside a little voice says, “But I just want what's best, good, right for you.” So now, instead of telling them what to do, I ask if they would like to go out to dinner, or go to the movie, or come over and do their laundry. I tell them how proud I am of them, or affirm my confidence in their ability to make decisions that get them where they want to go, or validate when something is really hard in their lives without trying to tell them what to do.

I don't know what's best for any other human being. Period. I don't know. And it really is an act of aggression to impose that on anyone - what I think is best. Chances are that at the core of my being “helpful” is more often the desire to make some part of my own life more comfortable or easier. Truth is, I don't want to have to worry, be anxious, embarrassed or brokenhearted, and I am pretty vigilant about watching the signs and trying to be proactive (which might as well be translated as “pre-emptive”) so that I don't get hurt or bothered. There are better uses of life's precious energy than trying to micro-manage the people and the world around me. As the mantra of last Sunday's children's sermon testifies: “Don't worry about tomorrow. Feed life!” One way to feed life is to just be kind.

**Prayer: Thank you God for those in our lives who have extended kindness to us, who have loved us without condition or expectation and freed us up to be ourselves. Help me to see the world through very kind eyes today. Amen.**