

Quotations From Margaret Wheatley

Telling the stories that make up a school's history serves two purposes: it invites conversation, and it bonds staff members together. Making these forms of dialogue acceptable and expected will give people the courage to start their own conversations about what they feel is important. It can open the door to the creativity needed for future challenges.

The following words are taken from Margaret Wheatley's book, *Turning to One Another: Simple Conversations to Restore Hope to the Future* (2002):

I believe we can change the world if we start listening to one another again. Simple, honest, human conversation. Not mediation, negotiation, problem-solving, debate at public meetings. Simple, truthful conversation where we have a chance to speak, we each feel heard, and we each listen well.

All change, even very large and powerful change, begins when a few people start talking with one another about something they care about. (p. 7)

This means listening to everyone—even to people we wouldn't ordinarily listen to. Fear of what people will think, fear of their reactions, and fear of their anger keep many of us quiet. Margaret Wheatley's belief is that when you know someone's story, you aren't as afraid anymore.

We need to be able to talk with those we have named "enemy." Fear of each other also keeps us apart. Most of us have lists of people we fear. We can't imagine talking to them, and if we did, we know it would only create more anger. We can't imagine what we would learn from them, or what might be possible if we spoke to those we fear most. (p. 5)

This grounding increases the possibility of more sharing as the future unfolds.

Why is being heard so healing? I don't know the full answer to that question but I do know that it has something to do with the fact that listening creates relationship. Listening moves us closer, helps us become more whole, more healthy, more holy. Not listening causes fragmentation and fragmentation always causes more suffering. (p. 89)

References

Wheatley, M. (2002) *Turning to one another: Simple conversations to restore hope to the future*. San Francisco: Barrett-Koehler.