

Margaret J. Wheatley

Quotes

*People, Organization, Leadership, Thinking, Moving, Change, Believe,
Learning, Order, Inspirational, Ideas, World, Needs, Reflection, Process, Work,
Community, Hero, Simple, Business*

Without reflection, we go blindly on our way.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

When we seek for connection, we restore the world to wholeness. Our seemingly separate lives become meaningful as we discover how truly necessary we are to each other.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

Very great change starts from very small conversations, held among people who care.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

Without reflection, we go blindly on our way, creating more unintended consequences, and failing to achieve anything useful.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

I think a major act of leadership right now, call it a radical act, is to create the places and processes so people can actually learn together, using our experiences

~Margaret J. Wheatley

I think we have to notice that the business processes we use right now for thinking and planning and budgeting and strategy are all delivered on very tight agendas.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

[A]ll change, even very large and powerful change, begins when a few people start talking with one another about something they care about.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

It's not differences that divide us. It's our judgments about each other that do.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

Leadership is a series of behaviors rather than a role for heroes.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

A leader is one who... Has more faith in people than they do, and . . . who holds opportunities open long enough for their competence to re-emerge.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

Determination, energy, and courage appear spontaneously when we care deeply about something. We take risks that are unimaginable in any other context.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

You can't hate someone whose story you know.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

The things we fear most in organizations - fluctuations, disturbances, imbalances - are the primary sources of creativity.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

Probably the most visible example of unintended consequences, is what happens every time humans try to change the natural ecology of a place.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

Change always involves a dark night when everything falls apart. Yet if this period of dissolution is used to create new meaning, then chaos ends and new order emerges.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

we don't have to agree with each other in order to think well together. There is no need for us to be joined at the head. We are joined by our human hearts.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

All of us need better skills in listening, conversing, respecting one another's uniqueness, because these are essential for strong relationships.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

I believe that our very survival depends upon us becoming better systems thinkers.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

We are, always, poets, exploring possibilities of meaning in a world which is also all the time exploring possibilities.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

Disorder can play a critical role in giving birth to new, higher forms of order.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

When we can lay down our fear and anger and choose responses other than aggression, we create the conditions for bringing out the best in us humans.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

Circles create soothing space, where even reticent people can realize that their voice is welcome.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

Everyone in a complex system has a slightly different interpretation. The more interpretations we gather, the easier it becomes to gain a sense of the whole.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

We each create our world by what we choose to notice, creating a world of distinction that makes sense to us. We then 'see' the world through the self we have created.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

Circles create soothing space.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

When leaders take back power, when they act as heroes and saviors, they end up exhausted, overwhelmed, and deeply stressed.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

A leader these days needs to be a host - one who convenes diversity; who convenes all viewpoints in creative processes where our mutual intelligence can come forth.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

Hopelessness has surprised me with patience.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

All social change begins with a conversation.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

In fact, Western culture has spent decades drawing lines and boxes around interconnected phenomena. We've chunked the world into pieces rather than explored its webby nature.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

We would do well to ponder the realization that love is the most potent source of power.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

We know from science that nothing in the universe exists as an isolated or independent entity.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

Listening moves us closer, it helps us become more whole, more healthy, more holy. Not listening creates fragmentation, and fragmentation is the root of all suffering.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

Who you are depends on who you meet.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

Independence is a political concept, not a biological concept.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

Whatever life we have experienced, if we can tell our story to someone who listens, we find it easier to deal with our circumstances.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

Ask what's possible, not what's wrong. Keep asking.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

Aggression is the most common behavior used by many organizations, a nearly invisible medium that influences all decisions and actions.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

I've wanted to see beyond the Western, mechanical view of the world and see what else might appear when the lens was changed

~Margaret J. Wheatley

Without aggression, it becomes possible to think well, to be curious about differences, and to enjoy each other's company.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

We need to move from the leader as hero, to the leader as host.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

Aggression only moves in one direction - it creates more aggression.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

Destroying is a necessary function in life. Everything has its season, and all things eventually lose their effectiveness and die.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

I believe that the capacity that any organization needs is for leadership to appear anywhere it is needed, when it is needed.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

Perseverance is a choice. It's not a simple, one-time choice, it's a daily one. There's never a final decision.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

One of the easiest human acts is also the most healing. Listening to someone. Simply listening. Not advising or coaching, but silently and fully listening.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

A world based on machine images is a world filled with boundaries. In a machine, every piece knows its place.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

Most people associate command and control leadership with the military.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

No longer in a relational universe, can we study anything as separate from ourselves. Our acts of observation are part of the process that brings forth the manifestation of what we are observing.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

In this present culture, we need to find the means to work and live together with less aggression if we are to resolve the serious problems that afflict and impede us.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

The future cannot be determined. It can only be experienced as it occurring. Life doesn't know what it will be until it notices what it has become.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

Passion mutates into procedures, into rules and roles. Instead of purpose, we focus on policies. Instead of being free to create, we impose constraints that squeeze the life out of us.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

To make a system stronger, we need to make stronger relationships.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

These days, our senses are bombarded with aggression. We are constantly confronted with global images of unending, escalating war and violence.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

Listening is a reciprocal process - we become more attentive to others if they have attended to us.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

Aggression is inherently destructive of relationships. People and ideologies are pitted against each other, believing that in order to survive, they must destroy the opposition.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

We have created trouble for ourselves in organizations by confusing control with order.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

Power is the capacity to generate relationships.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

Too many problem-solving sessions become battlegrounds where decisions are made based on power rather than intelligence.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

Aggression only breeds more aggression. It only creates more fear and anger.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

Organizations are now confronted with two sources of change: the traditional type that is initiated and managed; and external changes over which no one has control.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

For us, someone who is willing to step forward and help is much more courageous than someone who is merely fulfilling the role.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

In the past, it was easier to believe in my own effectiveness. If I worked hard, with good colleagues and good ideas, we could make a difference. But now, I sincerely doubt that.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

Successful organizations, including the Military, have learned that the higher the risk, the more necessary it is to engage everyone's commitment and intelligence.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

And time for reflection with colleagues is for me a lifesaver; it is not just a nice thing to do if you have the time. It is the only way you can survive.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

In virtually every organization, regardless of mission and function, people are frustrated by problems that seem unsolvable.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

Even though worker capacity and motivation are destroyed when leaders choose power over productivity, it appears that bosses would rather be in control than have the organization work well.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

Life doesn't move in straight lines, and neither does a good conversation.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

I've found that I can only change how I act if I stay aware of my beliefs and assumptions. Thoughts always reveal themselves in behavior.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

Let's just keep asking ourselves this question: 'Is what I'm about to do strengthening the web of connections, or is it weakening it?'

~Margaret J. Wheatley

Power in organizations is the capacity generated by relationships. It is an energy that comes into existence through relationships.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

We could focus our efforts on discovering solutions that work uniquely for us.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

When error holds so much power, play disappears. Creativity ceases.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

Space is the basic ingredient of the universe; there is more of it than anything else.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

Life is creative. It makes it up as it goes along.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

Thinking is always dangerous to the status quo. [...] The moment you start thinking, you'll want to change something.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

This is a world of process, not a world of things.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

For eons, humans have struggled to find less destructive ways of living together.

~Margaret J. Wheatley

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