

# Marian Wright Edelman Quotes

*Children, People, Thinking, Inspirational, Trying, School, America, Inspiring,  
Justice, Peace, Law, Community, Real, Leader, Education, Needs, Adults, Gun,  
Kings, Struggle*

Education is for improving the lives of others and for leaving your community and world better than you found it.

~Marian Wright Edelman

You just need to be a flea against injustice. Enough committed fleas biting strategically can make even the biggest dog uncomfortable and transform even the biggest nation.

~Marian Wright Edelman

The question is not whether we can afford to invest in every child; it is whether we can afford not to.

~Marian Wright Edelman

Being considerate of others will take your children further in life than any college degree.

~Marian Wright Edelman

You're not obligated to win. You're obligated to keep trying to do the best you can every day.

~Marian Wright Edelman

Service is the rent we pay for being. It is the very purpose of life, and not something you do in your spare time.

~Marian Wright Edelman

We must not, in trying to think about how we can make a big difference, ignore the small daily differences we can make which, over time, add up to big differences that we often cannot foresee.

~Marian Wright Edelman

It's time for greatness - not for greed. It's a time for idealism - not ideology. It is a time not just for compassionate words, but compassionate action.

~Marian Wright Edelman

Learn to be quiet enough to hear the genuine within yourself so that you can hear it in others.

~Marian Wright Edelman

The future which we hold in trust for our own children will be shaped by our fairness to other people's children.

~Marian Wright Edelman

Be a good ancestor. Stand for something bigger than yourself. Add value to the Earth during your sojourn.

~Marian Wright Edelman

A nation that does not stand for its children does not stand for anything and will not stand tall in the future.

~Marian Wright Edelman

No person has the right to rain on your dreams.

~Marian Wright Edelman

This act will leave a moral blot on his presidency

~Marian Wright Edelman

Don't just dream about grandiose acts of doing good. Every day do small ones, that add up over time to positive patterns.

~Marian Wright Edelman

Don't feel entitled to anything you didn't sweat and struggle for.

~Marian Wright Edelman

Be real. Try to do what you say, say what you mean, and be what you seem.

~Marian Wright Edelman

If you don't like the way the world is, you change it. You have an

obligation to change it. You just do it one step at a time.

~Marian Wright Edelman

It is the responsibility of every adult... to make sure that children hear what we have learned from the lessons of life and to hear over and over that we love them and that they are not alone.

~Marian Wright Edelman

You are in charge of your own attitude whatever others do or circumstances you face. The only person you can control is yourself...worry more about your attitude than your aptitude or lineage.

~Marian Wright Edelman

Never let us confuse what is legal with what is right. Everything Hitler did in Nazi Germany was legal, but it was not right.

~Marian Wright Edelman

You can't be what you can't see.

~Marian Wright Edelman

Failure is just another way to learn how to do something right.

~Marian Wright Edelman

No one, Eleanor Roosevelt said, can make you feel inferior without your consent. Never give it.

~Marian Wright Edelman

A lot of people are waiting for Martin Luther King or Mahatma Gandhi to come back - but they are gone. We are it. It is up to us. It is up to you.

~Marian Wright Edelman

It really takes a community to raise children, no matter how much money one has. Nobody can do it well alone. And it's the bedrock security of community that we and our children need.

~Marian Wright Edelman

Why are guns the only unregulated consumer products in America? We regulate toy guns and teddy bears, but we do not regulate a product that kills 4,600 children a year.

~Marian Wright Edelman

Service is the rent we pay for living.

~Marian Wright Edelman

We do not have a money problem in America. We have a values and priorities problem.

~Marian Wright Edelman

The challenge of social justice is to evoke a sense of community that we need to make our nation a better place, just as we make it a safer place.

~Marian Wright Edelman

Whoever said anybody has a right to give up?

~Marian Wright Edelman

Never work just for money or for power. They won't save your soul or help you sleep at night.

~Marian Wright Edelman

We're spending, on average, three times more for prison than for public-school pupils. That's the dumbest investment policy. It doesn't make us safer.

~Marian Wright Edelman

There comes a time when you roll up your sleeves and put yourself at the top of your commitment list.

~Marian Wright Edelman

Parents have become so convinced that educators know what is best for their children that they forget that they themselves are really the experts.

~Marian Wright Edelman

I'm doing what I think I was put on this earth to do. And I'm really grateful to have something that I'm passionate about and that I think is profoundly important.

~Marian Wright Edelman

If parents snicker at racial and gender jokes, another generation will pass on the poison adults still have not had the courage to snuff out.

~Marian Wright Edelman

You'd better stay determined, because that's how our ancestors got us where we are.

~Marian Wright Edelman

There should not be one new dime in tax breaks for millionaires and billionaires as long as millions of children in America are poor, hungry, uneducated and without health coverage.

~Marian Wright Edelman

The legacy I want to leave is a child-care system that says that no kid is going to be left alone or left unsafe.

~Marian Wright Edelman

No time is ever wasted if you have a book along as a companion.

~Marian Wright Edelman

We must serve consciously as caring role models, emphasizing the ethic of service, not consumption.

~Marian Wright Edelman

Education is a precondition to survival in America today.

~Marian Wright Edelman

I never thought I was breaking a glass ceiling. I just had to do what I had to do, and it never occurred to me not to.

~Marian Wright Edelman

People who don't vote have no line of credit with people who are elected and thus pose no threat to those who act against our interests.

~Marian Wright Edelman

It is [children] who are God's presence, promise and hope for mankind.

~Marian Wright Edelman

There are levels of outrage, and there's a point at which you can't be trespassed upon anymore.

~Marian Wright Edelman

You just do it one step at a time.

~Marian Wright Edelman

In every seed of good there is always a piece of bad.

~Marian Wright Edelman

So often we are depressed by what remains to be done and forget to be thankful for all that has been done.

~Marian Wright Edelman

Be grateful for good breaks and kind favors but don't count on them.

~Marian Wright Edelman

If we don't stand up for children, then we don't stand for much.

~Marian Wright Edelman

You really can change the world if you care enough.

~Marian Wright Edelman

We are willing to spend the least amount of money to keep a kid at home, more to put him in a foster home and the most to institutionalize him.

~Marian Wright Edelman

Service is what life is all about.

~Marian Wright Edelman

You didn't have a choice about the parents you inherited, but you do have a choice about the kind of parent you will be.

~Marian Wright Edelman

Semi-automatic weapons have no socially redeeming purpose.

~Marian Wright Edelman

The literacy level at Mississippi prisons? Fifth grade. Can't read, what are you going to do? If you've got a conviction rap, what are you going to do? It's a real crisis.

~Marian Wright Edelman

Every child's life is sacred and it is long past time that we protect it.

~Marian Wright Edelman

I think it is important that people who are perceived as liberals not be afraid of talking about moral and community values.

~Marian Wright Edelman

Just because a child's parents are poor or uneducated is no reason to deprive the child of basic human rights to health care, education and proper nutrition.

~Marian Wright Edelman



You can achieve much in life if you don't mind doing the work and giving someone else the credit.

~Marian Wright Edelman

Homeless shelters, child hunger, and child suffering have become normalized in the richest nation on earth. It's time to reset our moral compass and redefine how we measure success.

~Marian Wright Edelman

Each American must remember and help America remember that the fellowship of human beings is more important than the fellowship of race and class and gender in a democratic society.

~Marian Wright Edelman

You were born God's original. Try not to become someone's copy.

~Marian Wright Edelman

Understand and be confident that each of us can make a difference by caring and acting in small as well as big ways.

~Marian Wright Edelman

Don't assume a door is closed; push on it. Don't assume if it was closed yesterday that it is closed today. Don't ever stop learning and improving your mind. If you do, you're going to be left behind.

~Marian Wright Edelman

If it's wrong for 13-year-old inner-city girls to have babies without the benefit of marriage, it's wrong for rich celebrities, and we ought to stop putting them on the cover of People magazine.

~Marian Wright Edelman

Let all children come unto me.

~Marian Wright Edelman

[Martin Luther ] King didn't pick his leadership position. Most movements are not started by single people.

~Marian Wright Edelman

I've always hated being hemmed in or seeing anybody being hemmed in. Even when I was the smallest child, I couldn't bear being told I couldn't drink at a so-called white drinking fountain.

~Marian Wright Edelman

We have the capacity to make sure that every mother has pre-natal care. Yet, we don't do it. What is it about America? It says we don't value children and families. We are hypocrites.

~Marian Wright Edelman

Don't wait for, expect, or rely on favors. Count on earning them by hard work and perseverance.

~Marian Wright Edelman

It's the new slavery. It came out of the drug laws and it really is something we're going to have to confront, but I don't see enough people up in arms about that. We need to be.

~Marian Wright Edelman

Don't be afraid of hard work.

~Marian Wright Edelman

Luckily, I had incredible parents who, when they saw a problem, didn't say, "Why doesn't somebody do something?" They would say, "Why don't we do something?".

~Marian Wright Edelman

We must always refill and ensure there is a critical mass of leaders and activists committed to nonviolence and racial and economic justice who will keep seeding and building transforming movements.

~Marian Wright Edelman

Whoever said anyone has the right to give up.

~Marian Wright Edelman

Democracy is not a spectator sport.

~Marian Wright Edelman

Somehow we are going to have to develop a concept of enough for those at the top and at the bottom so that the necessities of the many are not sacrificed for the luxuries of the few.

~Marian Wright Edelman

The poor have been sent to the front lines of a federal budget deficit reduction war that few other groups were drafted to fight.

~Marian Wright Edelman

Black women rock the cradle, and whoever rocks the cradle rocks the future.

~Marian Wright Edelman

I try to be a person of faith.

~Marian Wright Edelman

I hadn't planned on going to law school. I wanted to study 19th-century Russian literature.

~Marian Wright Edelman

It is time for every one of us to roll up our sleeves and put ourselves at the top of our commitment list.

~Marian Wright Edelman

Children don't vote but adults who do must stand up and vote for them.

~Marian Wright Edelman

Hope is the best contraceptive.

~Marian Wright Edelman

Character, self-discipline, determination, attitude and service are the substance of life.

~Marian Wright Edelman

Far less wealthy industrialized countries have committed to end child poverty, while the United States is sliding backwards. We can do better. We must demand that our leaders do better.

~Marian Wright Edelman

We all need to get out of our safety zones too. In addition to voting, we need to embarrass people who don't do the right thing. It's going to take citizen action.

~Marian Wright Edelman

People who don't vote have no call on political leaders!

~Marian Wright Edelman

None of the candidates are ever perfect, ok? Then you have to get them in there and you have to hold them accountable. You have to make noises.

~Marian Wright Edelman

That's not to say that some of the new media is not advantageous. You can reach lots of folks with what Black Lives Matter is doing, mobilizing people. God bless them.

~Marian Wright Edelman

So often we think we have got to make a difference and be a big dog. Let us just try to be little fleas biting. Enough fleas biting strategically can make a big dog very uncomfortable.

~Marian Wright Edelman

I need to work outside government, on my own.

~Marian Wright Edelman

I try to act out of faith.

~Marian Wright Edelman

I'm tough in the sense that I believe as strongly in what I'm doing as anybody else believes in what they are doing.

~Marian Wright Edelman

I get very upset with all of the crowd seekers today, and people out there trying to get on TV. It ain't about you. It's about trying to make the world more just for everybody.

~Marian Wright Edelman

Amidst protestations of 'Who can be against the children?' too few people are FOR children when it really matters.

~Marian Wright Edelman

We're a violent nation, and we need to confront it. This gun plague has to stop.

~Marian Wright Edelman

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