

A Thread is so Slender

A thread is so slender
yet here I am with one strand of ferocious hope
afraid it is the last strand
hanging from the torn seam of the earth,
afraid we have finally gone and pulled it,
the blue-green world, unraveling like a ball of yarn
into the spheres.

Still I go holding this thread.
I love the daring inside it
how it is always beginning.
It talks to the humblest thing in me:
Why don't you risk everything for hope?
What if one gives birth to two, and two gives birth to three?
Does the universe dwell in a pumpkin seed?

A thread is so slender
and dangerous.
It is a beam of light no bigger than a wire, yet
it holds so many suns,
the way a drop of fire contains the whole inferno.
What if it is a fiber of God just floating about?
What if it harbors inside it the very tapestry that will save us?

A thread is so slender.
It hides in plain sight in the corners of my kitchen,
subverting the domestic morning.
I catch it riding currents in the backyard
like a child gone to play.
But back again, curled on my pillow for the night
Pregnant by some small piercing of hope.

We are always having this conversation.
I say: Stretch the world upon a loom,
Let kindness be our warp, gentleness our woof.
May we never tire of this back and forth,
back and forth,
the daily shuttle of loving each other.
There are visions shining in our fingers,
And we will not cease.
We will expand to this moment.

Here is what the thread tells me:
I believe in the loom.

Sue Monk Kidd

For conversation to take us to this deeper realm, I believe we have to practice several new behaviors. Here are the principles I've learned to emphasize before we begin a formal conversation process:

- we acknowledge one another as equals
- we try to stay curious about each other
- we recognize that we need each other's help to become better listeners
- we slow down so we have time to think and reflect
- we remember that conversation is the natural way humans think together
- we expect it to be messy at times

Margaret Wheatley

Where can we find the courage to start a good conversation? The answer is found in the word itself. Courage comes from the Old French word for heart (cuer). We develop courage for those things that speak to our hearts. Once our heart is engaged, it is easy to be brave.

Margaret Wheatley

I first fell in love with the practice of conversation when I experienced for myself the sense of unity, of communion, that is available in this process. Most of what we do in communities and organizations focuses us on our individual needs. . . Conversation is different. Although we each benefit individually from good conversation, we also discover that we were never separate as we thought. Good conversation connects us at a deeper level. As we share our different human experiences, we rediscover a sense of unity. We remember we are part of a greater whole. And as an added joy, we also discover our collective wisdom. We suddenly see how wise we can be together.

Margaret Wheatley

How do I Listen?

How
Do I
Listen to Others?
As if everyone were my Master
Speaking to me
His
Cherished
Last
Words.

Hafiz

It takes courage to start a conversation. But if we don't start talking to one another, nothing will change. Conversation is the way we discover how to transform our world together.

Margaret Wheatley

I think of a gesture of love as anything we do that helps others discover their humanity. Any act where we turn to one another. Open our hearts. Extend ourselves. Listen. Any time we're patient. Curious. Quiet. Engaged...

Conversation does this – it requires that we extend ourselves, that we open our minds and hearts a bit more, that we turn to someone, curious about how they live their life.

Margaret Wheatley

We can also take courage from the fact that many people are longing to be in conversation again. We are hungry for a chance to talk. People want to tell their story and are willing to listen to yours. People want to talk about their concerns and struggles. Too many of us feel isolated, strange, or invisible. Conversations help end that.

Margaret Wheatley

Speaking to each other involves risk. It's often difficult to extend ourselves, to let down our guard, especially with those we fear or avoid. When we're willing to overcome our fear and speak to them, that is a gesture of love. Strangely, what we say is not that important. We have ended the silence that keeps us apart.

Margaret Wheatley

Turning to One Another 2002