



Georg Christoph Lichtenberg

It's just a darn paragraph.

Without true knowledge, I have quoted from the lines you will read below. I credited the author when quoting their lines while presenting motivational speeches, Toastmasters International competitions, and even in sermons.

For years, I gave credit to Nelson Mandela for the lines I shared with my audiences. It was, I thought, common knowledge that President Mandela had written and said the words you are about to read in his inaugural address in 1994, just after he was elected the President of apartheid ravaged South Africa.

When read in full, it appears to be a piece of free verse poetry or lines in a speech. It appears to be written to be an inspirational wall hanging to give to a high school graduate off to college, or perhaps, a gift to an employee promoted to a higher position.

Here are the words I thought were written and spoken by President Mandela in his speech to the nation:

*"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.
Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.
It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us.
We ask ourselves, Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?
Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God.
Your playing small does not serve the world.
There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel
insecure around you.
We are all meant to shine, as children do.
We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us.
It is not just in some of us; it is in everyone.
And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people
permission to do the same.
As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates
others." ¹*

The copy I had in my possession was printed just as I typed it here, like a poem, but not so...it's just a darn paragraph. Now, I must confess that the

¹ Marianne Williamson, "A Return To Love", Harper One, 195 Broadway, New York, NY, 1992 (p. 190)

words were actually written in 1992 in a #1 Best Seller titled "A Return To Love" by Marianne Williamson. I have known about Marianne for several years. In my early motivational speaking years, I had quoted her, Wayne Dyer, Lao Tzu, Deepak Chopra, Jesus of Nazareth, and other inspiration writers.

The problem was resources generally revealed only one or two lines from speeches. You know the type, "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country" or "Ask not what you can do for your country" or "Two roads diverged into a yellow wood" or "Go confidently in the direction of your dreams!" That's words from revolutionaries, presidents, poets, and authors. The possibilities for supporting quotes is enormous.

Over the next six weeks, I will be writing personal thoughts about each of the phrases in Marianne Williamson's paragraph. In case you are interested, you can find it on page 190 in her book.

However for this writing, I choose to offer one quote from Nelson Mandela that I have never used in a speech or sermon, but find it significant for the USA today. Based on the state of our country regarding race relations and associated unrest, I believe his words are relevant. He wrote:

No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.¹

In 1961, Mandela was convicted for inciting people to strike and leaving the country without a passport and sentenced to five years' imprisonment. Later he was sentenced to life imprisonment for sabotage in what was known as the "Rivonia Trial", by Justice Dr. Quartus de Wet, rather than the death sentence. After 27 years in the worst of prison conditions, Nelson Mandela was freed to finish the unification of a horrific national separation of humankind.

God bless the peace efforts in our country today.

Peace always.

Ted

¹ Nelson Mandela, "Long Walk to Freedom", Little, Brown and Company, 1290 Avenue of the Americas, 1992