

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

Philippians 4:6-7 NIV

*Your playing small doesn't serve the world. There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you.*

Marianne Williamson

Do you ever want to be perceived as a person who is daring, adventurous, outgoing and courageous? I do, and I seek that positive feeling daily. "Be brave" I whisper to myself. Occasionally I shout it when no one is around just to show myself how fearless I really want the world to see me. Are you with me?

Regrettably I, and possibly you, panic in the face of judgment from our friends, family, co-workers, and even people we know and love in Church. Some of us may be embarrassed about showing our ideas to those around us. And this fear is what causes us to be old-fashioned in our thinking. So, we might have a wild idea, but we're afraid to share it with anybody else. We "play small" to protect ourselves from what others may think about us, and regrettably what we may think about ourselves.

Rules and limitations that we place on ourselves and others takes a long time to correct. The concreted beliefs harden when they are created by our own thoughts and visions, and often by words from peers, adults, sometimes parents or teachers. I understand how you and I do all we can to avoid being too creepy, or too irritating, or too unusual. But truthfully, I've lived my whole life playing my guitar and singing tunes that shaped my life in the 1960's. Not because they are great, but because I love them.

This TALK is inspired by the words attributed to South African President, Nelson Mandela's inaugural address after being elected to lead an oppressive white ruled society in his country. A black man in a country torn by Apartheid, an atrocious period of hatred in South Africa's history. Mandela was an avid fighter and respected adversary for freedom. His rebellious spirit and stand against oppression stifled him over a quarter century in prison. The journey is described wonderfully in his autobiography "Long Walk to Freedom."

Mandela fully understood there is "nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you." To illustrate this thinking, I want to allow the great leader to share his view on the matter in his own words.

*"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."*

Let's believe and assert the idea that our country needs to be thinking positively, and courageously, and kindheartedly. Let it begin with you and me.

Peace always

*Ted*