



Who Do We Choose To Be?, by Margaret Wheatley

The powerful always defend the status quo because it is the source of their power and privilege. Any change that benefits others would destroy their position. And their position is all they care about defending.

As a lifelong activist focused on changing leadership in large systems, as one still inside those large systems as a consultant, advisor, and friend, I realized years ago that large-scale change was not possible. Leaders were grasping for control, overreacting to crises rather than thinking systemically, treating people as “units” rather than as humans. Yet I also met and worked with extraordinary leaders who were creating islands of sanity where good work still got done and where people enjoyed healthy relationships in the midst of chaotic conditions, fierce opposition, heartbreaking defeats, lack of support, isolation, loneliness, and slander. I have been with them in circumstances that caused most other leaders to give up and walk away, yet still they kept going. [...]

Several years ago, in the face of irreversible global problems and the devolution of leadership, I began to challenge every leader I met with these questions: Who do you choose to be for this time? Are you willing to use whatever power and influence you have to create islands of sanity that evoke and rely on our best human qualities to create, produce, and persevere?

Now Iâ€™m asking you.