

# Our Deepest Fear

By Marianne Williamson

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's 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's not just in some of us;  
It's in everyone.

And as we let our own light shine,  
We unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.  
As we're liberated from our own fear,  
Our presence automatically liberates others.

**Note:** This inspiring poem is taken from Marianne Williamson's book *A Return to Love*. Though often quoted as part of Nelson Mandela's moving [inaugural speech](#), "Our Deepest Fear" does not appear in the speech.