

Marianne Williamson—Force of Nature: A Personal Review

BY MICHAEL STERNFELD

PHOTOS BY WERNER ELMKER

Words can be a powerful force. A simple succession of words and phrases creates waves that can caress or crash on the shores of your awareness. Then they seep in, creating inspiration, resistance, or even a peak experience. The impactful power of words was made very apparent to me when Marianne Williamson delivered her *Consciousness, Democracy & Politics* talk at the Sondheim on October 28 to an overflowing Fairfield crowd.

As one of those camped on the shores of political disinterest, I was a perfect receptor site for her motivating message of social engagement. It's been glibly easy for me to conclude that political action is nothing more than surface level band-aid, and that real lasting change can only be effected on the level of consciousness. The truth that, 'A leader is an innocent reflection of the consciousness of the people' has often reverberated in my head. But something shifted inside me that night. Marianne Williamson is a force of nature—one whose words rolled in like waves of compelling logic forcing me to look more deeply at social change and its personal implications. Over the course of the evening, she built a powerful case for the underlying connection between the inner workings of consciousness and the outer fields of political action that serve the higher good.

"I want to talk tonight about political activism—when grounded and aligned with a level of consciousness—that not only empowers the activism, but gives it a larger moral and spiritual authority."

I was not the only one who felt the heat of the evening. One friend commented that her brain was on fire "in a good way" after the talk. Another friend described how the talk really shook him up in a way that forced him to re-examine his priorities in action and service.

By challenging our complacency and status-quo thinking, Marianne went on to give a larger historical context for the democratic process and how it produces change.

"We never move forward as a nation because the status quo wakes up one day and goes, 'Oh, let's do it different'. The majority didn't wake up one day and say, 'Oh, let's free the slaves'. The majority didn't wake up one day and say, 'I think we should give women the right to vote'.... Social change

does not occur because the status quo decides to change it.... Society changes not because of a horizontal move.... Society moves when enough people go vertical, enough people go deep.... They are those usually considered outrageous radicals by the status quo of their time, but they have a better idea. And because their idea is based on not just what is expedient....but what is deeply true, then in time, history moves in that direction."

She also described how many of the great spiritual leaders—Gandhi, Martin Luther King, and even Jesus—did not differentiate



between spiritual and social transformation. These apparent polarities actually lie on a continuum of serving the higher good in whatever form necessary in the need of the times.

And that's how Marianne Williamson herself seems to move. She put her high-frequency talk about the field of consciousness on the front lines last year when she ran for US Congress. This year, she dove further into the political field in support of U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders' presidential campaign. Fed up with the current political/social structure that consistently puts short-term profit ahead of economic/social equality in our country, she feels there's only one presidential candidate who speaks from the level of moral authority to correct this growing

Continued on page 2