

INSPIRATION FROM WOMEN

LUTHERAN PEACE FELLOWSHIP

Quotes and Litanies for Empowerment

How does peace in the world begin, and how does it grow? If peace were a garden, we could tend it by:

- * Watering the individual flowers -- for peace within ourselves
- * Nourishing the clusters -- for peace within our families/communities
- * Working together in the "garden"-- for peace within our world

Inspiration from Women is a sampling of quotes found when LPF's [Women's Resources](#) were created, along with others newly gathered. For more, see the [Stopping Violence Against Women](#) and [Nurturing Peace](#) action guides, which include some exceptional quotes by women. For more in-depth sharings, the [Women's Video Gallery](#) presents an array of peacemaking speakers. Women's sayings also appear in the LPF [Peace Deck](#), an extensive collection of biblical and contemporary quotations.

Quotes can awaken us to our creative and courageous capacities. They remind us that we share deep yearnings with others in our quest for peace. They can spark fresh insights, breathing new life into our spirits. It is a wonder what brief sayings in our conversations, social media, events and church gatherings can do to plant and cultivate peace in our everyday lives.

ABOUT OUR "WOVEN PATH"

The gentle, moving "woven path" design of the LPF Women's Initiative symbolizes our commitment to creating and nurturing nonviolent waves of change as we "roll along" together in interwoven efforts for peace.

The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.

Eleanor Roosevelt

Human rights activist and U.S. First Lady

Think big, start small.

Patricia Fripp

Executive speech coach

"Hope begins in the dark, the stubborn hope that if you just show up and try to do the right thing, the dawn will come. You wait and watch and work; you don't give up."

Anne Lamott, Author

"If everyone lit their own candle the whole world would be lit."

Mary Moskowitz

Effective people rarely sit back and let things happen. They go out and happen to things.

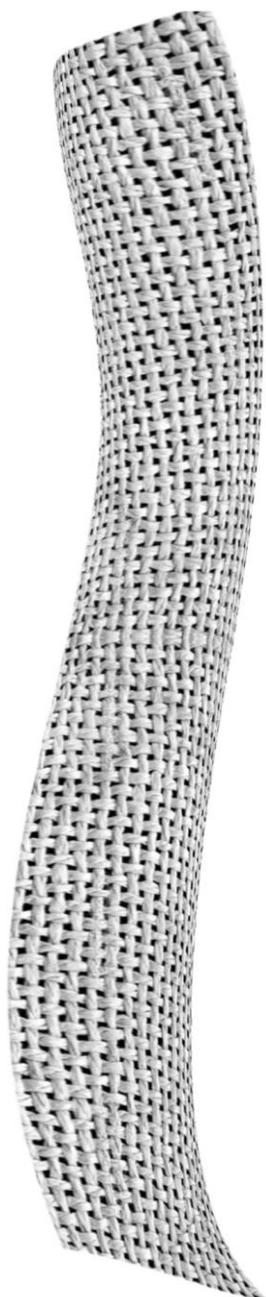
Elinor Smith (1911-)

Record-breaking aviator,
world's youngest licensed pilot

We are sometimes called to invest our lives in causes that seem to go nowhere, because it is the right thing to do, because the tapestry of history is longer in the making than our short lives, and because we know nothing is wasted in God's economy.

Shirley Mullen

President, Houghton College, NY



Activism, Courage

"I became more courageous
by doing the things I needed to be
courageous for – first, a little, and badly.
Then, bit by bit, more and better."

Audre Lorde

Writer and civil rights activist



"Women, the life-bearers,
must give to the world the spiritual
life the world lacks."

Sister Joan Chittister

Author and speaker

One's life has value
so long as one attributes
value to the life of others, by means
of love, friendship, indignation,
and compassion.

Simone de Beauvoir

Philosopher

Goals are dreams with deadlines.

Diana Scharf Hunt

Time management expert

"To become fully human means
learning to turn my gratitude for being
alive into some concrete common good...
growing gentler toward human weakness...
learning to forget myself on a regular
basis in order to attend to the
other selves in my vicinity."

Brené Brown, Author

Daring Greatly, Gifts of Imperfection

**A Litany of Need for Justice --
There Was No Singing at My Birth: I Am A Girl**

One: O Reconciling God, listen to my story,
For there was no singing at my birth.

All: I am a girl.

One: "Kill her. Kill her!" my father cried when he
learned he had a girl. My mother only cried.

All: I am a girl.

One: From morning to night they had me look after
my sisters and brothers.

All: I am a girl.

One: I watched the children go to school and
wondered why I was not one of them.

All: I am a girl.

One: I heard my father groan about my dowry.
My mother only sighed.

All: I am a girl.

One: They said that I belonged to my husband's
family when I knew I had become a woman.

All: I am a woman.

One: They told me to obey my husband and his
family. My mother's face looked pained.

All: I am a woman.

One: I had to cook for them and make them
happy always.

All: I am a woman.

One: I took abuse from my husband's family and
bore it in silence. My mother also wept alone.

All: I am a woman.

One: I had to bring forth many children to work in
the fields. My friends did likewise.

All: I am a woman.

One: Now I am old, weak, and weary – a widow
with daughters whose lives repeat my story.
The path we women tread is very hard.

**All: Is there no solace for womenkind? O,
Reconciling God, hear the prayers of your
daughters and give them hope of brighter
days. Amen.**

Andrea Vedanayagam

Santa Clara, California

(Inspired by an anonymous poem from India)

A Litany In Praise of Mothers

One: God, our Creator, we thank you for our mothers, who wished for us every good blessing before we were even born.

All: O God, teach us how to show our gratitude for their labors of love.

One: God, our Protector, we thank you for our mothers, who cradled and shielded us against death-dealing forces, who taught us dignity, strength, and self-worth against all odds.

All: O God, lead us in being protectors and enablers of children and others who are vulnerable and need safety.

One: God of Community, we thank you for our father, aunts, uncles, sisters, brothers, and friends, who, with tenderness of heart, have mothered us in the best of ways.

All: O God, help us to contribute to a world where such qualities and persons are valued and recognized as the gifts and strengths that they are.

One: God, our Comforter, we thank you for our mothers, who wiped away the tears from our eyes as they wept, sacrificed, and suffered to hold their families close.

All: O God, show us how to honor our mothers, so they will realize our appreciation.

One: God of Gentleness, we thank you for our mothers who died before we were able to express our love to them.

All: O God, breathe on us with your gentle wind, heal our sadness and regret, and inspire us with new chances to find wholeness through loving others.

One: God of Justice, we thank you for our mothers who have battled against the sting of racism and sexism, in hopes of a better world for us, their second, third, and fourth generation children in this country.

All: O God, teach us how to be bridge-builders across generations, to cherish our roots, to advocate for the rights of all to be who you created us to be, as we learn to work together for a just and peaceful world. O God, we thank you for our mothers. Please transform and renew us each day so that we can be people who make you, and our mothers, proud! Amen.

Lily R. Wu
New York City

Creativity

We are ourselves creations.
We are meant to continue creativity by being creative ourselves. Creativity is God's gift to us. Using creativity is our gift back to God.

Julia Cameron
Author, *Heart Steps*

You can't use up creativity. The more you use, the more you have.

Maya Angelou, Author

Creativity of all kinds, in art, in justice-making, in human relationships, in prayer, is born where people wrestle, where they struggle to create a new form, a new song, a new template, a new ethic with all the discipline and passion they can bring to bear.

Kathy Galloway
Author, *Dreaming of Eden*

Creativity is inventing, experimenting, growing, taking risks, breaking rules, making mistakes, and having fun.

Mary Lou Cook
Peace activist, artist, minister

Empowerment

Real power is when you are doing exactly what you are supposed to be doing the best it can be done. Authentic power. There's a surge, a kind of energy field that says, "I'm in my groove." And nobody has to tell you, "You go, girl," because, you know, you're already gone.

Oprah Winfrey
Talk show host, media mogul

Nonviolence, War and Peace

"The connection between feminism and nonviolence is not that both are so nice and humane compared to patriarchy and violence. It is that both are so potent, with the same kind of power, that they have the potential to turn the violent, patriarchal system over and give birth to something healthier in its place."

Betsy Wright

Women's rights activist

"I went to jail for 11 days for disturbing the peace. I was trying to disturb the war."

Joan Baez

Songwriter, activist, humanitarian

"We didn't start as women against war, but as women against violence against women. Through that we came to take a stand against violence in the wider society."

Women of Vimochana,

A women's rights forum in Bangalore, India

"When we began, we were talking more about personal injustices, about domestic violence. Now...the single most important factor in whether a country is violent within itself or willing to use violence against other countries is violence against females. That subject-object, conquered-conqueror kind of paradigm in varying degrees normalizes it everywhere else."

Gloria Steinem

Originator of the Women Under Siege journalism project... when asked if the feminist cause seems as urgent today as it did in the 1960s and '70s

The women of my generation in Latin America have been taught that the man is always in charge and the woman is silent even in the face of injustice...Now I know that we have to speak out... I am going to denounce them publicly without fear."

María del Rosario de Cerruti

Member of Madres of the Plaza de Mayo, mothers challenging Argentina's terrorist government that had abducted their children

Social Equality

"Why is it so important to promote and safeguard gender equality? It is a matter of human rights... democracy... and pure common sense."

Gro Harlem Brundtland

Former prime minister of Norway

"Leave out the women, and you don't have a full and robust economy. Lead with the women, and you do."

Maria Shriver

Author of The Shriver Report: A Woman's Nation Pushes Back from the Brink

"The Constitution says: 'We the people of the United States...not we the white male citizens...'"

Susan B. Anthony

19th century suffrage leader

"Until people – individuals and societies – have a legitimate place at the table, and are heard, we will not have lasting peace. We may have an absence of violence, but that is not the same thing."

Susanne Terry

Alternative dispute resolution mediator