

Spirit of Sedona

Thank you. I'm honored and I feel *very* proud to be here – I'm proud to be part of Sedona's culture of "giving back."

Tracey McConnell, who organized a large part of this event, asked me to say something "inspiring" today. That felt like a lot of pressure for me. What I am *I* going to say to a roomful of *you*? A room that is jam-packed with philanthropists and volunteers – "do-gooders" who have been doing good since long before I was even born. What can I tell you that you don't already know? I didn't know – I don't know, so I'm just going to talk for a few moments about something that feels really important to *me*. I'm going to talk about power.

This room is positively *brimming* with power. It's *overflowing* and everyone in here has a tremendous amount of it. All of us experience our power in different ways, depending on who we are and what we care most about. The way you experience *your* power – or that I experience mine - might be in the form of position. Or relationships. It might look like money or access to resources. All of this is *wonderful*, and it really counts - but it *isn't* the kind of power I'm talking about. What *I'm* talking about, I believe, is the most powerful power of all– and it's a kind that *everybody* can access, when they decide to. It comes from here, our heart and our soul. It's in the quality of our presence. It's in our beliefs and our attitude. And it's in our voice – our words and actions. Through our everyday words and actions, we shape not only our own lives, but also the lives of those around us. And through our everyday words and actions, we *can*, in fact, choose to work together to help change our world. Every one of us has an impact; every one of us makes some sort of a difference. The *kind* of difference we make is totally up to us. To each of us. Whether we use our power to do good or harm; whether we serve ourselves or the greater good.... this is all up to us... it's a *choice*.

If you're like me, sometimes you step out of your power; you give it away. For me, this might feel like being overwhelmed or stressed; I place blame; I get reactive instead of proactive and I get obsessed – and pretend that my own little microcosm is the center of the whole world. I don't know why any of us do this, exactly. Maybe we're scared; we're tired; we think we're too busy or we're concerned with our own lives... For whatever reason, we give our power away and choose *not* to make a difference; or we choose *not* to consider the impact we have on everything outside of ourselves.

But my hope is that we can *all* overcome our perceived obstacles and choose to connect, or perhaps *re*-connect with our power. I do this by slowing down; by seeking stillness and calm; by focusing on my breath and by remembering to practice gratitude in everyday things. I hope you do whatever works for you and that we *all* step into our own power. And I hope we choose to use this power for good and that we choose to change our world for the better, in big ways... in small ways. *All* of it matters.

My hope is that we move forward in a spirit of togetherness, in collaboration. That we operate *every day* with more kindness, compassion, love. That we can accept more responsibility; that we focus more on listening than talking; that we give more attention to gratitude. And I hope that more of us can focus on *possibility* and all of the ways in which we *can* effect positive change, rather than focusing on perceived limitations. I hope we can spend less of our energy feeding the drama that exists all around us, all of the time. And that, instead, we spend *more* of our energy taking measurable action, where action is needed.

All of this is a choice. It's a *decision*. And it's a decision that we make over and over, from moment to moment, as life unfolds before us. I hope we can *all* tap into our power and that we use it wisely and with care. I hope we choose, collectively, to use it to serve the greater good, and that we do it with a long-term vision in mind.