

TAKING ROOT: The Vision of Wangari Maathai

A Film by Lisa Merton & Alan Dater

Selected Quotes from the Film

"We approached the women and tried to make a relationship between environmental problems and their daily problems . . . And we called the foresters. They came and they talked to women. They did not really see why I was trying to teach women how to plant trees. Because to plant a tree you need a diploma! I said, 'well, I don't think you need a diploma to plant a tree.' "

Wangari Maathai

"Culture is coded wisdom. . . Wisdom that has been accumulated for thousands of years and generations. Some of that wisdom is coded in our ceremonies, it is coded in our values, it is coded in our songs, in our dances, in our plays."

Wangari Maathai

"There was something in our people that had helped them conserve those forests. They were not looking at trees and seeing timber. They were not looking at elephants and seeing ivory. Or looking at the Cheetahs and seeing the beautiful skin for sale. There was no such economic value of these animals so they let them be. It was in their culture to let them be."

Wangari Maathai

"You raise your consciousness to a level where you feel that you must do the right thing, because it is the only right thing to do."

Wangari Maathai

"When I went back home, I was constantly being reminded, I'm an African woman, and so there are certain things I shouldn't do, certain ambitions that I should not entertain. That was a problem for me because I had never thought of myself as an African woman, never thought of myself as a woman to begin with. For me the limit was my capacity, my capability."

Wangari Maathai

"As long as the resources are not adequate, as long as the resources are not being managed properly, as long as the resources are not being shared more equitably, we will be threatened."

Wangari Maathai

"You cannot enslave a mind that knows itself. That values itself. That understands itself."

Wangari Maathai

"Today we are faced with a challenge that calls for a shift in our thinking so that humanity stops threatening its life support system. We are called to assist the earth to heal her wounds. And in the process, heal our own... In the course of history there comes a time when humanity is called to shift to a new level of consciousness. To reach a higher moral ground. A time when we have to shed our fear and give hope to each other. That time is now."

**Excerpts from Wangari Maathai's Nobel Peace Prize
Acceptance Speech, 2004**