

My moment with Dr. Maya Angelou - RIP sweet soul

Written by Lisa Nichols, Motivating the Masses
Monday, 02 June 2014 12:54

It's funny how no matter how hard you try to plan for it, you can never ever anticipate the very moments when your life will change forever.

Yesterday I had one of those moments.

I've got my bags and I'm reading the signs, trying to make my way through a group of people to catch the next ferry to get to my next meeting on another island for Motivating the Masses and I get a text with the news that Dr. Maya Angelou - a legend - has passed and gone on to meet her Maker.

Wow.

And then this surge of emotions starts rushing through my blood and my heart starts pounding. I can't control it. I'm just trying to keep walking to catch that next ferry so I'm not late for my meeting.

And then it's over. My eyes are welling up and the memories are flooding back. And I allow the tears to stream down my face and ruin my mascara.

But don't you mistake my tears for sadness. Don't you dare.

My tears were movement. Gratitude. Deep, deep gratitude for a woman that had a profound influence on my life.

Let me take you back for just a moment...

It's 2000. I've just launched my career as a speaker and I'm just a baby. Nervous and fresh and ready to take on the world.

And I'm staring right at THE Dr. Maya Angelou. I'm in total and complete awe standing in a room filled to the brim with journalists, flashing lights and people just begging to get two seconds with this world-changer.

And God saw it fit to give me a moment with her. We made eye contact, she stares right through me, and I ask her, "Can I come sit next to you?"

She accepts.

I'm stunned and all of these questions are racing through my head. I'm in total awe sitting next to this giant soul!

At the time, I didn't see any evidence that I could be a tenth or even an eighth of who she was.

I remember the cameras just flashing continuously (and intrusively), and for some reason, she wanted to be present with me. She wanted to give me her undivided attention.

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And I'll never forget this...

Dr. Maya Angelou holds up her hand signaling the cameras to stop and she just keeps it in the air for a moment. And it was in this moment that she taught me a life-changing lesson.

She says, "I don't mind you taking photos of me, but it would be kind if you would ask me first."

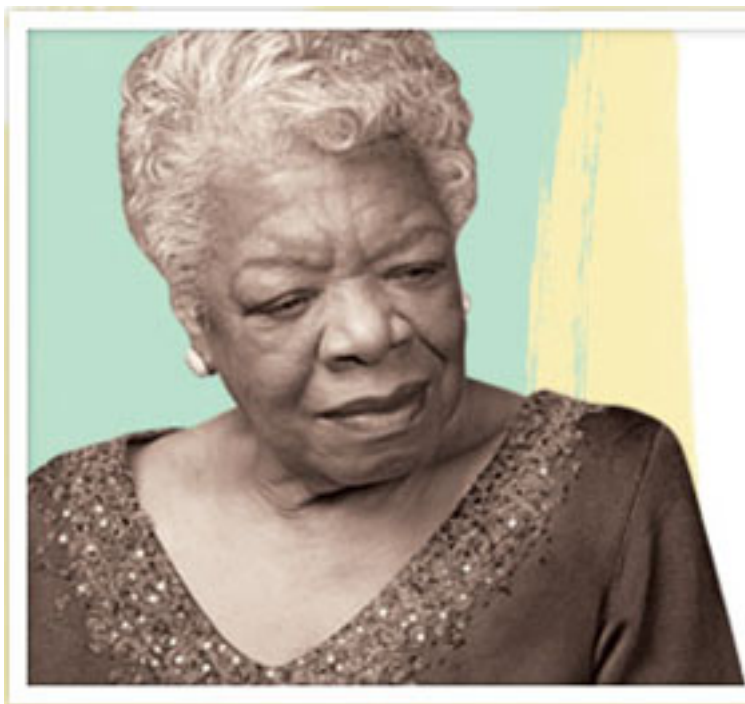
That was a lesson that went dormant for years because I was too young to get it.

Then she turns to me and I share the poem I've written. I pour my everything into it, and at the end, she looks at me and says, "You will be a gifted speaker and you will gather many."

I felt like I had been knighted! Like I had been crowned by her generosity and her attentiveness to me. She gave me HER moment and gifted me sixty seconds of her time.

THIS moment has been one of the pillars I have lived and worked off of for the last fourteen years.

I'm blown away thinking about it now. Blown away.



Dr. Maya Angelou,

Thank you for teaching me that your soul can come across your lips and it can change you and change the world. That freedom lives in your ability to form the right words. That words give texture to your thoughts, meaning to your expression and then those words go out and give meaning to the world.

Thank you for teaching me how to shape my words so that others could hear my message.

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Thank you for giving me just a moment. Later on I learned that lesson you were trying to teach me. That even as a public figure you still have the right to request respect and honor.

That as the creator, as the artist, I write my own rules.

Later that same day she delivered a poem and she did something I've never seen done before or after that day.

She broke into a song!

She disrupted everything I knew about poetry. I remember screaming in my head,

"How can she do that? She broke the rules! She can't do it!"

And just like that - almost as quickly as she started singing, she stopped and went back to speaking.

So, thank you, Dr. Maya Angelou, for showing me what was possible. No limits.

Millions have been inspired not only through you, but because of YOU working through me and me reaching millions.

Your words have followed me and today we celebrate your sweet soul.

*You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may tread me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.*

(an excerpt from Still I Rise, Maya Angelou)

So my sweet, sweet Dr. Maya Angelou, I love you. I want my life to be a ripple in a pond - a ripple that never ends.

Thank you for every moment, every breath, every word you gave to create magic in me and countless others.

No matter what - I will rise.

Love,



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Lisa

PS - I want to know how you will RISE above today. What's that thing holding you back that you're going to go beyond? No matter what it will NOT keep you down. < <https://wgy87770.informationsoft.com/app/linkClick/18723/b6655d47d6fcbbe7/20443931/43b8fa48e18ee9e1>

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