

# Dancing with Words Dancing With Wisdom (4)

## Marilyn Nyborg

Dr. Janet: Today I'm interviewing Marilyn Nyborg. Marilyn has such a wealth of experience. I hardly know where to start in introducing her.

She was a high-tech recruiter in Silicon Valley for 25 years. She's co-founder of Gather the Women Global Matrix and Indivisible Women. She's the founder of Women Waking the World. She's a master networker with 45 years of connections in women's leadership and women's circles. She's the author of a book, *Sacred Activism for Women*. She's a speaker, she's a teleseminar leader, and she's producer of a video *The Book of Jane: The Story of Woman*. A lot of Marilyn's focus right now is on sacred activism, to develop an international network to restore feminine wisdom, values and influence in the service of all life.

Marilyn, welcome. Clearly, you have a very strong sense of life purpose. Where did that begin for you? What started you on this very fascinating path you've been on?

Marilyn: Well, it's interesting because what I was thinking about was it's really quite evolutionary, following the stages of one's life. Although the theme has always been the same, shall we say, it has taken different forms as I've grown older and as I've gained more experience.

When did it start? Probably after I was married, had children, lived a traditional life, and then began to look outside of myself and my home and began to recognize that there are a lot of things needed in the world. That probably occurred for me in my 30s, I would guess. By then I had three children pretty well launched and began to be really called to another mission. That's where it took off. As I said, it has expressed itself in many different forms as well.

Dr. Janet: I can see that. That's pretty obvious.

In terms of this “calling” that you experienced, can you talk a little more about that, what that felt like, whether it was insights or whether it was suddenly sudden shifts in the way you looked at the world, or was it external experiences that happened to you? How did that evolve, this “calling”?

Marilyn: That's a really good question. I think the calling could also be spoken to as an awakening of beginning to recognize what was going on around me and the

culture in the world itself, and seeing or feeling like I could see what was needed to bring about a more loving and compassionate world. That drew me.

My beginnings were actually in what we then called "civil rights." That went on for about a good 15 years in working in and around the African-American community. That was a real learning for me.

We have different terms for all of that now. We talk about our "white privilege." We didn't do that back then, but I did a lot in the area of fair housing and in bringing multicultural education into the school district. That was my starting point of activism.

Dr. Janet: Just to clarify for our audience, you do have a white skin, right?

Marilyn: Very white, yes.

Dr. Janet: Yet you became very involved in multicultural and multiracial communities.

Dr. Janet: Yes, I did, ~~I did~~. That was the beginning for me. It was very interesting. This was back in the era when we were also dealing with the John Birch Society. You can see how things have sort of evolved or changed.

But it was interesting, because those of us that were working together, black and white and whatever, really became a community in what we were doing. At the same time, I realized that we stirred the anger that each of us held, and we supported the frustration that each of us held. It was not an easy work at any rate.

That began to change for me over the years as I then evolved into another stage of my life, which was wake up, be conscious. What does that mean? I spent a number of years delving intowith my own personal conditioning as well as sitting in groups, learning and teaching at the same time to others.

There was an incredible outreach in an organization called Creative Initiative Foundation. That was another incredibly big opening. We began to really explore the world in its oneness and its unity and what that means and way beyond separation. It was coming together and that was a beautiful experience. It was another ten years of my life.

Dr. Janet: You mentioned dealing with your anger. What was that experience like for you?

Marilyn: Well, I would say that in those early days, there was a camaraderie. We liked being together and we liked what we were doing. We didn't like that we had to

do it. It was not unlike the times we're in right now. There's lots of anger and fear and upset. We tended to fan that in one another.

So, what did I do with it? I probably worked with it and in it for a long time until I began to see that anger, shall we say, and fear simply creates more anger and more fear. That was a very big lesson for me that to be angry in the world creates and fans the flames of further anger and upset.

I began to look at myself, what was triggering me and why did I have to go there, and instead looking at other ways of dealing with the things that I didn't happen to agree with, without demonizing others or keeping myself in a constant level of anger and fear. I talked to a woman the other day in our area, and given the current climate, she said we have anger fatigue.

Dr. Janet: Before the break, Marilyn was talking ~~a little bit~~ about ~~just~~ this just "being in anger" and "being in rage" and what a destructive place it is to be. I, too, have struggled with rage, and perhaps in some of the same areas, certainly rage over male adultery and rage over being verbally abused by men, slandered by men.

I think it was really important for me to feel that rage, and yet to be in that space is very energy draining. I found that I could take that rage, which is a really powerful energy, and transform it from rage against into passion for women standing in their own truth, their own authenticity, their own power, setting appropriate boundaries, learning to say, "No, I will not support that because it does not support my values."

That's been my own experience with anger. Being passionate for something is just a much better use of that same energy and force. It also brings you into a "power with" position.

Marilyn: I couldn't have said that any better myself.

Dr. Janet: I was going to ask you another question. We're not going to begin to cover all the topics we could talk about here. But this whole discussion of "power with," another very strong experience for me was aligning my energy with — I'm going to use the words — "a Power greater than myself." You can use the word "God," "Allah," or "Universal Energy." There are a lot of different words you can stick on this experience of feeling aligned with — let's use the word s — "a Power greater than myself." Is that part of your experience as well, Marilyn?

Marilyn: Absolutely, absolutely. I might refer to that as "creation." But yes, we're talking about the same thing, and I think it's very important for that alignment.

One of the reasons that spurred me into this book was watching women becoming politically active all of a sudden, in great numbers, and recognizing that just because you're a woman does not mean that you do things from the feminine power or even from the positive. I've watched women get really, really angry and happily go out there and scream and yell their anger.

My stance is that it is feeding the energy that we don't want. What would it mean if we, all of a sudden, turned our attention, our ideas and our desires towards what we wanted?

Now, I'm part of the "resistance movement," but I have to say I don't like the word "resistance." I really believe resist not evil. That to me means don't give attention to what you don't want. I think we get so engaged in our anger and what we don't want to see happening that we continue to feed the flame of what we don't want. I think we have enormous tools to create what we want and that we need to give that some attention and not hold the negativity.

I posted the other day that they say stress actually cuts your life short. We have created so much stress. As I said, my friend referred to it as "anger fatigue." But I think you have to take your anger and your rage and go within yourself to transform it, as you just spoke to so beautifully, and bring that out. I would rather stand for something than rage against something.

Dr. Janet: For me, a really simple example of that would be we can fight against, which is this "power against" dynamic which we see so much of these days. ~~we~~ we can fight against injustice, or we can stand passionately for justice and fairness. There's a whole different energy in those two concepts. It's a little shift in words and a little shift in focus that makes a huge shift in energy.

Marilyn: And in the results that we want to see happen, absolutely.

Dr. Janet: Yes, and in the results. So, when you're looking at the things that really matter to you, can you give us some examples of what you think is really important for us to be standing for — each of us individually and then all together?

Marilyn: Well, from my perspective, because most of my work during the last 40 to -50 years has been with women, first, we talked about becoming empowered.

About 15 years ago, I thought we *were* empowered. What we were lacking was mobilization. Now we have mobilization, and now we have to look at what it is that we're bringing to the party that's different from the patriarchy y or the men's movement and what they've been bringing to the party. I think we have to begin to focus on that and find power in that and identify our values as not only

important but powerful, and (values that) would make a really big difference in the lives of people.

And injustice, that's a big issue for me as well, and to bring that into a form of justice rather than injustice. I think the divine feminine has lots to teach us.

Dr. Janet: How do you see the way women think as being different from the way men think? Or, is it different? That's a question we will come back to.

I'm jotting notes down as you're talking because I think I'm looking for clarity about some of the terms you're using. For example, when we use that word "feminine," are we talking about a woman who is still stuck in her personal conditioning, or are we talking about a woman who has become aware of her power and is using her power? It seems to me they are very different states of consciousness.

Marilyn: Absolutely. It's interesting because that was the question: do you see a difference between the way men think and women think? Yes, I do. I *do* think that each woman has within her the innate instincts of the feminine.

However, we are all in various (states of) understanding and consciousness of what that is. We have a culture that has made those qualities wrong or weak or not respected. Too many of us are still imprinted with that sense. We are very, very cautious in terms of how we might think, for example, that to be feminine is to stay home, be a mother, and a good wife.

Then we go beyond that. I think I woke up a few months ago or a year ago and said, "What the world really needs is being mothered — and to go beyond our children — to begin to mother the world itself. That means starting with Mother Earth and the sacredness of life itself and caring for individual people and their needs.

Yes, I do think that we think differently. We have a mutual friend in Sharon, and she talks about the male design was to basically support and protect the feminine. What I see has happened is they've moved from protection to ownership of the feminine, i.e., of women, and that has been the burden we've carried now for generations.

We're just beginning. We've been talking about it for — I don't know how many years — a hundred years? We haven't even been voting for that long, for that matter. Yes, we definitely think differently. There are lots of holdovers from the patriarchal models that have been designed that we all live under and by.

Dr. Janet: Those are interesting comments. I guess I've experienced it a little bit differently, in that, as a woman, growing up, certainly, I felt very naturally free and empowered by my parents. I was very fortunate. ~~U~~until I became a teenager, and then I felt this tension between being who I was and doing the things I love to do and being told that I ought to go wear high heels and paint my fingernails and paint my face so that I would be able to get myself a husband. God forbid that I should become an old maid in a laboratory someplace, because I was fascinated with biology or math!

I know there was that conditioning, the societal conditioning which created tension for me. It felt as if there was something wrong with me, because I was really bright in school, but I didn't get asked out on a lot of dates. This is from hindsight. At the time, I didn't know what was going on. But from hindsight, I think I was threatening to guys who were looking for sex at that point in their lives, when the testosterone was flowing so freely through their bodies.

Again, a lot of this is from hindsight, but it seems to me that control of the money system is also control of the sexual supply. If you prevent women from earning as much as men for the same kind of work; if you don't allow them to vote; if you don't allow them to own property; if you don't allow them to do a lot of things because they are women; you are, in effect, controlling the sexual supply and making it much more available.

That has been my own evaluation of what's going on. It's not an easy barrier for women to break through, particularly after they become pregnant, and they have children to care for, and they have a very intimate role in caring for the children. You cannot be both a good mother and also be out working full time, because our bodies and our physical makeup, to some extent, limit what we can do. But yes, I think women naturally are loving and giving, and it sometimes is an Achilles heel because men then use women and discard them. Do you have any comments about any of that?

Marilyn: I think the good news that I'm seeing among the younger men is when I go out on a Sunday and see men pushing the stroller or the buggy. It's beginning to change — where it is a cooperative effort to raise a child. In my era and probably in yours, my husband went to work and supplied the money and the food on the table, and I maintained everything else within the range at home. I think times are changing and it's just bloody slow.

Dr. Janet: Before the break, we started to talk about the obvious physical and biological differences between men and women, which do affect both the way we experience the world and perhaps the tasks that come most naturally to us in the world.

You were commenting, Marilyn, about the fact that you're beginning to notice a lot more men becoming better parents in the family and perhaps more women going out and bringing in the money, which was very different from the way things were when you and I grew up. There may be a shifting into a "working together more" or sharing the power, sharing the responsibilities, rather than fitting men and women into very different [role goals](#). I think you had mentioned you had a story you wanted to tell?

Marilyn: Yes, I would share this. When Trump was elected, a coworker of mine I hadn't talked to in quite a few years actually called me. He called me about something entirely different. Then I said to him, "So what do you think of the new guy?" and he just about took my ear off screaming and said he loved Trump. He just thought [he](#) was fabulous.

Then he went off on how there's a war on men. In our business, which was recruiting high tech engineers, he said they only want minorities and women. "I've got this perfectly good guy who really fits, but they don't want him." He was just enraged. Then he went on about the war on men.

Actually, I put this up on YouTube too. It's called "A Letter to Men." Basically, what I said to him is "Welcome to the club, but there's been a war on women for centuries."

In essence, there comes a time when we have to bring ourselves into some level of balance. Sometimes the pendulum swings in different directions. This is a transitional time. I don't think it is meant to keep us separate. It may mean that we have to do that for a while to begin to adjust ourselves into an emerging new system, if you will.

I think also that we have to get away from what we define as "masculine" and what we define as "feminine." Yes, structurally, we're different. We do think differently, but we've been enculturated to think differently with all of the attention given to male attributes as being superior and female attributes as being very nice, but basically passive.

[A W](#)omen has [ve](#) to begin to peel away the patriarchal mind that lives within [her](#) and take [her](#) place and take her stand for her truth and her values. We're in an amazing time right now. I don't believe there's a war on men. I think there is a transitional time that means we're all having to adjust.

I think, as I said, in some of the new couples that I see that are coming together, they're doing so in a greater level of partnership. The fact is that women are now making as much and sometimes more than the men are making in the household. It is a real shifting time.

I think we have to hold the highest value for both men and women to come together and to create a family. I think family is extraordinarily important, and we have to put some energy there. We have to make it so that our children are not being raised with the same conditions of the patriarchal conditioning that we have lived under.

It's an exciting time. I like to say that when women rise, all humanity is lifted. When women rise, all humanity is lifted.

Dr. Janet: So, we need to help women rise and perhaps help men rise too out of their societal conditioning.

Marilyn: They have to be as comfortable with their capacity to nurture as we have to become comfortable with our capacity to be the mother bear in the world.

Dr. Janet: That's not always easy. At least I don't find it easy to be a mother bear. It feels as if it goes very much against my natural instincts.

Marilyn: Is it your instincts or is it your conditioning?

Dr. Janet: I think it's a combination. However, I surprised myself recently when I was on the subway in Atlanta Airport with a very tight schedule to make a connecting flight. I was sitting down. I went to stand up to get off. The train was mobbed and nobody was moving. I didn't think twice. I said, "Move! I need to get out!" And people woke up, paid attention, moved out of my way, and I barely got off that train.

So I think a lot of that is just being aware of your own needs in the moment and asserting when you need to, when other people around you aren't paying any attention to what you might need. Sometimes you have to do it with a great deal of assertiveness and force.

Marilyn: Exactly, exactly. In our current conditioning, most people are lost in their digital equipment and may not even be aware of the station they're in without someone calling attention to it. We all go off into these other worlds.

Dr. Janet: We could have a discussion, too, about artificial intelligence and electronics these days.

Marilyn: And the rewiring of the young minds, yes indeed.

Dr. Janet: Before the break, we started to talk about the effect of electronics on our ability to connect with one another in this world. It seems as if we're always connecting



with one another through concepts or electronics rather than simply being in presence, which to me means Ram Dass's "Be Here Now" with whatever is going on in our lives right here, right now. Do you have any comments about that, Marilyn?

Marilyn: Well, I think it's something we're all questioning because we don't really understand it or where it's going. I do think that the younger generation, like every generation, has done things differently. They have a different world that they are negotiating. It's digital and it's on the web and it's all over at one time throughout the world.

I look on it as the great mystery. We don't know where it's going to take [us](#)~~it~~. You can see some of the downsides. There's no question about that.

One of the things that we mentioned in the book is a program we've been initiating here called Living Room Conversations. Actually, I like to consider them more like listening [cafés](#), if you will. That is where we bring people together to just listen to one another, face to face, eyeball to eyeball. It's a wonderful way of putting your digital equipment down and actually speaking your truth and your concerns out loud without interruption.

I'm happy to see that both Pope John and the Dalai Lama have said we've got to stop talking so much and start listening. I think that this is also true for those of us who are attached to our electronic equipment. We have to make room for one-on-one, the personal connection, the touch, the feeling, being in the room and understanding the energy of the other person.

You don't do that online. The people who try to speak intimately and passionately online get misconstrued because you can't see them. You can't feel them. There is the good news and the bad news and I think it's fascinating. No answer. It's just fascinating.

Dr. Janet: Well, yes, I think it's fascinating [too](#). All the electronic media offers us almost instant information when we have a question.

I think it's almost as if we're moving into Teilhard de Chardin's Noosphere of information exchange. Yet, it takes us out of just being here now in our own bodies, with our own emotions and our own thoughts and our own minds, and also [listening](#) not only to the other people around [us](#), but also to nature and to the atmosphere that we're in. Maybe it transcends the words, because it feels ~~both~~ very passive, but there's also an intensity and an aliveness to being in that State of Consciousness where you are just present with whatever is going on.

Marilyn: I totally agree with what you're saying and the fact that it's beyond words, because it's even beyond our imagination in terms of where it could go. I love your analogy between the Noosphere and the Internet. Little did Teilhard know where this was going, but I think that's a very good analogy actually.

Dr. Janet: I know that's the way I think of it. I don't know what I would do without my ability to Google something when I have a question. But at the same time, I know it's very important to me, when I'm with other people or when I'm in nature, to simply “be here now” with whatever is going on.

In your book *A Women's Guide to Sacred Activism*, you make a distinction between judgment and discernment. That's a distinction that I've also found very useful. Do you want to talk briefly about that?

Marilyn: Between judgment and discernment. I don't know that I can talk about it. I think I wrote about it, and I'm trying to remember everything I happened to say. It was a very great discussion at that time, because we were trying to figure out what is the distinction.

Without answering that question, I think the main thing is that when we begin to question what we think we know, ~~that~~ we begin to question the power of our language, as you do so beautifully in your book. I loved it. I think we don't recognize the power of our thoughts, of our mind. I think that's something that we have to begin to apply now to the conditions we find ourselves in in the world.

We often use those "spiritual tools" for our family, for ourselves, for our world, for our finances, what have you. I don't know that there's enough of us that are applying those visualizations, those prayers, if you will, meditating on what we want the world to look like now. I think it's desperately needed.

It's a powerful tool that we tend not to think about when it comes to politics, for example, but imagine spending your morning — maybe when you get up for 15 minutes — envisioning the world you want, envisioning the best for Trump — that he take off and do other things. I think he should pick up golf myself. We can't keep feeding him negativity is what I'm saying.

Now, I know I've avoided your question beautifully, but nonetheless, the distinction is written in the book.

Dr. Janet: Well, I'll just throw in a couple of my own thoughts here. One is judgment focuses on other people and what they're doing wrong, whereas discernment is simply noticing what's going on within yourself. When you're discerning, you're

taking your power back. When you're judging someone else, you're giving your power away to them.

Marilyn: I'd like to think that's what we kind of came up with. There was so much packed into those few pages. It was only 88 pages.

Dr. Janet: So, Marilyn, we've just got a short time left to wrap this up. Why don't you tell us a little bit about your book, *A Women's Guide to Sacred Activism*? How do we move forward?

Marilyn: Well, thank you. I think you'll find the book covers a lot of the areas we've been talking about this morning. You can find the book on Amazon, by the way, as well as Barnes & Noble. It can be found in both places. It's a small book. It's pocket size, so you can carry it with you and read very quickly.

It really covers a lot of territory. What I'm trying to do is get people to get in touch with what motivates ~~them~~you. Are you motivated from fear and anger or are you motivated from the love of the possible and the different outcomes each will bring?

We get into motivation. We get into ideas of what you can do, ways of evaluating your time and your efforts. There's a short bio to get a little sense of how I got here and what brought me to this point.

Anyway, it's a fun little book, and I have seen lovely comments about it on Amazon reviews. I hope I can refer your listeners to that. Anyway, it was a journey through my life to write this book, to say the least.

Dr. Janet: I will second all those comments. I read Marilyn's book and thoroughly marked it up as I went through, and I thought, "Yes~~sah~~, she's nailed that. Yes~~sah~~, she's right on that." I have had those thoughts, too.

Particularly I guess for women, get this book, *A Women's Guide to Sacred Activism: How Do We Move Forward and How Do We Move Forward Together?*

Marilyn: Men can read it too. They just will learn something about women.

Dr. Janet: Or about themselves.

Marilyn: And about themselves.

(To be coded as transforming anger into right action and what we humans do with words.)