

# WHO DO WE CHOOSE TO BE

Facing Reality | Claiming Leadership | Restoring Sanity

## DISCUSSION GUIDE: “Interconnectedness”

“Nothing living lives alone” (p218). So much of American culture praises independence. If Wheatley is right, how does our “rugged individualism” and lifting up of the self, keep us from living?

“Interconnectedness is a relationship among equals bound together in networks of mutuality... If you don’t honor the other as equal, relationships are wicked problems, not possibilities. Throughout the Universe—from elementary particles to people—relationships are the only way that potential can manifest in physical reality. Relationships are the fabric of creation” (p230). How does living interconnected lives lead to creativity and life?

Invasive species are destructive because they don’t work from collaboration: they take everything for themselves and wreak havoc with their insatiable appetite. Predatory invaders destroy the delicate harmony and balance that an ecosystem creates for itself. Without any doubt, humans are the greatest invasive species on Earth” (p220). How are invasive species and predatory invaders kept in check? How can humanity “check itself before it wrecks itself”?

“The distress and dysfunction caused by feeling isolated, victimized, invisible cannot be treated by focusing on the individual. it’s not an individual weakness—it’s a failure of community. Mental health and well-being are the responsibility of the community...

Humans need to be together. it’s in our biology, our evolution, our human spirits. We cannot live in isolation from one another without experiencing fear and trauma. Of course we’re facing unparalleled levels of mental distress as we withdraw from one another in self-protection” (p259).

What does it look like for a community to take responsibility for and tend to the mental health and well-being of each of its members?

How do fearful, isolated, and mentally distressed persons (i.e. anyone living in the chaos of our time) learn to trust, live interconnected lives, and find joy in community?

## NEXT WEEK

read chapter 6-7, “Interconnectedness” (p. 292-320)