

**MAYA
ANGELOU**

"A bird doesn't sing
because it has an
answer, it sings because
it has a song."



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Maya Angelou

Four Ideas to Live By

These quotes come from the "Master Class" series
which aired on the OWN network in 2011

We are all children of God: "If I think of my life as a class, and what I've really learned. I've learned a few things. First, I'm aware that I'm a child of God. It's such an amazing understanding, to think that the "It" which made fleas and mountains, rivers and stars . . . made me. What I pray for is humility to know that there is something greater than "I". And I have to know that the brute, the bigot, and the batterer are all children of God, whether they know it or not, and I'm *supposed* to treat them accordingly. It's hard, and I blow it all the time."

We can be rainbows in other people's clouds: "Prepare yourself so you that can be a rainbow in somebody else's cloud; somebody that may not look like you, may not call God the same name that you call God, if they call God at all, you see? And may not eat the same dishes prepared the way you do, may not dance your dances, or speak your language. But, be a *blessing* to somebody. That's what I think."

We can stretch beyond the conditions of our birth: "If a human being dreams a great dream, dares to love somebody; if a human being dares to be Martin King, or Mahatma Gandhi, or Mother Theresa, or Malcolm X; if a human being dares to be bigger than the condition into which she or he was born—it means so can you. And so you can try to stretch, stretch, stretch yourself so you can internalize, '*Homo sum, humani nil a me alienum puto*. I am a human being, nothing human can be alien to me.' That's one thing I'm learning."

By letting the voices of others into our ears: "I am grateful to have been loved and to be loved now and to be able to love, because that liberates. Love liberates. It doesn't just hold—that's ego. Love liberates. It doesn't bind. Love says, 'I love you. I love you if you're in China. I love you if you're across town. I love you if you're in Harlem. I love you. I would like to be near you. I'd like to have your arms around me. I'd like to hear your voice in my ear. But that's not possible now, so I love you. Go.'"