



What Breaks Your Heart?, by Maria Shriver

What breaks your heart? What does your soul long for? And, how is that connected to how you are living your life now?

I love this question because it's made me think about my passion and purpose in a whole new way. I wanted to share it with you today because I believe this is a question that applies to all of us. And, I also believe that the answer lies deep within each and every one of us.

I deeply believe that each of us is here to move humanity forward. I deeply believe that each and every one of us longs to be of service to others, and also to live our lives in a way that matters.

"What breaks your heart?" is about the best question I've ever heard to help you get closer to your soul's longing and closer to your life's passion and purpose. But, I think before you can even answer that question, you must first acknowledge that your heart is broken, or has been broken.

I think we often think heartbreak is the result of lost love. Of course, it can be, but heartbreak also happens when what you value isn't valued by society, by your community, or by others.

For example, what broke my mother's heart was the way that society treated those with intellectual disabilities, and so she created the Special Olympics. One of the things that broke my father's heart was poverty -- financial poverty and spiritual poverty -- and so he created the War on Poverty. My daughter's heart breaks when animals are abused and left by the side of the road, and so she wrote a book about it, "Maverick and Me." My other daughter's heart breaks when she witnesses how indifferent and insensitive people are to those struggling with mental health, and so she writes articles that promote understanding of these issues. And so it goes

There are several things that break my heart today. It's broken by the fact that we still don't have a cure for Alzheimer's. It's broken by the injustice so many work so hard, yet still live paycheck to paycheck. It's broken by the state of our criminal justice system. It's broken listening to women speak out against the abuse they endured for far too long.

But, what really breaks my heart right now is how divided we are. How mean we are to one another. How critical we are of one another. How judgmental we are of each other and how angry we are at each other. Also, how lonely we all seem to be.

Yet, what moves me is the deep belief that we are all longing for the same things. We are all longing to be accepted, to be seen and

understood, and to be invited into the space that unites us.

This space, I believe, is a big open field filled with dreamers and explorers. It's filled with teachers and doctors, with mothers and fathers, and with the young and the old.

What breaks my heart is also what simultaneously fills and fuels my heart. It is a deep belief that we are more alike than we are different. It is the belief that we long to be more united than separate. It is the belief that we ache and break and want to put the pieces back together again, and that we want to do it together.

I'm not saying the anger that many of us feel today is not justified. But, let's parlay our anger into action and allow it to fuel our purpose. I envision all of us with broken hearts coming together to heal and get to work, mending the crack in our divide.

This is what breaks my heart, but what breaks yours? I'd love to know.

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