



Climate Changed Podcast Discussion Guide **Season 2, Episode 5**

Guest: Margaret Wheatley

Title: *Am I the Right Person?*

Welcoming Activity

Our co-hosts, Ben and Nicole, began the episode by describing one practice that each of them maintains to ground themselves and which allows them to continue on as climate professionals. Practices of grounding, centering, or reflection can sustain a person through the painful realities of climate change and social injustice. These also serve as ways of remembrance — reminders of who we are and why we do what we do. Go around the group so each person can tell everyone the following: who you are, an example of work that you find meaningful, and one practice which keeps you grounded.

Introduction To Episode

In this episode, best-selling author and organizational leader Margaret, or Meg, Wheatley teaches us to ask two central questions: *What is needed here?*, and *Am I the right person to contribute?* With much honesty in the face of hard realities, she explains what it means to give up trying to save the world and instead, to seek out meaningful and joyful work that contributes to communities. Meg shares her observations about young generations and why she believes they, too, ought to channel their idealism, anger, and energy towards community work. To further reflect upon his conversation with Meg, Ben speaks with Debra Rienstra, professor of English at Calvin College and author of *Refugia Faith*, about the role of refugia spaces in a climate-changed world.

Discussion Questions

1. After describing the harrowing future that she believes all people are heading towards, Meg says that “once we face reality, there’s such good work to be done... and that work is spiritually based.” How do you relate your spiritually-based good work of today with the distressing conditions of the near future?
2. A word that Meg uses in this episode is joy. How do you describe joy? How do you experience joy?
3. To borrow a question from Meg, what does the “little” world — meaning your family, congregation, school, workplace, local community, and so on — need from you at this time?
4. What are the differences between asking “what’s wrong” and “what’s possible”? What could happen in your community if, rather than paying attention to what is wrong in the world, everyone explored what is possible?
5. Debra Rienstra summarizes refugia, originally a biological concept, as “places where biodiversity can retreat to persist in and potentially expand from in the midst of extreme disturbance.” How do you envision your religious or spiritual community as a refugia in this time of climate crisis and widespread environmental issues?

Closing Activity

Pass out notecards to everyone in the group, one per person, as well as pens/markers. Invite everyone to write on their notecard the two central questions that Meg teaches us:

What is needed here? Am I the right person to contribute?

Invite the group to reflect on where in their lives they want to be reminded of these questions. For example, someone might place their notecard on their desk at work. Another may hang it on the fridge. Once everyone has come up with a location, go around the group and ask each person to share where they will place this reminder and how they imagine these questions could guide them towards meaningful work. Encourage everyone to put their notecards in the location that they imagined.