**10th Form National Poetry Recitation Contest**

**Title of Poem**: Our Deepest Fear

**Writer**: Marianne Williamson

**Link to poem**: <http://skdesigns.com/internet/articles/quotes/williamson/our_deepest_fear/>

**Link to audio recording of the poem**: <https://youtu.be/thtuTxYxUD4>

**About the poet**

****Marianne Williamson is an internationally acclaimed lecturer, activist and author of four #1 New York times bestselling books. Written in 1992, this passage has become a mantra for people who feel underconfident or shy. Williamson urges all of us to believe in our own power, beauty and value. She believes that if we believe in ourselves we will be unstoppable.

**Excerpt**

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.

**Vocabulary:**

Inadequate: not good enough, a failure

Playing small: being meek, or shy or overly modest; feeling we are not good enough

Enlightened: in this case she means clever or wise or all-knowing

Shrinking: to make yourself or something smaller. When we dry an apricot, it shrinks. When someone shouts at us, we shrink.

Make manifest: make real, make visible, make apparent

Liberate: make free

**Discussion Guide:**

How does this excerpt make you feel? Bigger or smaller?

Do you believe Armenians are taught to be

1. Too modest and humble
2. Not modest and humble enough
3. Just right in their assessment of their own strengths and value

Can you imagine talking to a friend about this poem? How might it help him or her?