

# Notable Quotable

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Collected by Caleb Nei

## **Art**

There is no excellent beauty that hath not some strangeness in the proportion.

Francis Bacon

The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science.

Albert Einstein in *Why I Believe*

The sole substitute for an experience which we have not ourselves lived through is art and literature.

Alexander Isayevich Solyhenitsyn

Hell is a half-filled auditorium.

Robert Frost

Sola, sola, wo ha, ho, sola!

William Shakespeare

Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication.

Leonardo da Vinci

Entertainers are very weird. They expose their souls for a living to strangers.

Johnny Carson

My goal as a writer is to write the greatest book I can possibly write. My goal as a Christian is to be willing to release a bad book.

Donald Miller from the interview on the Relevant Podcast Feb 23, 07

Commercialism is to art as water is to a boat- it can keep a boat afloat, but it can also capsize it.

Lee Shen Ting in at interview on Studio360 11-16-07.

Very often audacity and not talent makes one person an artist and another a shadow artist.

Julia Cameron

My aim is to omit everything superfluous so that the essential is shown to the best possible advantage.

Dieter Rams

## Coffee

Coffee should be black as hell, strong as death, and sweet as love.

Turkish Proverb

Way too much coffee. But if it weren't for the coffee, I'd have no identifiable personality whatsoever.

David Letterman

I believe humans get a lot done, not because we're smart, but because we have thumbs so we can make coffee.

Flash Rosenberg

Sleep is a symptom of caffeine deprivation.

Unknown

Decaffeinated coffee is kind of like kissing your sister.

Bob Irwin

Coffee makes the world go round, love only populates it!

Unknown

Coffee in England is just toasted milk.

Unknown

I have measured out my life in coffee spoons.

T. S. Eliot from The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock

Racine will go out of style like coffee.

Marie de Rabutin-Chantal, Marquise de Sévigné

When we drink coffee, ideas march in like the army.

Honore de Balzac

Coffee comes in five descending stages: Coffee, Java, Jamoke, Joe, and Carbon Remover

Robert A. Heinlein, Glory Road

A mathematician is a device for turning coffee into theorems.

Paul Erdos, mathematician

Coffee. It's how you know you are still alive.

Garrison Keillor

Every morning I get up and I make instant coffee and I drink it so I'll have enough energy to make the regular coffee.

Steven Wright

## Communication

Headley's first law: When you convey information to another person, that person invariably absorbs said information through the filter of his or her own personal experience.

Headley's second law: The personal experience of an individual is unique and complex and therefore cannot be allowed for, duplicated, or anticipated.

Headley's third law: No matter what you say or how you say it or where or when or why or to whom, no individual is ever going to know exactly what you mean.

Any problem on earth can be solved with the careful application of high explosives. The trick is not to be around when they go off.

Albrecht Mertz von Quirnheim's character in the movie Valkyrie.

## Creativity and Inspiration

I am enough of an artist to draw freely upon my imagination. Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited. Imagination encircles the world.

Albert Einstein

People will know you're serious when you produce.

Muhammad Ali

Completion...not perfection.

Ramon Williamson

Don't Let Your Preoccupation With Reality Stifle Your Imagination.

NASA Institute for Advanced Concepts quoted in The Washington Post Magazine 5-15-05

If everything has to be brilliant from the word go, you're never gonna get off the ground.

Bono in the November 2005 *Rolling Stone* interview

Oh, that's not necessary. It's so seldom that I have one.

Albert Einstein when asked if he carried a notebook to record ideas

"I was working on the proof of one of my poems all the morning and took out a comma," he said.

"And in the afternoon?" she asked.

"In the afternoon...well, I put it back again."

Oscar Wilde

Tomorrow may be hell, but today was a good writing day, and on the good writing days nothing else matters.

Neil Gaiman

You get ideas from daydreaming. You get ideas from being bored. You get ideas all the time. The only difference between writers and other people is we notice when we're doing it.

Neil Gaiman

When a thought takes ones breath away, a lesson on grammar seems impertinence.

Thomas Wentworth Higginson on Emily Dickenson

Making the simple complicated is commonplace; making the complicated simple, awesomely simple, that's creativity.

Charles Mingus

Peace goes into the making of a poem as flour goes into the making of bread.

Pablo Neruda

Those who are not dissatisfied will never make any progress.

Shigeo Shingo

It is fine to be zealous, provided the purpose is good.

The Apostle Paul

If you're not prepared to be wrong, you'll never come up with anything original.

Sir Ken Robinson<sup>1</sup>

I begin with an idea and then it becomes something else.

Pablo Picasso

All children are artists. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up.

Pablo Picasso

The journey is always the only arrival.

Julia Cameron<sup>2</sup>

### **Discipline and Work**

No horse ever gets anywhere until he is harnessed. No steam or gas ever drives anything until it is confined. No Niagara is ever turned into light and power until it is tunneled. No life ever grows great until it is focused, dedicated, disciplined.

Harry Emerson Fosdick

I've never known a man worth his salt who in the long run, deep down in his heart, didn't appreciate the grind, the discipline. ...I firmly believe that any man's finest hour— this greatest fulfillment to all he holds dear— is that moment when he has worked his heart out in a good cause and lies exhausted on the field of battle victorious.

Vince Lombardi

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<sup>1</sup> In a talk at TED.

<sup>2</sup> In her book, *The Artist's Way*.

Life is tons of discipline.

Robert Frost

Eat the elephant, then the giraffe. Always do the hardest thing first.

Richard Parker

If you want something, go get it. Period.

Chris Gardner

If you have to ask how many calories, you shouldn't be eating it

Jeanne Delaney

The real moment of success is the moment not apparent to the crowd.

George Bernard Shaw

Some people regard discipline as a chore. For me, it is a kind of order that sets me free to fly.

Julie Andrews

I was made to work. If you are equally industrious, you will be equally successful.

J. S. Bach

Whole hog, or nothin' at all.

Old Southern Phrase

The will to succeed is important, but what's even more important is the will to prepare.

Bobby Knight

## Dreams

[Speaking of his father.] By not encouraging me to be a musician, even though that's all he ever wanted to be, he's made me one. By telling me to never have big dreams or else, that to dream is to be disappointed, he made me have big dreams.

Bono in the November 2005 *Rolling Stone* interview

Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart.

Psalms 37:4

Asok: What can I do to get a raise?

Catburt: Try rewriting the law of supply and demand.

Dilbert 1-12-08

What got you here won't get you there.

Marshall Goldsmith

Sometimes Christmas makes me cry.

Elena Vega

All you need in this life is ignorance and confidence; then success is sure.

Mark Twain

## Eggs

Put all your eggs in one basket and— WATCH THAT BASKET!

Mark Twain

A hen is only an egg's way of making another egg.

Samuel Butler

What's the use? Yesterday an egg, tomorrow a feather duster.

Mark Fenderson's caption for the cartoon *The Dejected Rooster*

I can suck melancholy out of a song as a weasel sucks eggs.

Shakespeare. *As You Like It II, v, 12*

I've decided life is too fragile to finish a book I dislike just because it cost \$16.95 and everyone else loved it. Or eat a fried egg with a broken yolk (which I hate) when the dog would leap over the St. Louis Arch for it.

Erma Bombeck

The key to everything is patience. You get the chicken by hatching the egg, not by smashing it.

Arnold H. Glasow

## Excellence

Excellence is an art won by training and habitation. We do not act rightly because we have virtue or excellence, but rather we have those because we have acted rightly. We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then, is not an act but a habit.

Aristotle

Do it right the first time, for you may not receive another opportunity.

Unknown

Bob Dylan taught me this: You should let people down. You do not have to live up to people's expectations. And if they have them, well, let them down.

Bono in the November 2005 *Rolling Stone* interview

Good is the enemy of great.

Jim Collins

Don't try to become a person of importance. Try to become a person of value.

Albert Einstein

Even a turkey can fly in a tornado.

Dave Ramsey

## **Fame**

My parents told me that you're not good because you're famous, but you become famous because you're good.

Paloma Picasso quoted in *Elle Décor* September 2005

I remember your name perfectly, but I just can't think of your face.

William Archibald Spooner

In the future everybody will be world famous for fifteen minutes.

Andy Warhol

## **Friendship**

Come on, Mr. Frodo, I can't carry it for you but I can carry you.

Samwise Gamgee in *Lord of the Rings*

## **God and Truth**

The question is not about how much faith you have, it's about what the object of your faith is.

Mary Veilleux

Truth exists, only falsehood has to be invented.

Georges Braque

The greatest truths are the simplest: and so are the greatest men.

A.W. Hare and J.C. Hare

We cannot fathom the mystery of a single flower. Nor is it intended that we should.

John Locke

## Humanity

We live in a time when man, lord of all things, is not lord of himself.

Ortega y Gasset

We can control the movements of a spaceship orbiting about a distant planet, but we cannot control the situation in Northern Ireland.

Arthur Koestler

I often marvel how it is that, though each man loves himself beyond all else, he should yet value his own opinion of himself less than that of others.

Marcus Aurelius

If you sacrifice principle for unity, you will obtain neither.

Unknown

A bank is a place where they lend you an umbrella in fair weather and ask for it back when it begins to rain.

Robert Frost

You may meet a man and think him cold when he is merely sad.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

One thing you can't hide is when you're crippled inside.

John Lennon

Sleep deprivation is one of the most common causes of stupidity in mildly intelligent people.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/h2g2/A261046>

Hurt people, hurt people.

Rick Warren

If you don't release those who have hurt you, you will begin to resemble them.

Rick Warren

And now, with God's help, I shall become myself.

Søren Kierkegaard

Marriage doesn't create problems; it reveals problems that already exist in each person.

Rev. Jim Dobbs

Depression is simply anger without enthusiasm.

Steven Wright

People would rather be embarrassed publicly than ignored privately.

Bob Reno on the MySpace/YouTube phenomenon quoted in *The Washington Post* 7-23-06

I am that cordless screwdriver that has to charge for twenty hours to earn ten minutes of use.

Donald Miller in *Blue Like Jazz*

In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war...

2 Samuel 11:1, 1 Chronicles 20:1

To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was you.

Lewis B. Smedes

Every man is broken into twenty-four hour fractions. It's a daily pantomime, one man yielding control to the next: a backstage crowded with old hacks clamoring for their turn in the spotlight. Every week, every day. The angry man hands the baton over to the sulking man, and in turn to the sex addict, the introvert, the conversationalist. Every man is a mob, a chain gang of idiots.

From *Memento Mori* by John Nolan

The average person has one breast and one testicle.

Dixie Lee Ray

Character is determined more by the lack of certain experiences than by those one has had.

Friedrich Nietzsche

## Humor

How wrong Emily Dickinson was! Hope is not the thing with feathers. The thing with feathers turned out to be my nephew. I must take him to a specialist in Zurich.

Woody Allen

Humor is a very effective vehicle for delivering a more serious thought, not the end in itself. It is often the sugar coating on a more bitter pill.

Pat Oliphant

So what's with the outfit, Lemon? Did the people from the makeover show finally respond to your letter?

Jack Donaghy

## Leadership

I start with the premise that the function of leadership is to produce more leaders, not more followers.

Ralph Nader (restating a concept first taught by Jesus)

Attitude reflect(s) leadership, Captain.

Julius from the movie 'Remember the Titans'

Nothing happens until someone provides leadership for it.

Rick Warren in Ministry Toolbox 207

To know the pains of power, we must go to those who have it. To know its pleasures, we must go to those who are seeking it. The pains of power are real, its pleasures imaginary.

Charles Caleb Colton

Leadership is action, not position.

Donald H. McGannon

Most churches are over-managed and under-led.

Rick Warren in Ministry Toolbox 218

Leaders are readers.

Unknown

It's th' rich folks. They start all the wars- and then yell at us poor folks to come do their dying for them.

Woody Guthrie

The victor is not victorious if the vanquished does not consider himself so.

Ennius

## Life

What is life? It is the flash of a firefly in the night. It is the breath of a buffalo in the wintertime. It is the little shadow which runs along the grass and loses itself in the sunset.

Crowfoot 1821-1890

It is the simplicity of your ordinary work, in the monotonous details of each day, that you have to find the secret, which is hidden from so many, of something great and new: Love.

Saint Josemaria

He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.

From the Journal of Jim Elliot who was killed trying to bring the gospel to the Aucas of South America

My steps were bathed in butter, and the rock poured out for me streams of oil.

Job 29:6

Your calling is simply to be who you were created to be in the place God assigns you.

Gary Barkalow

What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?

Mark 8:36

McDonald's are like dandelions.

Jeanne Dean

If you gonna be dumb you'd better be tough.

John Owen

My problem is I know too much about too many things.

My Father

## Literature and Writing

Much pride and little understanding come from the hasty reading of a book.

Charles H. Spurgeon

You can learn to love tinkering with drafts of poems till a warm hand from somewhere above you reaches down, unscrews the top of your head, and drops in a solution that blows your ears off.

Ted Kooser in his book *The Poetry Home Repair Manual*

The large is present in the small...

Ted Kooser in his book *The Poetry Home Repair Manual*

He knew how to keep his attention in the specifics and to let the grand emerge from carefully observed particulars.

Ted Kooser in his book *The Poetry Home Repair Manual*

The ear is the only true writer and the only true reader.

Robert Frost

You sit at your keyboard and make up lies until they sound like the truth.

Brian K. Vaughan in a Studio 360 interview on being a writer

The pen has become to me what the oar is to the galley slave.

C. S. Lewis

Every stranger's tolerance for poetry is compromised by much more important demands on his or her time. Therefore, I try to honor my reader's patience and generosity by presenting what I have to say as clearly and succinctly as possible.... Also, I try not to insult the reader's good sense by talking down; I don't see anything to gain by alluding to intellectual experiences that the reader may not have had. I do what I can to avoid being rude or offensive; most strangers, understandably, have a very low tolerance for displays of pique or anger or hysteria. Being harangued by a poet rarely endears a reader. I am also extremely wary of over cleverness; there is a definite limit to how much intellectual showing off a stranger can tolerate.

Ted Kooser in the *Midwest Quarterly*, 1999

Drama begins when ritual is broken.

Martin Epstein

Ends are ends only when they are not negative but frankly transfigure the events in which they were immanent.

Frank Kermode in *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction*

It is not of so much consequence what you say, as how you say it. Memorable sentences are memorable on account of some single irradiating word.

Alexander Smith in *On the Writing of Essays*

Shall we forever make new books, as apothecaries make new mixtures, by pouring only out of one vessel into another? Are we forever to be twisting and untwisting the same rope?

Laurence Sterne from *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gent.*

Action is the enemy of suspense...action releases tension instead of building it.

Roger Ebert

## Love

It's better for a woman to marry a man who loves her than a man she loves.

Unknown

The prostitute reduces you to a loaf of bread.

Proverbs 6:26

## Music

Writing about music is like dancing about architecture.

Elvis Costello quoted in the *Washington Post Magazine* August 28, 2005

Groove keeps you workin', chops keep you practicing in your basement.

Brian Haley on the Rock'N U video

Most guitar playing in the rock era is white guys redoing black riffs.

Bono in the November 2005 *Rolling Stone* interview

We got fed up of being sidemen for Paul. Paul took over and supposedly led us. What's leading us when you wander around in circles?

John Lennon

He was working with two brilliant songwriters and he learned a lot from us. I wouldn't have minded being George, the invisible man, and learning what he learned.

John Lennon

Best drummer in the world? He's not even the best drummer in The Beatles.

John Lennon on Ringo Starr

I don't appreciate worship of dead Sid Vicious or of dead James Dean or of dead John Wayne. It's the same thing. Making Sid Vicious a hero, Jim Morrison—it's garbage to me. I worship the people who survive. I'll take the living and the healthy.

John Lennon

My role in society, or any artist's or poet's role, is to try and express what we all feel. Not to tell people how to feel. Not as a preacher, not as a leader, but as a reflection of us all.

John Lennon

Classical music is the kind we keep thinking will turn into a tune.

Kin Hubbard

I don't know anything about music. In my line you don't have to.

Elvis Presley

The music business is a cruel and shallow money trench, a long plastic hallway where thieves and pimps run free, and good men die like dogs. There's also a negative side.

Hunter S. Thompson

There is no doubt that the first requirement for a composer is to be dead.

Arthur Honegger

A good composer does not imitate; he steals.

Igor Stravinsky

A motive consists of both a set of intervals and a set of durations. The composer may alter one of the other and maintain recognizable identity with the original motive; however, when both have been changed, a new motive is created.

Arnold Schönberg

Bach almost persuades me to be a Christian.

Roger Fry

Get around, be on the scene, play it clean, be seen, be keen, and be over eighteen.

Willie the Lion Smith's advice to young jazz pianists

[Jazz], as I understand it, is not music at all. It is merely an irritation of the nerves of hearing, a sensual teasing of the strings of physical passion. Its fault lies not in syncopation, for that is a legitimate device when sparingly used. But 'jazz' is an unmitigated cacophony, a combination of disagreeable sounds in complicated discords, a willful ugliness and a deliberate vulgarity.

Professor Henry Van Dyck of Princeton University

More than four choruses and you're just practicing.

Charlie Parker

The things I'm looking for musically are clarity, emotional communication on a not-too-obvious level, form in a chorus that doesn't hit you over the head but is there if you look for it, humor, and construction that sounds logical in an unexpected way. That, and a good dependable high F#.

Paul Desmond in Ken Burns' Jazz

Music is worship: whether it's worship of women or their designer, the world or its destroyer...the smoke goes upwards...to God or something you replace God with...usually yourself.

Bono

We generally go for a pretty straight definitive version of what the song sounds like it should be and then deconstruct it a little bit and see if there's some more exciting way to approach it.

There's no reason at all not to destroy it. We made it so it's ours to destroy and that's liberating and exciting in a really creative way.

Wilco's Jeff Tweedy

Ringo Starr is perhaps the luckiest man in the world.

Jamie Leonard

Midtempo is hell—you can't have a log-jam of those songs.

Adam Clayton

The thing I bristle at is this idea that artists- or musicians- or people that are creative suffer more than anyone else. I think that is patently false. I think that everybody suffers. I think that this world is kind of built on how well you cope with your suffering...I'm no different from anyone else in that regard.

Jeff Tweedy in the DVD *Sunken Treasure Live*

I am not satisfied with those who despise music, as all fanatics do; for music is an endowment and a gift of God, not a gift of other persons. It also drives away the devil and makes people cheerful, one forgets all anger, unchasteness, pride, and other vices. I place music next to theology and give it the highest praise.

Martin Luther

It's a fine line between writing something with genuine emotional impact and turning into little idiots feeling sorry for ourselves and playing stadium rock.

Thom Yorke

The aim and final reason of all music is none else but the glory of God.

J. S. Bach

The punk thing doesn't work for me. I'd rather spend a day with Johnny Cash anytime...you can only get so far with rage.

Bono from the podcast of his interview with Jann Wenner

Jazz is the ultimate lesson in faith

Meshell Ndegeocello in a September 9, 2007 interview on Studio 360.

We don't see rock & roll as being about coke-taking, leather-trouser-wearing rebellion, because that to us is not rebellion any more.

Chris Martin in Rolling Stone Magazine June 26, 2008

No suffocating pretension, no restrictive worldview, no arcane dogma, no overwhelming angst; just music content to be what it is- the pure and reasonable expression of the computer as realized by the performer and perceived by the listener.

Composer David Morneau on the welcome page to his website

## Politics

Ninety percent of the politicians give the other ten percent a bad reputation.

Henry Kissinger

When the politicians complain that TV turns the proceedings into a circus, it should be made clear that the circus was already there, and that TV has merely demonstrated that not all the performers are well trained.

Edward R. Murrow

**Samuel Goldwyn**

A verbal contract isn't worth the paper it's written on.  
A wide screen just makes a bad film twice as bad.  
Anyone who would go to a psychiatrist ought to have his head examined!  
Every director bites the hand that lays the golden egg.  
Flashbacks are a thing of the past.  
I'll give you a definite maybe.  
If I could drop dead right now, I'd be the happiest man alive.  
Include me out.  
What we need now is some new, fresh clichés.  
When I want your opinion I will give it to you.  
In two words: im-possible.  
I read part of it all the way through.  
We've passed a lot of water since then.

**Women**

Our society has lifted up women only to throw them back down again.  
Linda Fumea

**Worship**

Man can no more diminish God's glory by refusing to worship Him than a lunatic can put out the sun by scribbling the word, 'darkness' on the walls of his cell.  
C. S. Lewis

An ill-prepared worship leader becomes distractingly visible, pulling people away from, not toward, God.  
Kent Morris in *Worship Leader*, October 2005

To sing the praises of God upon the harp and psaltery," says Calvin, "unquestionably formed a part of the training of the law and of the service of God under that dispensation of shadows and figures, but they are not now to be used in public thanksgiving.  
John Calvin<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> On Ps. lxxi. 22.

Last updated November 20, 2009.