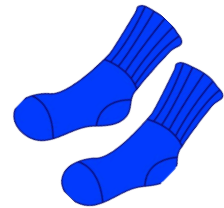


Socks First, Then the Shoes



Musings about Acting, Art, and the Human Condition

Compiled by Ken Sonkin

April 2023

Introduction

Over the past 40 years, I have been gathering quotes about acting, theater, life, love, and the human condition. When I started my journey as an artist, the following excerpts helped to shape me, not only as a storyteller, but as a man. Many of these contemplations are from mentors, collaborators, teachers, students, most of them smarter and more eloquent than me. And while my thoughts and feelings about some of these have changed over the years (just as the world and I have changed!), the sayings and witticisms that follow still resonate with me. Artists, writers, philosophers... their beautiful language... their thoughts never stop inspiring me. Their wisdom asks me to examine the past, reconsider the present, and hope for a better future. Or at the very least, their words make me smile. I hope you find that *Socks First, Then the Shoes* does the same for you.

—K.S.
4.23

~ ~ ~

For MB

My wife has taught me more about wine, food, interior design, color, fashion, flowers, crafts, gift-wrapping, holiday décor, dancing, 1980s song lyrics, literature, history, the arts, diplomacy, humility, excellence, fear, and joy than all of my teachers combined. But I can still beat her at Trivial Pursuit.

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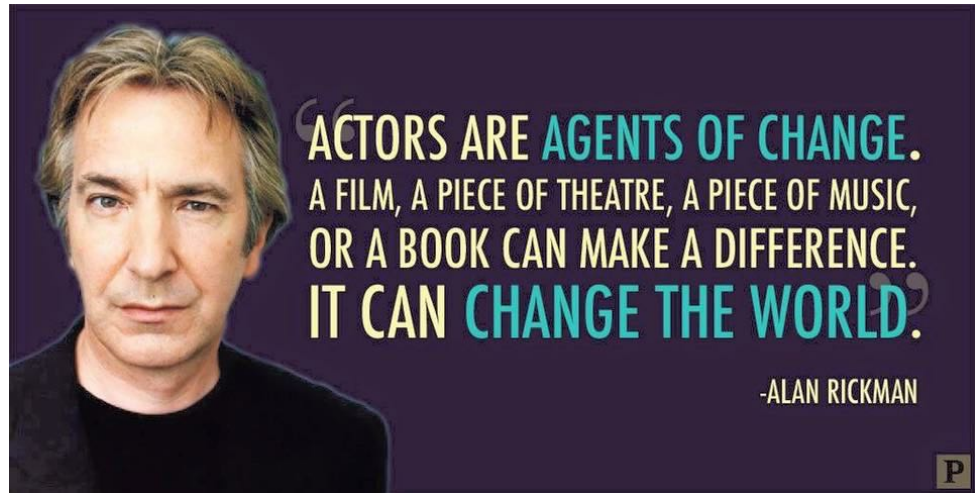
“I love what a ghost light does in a darkened theater... shadows and wonder.”

—Ken Sonkin

Table of Contents

1.	Acting	page 4
2.	Art	page 41
3.	Culture	page 55
4.	Literature	page 68
5.	Love	page 75
6.	Music	page 82
7.	Philosophy	page 86
8.	Poetry	page 117
9.	Politics	page 127
10.	Show Business	page 130
11.	Stories	page 147
12.	Theater	page 157
13.	Miscellaneous	page 177
14.	Biography	page 188

Acting



"An actor is an interpreter of other men's words, often a soul which wishes to reveal itself to the world but dare not, a craftsman, a bag of tricks, a vanity bag, a cool observer of mankind, a child and at his best a kind of unfrocked priest who, for an hour or two, can call on heaven and hell to mesmerize a group of innocents."

—Sir Alec Guinness

"Cultivate your kindness, then blend it with your curiosity. You don't have to befriend everyone on the planet, but I think you have to have a kind curiosity and an awareness of who they are and what they might be going through to be an honest and effective actor or writer or merely a decent human being. Don't be prurient: You're not trying to find out things about people just for the enjoyment or the power of information. Delve into their hearts and enlarge your own. There is always something we can do. There is always something we can give. A good artist is an enlarged artist. Absorb the world and its people and then retreat to create something."

—Julie Harris

"The thing about performance, even if it's only an illusion, is that it is a celebration of the fact that we do contain within ourselves infinite possibilities."

—Daniel Day Lewis

"Actors lie with truth."

—Richard Burton

Acting

"The amount of your commitment is in direct proportion to the amount that you receive."

—Anonymous

"The actors must understand each other, help each other, absolutely love each other. They absolutely must."

—Laurence Olivier

"Actors have to come to a play with creative energy, instead of defensive energy about proving themselves worthy."

—Robert Joy

"Acting provides the fulfillment of never being fulfilled. You're never as good as you'd like to be. So, there's always something to hope for."

—Glenda Jackson

"I sometimes think that if professional actors reflected a little more on how we all learn acceptable social manners, it would be a valuable guide to many of the techniques of their craft."

—Tyrone Guthrie

"Acting is ten percent acting, and ninety percent reacting."

—Anonymous

"In the studio, you learn to conform—to submit yourself to the demands of your craft—so that you may finally be free."

—Martha Graham

"Create your own method. Don't depend slavishly on mine [or someone else's]. Make up something that will work for you! But keep breaking traditions, I beg you."

—Constantine Stanislavsky

"I can't understand actors who learn their lines approximately. If it's a good script, the writer has sweated over every part of it and a single word can throw everything."

—Katharine Hepburn

Acting

“One mustn’t allow acting to be like stock broking—you must not take it as a means of earning a living, to go down every day to do a job of work. The big thing is to combine punctuality, efficiency, good nature, obedience, intelligence, and concentration with an unawareness of what is going to happen next, thus keeping yourself available for excitement.”

—Sir John Gielgud

“Let someone explain why the violinist who plays in an orchestra on the tenth violin must daily perform hour—long exercises or lose his power to play? Why does the dancer work daily over every muscle in his body? Why does the painter, the sculptor, the writer practice their art each day and count that day lost when they do not work? And why may the dramatic artist do nothing, spend his day in coffee houses and hope for the gift of inspiration in the evening? There is no art that does not demand virtuosity.”

—Constantine Stanislavsky

“An actor has no right to mold his partner so as to provide greater possibilities for his own performance. Nor has he the right to correct his partner... Intimate or drastic elements in the work of others are untouchable and should not be commented upon even in their absence. Private conflicts, quarrels, sentiments, animosities are unavoidable in any human group. It is our duty towards creation to keep these in check in so far as they might deform and wreck the work process.”

—Jerzy Grotowski

“Let me say something about ethics in theatre. [One] reason for the collapse of well—intentioned venture after venture is sloth and ego mania. We must accept the fact the theatre is a communal adventure. Unlike the soloist we can’t perform alone in the theatre... the better the play, the more we need an ensemble venture. We must recognize that we need each other’s strengths, and the more we need each other’s professional comradeship, the better the chance we have of making theatre. We must serve the play by serving each other; an egomaniacal “star” attitude is only self—serving and hurts everyone... “We must aim for “character” in the moral and ethical sense of the word, compounded with the virtues of mutual respect, courtesy, kindness, generosity, trust, attention to others, seriousness, loyalty, as well as those necessary attributes of diligence and dedication.”

—Uta Hagen

Acting

"All artists should have "e," "f," "g," and "h": efficiency, flexibility, grace, and humor."

—Ken Sonkin

"A clown is an orangutan who is also a poet."

—Anonymous

"Man's first obligation is to be happy. His second is to make others happy."

—Cantinflas

H: You once defined technique as the breaking down of barriers between the unconscious mind and the conscious mind.

M: No, I said that the purpose of technique is to break down the barriers between the conscious and the unconscious mind.

H: Could you tell me exactly what do you mean by "technique?"

"The purpose of any technique, the purpose of any skill which is learned through cognition and repetition in the arts, or in sports for that matter, is to break down the barriers between the conscious and the unconscious mind so that you don't have to think about what you're doing. You can only be free if your unconscious is unfettered. There are a lot of people who don't have technique but whose unconscious is unfettered: children, psychotics, some artists. But for most of us, we need a technique to enable us to get out of our own way."—David Mamet

H: Could you give me an example, so that I know exactly what you mean by a writing technique?

M: No. But I could give you an example of a sports technique. You practice putting. You practice it over and over.

H: So, in terms of a playwright, it would mean that you write over and over, so that the techniques of what makes a good line, what makes a good rhythm, what makes a good scene is so automatic that it frees you to be able to let the unconscious seep into the sentence, the rhythm, the scene?

Acting

M: I think so. Somebody intelligent said, and it might have been Bob Brustein, as a matter of fact, that the way you write a good play is that you write a lot of plays.

—Excerpt from an Interview with David Mamet

There are three masks:

The one we think we are,
The one we really are,
And the one we have in common.

—Jacques Lecoq

On acting: “Come to work on time, know your lines and don't bump into the other actors.”

On drinking: “Hell, I used to take two—week lunch hours!”

“I couldn't be a director because I couldn't put up with the actors. I don't have the patience. Why, I'd probably kill the actors. Not to mention some of the beautiful actresses.”

“Whenever I'm asked what my definition of a professional is in our business, I tell 'em to go talk to Spence.”

—Clark Gable

“The kids keep telling me I should try this new “Method Acting” but I'm too old, I'm too tired and I'm too talented to care.”

On why he never left his wife for Katherine Hepburn: “I can get a divorce whenever I want to. But my wife and Kate like things just as they are.”

“This mug of mine is as plain as a barn door. Why should people pay thirty—five cents to look at it?”

“I'm disappointed in acting as a craft. I want everything to go back to Orson Welles and fake noses and changing your voice. It's become so much about personality.”

Acting

"It is up to us to give ourselves recognition. If we wait for it to come from others, we feel resentful when it doesn't, and when it does, we may well reject it."

"Even when my throat is completely tired out from acting, Luckies still get along with it fine."

"There were times when my pants were so thin, I could sit on a dime and know if it was heads or tails."

"The physical labor actors have to do wouldn't tax an embryo."

"Write anything you want about me. Make up something. Hell, I don't care."

—Spencer Tracy

"Spencer Tracy, you're the best damn actor there is!"

—George M. Cohan

"Actors want to work with me, even though their agents don't want them to. My reputation is known: that I'll never lie to them and that they finally get to do what they became actors to do, and that is create. They create their roles. I don't. Once I have a film cast, 85 percent of my creative work is done. I'm just there to keep it in the boundaries. If somebody tries to go across the street, I say, 'That's too far. Come back.'"

—Robert Altman

"For an actress to be a success she must have the face of Venus, the brains of Minerva, the grace of Terpsichore, the memory of Macaulay, the figure of Juno, and the hide of a rhinoceros."

—Ethel Barrymore

"A clown cannot pretend or be artificial. In the circus, laughter cannot be faked any more than a somersault."

—Jerome Medrano
Cirque Medrano, Paris

"Acting is the art of living truthfully under imaginary circumstances."

—Sandy Meisner, "On Acting"

Acting

“A person's psychological and physical behavior is subject to the external influences of his environment, and an action makes clear what a certain character does in the given circumstances of the play and why he does it. The character is built with these actions in the given circumstances.”

—Sonia Moore

“The Stanislavsky Method:
The Professional Training of an Actor”

“...the biggest challenge in playing real characters is pleasing the people who are still alive and can point to your performance and say, 'Nah, he didn't get him.' That can be scary. But otherwise, it's the same attempt as always—to embody a character's spirit and journey.”

—Don Cheadle

“Every kid has a real vivid imagination, so it is a very natural thing for kids to act.”

—Christian Bale

“I do not hold that because the author did a bad job of writing the player need trump it with the same kind of acting. When I go into a picture I have only one character to look after. If the author didn't do him justice, I try to add whatever the creator of the part overlooked.”

“I have never gone into a picture without first studying my characterization from all angles. I make a study of the fellow's life and try to learn everything about him, including the conditions under which he came into this world, his parentage, his environment, his social status, and the things in which he is interested. Then I attempt to get his mental attitude as much as possible.”

“There is more money in being liked by an audience than in being disliked by it. The biggest thing about movie audiences is the sympathy they give characters on the screen. But the art of acting and the talent of selecting what one will act are divorced qualities.”

—William Powell

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The rhythm of life in modern civilization is characterized by pace, tension, a feeling of doom, the wish to hide our personal motives and the assumption of a variety of roles and masks in life (different ones with our family, at work, amongst friends or in community life, etc.—). We like to

Acting

be "scientific", by which we mean discursive and cerebral, since this attitude is dictated by the course of civilization. But we also want to pay tribute to our biological selves, to what we might call physiological pleasures. We do not want to be restricted in this sphere. Therefore, we play a double game of intellect and instinct, thought and emotion; we try to divide ourselves artificially into body and soul. When we try to liberate ourselves from it all we start to shout and stamp, we convulse to the rhythm of music. In our search for liberation, we reach biological chaos. We suffer most from a lack of totality, throwing ourselves away, squandering ourselves.

Theatre—through the actor's technique, his art in which the living organism strives for higher motives—provides an opportunity for what could be called integration, the discarding of masks, the revealing of the real substance: a totality of physical and mental reactions. This opportunity must be treated in a disciplined manner, with a full awareness of the responsibilities it involves. Here we can see the theatre's therapeutic function for people in our present-day civilization. It is true that the actor accomplishes this act, but he can only do so through an encounter with the spectator—intimately, visibly, not hiding behind a cameraman, wardrobe mistress, stage designer or make—up girl—in direct confrontation with him, and somehow " instead of" him. The actor's act—discarding half measures, revealing, opening up, emerging from himself as opposed to closing up—is an invitation to the spectator. This act could be compared to an act of the most deeply rooted, genuine love between two human beings—this is just a comparison since we can only refer to this "emergence from oneself" through analogy. This act, paradoxical and borderline, we call a total act. In our opinion it epitomizes the actor's deepest calling.

II

Why do we sacrifice so much energy to our art? Not in order to teach others but to learn with them what our existence, our organism, our personal and unrepeatable experience have to give us; to learn to break down the barriers which surround us and to free ourselves from the breaks which hold us back, from the lies about ourselves which we manufacture daily for ourselves and for others; to destroy the limitations caused by our ignorance and lack of courage; in short, to fill the emptiness in us: to fulfill ourselves. Art is neither a state of the soul (in the sense of some extraordinary, unpredictable moment of inspiration) nor a state of man (in the sense of a profession or social function). Art is a ripening, an evolution, an uplifting which enables us to emerge from darkness into a blaze of light.

Acting

We fight then to discover, to experience the truth about ourselves; to tear away the masks behind which we hide daily. We see theatre—especially in its palpable, carnal aspect—as a place of provocation, a challenge the actor sets himself and also, indirectly, other people. Theatre only has a meaning if it allows us to transcend our stereotyped vision, our conventional feelings and customs, our standards of judgment—not just for the sake of doing so, but so that we may experience what is real and, having already given up all daily escapes and pretenses, in a state of complete defenselessness unveil, give, discover ourselves. In this way—through shock, through the shudder which causes us to drop our daily masks and mannerisms—we are able, without hiding anything, to entrust ourselves to something we cannot name but in which live Eros and Caritas.

III

Art cannot be bound by the laws of common morality or any catechism. The actor, at least in part, is creator, model and creation rolled into one—He must not be shameless as that leads to exhibitionism. He must have courage, but not merely the courage to exhibit himself—a passive courage, we might say: the courage of the defenseless, the courage to reveal himself. Neither that which touches the interior sphere, nor the profound stripping bare of the self should be regarded as evil so long as in the process of preparation or in the completed work they produce an act of creation. If they do not come easily and if they are not signs of outburst but of mastership, then they are creative: they reveal and purify us while we transcend ourselves. Indeed, they improve us then.

For these reasons every aspect of an actor's work dealing with intimate matters should be protected from incidental remarks, indiscretions, nonchalance, idle comments and jokes. The personal realm—both spiritual and physical—must not be “swamped” by triviality, the sordidness of life and lack of tact towards oneself and others; at least not in the place of work or anywhere connected with it. This postulate sounds like an abstract moral order. It is not. It involves the very essence of the actor's calling. This calling is realized through carnality. The actor must not illustrate but accomplish an “act of the soul” by means of his own organism. Thus, he is faced with two extreme alternatives: he can either sell, dishonour, his real “incarnate” self, making himself an object of artistic prostitution; or he can give himself, sanctify his real “incarnate” self.

IV

Acting

An actor can only be guided and inspired by someone who is whole—hearted in his creative activity. The producer, while guiding and inspiring the actor, must at the same time allow himself to be guided and inspired by him—it is a question of freedom, partnership, and this does not imply a lack of discipline but a respect for the autonomy of others. Respect for the actor's autonomy does not mean lawlessness, lack of demands, never ending discussions and the replacement of action by continuous streams of words. On the contrary, respect for autonomy means enormous demands, the expectation of a maximum creative effort and the most personal revelation. Understood thus, solicitude for the actor's freedom can only be born from the plenitude of the guide and not from his lack of plenitude. Such a lack implies imposition, dictatorship, superficial dressage.

V

An act of creation has nothing to do with either external comfort or conventional human civility; that is to say working conditions in which everybody is happy. It demands a maximum of silence and a minimum of words. In this kind of creativity, we discuss through proposals, actions and living organisms, not through explanations. When we finally find ourselves on the track of something difficult and often almost intangible, we have no right to lose it through frivolity and carelessness. Therefore, even during breaks after which we will be continuing with the creative process, we are obliged to observe certain natural reticence's in our behaviour and even in our private affairs. This applies just as much to our own work as to the work of our partners. We must not interrupt and disorganize the work because we are hurrying to our own affairs; we must not peep, comment or make jokes about it privately. In any case, private Ideas of fun have no place in the actors calling. In our approach to creative tasks, even if the theme is a game, we must be in a state of readiness—one might even say "solemnity". Our working terminology which serves as a stimulus must not be dissociated from the work and used in a private context. Work terminology should be associated only with that which it serves.

A creative act of this quality is performed in a group, and therefore within certain limits we should restrain our creative egoism. An actor has no right to mold his partner so as to provide greater possibilities for his own performance. Nor has he the right to correct his partner unless authorized by the work leader. Intimate or drastic elements in the work of others are untouchable and should not be commented upon even in their absence. Private conflicts, quarrels, sentiments, animosities are unavoidable in any human group. It is our duty towards creation to keep them in check in so far as they might deform and wreck the work process. We are obliged to open ourselves up even towards an enemy.

Acting

VI

It has been mentioned several times already but we can never stress and explain too often the fact that we must never exploit privately anything connected with the creative act: i. e. location, costume, props, an element from the acting score a melodic theme or lines from the text. This rule applies to the smallest detail and there can be no exceptions. We did not make this rule simply to pay tribute to a special artistic devotion. We are not interested in grandeur and noble words, but our awareness and experience tell us that lack of strict adherence to such rules causes the actors score to become deprived of its psychic motives and "radiance."

VII

Order and harmony in the work of each actor are essential conditions without which a creative act cannot take place. Here we demand consistency. We demand it from the actors who come to the theatre consciously to try themselves out in something extreme, a sort of challenge seeking a total response from every one of us. They come to test themselves in something very definite that reaches beyond the meaning of "theatre" and is more like an act of living and way of existence. This outline probably sounds rather vague. If we try to explain it theoretically, we might say that the theatre and acting are for us a kind of vehicle allowing us to emerge from ourselves, to fulfill ourselves. We could go into this at great length. However, anyone who stays here longer than just the trial period is perfectly aware that what we are talking about can be grasped less through grandiose words than through details, demands and the rigours of work in all its elements. The individual who disturbs the basic elements, who does not for example respect his own and the others acting score, destroying its structure by shamming or automatic reproduction, is the very one who shakes this undeniable higher motive of our common activity. Seemingly small details form the background against which fundamental questions are decided, as for example the duty to note down elements discovered in the course of the work. We must not rely on our memory unless we feel the spontaneity of our work is being threatened, and even then we must keep a partial record. This is just as basic a rule as is strict punctuality, the thorough memorizing of the text, etc. Any form of shamming in one's work is completely inadmissible. However, it does sometimes happen that an actor has to go through a scene, just outline it, in order to check its organization and the elements of his partners' actions. But even then he must follow the actions carefully, measuring himself against them, in order to comprehend their motives. This is the difference between outlining and shamming.

Acting

An actor must always be ready to join the creative act at the exact moment determined by the group. In this respect his health, physical condition and all his private affairs cease to be just his own concern. A creative act of such quality flourishes only if nourished by the living organism. Therefore, we are obliged to take daily care of our bodies so we are always ready for our tasks. We must not go short of sleep for the sake of private enjoyment and then come to work tired or with a hangover. We must not come unable to concentrate. The rule here is not just one's compulsory presence in the place of work, but physical readiness to create.

VIII

Creativity, especially where acting is concerned, is boundless sincerity, yet disciplined: i.e., articulated through signs. The creator should not therefore find his material a barrier in this respect. And as the actor's material is his own body, it should be trained to obey, to be pliable, to respond passively to psychic impulses as if it did not exist during the moment of creation—by which we mean it does not offer any resistance. Spontaneity and discipline are the basic aspects of an actor's work and they require a methodical key.

Before a man decides to do something he must first work out a point of orientation and then act accordingly and in a coherent manner. This point of orientation should be quite evident to him, the result of natural convictions, prior observations and experiences in life. The basic foundations of this method constitute for our troupe this point of orientation. Our institute is geared to examining the consequences of this point of orientation. Therefore, nobody who comes and stays here can claim a lack of knowledge of the troupe's methodical program. Anyone who comes and works here and then wants to keep his distance (as regards creative consciousness) shows the wrong kind of care for his own individuality. The etymological meaning of "individuality" is "indivisibility" which means complete existence in something: individuality is the very opposite of half-heartedness. We maintain, therefore, that those who come and stay here discover in our method something deeply related to them, prepared by their lives and experiences. Since they accept this consciously, we presume that each of the participants feels obliged to train creatively and try to form his own variation inseparable from himself, his own reorientation open to risks and search. For what we here call "the method" is the very opposite of any sort of prescription.

IX

The main point then is that an actor should not try to acquire any kind of recipe or build up a "box of tricks." This is no place for collecting all sorts of means of expression. The force of

Acting

gravity in our work pushes the actor towards an interior ripening which expresses itself through a willingness to break through barriers, to search for a “summit”, for totality.

The actor's first duty is to grasp the fact that nobody here wants to give him anything; instead, they plan to take a lot from him, to take away that to which he is usually very attached: his resistance, reticence, his inclination to hide behind masks, his half—heartedness, the obstacles his body places in the way of his creative act, his habits and even his usual “good manners”.

X

Before an actor is able to achieve a total act he has to fulfill a number of requirements, some of which are so subtle, so intangible, as to be practically undefinable through words. They only become plain through practical application. It is easier, however, to define conditions under which a total act cannot be achieved and which of the actor's actions make it impossible. This act cannot exist if the actor is more concerned with charm, personal success, applause and salary than with creation as understood in its highest form. It cannot exist if the actor conditions it according to the size of his part, his place in the performance, the day or kind of audience. There can be no total act if the actor, even away from the theatre, dissipates his creative impulse and, as we said before, sullies it, blocks it, particularly through incidental engagements of a doubtful nature or by the premeditated use of the creative act as a means to further own career.

—Jerzy Grotowski
“Statement of Principles”

“An actor is totally vulnerable. His total personality is exposed to critical judgment—his intellect, his bearing, his diction, his whole appearance. In short, his ego.”

—Alec Guinness

“An actor is an interpreter of other men's words, often a soul which wishes to reveal itself to the world but dare not, a craftsman, a bag of tricks, a vanity bag, a cool observer of mankind, a child and at his best a kind of unfrocked priest who, for an hour or two, can call on heaven and hell to mesmerize a group of innocents.”

—Alec Guinness

“Getting to the theater on the early side, usually about seven o'clock, changing into a dressing—gown, applying make—up, having a chat for a few minutes with other actors and

Acting

then, quite unconsciously, beginning to assume another personality which would stay with me (but mostly tucked inside) until curtain down, was all I required of life. I thought it bliss."

—Alec Guinness

"I tried being reasonable, I didn't like it."

—Clint Eastwood

"Life is a great big canvas; throw all the paint you can at it."

—Danny Kaye

"The hardest job kids face today is learning good manners without seeing any."

—Fred Astaire

"Failure seldom stops you. What stops you is the fear of failure."

—Jack Lemmon

"If you really do want to be an actor who can satisfy himself and his audience, you need to be vulnerable. You must reach the emotional and intellectual level of ability where you can go out stark naked, emotionally, in front of an audience."

—Jack Lemmon

"Acting is half shame, half glory. Shame at exhibiting yourself, glory when you can forget yourself."

—John Gielgud

"Tomorrow is the most important thing in life. Comes into us at midnight very clean. It's perfect when it arrives and it puts itself in our hands. It hopes we've learned something from yesterday."

—John Wayne

"If you've got them by the balls their hearts and minds will follow."

—John Wayne

Acting

"A true priest is aware of the presence of the altar during every moment that he is conducting a service. It is exactly the same way that a true artist should react to the stage all the time he is in the theater. An actor who is incapable of this feeling will never be a true artist."

—Constantin Stanislavsky

"Create your own method. Don't depend slavishly on mine. Make up something that will work for you! But keep breaking traditions, I beg you."

—Constantin Stanislavsky

"Love the art in yourself and not yourself in the art."

—Constantin Stanislavsky

"Our demands are simple, normal, and therefore they are difficult to satisfy. All we ask is that an actor on the stage live in accordance with natural laws"

—Constantin Stanislavsky

"Remember: there are no small parts, only small actors."

—Constantin Stanislavsky

"The main factor in any form of creativeness is the life of a human spirit, that of the actor and his part, their joint feelings and subconscious creation."

—Constantin Stanislavsky

"I don't know what is better than the work that is given to the actor—to teach the human heart the knowledge of itself."

—Laurence Olivier

"In silence and movement, you can show the reflection of people. It's good to shut up sometimes."

—Marcel Marceau

"At the age of four with paper hats and wooden swords we're all Generals. Only some of us never grew out of it."

—Peter Ustinov

Acting

"Comedy has to be based on truth. You take the truth and you put a little curlicue at the end."
—Sid Caesar

"Know your lines and don't bump into the furniture."
—Spencer Tracy

"I honestly believe it is better to be a failure at something you love, then a success at something you hate."
—George Burns

"Sometimes I get moments I know are right on the head, almost an epiphany, knowing you're exactly there; you're in the moment, in character. Most of the other times it's just a struggle to get through it and hope that it's right."
—Robert De Niro

"An actor's job is not to feel things, it is to make the audience feel them."
—Richard Dreyfuss

"When [actors] are talking, they are servants of the dramatist. It is what they can show the audience when they are not talking that reveals the fine actor."
—Cedric Hardwicke

"I believe that God felt sorry for actors so he created Hollywood to give them a place in the sun and a swimming pool. The price they had to pay was to surrender their talent."
—Cedric Hardwicke

"I'm a skilled professional actor. Whether or not I've any talent is beside the point."
—Michael Caine

"With the exception of Charles Chaplin, Lon Chaney was the last major silent film star to make a talkie. Assaying five different voices in his first talkie, Chaney signed a notarized statement attesting to the fact that the different voices were his: 'I, Lon Chaney, being first duly sworn, depose and say: In the photoplay entitled *The Unholy Three* (1930), produced by Metro—Goldwyn—Mayer Corporation, all voice reproductions which purport to be reproductions of my voice, to wit, the ventriloquist's, the old woman's, the dummy's, the parrot's, and the girl's, are

Acting

actual reproductions of my own voice, and in no place in said photoplay or in any of the various characters portrayed by me in said photoplay was a 'double' or substitute used for my voice. Subscribed and sworn to before me, this 19th day of May, 1930, J. L. Hendrickson, Notary Public in and for the county of Los Angeles, State of California.'"

"Actors speak of things imaginary as if they were real, while you preachers too often speak of things real as if they were imaginary."

—Thomas Betterton

"You are not in business to be popular."

—Kirstie Alley

"I don't get acting jobs because of my looks."

—Alec Baldwin

"Acting is a matter of giving away secrets."

—Ellen Barkin

"For an actress to be a success, she must have the face of Venus, the brains of a Minerva, the grace of Terpsichore, the memory of a Macaulay, the figure of Juno, and the hide of a rhinoceros."

—Ethel Barrymore

"The face of Garbo is an idea, that of Hepburn an Event."

—Roland Barthes

"For the theatre one needs long arms; it is better to have them too long than too short. An artiste with short arms can never, never make a fine gesture."

—Sarah Bernhardt

"Acting is the expression of a neurotic impulse. It's a bum's life. The principal benefit acting has afforded me is the money to pay for my psychoanalysis."

—Marlon Brando

Acting

"The actors today really need the whip hand. They're so lazy. They haven't got the sense of pride in their profession that the less socially elevated musical comedy and music hall people or acrobats have. The theater has never been any good since the actors became gentlemen."

—W. H. Auden

"A man who strains himself on the stage is bound, if he is any good, to strain all the people sitting in the stalls."

—Bertolt Brecht

"One forgets too easily the difference between a man and his image, and that there is none between the sound of his voice on the screen and in real life."

—Robert Bresson

"The actor searches vainly for the sound of a vanished tradition, and critic and audience follow suit. We have lost all sense of ritual and ceremony—whether it be connected with Christmas, birthdays or funerals—but the words remain with us and old impulses stir in the marrow. We feel we should have rituals; we should do something about getting them and we blame the artists for not finding them for us. So, the artist sometimes attempts to find new rituals with only his imagination as his source: he imitates the outer form of ceremonies, pagan or baroque, unfortunately adding his own trapping—the result is rarely convincing. And after the years and years of weaker and waterier imitations we now find ourselves rejecting the very notion of a holy stage. It is not the fault of the holy that it has become a middle—class weapon to keep the children good."

—Peter Brook

"From '86 until the summer of last year, wherever I went, people would say, "You would have made a great James Bond! Weren't you going to be James Bond? You should have been, you could have been, you may have been." Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. It was like unfinished business in my life. I couldn't say no to it this time around."

—Pierce Brosnan

When I was a fireman I was in a lot of burning buildings. It was a great job, the only job I ever had that compares with the thrill of acting. Before going into a fire, there's the same surge of adrenaline you get just before the camera rolls.

—Steve Buscemi

Acting

"First of all, I choose the great [roles], and if none of these come, I choose the mediocre ones, and if they don't come, I choose the ones that pay the rent."

—Michael Caine

"Such is an actor's life. We must ride the waves of every film, barfing occasionally, yet maintain our dignity, even as the bulk of our Herculean efforts are keel—hailed before our very eyes."

—Bruce Campbell [On filming MacHale's Navy]

"Until Ace Ventura, no actor had considered talking through his ass."

—Jim Carrey

"The basic essential of a great actor is that he loves himself in acting."

—Charlie Chaplin

"Actors search for rejection. If they don't get it they reject themselves."

—Anton Chekhov

"The popularity of that baby—faced boy, who possessed not even the elements of a good actor, was a hallucination in the public mind, and a disgrace to our theatrical history."

—Thomas Campbell

"An actor is only merchandise."

—Chow Yun—Fat

"I really think that effective acting has to do literally with the movement of molecules."

—Glenn Close

"Celebrity is death. Celebrity... that's the worst thing that can happen to an actor."

—John Cusack

"Somebody told me I should put a pebble in my mouth to cure my stuttering. Well, I tried it, and during a scene I swallowed the pebble. That was the end of that."

—Marion Davies

Acting

"Some scenes you juggle two balls, some scenes you juggle three balls, some scenes you can juggle five balls. The key is always to speak in your own voice. Speak the truth. That's Acting 101. Then you start putting layers on top of that."

—Vincent D'Onofrio [On his acting techniques]

"I am the Fred Astaire of karate."

—Jean—Claude Van Damme

"You name it and I've done it. I'd like to say I did it my way. But that line, I'm afraid, belongs to someone else."

—Sammy Davis, Jr.

"The real actor has a direct line to the collective heart."

—Bette Davis

"I have often seen an actor laugh off the stage, but I don't remember ever having seen one weep."

—Denis Diderot

"I'd prefer not to be the pretty thing in a film. It's such a bloody responsibility to look cute, because people know when you don't and they're like, 'They're trying to pass her off as the cute girl and she's looking like a bedraggled sack of potatoes.'"

—Minnie Driver

"Mr. Clarke played the King all evening as though under constant fear that someone else was about to play the Ace."

—Eugene Field

"The great actors are the luminous ones. They are the great conductors of the stage."

—Minnie Fiske

"The best actors do not let the wheels show."

—Henry Fonda

"You spend all your life trying to do something they put people in asylums for."

Acting

—Jane Fonda

"I'm an assistant storyteller. It's like being a waiter or a gas-station attendant, but I'm waiting on six million people a week, if I'm lucky."

—Harrison Ford, [On being an actor]

"The actor's popularity is evanescent; applauded today, forgotten tomorrow."

—Edwin Forrest

"I was born at the age of twelve on a Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer lot."

—Judy Garland

"If you have to be in a soap opera, try not to get the worst role."

—Boy George

"An actor is a guy who, if you ain't talking about him, he ain't listening."

—George Glass

"Acting is nothing more or less than playing. The idea is to humanize life."

—Jeff Goldblum

"Acting is happy agony."

—Sir Alec Guinness

"More than in any other performing arts, the lack of respect for acting seems to spring from the fact that every layman considers himself a valid critic."

—Uta Hagen

"A movie camera is like having someone you have a crush on watching you from afar—you pretend it's not there."

—Daryl Hannah

"We must overact our part in some measure, in order to produce any effect at all."

—William Hazlitt

Acting

"If you give an audience a chance, they will do half of your acting for you."

—Katharine Hepburn

"I never said all actors are cattle. What I said was 'all actors should be treated like cattle.'"

—Alfred Hitchcock

"You reach a point where you say you're not going to do juveniles any longer."

—Ron Howard

"I have tried to be as eclectic as I possibly can with my professional life, and so far it's been pretty fun."

—Holly Hunter

"Talk to them about things they don't know. Try to give them an inferiority complex. If they insist on being boring, kick their asses or twist their noses. And that's about all there is to it."

—John Huston

"Abused as we abuse it at present, dramatic art is in no sense cathartic; it is merely a form of emotional masturbation. It is the rarest thing to find a player who has not had his character affected for the worse by the practice of his profession. Nobody can make a habit of self-exhibition, nobody can exploit his personality for the sake of exercising a kind of hypnotic power over others, and remain untouched by the process."

—Aldous Huxley

"Actors often behave like children, and so we're taken for children. I want to be grown up."

—Jeremy Irons

"Acting provides the fulfillment of never being fulfilled. You're never as good as you'd like to be. So, there's always something to hope for."

—Glenda Jackson

"An agent is a person who is sore because an actor gets 90% of what they make."

—Alva Johnson

Acting

"I think every American actor wants to be a movie star. But I never wanted to do stupid movies, I wanted to do films. I vowed I would never do a commercial, nor would I do a soap opera, both of which I did as soon as I left the [Acting] Company and was starving."

—Kevin Kline

"I just stopped playing bitches on wheels and peoples' mothers. I have only a few more years to kick up my heels!"

—Angela Lansbury

"I was sitting in the looping studio late one night, and I had this epiphany that they weren't paying me for my acting, for God's sake, but to own me. And from then on, it became clear and an awful lot easier to deal with."

—Lucy Lawless

"I don't do T & A very well because I haven't got much of either."

—Téa Leoni

"People say I'm cocky, but am I supposed to sit here and be insecure and not know where my future's going or not realize that moviemaking is the greatest thing to happen to me?"

—Juliette Lewis

"We are born at the rise of the curtain and we die with its fall, and every night in the presence of our patrons we write our new creation, and every night it is blotted out forever; and of what use is it to say to audience or to critic, 'Ah, but you should have seen me last Tuesday?'"

—Michael Macliammoir

"It's not a field, I think, for people who need to have success every day: if you can't live with a nightly sort of disaster, you should get out. I wouldn't describe myself as lacking in confidence, but I would just say that the ghosts you chase, you never catch."

—John Malkovich

"I have spent more than half a lifetime trying to express the tragic moment."

—Marcel Marceau

Acting

"After *Blood Simple*, everybody thought I was from Texas. After *Mississippi Burning*, everybody thought I was from Mississippi and uneducated. After *Fargo*, everybody's going to think I'm from Minnesota, pregnant, and have blonde hair. I don't think you can ever completely transform yourself on film, but if you do your job well, you can make people believe that you're the character you're trying to be."

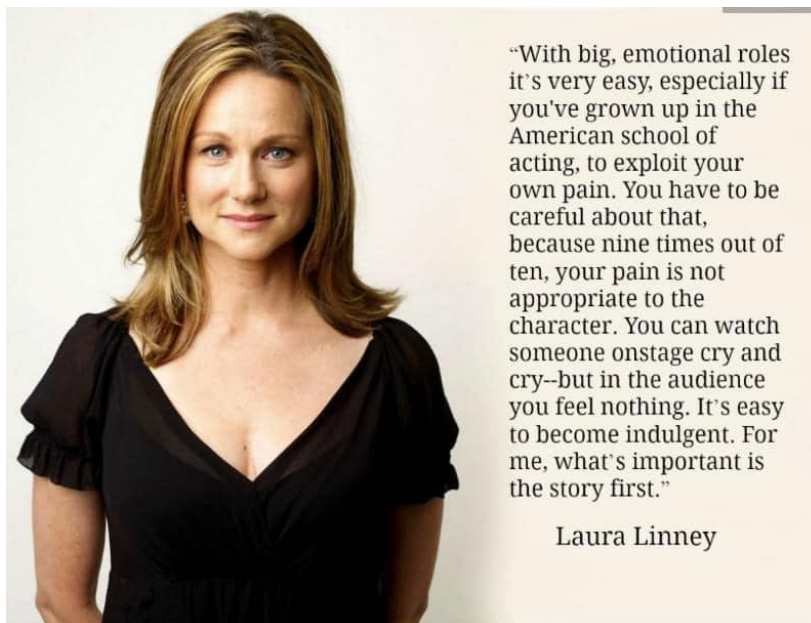
—Frances McDormand

"This is not a tough job. You read a script. If you like the part and the money is O.K., you do it. Then you remember your lines. You show up on time. You do what the director tells you to do. When you finish, you rest and then go on to the next part. That's it."

—Robert Mitchum

"I'm not an actress who can create a character. I play me."

—Mary Tyler Moore



"Left eyebrow raised, right eyebrow raised."

—Roger Moore

"Acting deals with very delicate emotions. It is not putting up a mask. Each time an actor acts, he does not hide; he exposes himself."

Acting

—Jeanne Moreau

“Acting is a question of absorbing other people's personalities and adding some of your own experience.”

—Paul Newman

“I'm a supporter of gay rights. And not a closet supporter either. From the time I was a kid, I have never been able to understand attacks upon the gay community. There are so many qualities that make up a human being... by the time I get through with all the things that I really admire about people, what they do with their private parts is probably so low on the list that it is irrelevant.”

—Paul Newman

“Every time I get a script it's a matter of trying to know what I could do with it. I see colors, imagery. It has to have a smell. It's like falling in love. You can't give a reason why.”

—Lena Olin

“I have to act to live.”

—Sir Lawrence Olivier

“The actor becomes an emotional athlete. The process is painful—my personal life suffers.”

—Al Pacino

“You can't do four movies and be good to everybody and be flying all night and shooting all day with a different wig and then be going to sing on Broadway without feeling a little tired. You endlessly feel you're letting somebody down.”

—Sarah Jessica Parker

“All men practice the actor's art.”

—Petron

“Ah just act the way ah feel.”

—Elvis Presley

Acting

"I don't want to read about some of these actresses who are around today. They sound like my niece in Scarsdale. I love my niece in Scarsdale, but I won't buy tickets to see her act."

—Vincent Price

"I don't think there's a punch-line scheduled, is there?"

—Monty Python

"In Europe an actor is an artist. In Hollywood, if he isn't working, he's a bum."

—Anthony Quinn

"A lot of acting is paying attention."

—Robert Redford

"Acting is not being emotional, but being able to express emotion."

—Thomas Reid

"Insecurity, commonly regarded as a weakness in normal people, is the basic tool of the actor's trade."

—Miranda Richardson

"There are no small parts. Only small actors."

—Ginger Rogers

"I was planning to go into architecture. But when I arrived, architecture was filled up. Acting was right next to it, so I signed up for acting instead."

—Tom Selleck

"An actress must never lose her ego—without it, she has no talent."

—Norma Shearer

"Actors ought to be larger than life. You come across quite enough ordinary, nondescript people in daily life and I don't see why you should be subjected to them on the stage too."

—Donald Sinden

"I think I am a much better actor than I have allowed myself to be."

Acting

—Kevin Spacey

“You know how in high school you do these plays and people come up after the show and they're really excited for you? Well, that's what's happening to me right now.”

—Mira Sorvino

“I'm not handsome in the classical sense. The eyes droop, the mouth is crooked, the teeth aren't straight, the voice sounds like a Mafioso pallbearer, but somehow it all works.”

—Sylvester Stallone

“Do not try to push your way through to the front ranks of your profession; do not run after distinctions and rewards; but do your utmost to find an entry into the world of beauty.”

—Constantin Stanislavsky

“Remember this practical piece of advice: Never come into the theatre with mud on your feet. Leave your dust and dirt outside. Check your little worries, squabbles, petty difficulties with your outside clothing—all the things that ruin your life and draw your attention away from your art—at the door.”

—Constantin Stanislavsky

“Imagination, industry, and intelligence—‘the three I s’—are all indispensable to the actress, but of these three the greatest is, without doubt, imagination.”

—Ellen Terry

“There were many times my pants were so thin, I could sit on a dime and tell if it was heads or tails.”

—Spencer Tracy

“I'm disappointed in acting as a craft. I want everything to go back to Orson Welles and fake noses and changing your voice. It's become so much about personality.”

—Skeet Ulrich

“If a farmer fills his barn with grain, he gets mice. If he leaves it empty, he gets actors.”

—Bill Vaughan

Acting

"I'm an actor. And I guess I've done so many movies I've achieved some high visibility. But a star? I guess I still think of myself as kind of a worker ant."

—Forest Whitaker

"I love acting. It is so much more real than life."

—Oscar Wilde

"If I wasn't an actor, I'd be a secret agent."

—Elijah Wood

"Actors are one family over the entire world."

—Alfre Woodard

"The mug is a tool. My ace in the hole. To have looks is the bonus on top of what motivates me to be an actor. Not to realize they're an asset would be counterproductive to the cause; they serve the common good."

—Billy Zane

"I do not regret one professional enemy I have made. Any actor who doesn't dare to make an enemy should get out of the business."

—Bette Davis (1908—1989)
The Lonely Life, 1962

"Talk low, talk slow, and don't talk too much."

—John Wayne (1907—1979)
Advice on acting

"Acting is not being emotional, but being able to express emotion."

—Kate Reid

"Acting is the most minor of gifts and not a very high-class way to earn a living. After all, Shirley Temple could do it at the age of four."

—Katharine Hepburn (1909—2003)

"I love acting. It is so much more real than life."

Acting

—Oscar Wilde (1854—1900)
The Picture of Dorian Gray, 1891

“I enjoy being a highly overpaid actor.”

—Roger Moore

“Acting is merely the art of keeping a large group of people from coughing.”

—Sir Ralph Richardson (1902—1983),
quoted in New York Herald Tribune, May 19, 1946

“We're actors—we're the opposite of people.”

—Tom Stoppard
Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead

“Man is a make-believe animal. He is never so truly himself as when he is acting a part.”

—William Hazlitt

“All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players. They have their exits and their entrances and one man in his time plays many parts.”

—William Shakespeare
Jaques in As You Like It

“Never meddle with play actors, for they're a favored race.”

—Miguel de Cervantes

As he was dying, his son asked him, ‘Is it difficult for you, father?’

“Dying is easy. Comedy is hard.”

—Edmund Kean

“When an actor has money he doesn't send letters, he sends telegrams.”

—Anton Chekhov

“The actor is too prone to exaggerate his powers; he wants to play Hamlet when his appearance is more suitable to King Lear.”

—Sarah Bernhardt

Acting

“Only a great actor finds the difficulties of the actor’s art infinite.”

—Ellen Terry

“Remember: there are no small parts, only small actors.”

—Constantine Stanislavsky

“Acting is not being emotional, but being able to express emotion.”

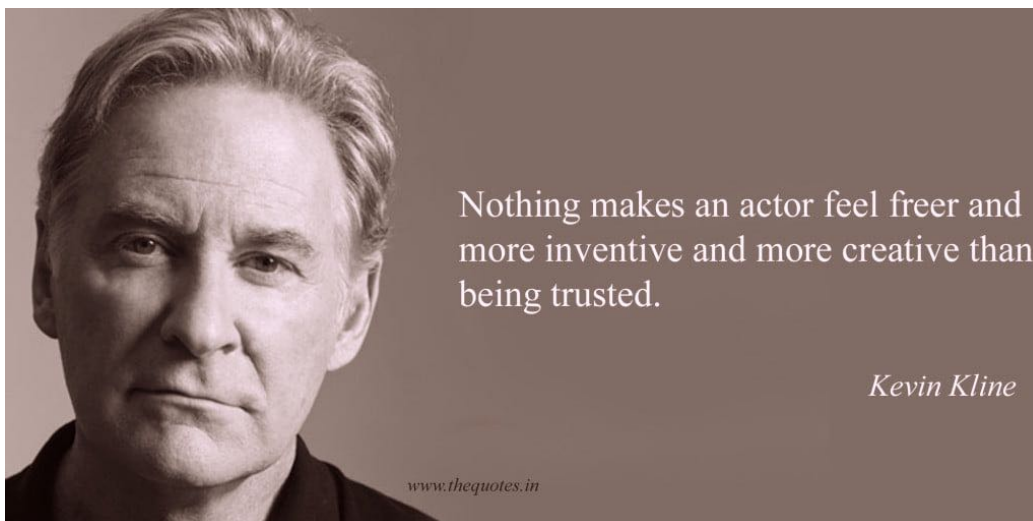
—Kate Reid

“Man is least himself when he talks in his own person. Give him a mask, and he will tell you the truth.”

—Oscar Wilde

“Acting is not a state of being ... but a state of appearing to be. You can't be eight times a week without going stark staring mad. You've got to be in control.”

—Noel Coward



“The mere mechanical technique of acting can be taught, but the spirit that is to give life to lifeless forms must be born in a man. No dramatic college can teach its pupils to think or to feel. It is Nature who makes our artists for us, though it may be Art who taught them their right mode of expression.”

Acting

—Oscar Wilde

“You can throw away the privilege of acting, but that would be such a shame. The tribe has elected you to tell its story. You are the shaman/healer, that's what the storyteller is, and I think it's important for actors to appreciate that. Too often actors think it's all about them, when in reality it's all about the audience being able to recognize themselves in you. The more you pull away from the public, the less power you have on screen.”

—Ben Kingsley

“It's one of the tragic ironies of the theatre that only one man in it can count on steady work—the night watchman.”

—Tallulah Bankhead

“The best actors do not let the wheels show.”

—Henry Fonda

“The actor is nothing without the gift, but the gift is nothing without the work.”

—Ken Farmer

“An actor is a sculptor who carves in snow.”

—Edwin Booth

“Each of the six principal male characters in the movie carried a photo in their back pocket of them all together as children so as to enhance the sense of camaraderie amongst them. As well as this, director Michael Cimino had the props department fashion complete Pennsylvania IDs for each of them, complete with driver's licenses, medical cards and various other pieces of paraphernalia, so as to enhance each actor's sense of their character.”

—The Deer Hunter

“You have to trust your instincts. There's a moment when an actor has it, and he knows it. Behind the camera you can feel the moment even more clearly. And once you've got it, once you feel it, you can't second—guess yourself. You can find a million reasons why something didn't work. But if it feels right, and it looks right, it works. Without sounding like a pseudo intellectual dipshit, it's my responsibility to be true to myself. If it works for me, it's right.”

—Clint Eastwood

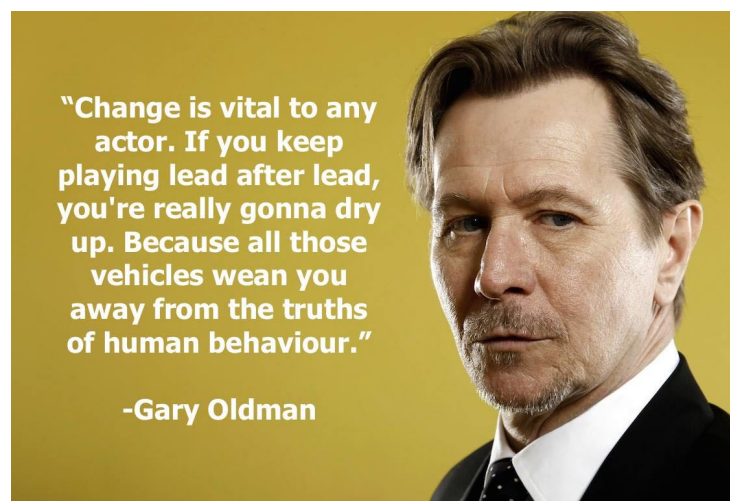
Acting

“Just what is an actor? Is he not the sum total of all that he is? His level of understanding, his capability to captivate the audience because he is real in the expression of his personal feelings toward what is required by the scene.”

—Bruce Lee

“The only way to find the best actor would be to let everybody play Hamlet and let the best man win.”

—Humphrey Bogart on the Oscars



“Actors are some of the most driven, courageous people on the face of the earth. They deal with more day—to—day rejection in one year than most people do in a lifetime. Every day, actors face the financial challenge of living a freelance lifestyle, the disrespect of people who think they should get real jobs, and their own fear that they'll never work again. Every day, they have to ignore the possibility that the vision they have dedicated their lives to is a pipe dream. With every passing year, many of them watch as the other people their age achieve the predictable milestones of normal life—the car, the family, the house, the nest egg. Why? Because actors are willing to give their entire lives to a moment—to that line, that laugh, that gesture, or that interpretation that will stir the audience's soul. Actors are beings who have tasted life's nectar in that crystal moment when they poured out their creative spirit and touched another's heart. In that instant, they were as close to magic, God, and perfection as anyone could ever be. And in their own hearts, they know that to dedicate oneself to that moment is worth a thousand lifetimes.”

Acting

—David Ackert, LA Times

“I’m happiest with colored tape at my feet, a light in my eyes, and someone else in my head. I’m an actor.”

—James Gandolfini

“You will find your audience—you will bond with your audience—when the great thing is discovered, which is your character, which is the truth of the play in which you are performing. It is what you are both searching for: Go on the journey together. It is extraordinary when you, the actor on a journey, and the audience, on its collective journey, find the character, recognize him, embrace him, understand him. That is why we do this. That is why the theatre will always live. That is why we need stories, and that is why we must keep telling them together. We need stories to live. We need to tell stories to survive. I'm looking for the story, and so is the audience, and if I have ever connected with anyone in the theatre, it is because we searched for the same story and we found it—together.”

—John Gielgud/Interview with James Grissom 1991
Photograph by Carl Van Vechten

“Without wonder and insight, acting is just a business. With it, it becomes creation.”

—Bette Davis

“Talent has a destructive side to it. I mean, TALENT comes from trouble..., I've said this before and it's the truth. There is no such thing as a non—neurotic talented person. Now if it's just 'trouble' and it gets trapped... it becomes neurosis, it has nowhere to go but to express itself in a way that's troublesome. But, IF it can become fluent, sometimes that passes into your imagination and you're able to see the world in ways that other people can't see the world, coming from this neurotic behavior or this neurotic point of view or this trouble thing.

It's ALL about dissatisfaction otherwise you wouldn't do it. Otherwise, why don't just go live your life? What's the big deal?... why make up something? My god eat a REAL ice cream cone!.. don't go on the stage and 'pretend' you're eating an ice cream cone... what the hell is the point of that? ... 'IT' has to represent something 'better' than the real ice cream cone. And the thing that makes it better.. is your dissatisfaction with the real ice cream cone and that's neurotic. That's coming from some kind of trouble... ya know, 'I see this whole life here and I'm not quite happy with it. Somethings wrong!'... And so, there is a destructive part of that to, and

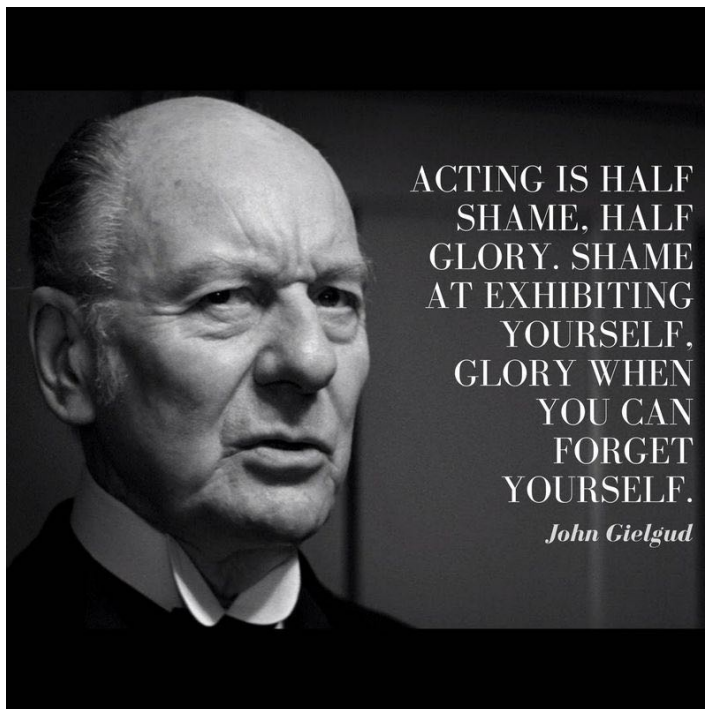
Acting

it depends on your whole handling of that whether you let that get the best of you?.. I've seen a lot of careers end in total self-destruction, I've seen great actors whose careers ended nowhere. It's not a one-way street being talented... it's.. got a upside and a down side... and you have to try and get a hold of the upside.”

—Sydney Pollack, director, producer, actor, writer

“On stage your job as actor is to present and show the story by your behavior, body language, and vocal work. In film, you mustn't. You just have to be. You are... and it's mostly intuitive. The amount of characterization you do is very minimal. In fact, you try not to act at all. It's actually better that way, and it's taken me years to learn that.”

—Hal Holbrook



“This is not a polite profession, a pastime, a little something to do until the kids get home or the husband is ready to show you some attention: This is the study of--the excavation of-- the human condition, and I'm getting tired of the passersby who come into the scene and foul up the air with their inane posturings. There are, I assure you, easier ways to get famous than being a truthful actor, and so you become a performer, a clown, a mime of the mundane. I don't have classes for people who want to make a splash; avenge a wrong; come to some

Acting

understanding of their teenage acne; improve their posture or their voice. I am here to understand the whole line of humanity, which can only be done in the study of history, of literature, of art, and we place ourselves, fearlessly and with little initial hope of worth, in that timeline. We become what Tennessee [Williams] called a witness to those before us. If we are blessed with talent and courage, we may become good witnesses. It will not be an easy task. It's a task that can tear you up."

—Kim Stanley/Interview with James Grissom

Karl Malden was known for his meticulous preparation, studying a script carefully long before he stepped into his role. "I not only figure out my own interpretation of the role, but try to guess other approaches that the director might like. I prepare them, too," he said in a 1962 Associated Press interview. "That way, I can switch in the middle of a scene with no sweat. There's no such thing as an easy job, not if you do it right," he added.

"Always work from inside out; if you work from the outside in, all you have is a dry husk."

—Meryl Streep

"Never let yourself get between you and your character."

—Michael Caine

(!)

—Marcel Marceau

"I never let anybody see process, because process is clunky. Process looks like bad acting. Process isn't something you should let anybody see. It's like (if someone asks), 'Show me your new building, ' and we show you the plumbing and the sewer line, which you may be very proud of and which will ultimately hold the building together, but it's not what you want to show people."

—Meryl Streep

"The play is not in the words, it's in you!"

—Stella Adler

"There are many secrets in us, in the depths of our souls, that we don't want anyone to know about," he told Parade. "There's terror and repulsion in us, the terrible spot that we don't talk

Acting

about. That place that no one knows about—horrifying things we keep secret. A lot of that is released through acting.”

—Charles Durning

“Acting is all about honesty. If you can fake that, you’ve got it made.”

—George Burns

Asked to explain his acting process: “It’s a bit like wearing in a pair of shoes. You put them on your feet, and at first they squeak and hurt and you can’t really walk. But you LIKE these shoes, so you work away at it until the shoes feel comfortable.”

—David Tennant

“I don’t speak of acting as if it were a profession, which I know sounds perverse, if not militantly ignorant: Acting for me was a salvation into which I fell, a piece of the family puzzle that was given to me, and I snapped it in place, and there was now a whole image, a fuller person, something where previously there had been nothing.

—Alec Guinness

“When I act, I am joining a family, and I accept and love them fully, as I do with those who are bound to me by love and blood. I am not a curious person in the sense of reading many things on acting--the history and the techniques and the application--but I am very curious about people, and acting affords me the luxury of metaphysical time travel and the voyeuristic joy of living within someone else’s skin, and seeing things through their eyes. Acting is the only way I know of in which we can live the fantasy of being invisible. Living in the mist, on the margins.

—Alec Guinness

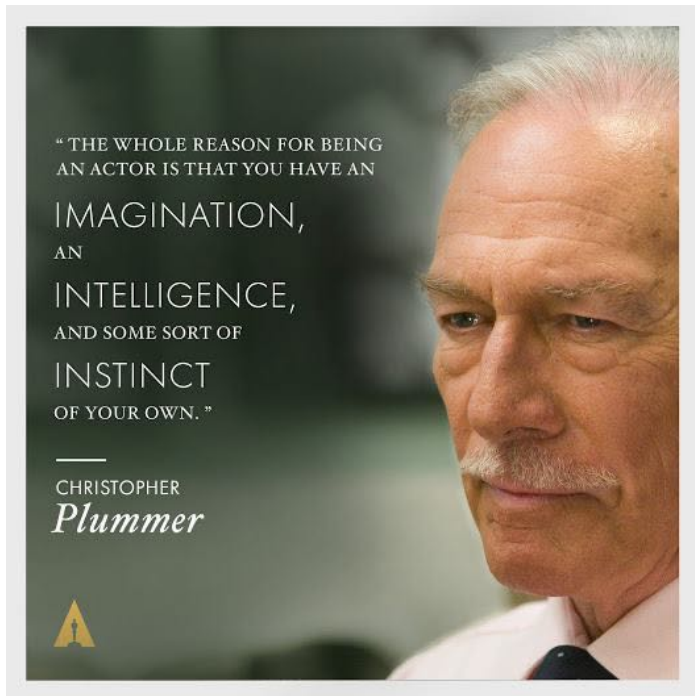
“But it begins with love--love of the work, the words, the act of rehearsing, the bonding that must take place among the company. I am a man sitting on a vast mountain of family members and friends and memories.

—Alec Guinness

“Acting came to me as a salvation, and it is now my profession, but I’m holding on to my immature concept of it.”

—Alec Guinness

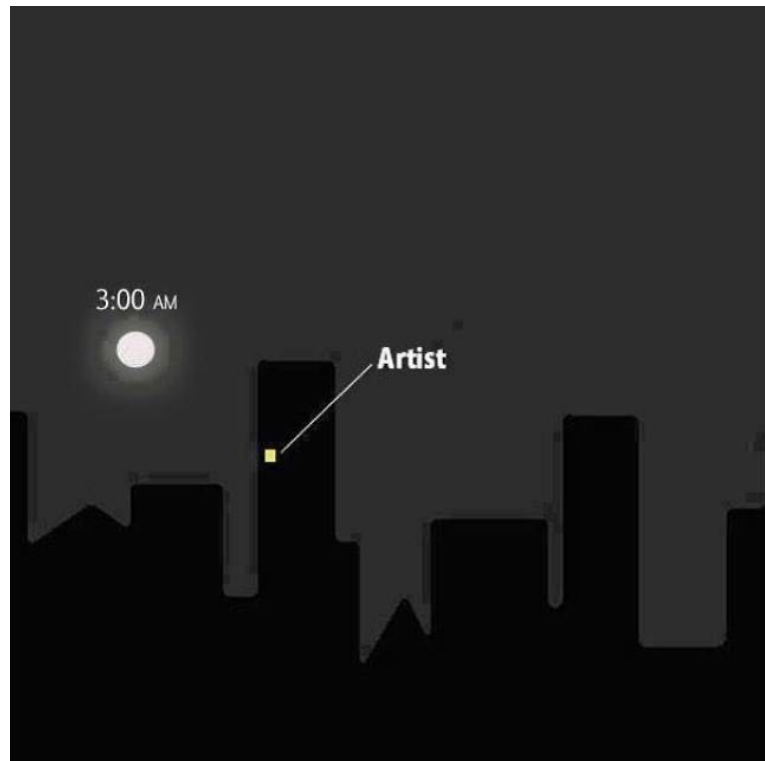
Acting



"People didn't believe me when I told them I practiced harder than I played, but it's true. That's where my comfort zone was created. By the time the game came, all I had to do was react to what my body was already accustomed to doing."

—Michael Jordan

Art



“Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up.”

—Pablo Picasso

“There is a vitality, a life force, an energy, a quickening that is translated through you into action, and because there is only one of you in all of time, this expression is unique. And if you block it, it will never exist through any other medium and be lost. The world will never have it. It is not your business to determine how good it is, nor how valuable it is, nor how it compares with other expressions. It is your business to keep it yours clearly and directly, to keep the channel open. You do not even have to believe in yourself or your work. You have to keep yourself open and aware directly to the urges that motivate you. Keep the channel open...”

—Martha Graham

“A hunch is creativity trying to tell you something.”

—Frank Capra

Art

"I don't think the artist grows by feeling. I think he grows by being compelled to do certain things whether he wants to do them or not. There is a tremendous weakness in doing only what you want to do. When I was in the Hebrides taking pictures where the cattle are very important, what if I had said, 'I like stones but I don't like cows,' and had only taken pictures of stones. I was of course forced to take pictures of everything in the Hebrides, if I wanted to tell the story of the Hebrides and I did. That's the only way the artist grows. The reason for it is very simple. If the matrix of the artist's work is reality and not feeling, and not imagination, and not what he dreams of, or to put it vulgarly, sucks out of his own guts—if that's the matrix of his work, it's absolutely inexhaustible. Because it's the whole world. I feel as though I could go on photographing forever. That the world itself is so enormous, so complex, so interesting, so full of wonders, that the minute I say that everything that's in the world will be a part of the matrix of my work, I can grow along with reality, and I won't repeat myself all the time. The artist does not grow by pampering himself with his own likes or dislikes. He grows by having to do and to solve problems that reality presents to him, which he must accept if he wants to continually develop."

—Paul Strand

When asked how she knew good art, she replied, "It makes me itch."

—Gertrude Stein

"It is only an auctioneer who can equally and impartially appreciate all schools of Art."

—Oscar Wilde

"He who works with his hands is a labourer. He who works with his hands and his head is a craftsman. He who works with his hands and his head and his heart is an artist."

Francis of Assisi

Art

"You know, our eyes are hungry all the time, and they have to be fed with color and light and flesh and humor. Movies used to be so big and colorful--otherworldly--and this fed us all. It was a big deal to go see a movie--red curtains parting, coming attractions, big, bold vistas, the music! Jesus, it was an event for a quarter or whatever. Now a movie rolls into town like a tumbleweed or a used condom and no one gives much of a shit unless it's loud. So, you have to keep feeding your eyes and your soul--with art and poetry and films and people having fun. Having fun is an art too, you know."

—Dennis Hopper



"Without magic, there is no art. Without art, there is no idealism. Without idealism, there is no integrity. Without integrity, there is nothing but production."

—Raymond Chandler

"Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away."

—Anonymous

The Greeks didn't write obituaries. When a man died, they simply asked one question: did he have passion?

—Jeremy Priven
(Dean) from "Serendipity"

Art

“Artists are magical helpers. Evoking symbols and motifs that connect us to our deeper selves, they can help us along the heroic journey of our own lives.”

—Joseph Campbell

“Pathways to Bliss: Mythology and Personal Transformation”

“I do not have much patience with a thing of beauty that must be explained to be understood. If it does need additional interpretation by someone other than the creator, then I question whether it has fulfilled its purpose.”

—Charlie Chaplin

HOW TO FEEL MISERABLE AS AN ARTIST

(OR, WHAT NOT TO DO, UNDERLINE ANY THAT CURRENTLY APPLY)

1. CONSTANTLY COMPARE YOURSELF TO OTHER ARTISTS.
2. TALK TO YOUR FAMILY ABOUT WHAT YOU DO AND EXPECT THEM TO CHEER YOU ON.
3. BASE THE SUCCESS OF YOUR ENTIRE CAREER ON ONE PROJECT.
4. STICK WITH WHAT YOU KNOW.
5. UNDERVALUE YOUR EXPERTISE.
6. LET MONEY DICTATE WHAT YOU DO.
7. BOW TO SOCIETAL PRESSURES.
8. ONLY DO WORK THAT YOUR FAMILY WOULD LOVE.
9. DO WHATEVER THE CLIENT/CUSTOMER/GALLERY OWNER/PATRON/INVESTOR ASKS.
10. SET UNACHIEVABLE/OVERWHELMING GOALS. TO BE ACCOMPLISHED BY TOMORROW.

“Only love interests me, and I am only in contact with things that revolve around love.”

—Marc Chagall

“I have always tried to hide my efforts and wished my works to have the light joyousness of springtime which never lets anyone suspect the labors it has cost me.”

—Henri Matisse

Art

“He who loves, flies, runs, and rejoices; he is free and nothing holds him back.”

—Henri Matisse

“Art is why I get up in the morning, but my definition ends there. It doesn't seem fair that I'm living for something I can't even define.”

—Ani DiFranco

“The real artist has no pride. Unfortunately, he sees that his art has no limits, he feels obscurely how far he is from the goal. And while he is perhaps being admired by others, he mourns the fact that he has not yet reached the point to which his better genius, like a distant sun, ever beckons him.”

—Ludwig van Beethoven

“Good taste is the enemy of creativity.”

—Pablo Picasso

“While the goal of all movies is to entertain, the kind of film in which I believe goes one step further. It compels the spectator to examine one facet or another of his own conscience. It stimulates thought and sets the mental juices flowing. My films not only probe the consequences of prejudice, corruption and betrayal but also celebrated individual acts of courage.”

—Sidney Lumet

In an interview with director Peter Bogdanovich, Lumet compared filmmaking to ‘making a mosaic.’ “You take each little tile and polish and color it, and you just do the best you can on each little individual tile, and it's not until you've literally glued them all together that you know whether or not you've got something good,” he said.

—Sidney Lumet

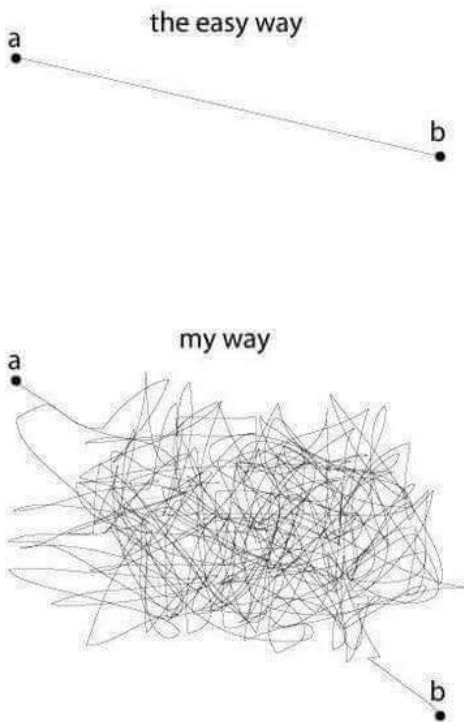
“I don't think that an artist should bother about his audience. His best audience is the person he sees in his shaving mirror every morning. I think that the audience an artist imagines, when he imagines that kind of a thing, is a room filled with people wearing his own mask.”

—Vladimir Nabokov

Art

“The creation of something new is not accomplished by the intellect but by the play instinct acting from inner necessity. The creative mind plays with the objects it loves.”

—Carl Jung



“Oh, Jesus, I have to stop you right now. I love you dearly: You're a smart and sweet man, but you are so wrong about what matters and where the eyes should visit. The things you find so important—the attention, the prizes, the approval—yes, they matter, and never so much than when they disappear. But I'm old now, and I've walked a long and rocky road, and what really mattered, what should matter most to you, is the rare and gorgeous experience of reaching out through your work and your actions and connecting to others. A message in a bottle thrown toward another frightened, loveless queer; a confused mother; a recently dejected man who can't see his way home. We get people home; we let them know that we're here for them. This is what art can do. Art should be the arm and the shoulder and the kind eyes—all of which let others know you deserve to live and to be loved. That is what matters, baby. Bringing people home.”

—Tennessee Williams

Art

"I pray that we will care to be big-of heart, of soul, of pocket, of industry, of daring—to magnify who and what we are through whatever means we have—in art, in living, in being. This is a great undertaking; it has value; it has saved so many; it is dying, but it is always in the process of dying, and is always rescued by those who recognize its frailty, its grandeur, and its necessity. Our greatness often lies in saving something that will be of use to souls unknown to us"

—Tennessee Williams

**"Go into the arts. I'm not kidding.
The arts are not a way to make a living.
They are a very human way of making life more bearable.
Practicing an art, no matter how well or badly,
is a way to make your soul grow, for heaven's sake.
Sing in the shower. Dance to the radio. Tell stories.
Write a poem to a friend, even a lousy poem.
Do it as well as you possibly can.
You will get an enormous reward.
You will have created something."**

Kurt Vonnegut



"The artist's life cannot be otherwise than full of conflicts, for two forces are at war within him—on the one hand, the common longing for happiness, satisfaction and security in life, and on the other a ruthless passion for creation which may go so far as to override every personal desire. There are hardly any exceptions to the rule that a person must pay dearly for the divine gift of creative fire."

—Carl Jung

"Creativity is oxygen for the soul."

—The Artist's Way

Art

“Nothing is original. Steal from anywhere that resonates with inspiration or fuels your imagination. Devour old films, new films, music, books, paintings, photographs, poems, dreams, random conversations, architecture, bridges, street signs, trees, clouds, bodies of water, light and shadows. Select only things to steal from that speak directly to your soul. If you do this, your work (and theft) will be authentic. Authenticity is invaluable; originality is nonexistent. And don't bother concealing your thievery—celebrate it if you feel like it. In any case, always remember what Jean-Luc Godard said: 'It's not where you take things from—it's where you take them to.'”

—Jim Jarmusch

“Creativity is not the possession of some special talent. It's about the willingness to play.”

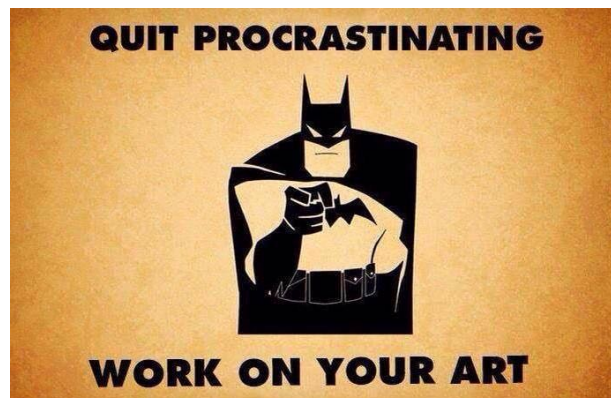
—John Cleese

“Many scientists argue that daydreaming is a crucial tool for creativity, a thought process that allows the brain to make new associations and connections. Instead of focusing on our immediate surroundings... [or on the problem at hand] the daydreaming mind is free to engage in abstract thought and imaginative ramblings. As a result, we're able to imagine things that don't actually exist.”

—Jonah Lehrer

“Mostly I straddle reality and the imagination. My reality needs imagination like a bulb needs a socket. My imagination needs reality like a blind man needs a cane.”

—Tom Waits



Art



"No artist is pleased. [There is] no satisfaction whatever at any time. There is only a queer divine dissatisfaction, a blessed unrest that keeps us marching and makes us more alive than the others."

—Martha Graham

"The power of art can break the shackles that bind and divide human beings."

—Daisaku Ikeda

"The arts make a bridge across this world in ways that nothing else can."

—Julie Andrews

James Gunn director (*Guardians of the Galaxy*) would keep a pile of little Play—Doh containers on set and if someone did an especially amazing job that day—whether it was an actor, a grip, a stunt man, or a PA—they'd get a canister of Play—Doh. He says he gave out 40 containers out over the entire shoot—on an 85—day schedule with a crew of two hundred: "I love the smell of Play—Doh—opening a new container and smelling it puts me in a creative, child—like place. And who doesn't love playing with Play—Doh?"

Art



"To live a creative life, we must lose our fear of being wrong."

—Joseph Chilton Pearce

"We all start out knowing magic. We are born with whirlwinds, forest fires, and comets inside us. We are born able to sing to birds and read the clouds and see our destiny in grains of sand. But then we get the magic educated right out of our souls. We get it church-ed out, spanked out, washed out, and combed out. We get put on the straight and narrow path and told to be responsible. Told to act our age. Told to grow up, for God's sake. And you know why we were told that? Because the people doing the telling were afraid of our wildness and youth, and because the magic we knew made them ashamed and sad of what they'd allowed to wither in themselves." -Robert R. McCammon

Art

“You should feel a flow of joy because you are alive. Your body will feel full of life. That is what you must give from the stage. Your life. No less. That is art: to give all you have.”

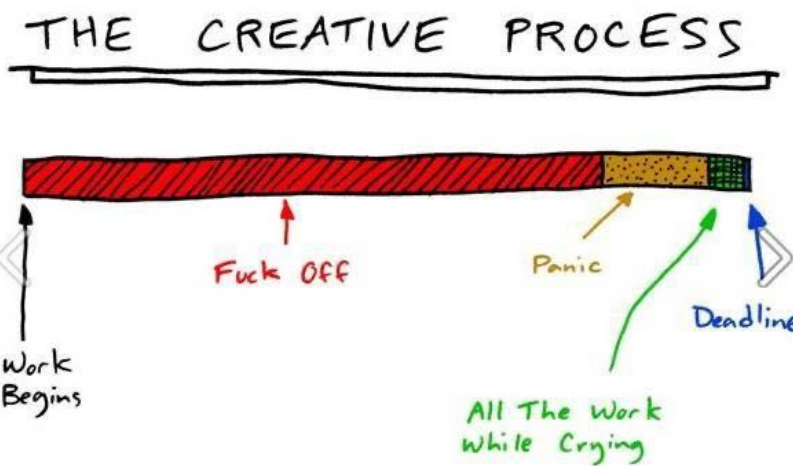
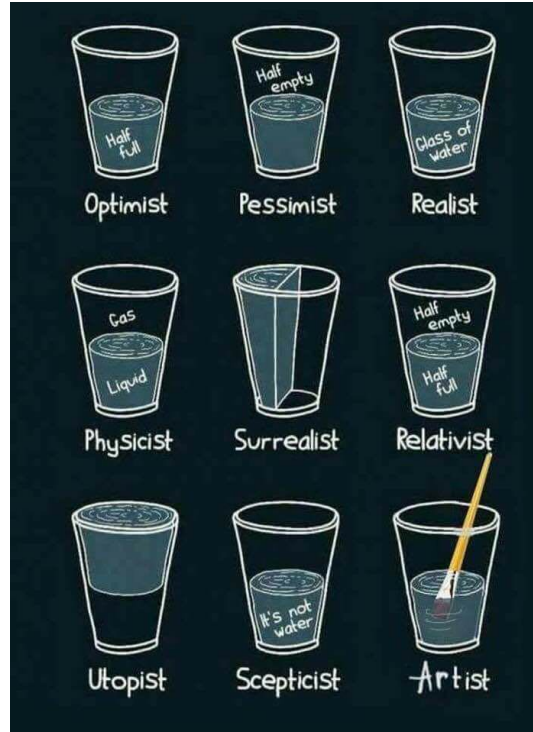
—Anton Chekhov



“Perhaps the primary distinction of the artist is that he must actively cultivate that state which most men, necessarily, must avoid: the state of being alone. That all men are, when the chips are down, alone, is a banality — a banality because it is very frequently stated, but very rarely, on the evidence, believed. Most of us are not compelled to linger with the knowledge of our aloneness, for it is a knowledge that can paralyze all action in this world. There are, forever, swamps to be drained, cities to be created, mines to be exploited, children to be fed. None of these things can be done alone. But the conquest of the physical world is not man’s only duty. He is also enjoined to conquer the great wilderness of himself. The precise role of the artist, then, is to illuminate that darkness, blaze roads through that vast forest, so that we will not, in all our doing, lose sight of its purpose, which is, after all, to make the world a more human dwelling place.”

—James Baldwin

Art



"Works of art make rules; rules do not make works of art."

—Claude Debussy

Art

"Artists are the gatekeepers of truth. We are civilization's radical voice."

—Paul Robeson

"To practice any art, no matter how well or badly, is a way to make your soul grow. So do it."

—Kurt Vonnegut

"Any form of art is a form of power; it has impact, it can affect change—it can not only move us, it makes us move."

—Ossie Davis

"In order to attain the impossible, one must attempt the absurd."

—Miguel de Cervantes

"From a small seed a mighty trunk may grow."

—Aeschylus

"Sometimes you will meet yourself on the road before you have a chance to learn the appropriate greeting. Faced with your own possibilities, the hard part is knowing a speech is not required. All you have to say is yes."

—Pearl Cleage, playwright

"The artist's role is to raise the consciousness of the people. To make them understand life, the world and themselves more completely. That's how I see it. Otherwise, I don't know why you do it."

—Amiri Baraka

On being asked by a reporter how it felt to have experienced 1,000 failures in inventing his light bulb, and the inventor allegedly replied, "I have not failed 1,000 times. I have successfully discovered 1,000 ways to NOT make a light bulb."

—Thomas Edison

"Without tradition, art is a flock of sheep without a shepherd. Without innovation, it is a corpse."

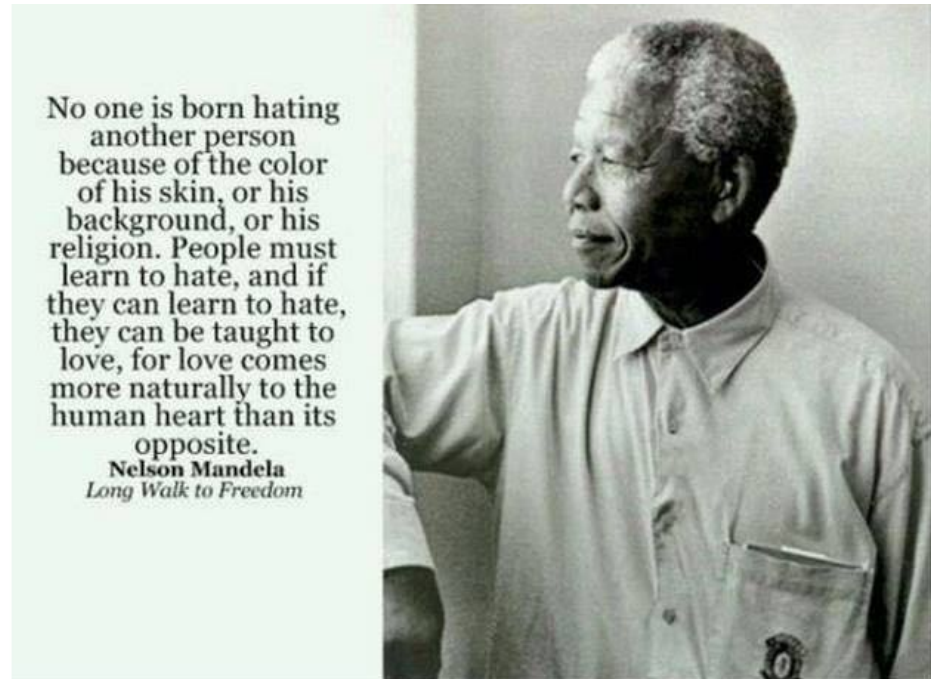
—Winston Churchill

Art

IMMACULATE HEART COLLEGE ART DEPARTMENT RULES

- Rule 1** FIND A PLACE YOU TRUST AND THEN TRY TRUSTING IT FOR A WHILE.
- Rule 2** GENERAL DUTIES OF A STUDENT:
PULL EVERYTHING OUT OF YOUR TEACHER.
PULL EVERYTHING OUT OF YOUR FELLOW STUDENTS.
- Rule 3** GENERAL DUTIES OF A TEACHER:
PULL EVERYTHING OUT OF YOUR STUDENTS.
- Rule 4** CONSIDER EVERYTHING AN EXPERIMENT.
- Rule 5** BE SELF DISCIPLINED. THIS MEANS FINDING SOMEONE WISE OR SMART AND CHOOSING TO FOLLOW THEM.
TO BE DISCIPLINED IS TO FOLLOW IN A GOOD WAY.
TO BE SELF DISCIPLINED IS TO FOLLOW IN A BETTER WAY.
- Rule 6** NOTHING IS A MISTAKE. THERE'S NO WIN AND NO FAIL. THERE'S ONLY MAKE.
- Rule 7** The only rule is work.
IF YOU WORK IT WILL LEAD TO SOMETHING.
IT'S THE PEOPLE WHO DO ALL OF THE WORK ALL THE TIME WHO EVENTUALLY CATCH ON TO THINGS.
- Rule 8** DON'T TRY TO CREATE AND ANALYSE AT THE SAME TIME. THEY'RE DIFFERENT PROCESSES.
- Rule 9** BE HAPPY WHENEVER YOU CAN MANAGE IT. ENJOY YOURSELF. IT'S LIGHTER THAN YOU THINK.
- Rule 10** "WE'RE BREAKING ALL OF THE RULES. EVEN OUR OWN RULES. AND HOW DO WE DO THAT? BY LEAVING PLENTY OF ROOM FOR X QUANTITIES." JOHN CAGE
- HELPFUL HINTS: ALWAYS BE AROUND. COME OR GO TO EVERYTHING. ALWAYS GO TO CLASSES. READ ANYTHING YOU CAN GET YOUR HANDS ON. LOOK AT MOVIES CAREFULLY OFTEN. SAVE EVERYTHING-IT MIGHT COME IN HANDY LATER.
THERE SHOULD BE NEW RULES NEXT WEEK.

Culture



No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.
Nelson Mandela
Long Walk to Freedom

“Athletes and actors—let actors stand for the set of performing artists—share much. They share the need to make gesture as fluid and economical as possible, to make out of a welter of choices the single, precisely right one. They share the need for impeccable and split-second timing. They share the need for thousands of hours of practice in order to train the body to become the perfect, instinctive instrument to express. Both athlete and actor, out of that congeries of emotion, choice, strategy, knowledge of the terrain, mood of spectators, condition of others in the ensemble, secret awareness of injury or weakness, and as nearly an absolute concentration as possible so that all externalities are integrated, all distraction absorbed to the self, must be able to change the self so successfully that it changes us.

When either athlete or actor can bring all these skills to bear and focus them, then he or she will achieve that state of complete intensity and complete relaxation—complete coherence or integrity between what the performer wants to do and what the performer has to do. Then, the performer is free; for then, all that has been learned, by thousands of hours of practice and discipline and by repetition of pattern, becomes natural. Then intellect is upgraded to the level of an instinct. The body follows commands that precede thinking.

Culture

When athlete and artist achieve such self-knowledge that they transform the self so that we are re-created, it is finally an exercise in power. The individual's power to dominate, on stage or field—and they are versions of the same place and are only by analogy altars—invests the whole arena around the locus of performance with his or her power.”

—A. Bartlett Giamati, from his book *Take Time for Paradise*.
Commissioner of Major League Baseball. Father of actors Paul and Marcus.

If we could shrink the earth's population to a village of precisely 100 people, with all the existing human ratios remaining the same, it would look something like the following:

There would be:

57 Asians

21 Europeans

14 from the Western Hemisphere, both north and south

8 Africans

52 would be female

48 would be male

70 would be non—white

30 would be white

70 would be non—Christian

30 would be Christian

11 would be homosexual

6 people would possess 59% of the entire world's wealth and all

6 would be from the United States.

70 would be unable to read

50 would suffer from malnutrition

1 would be near death; 1 would be near birth

1 (yes, only 1) would have a college education

1 would own a computer

When one considers our world from such a compressed perspective, the need for acceptance, understanding and education becomes glaringly apparent.

Culture

The following is also something to ponder...

If you woke up this morning with more health than illness... you are more blessed than the million who will not survive this week.

If you have never experienced the danger of battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture, or the pangs of starvation ...you are ahead of 500 million people in the world.

If you can attend a church meeting without fear of harassment, arrest, torture, or death... you are more blessed than three billion people in the world.

If you have food in the refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof overhead and a place to sleep... you are richer than 75% of this world.

If you have money in the bank, in your wallet, and spare change in a dish someplace ... you are among the top 8% of the world's wealthy.

If your parents are still alive and still married ... you are very rare, even in the United States and Canada.

If you can read this message, you just received a double blessing in that someone was thinking of you, and furthermore, you are more blessed than over two billion people in the world that cannot read at all.

Someone once said: What goes around comes around.

“Work like you don't need the money.

Love like you've never been hurt.

Dance like nobody's watching.

Sing like nobody's listening.

Live like it's Heaven on Earth.”

—Anonymous

Culture



We tried so hard to make things better for our kids that we made them worse. For my grandchildren, I'd like better.

I'd really like for them to know about hand me down clothes and homemade ice cream and leftover meat loaf sandwiches. I really would. I hope you learn humility by being humiliated, and that you learn honesty by being cheated.

I hope you learn to make your own bed and mow the lawn and wash the car. And I really hope nobody gives you a brand-new car when you are sixteen. It will be good if at least one time you can see puppies born and your old dog put to sleep.

I hope you get a black eye fighting for something you believe in. I hope you have to share a bedroom with your younger brother/sister. And it's all right if you have to draw a line down the middle of the room, but when he wants to crawl under the covers with you because he's scared, I hope you let him. When you want to see a movie and your little brother/sister wants to tag along, I hope you'll let him/her.

I hope you have to walk uphill to school with your friends and that you live in a town where you can do it safely.

Culture

On rainy days when you have to catch a ride, I hope you don't ask your driver to drop you two blocks away so you won't be seen riding with someone as uncool as your Mom. If you want a slingshot, I hope your Dad teaches you how to make one instead of buying one.

I hope you learn to dig in the dirt and read books. When you learn to use computers, I hope you also learn to add and subtract in your head.

I hope you get teased by your friends when you have your first crush on a boy/girl, and when you talk back to your mother that you learn what ivory soap tastes like.

May you skin your knee climbing a mountain, burn your hand on a stove and stick your tongue on a frozen flagpole.

I don't care if you try a beer once, but I hope you don't like it. And if a friend offers you dope or a joint, I hope you realize he is not your friend. I sure hope you make time to sit on a porch with your Grandma/Grandpa and go fishing with your Uncle.

May you feel sorrow at a funeral and joy during the holidays. I hope your mother punishes you when you throw a baseball through your neighbor's window and that she hugs you and kisses you at Hanukkah/Christmas time when you give her a plaster mold of your hand.

These things I wish for you—tough times and disappointment, hard work and happiness. To me, it's the only way to appreciate life.

Written with a pen. Sealed with a kiss. I'm here for you. And if I die before you do, I'll go to heaven and wait for you.

—Paul Harvey

Thursday, April 10, 2003 (AP)

Stung by anti—war criticism, Hall cancels 'Bull Durham' festivities

The Hall of Fame president, a former official in the Reagan administration, canceled a 15th anniversary celebration of "Bull Durham" because of anti—war criticism by co—stars Tim

Culture

Robbins and Susan Sarandon. Dale Petroskey sent a letter to Robbins and Sarandon this week, telling them the festivities April 26—27 at Cooperstown, N.Y., had been called off.

Recent comments by the actors “ultimately could put our troops in even more danger,” said Petroskey, a former White House assistant press secretary under President Reagan.

Reached Wednesday night, Robbins said he was “dismayed” by the decision. He responded with a letter he planned to send to Petroskey, telling him: “You belong with the cowards and ideologues in a hall of infamy and shame.”

The weekend affair, planned months ago, also was to feature “Bull Durham” actor Robert Wuhl and Ron Shelton, who wrote and directed the 1988 film.

Instead of commemorating the movie, the Hall canceled the celebration in a letter Tuesday sent to the scheduled participants.

“In a free country such as ours, every American has the right to his or her own opinions, and to express them. Public figures, such as you, have platforms much larger than the average American's, which provides you an extraordinary opportunity to have your views heard—and an equally large obligation to act and speak responsibly,” Petroskey wrote. “We believe your very public criticism of President Bush at this important—and sensitive—time in our nation's history helps undermine the U.S. position, which ultimately could put our troops in even more danger. As an institution, we stand behind our President and our troops in this conflict.”

Robbins and Sarandon, his longtime partner, have been active in peace rallies to protest the war in Iraq.

In his letter, Robbins said he'd been looking forward to “a weekend away from politics and war.” He said he remained “skeptical” of the war plans and told Petroskey he did not realize baseball was “a Republican sport.”

“I am sorry that you have chosen to use baseball and your position at the Hall of Fame to make a political statement,” Robbins wrote. “I know there are many baseball fans that disagree with you, and even more that will react with disgust to realize baseball is being politicized.”

Culture

"To suggest that my criticism of the president put the troops in danger is absurd. ... I wish you had, in your letter, saved me the rhetoric and talked honestly about your ties to the Bush and Reagan administrations.

"You invoke patriotism and use words like 'freedom' in an attempt to intimidate and bully. In doing so, you dishonor the words 'patriotism' and 'freedom' and dishonor the men and women who have fought wars to keep this nation a place where one can freely express their opinions without fear of reprisal or punishment."

Robbins signed his letter with a reference to an old-World Series champion.

"Long live democracy, free speech and the '69 Mets—all improbable, glorious miracles that I have always believed in," he wrote.

—Ben Walker, AP Baseball Writer

"Laughter is the shortest distance between two people."

—Victor Borge



"I can't afford to hate anyone. I don't have that kind of time."

—Akira Kurosawa

Culture

A Story for Our Times

"Many years ago, a student asked the anthropologist Margaret Mead what she considered to be the first sign of civilization in a culture. The student expected Mead to talk about hooks, clay pots or whetstones. But she didn't. Mead said the first sign of civilization in an ancient culture was a femur (thigh bone) that had healed from a break. Mead explained that in the animal kingdom, if you break your leg, you die. You can't run from danger, go to the river to drink water or hunt for food — injured animals or humans become fresh meat for predators. No animal survives a broken leg long enough for the bone to heal. A broken femur that healed is evidence that someone cared for the injured, treated the wound, took the person to safety and cared for them until they recovered. Helping someone through difficulty is where civilization begins, said Mead."



Gratitude is the antidote. It is useful in combating a variety of diseases, from something as vague as the discontents of civilization to something as specific as personal grief. Thanksgiving is the holiday of gratitude, and I am always willing to celebrate it.

We are told frequently that "it is what it is." That's a tautology, of course, and an increasingly grating cliché, but it gained prominence because it's a real reminder of a real thing: What happened happened. You can't change the past. All we have is today. See you in the future!

But regret is real. Sorrow and pain and loss—all real.

I sometimes think of civilization or society as a kind of floor, a patchy, rickety floor in constant need of repair. Below the floor is the chasm. Some people know that chasm well—those who have scrambled to exist in war zones, those who have tried to cope after hurricanes or earthquakes, those who have lost multiple family members simultaneously. For them, the daily

Culture

comforts of society are of little use. The network of routine, the solace of art, the hope for the future—none of it seems real.

Only the chasm seems real.

The chasm is only metaphorical, of course, but sometimes we live our lives entirely within metaphors. Our choice of metaphors is just a matter of taste. There's no right answer in this quiz, kids.

But still, we have to get through the day. And, I am convinced, the route through the day is gratitude. Because there is always something to be grateful for, and that something is not in the chasm, it floats above the chasm, denies the importance of the chasm.

You choose: sunsets, apples, bedrooms in the morning, Bruce Springsteen, a child's second birthday, the smile on the face of a passing stranger, rivers, mountaintops, cathedrals, Shakespeare, Tina Fey, the curve of a thigh, the curve of a road, the nation of Switzerland, Carl Hiaasen, grass, orange, Bola Sete, jumbo shrimp, Pascal's theorem, Occam's razor, clean restrooms, potable water, penguins, French kissing or peanuts.

Can you feel the floor beneath your feet get sturdier? Can you see the holes being patched? For a moment, the bounty of the world overwhelmed you, and you were grateful to be alive at this moment. See? Antidote.

So today, if we are at all lucky, we will gather with family and/or friends and eat food and talk of shared alliances and shared memories. Many Thanksgivings are family gatherings, and family gatherings are often fraught. My suggestion is: Embrace the fraught. You'd miss the fraught if it weren't there.

Besides, there's always the moment of escaping the fraught, going outside for a smoke or down to the store for more whipped cream or out for a walk with someone you love. You can't have the escape without the prison. Be grateful for both.

What I'm going to try to do this year is slow down. What I'm going to try to do this year is pay attention. Usually, I run around. Lots of people make me frantic—we always have lots of people

Culture

at our Thanksgivings—and there are always a thousand tasks. The point of the holiday is not the tasks, even though it seems that way sometimes.

I'm going to think about how each of the people at the table came into my life, and what I remember about that moment, and how we decided to become friends instead of just people who met each other once a long time ago. And I'm going to remember the kindness that each person has shown me, and I'm also going to remember my kindnesses, because I'm grateful for the times I behaved well.

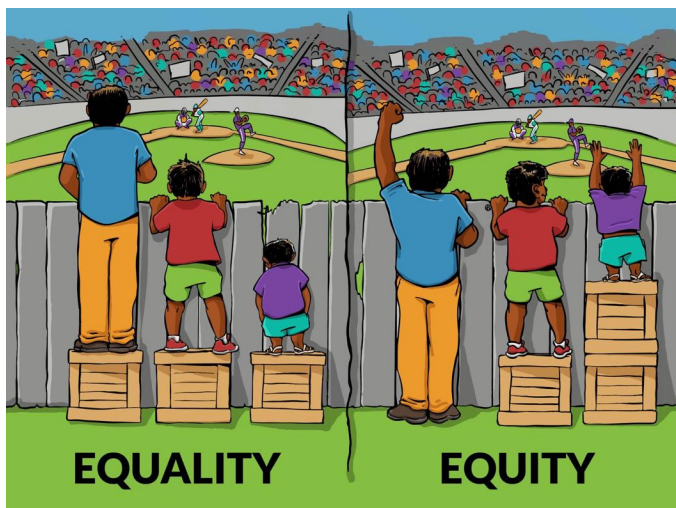
And because not all the people I'm grateful for are in the room today, I'm going to think about them and send them good thoughts across the miles. I don't believe in the transmission of thoughts, but I believe in trying. It's like a flashy vehicle for mindfulness, and mindfulness is hard when the talk is loud and the carbohydrates are disappearing at alarming rates.

And as I walk across the floor from one room to another, I'm going to notice how solid the floor feels beneath my feet today. I know how fragile it is, but it doesn't matter. Today, right now, this Thanksgiving, it feels like the oldest rock in the world, and I stand on it and rejoice.

May you grow up to be righteous, may you grow up to be true, may you always know the truth and see the lights surrounding you. May you always be courageous, stand upright and be strong; may you stay forever.

—Jon Carroll

The San Francisco Chronicle



Culture

“A race of people is like an individual man; until it uses its own talent, takes pride in its own history, expresses its own culture, affirms its own selfhood, it can never fulfill itself.”

—Malcolm X

“In civilized life, where the happiness and indeed almost the existence of man, depends on the opinion of his fellow men. He is constantly acting a studied part.”

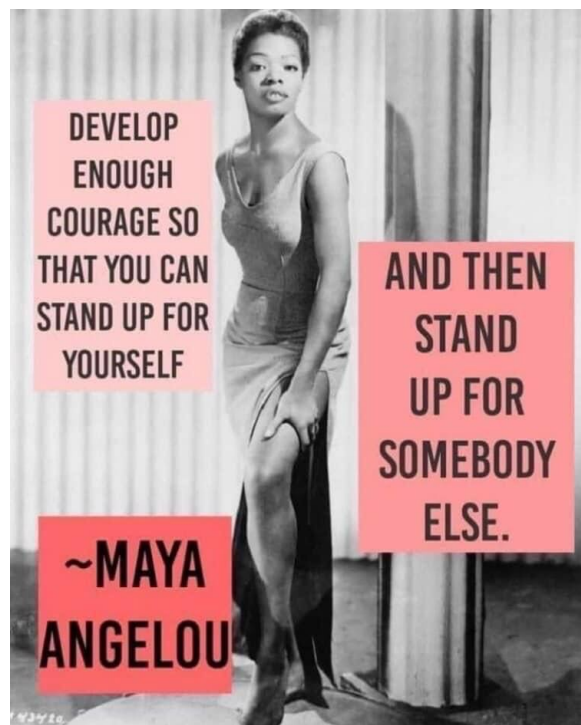
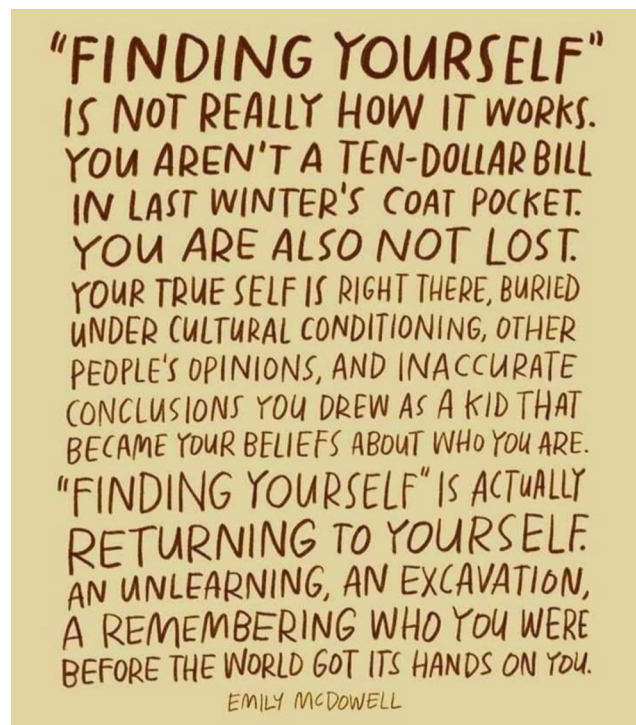
—Washington Irving

“All labor that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance and should be undertaken with painstaking excellence.”

—Martin Luther King, Jr.

“If I’m an advocate for anything, it’s to move. As far as you can, as much as you can. Across the ocean, or simply across the river. The extent to which you can walk in someone else’s shoes or at least eat their food, it’s a plus for everybody.”

—Anthony Bourdain



Culture

“San Francisco itself is art... Every block is a short story, every hill a novel. Every home a poem, every dweller within immortal. That is the whole truth.”

—William Saroyan

“Perhaps, as we say in America, I wanted to find myself. This is an interesting phrase, not current as far as I know in the language of any other people, which certainly does not mean what it says but betrays a nagging suspicion that something has been misplaced. I think now that if I had any intimation that the self I was going to find would turn out to be only the same self from which I had spent so much time in flight, I would have stayed at home.”

—James Baldwin

1. Rise with the sun to pray. Pray alone. Pray often. The Great Spirit will listen, if you only speak.
2. Be tolerant of those who are lost on their path. Ignorance, conceit, anger, jealousy and greed stem from a lost soul. Pray that they will find guidance.
3. Search for yourself, by yourself. Do not allow others to make your path for you. It is your road, and yours alone. Others may walk it with you, but no one can walk it for you.
4. Treat the guests in your home with much consideration. Serve them the best food, give them the best bed and treat them with respect and honor.
5. Do not take what is not yours whether from a person, a community, the wilderness or from a culture. It was not earned nor given. It is not yours.
6. Respect all things that are placed upon this earth—whether it be people or plant.
7. Honor other people’s thoughts, wishes and words. Never interrupt another or mock or rudely mimic them. Allow each person the right to personal expression.
8. Never speak of others in a bad way. The negative energy that you put out into the universe will multiply when it returns to you.
9. All persons make mistakes. And all mistakes can be forgiven.
10. Bad thoughts cause illness of the mind, body and spirit. Practice optimism.
11. Nature is not FOR us; it is a PART of us. Animals, plants and other living creatures are all part of your worldly family.
12. Children are the seeds of our future. Plant love in their hearts and water them with wisdom and life’s lessons. When they are grown, give them space to grow.
13. Avoid hurting the hearts of others. The poison of your pain will return to you.
14. Be truthful at all times. Honesty is the test of one’s will within this universe.

Culture

15. Keep yourself balanced. Your Mental self, Spiritual self, Emotional self, and Physical self-need to be strong, pure and healthy. Work out the body to strengthen the mind. Grow rich in spirit to cure emotional ails.

16. Make conscious decisions as to who you will be and how you will react. Be responsible for your own actions.

17. Respect the privacy and personal space of others. Do not touch the personal property of others—especially sacred and religious objects. This is forbidden.

18. Be true to yourself first. You cannot nurture and help others if you cannot nurture and help yourself first.

19. Respect others religious beliefs. Do not force your belief on others.

20. Share your good fortune with others. Participate in charity.

We may differ in our faith, religion, and culture, yet we all live together on the same boat. We are only custodians and not owners of The Earth, not its conquerors nor its destroyers.

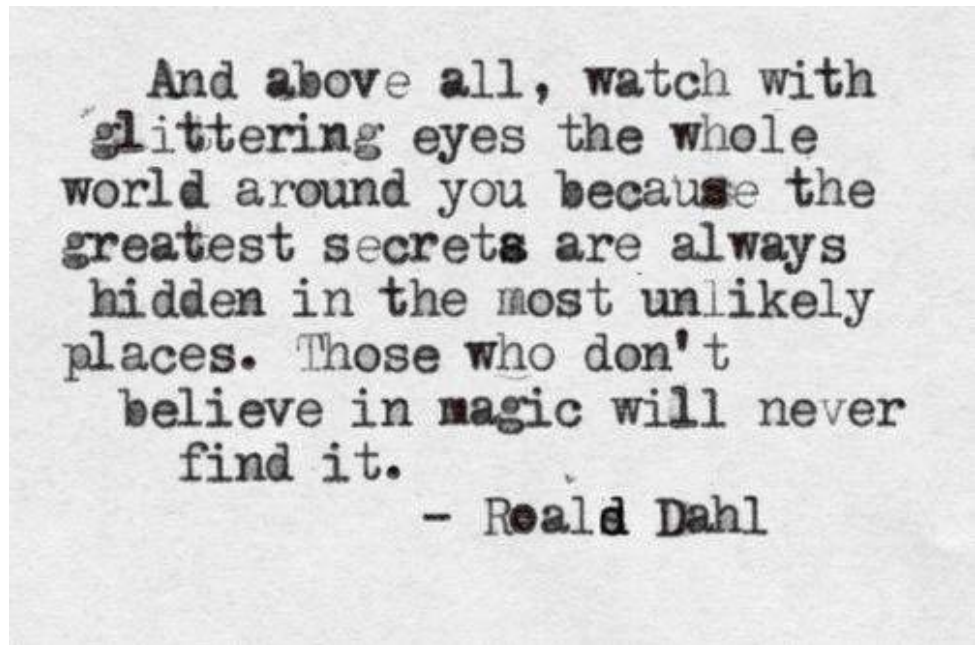
—The Native American Code of Ethics

These are Labrador Retrievers. They come in a variety of colors. They are loved & treated equally no matter their color. They don't fight each other over their color differences. When it comes down to it, they are all Labs, they are all dogs.

**Dear humans, do better, be better.
Be more like Labs.**



Literature



"Words are all we have. Each word is like an unnecessary stain in the silence and nothingness."
—Samuel Beckett

"If you're going to be crazy, you have to get paid for it or else you're going to be locked up."
—Hunter S. Thompson

If you lived as a child in the 40's, 50's, 60's or even the 70's.... looking back, it's hard to believe that we have lived as long as we have...

As children, we would ride in cars with no seat belts or air bags. Riding in the back of a pickup truck on a warm day was always a special treat.

Our baby cribs were covered with bright colored lead-based paint. We had no childproof lids on medicine bottles, doors, or cabinets, and when we rode our bikes, we had no helmets. (Not to mention hitchhiking to town as a young kid!)

Literature

We drank water from the garden hose and not from a bottle. Horrors!

We would spend hours building our go—carts out of scraps and then rode down the hill, only to find out we forgot the brakes. After running into the bushes a few times, we learned to solve the problem.

We would leave home in the morning and play all day, as long as we were back when the streetlights came on. No one was able to reach us all day.

No cell phones. Unthinkable. We played dodge ball and sometimes the ball would really hurt. We got cut and broke bones and broke teeth, and there were no lawsuits from these accidents. They were accidents. No one was to blame, but us. Remember accidents?

We had fights and punched each other and got black and blue and learned to get over it.

We ate cupcakes, bread and butter, and drank sugar soda but we were never overweight... we were always outside playing. We shared one grape soda with four friends, from one bottle and no one died from this.

We did not have Play stations, Nintendo 64, X—Boxes, video games at all, 99 channels on cable, video tape movies, surround sound, personal cell phones, Personal Computers, Internet chat rooms ... we had friends. We went outside and found them. We rode bikes or walked to a friend's home and knocked on the door, or rung the bell or just walked in and talked to them.

Imagine such a thing. Without asking a parent! By ourselves! Out there in the cold cruel world! Without a guardian. How did we do it?

We made up games with sticks and tennis balls and ate worms and although we were told it would happen, we did not put out very many eyes, nor did the worms live inside us forever.

Little League had tryouts and not everyone made the team. Those who didn't, had to learn to deal with disappointment... Some students weren't as smart as others so they failed a grade

Literature

and were held back to repeat the same grade..... Horrors. Tests were not adjusted for any reason.

Our actions were our own. Consequences were expected. No one to hide behind. The idea of a parent bailing us out if we broke a law was unheard of. They actually sided with the law, imagine that!

This generation has produced some of the best risk takers and problem solvers and inventors, ever. The past 50 years has been an explosion of innovation and new ideas. We had freedom, failure, success and responsibility, and we learned how to deal with it all.

And you're one of them.

Congratulations!

—Anonymous

“What lies behind us, what lies before us, are tiny matters compared to what lies inside us.”

—Emerson

“The body is a house of many windows: there we all sit, showing ourselves and crying on the passers—by to come and love us.”

—Robert Louis Stevenson

“The hottest places in Hell are reserved for those who, in times of great moral crisis, maintain their neutrality.”

—Dante

“Whatever you are meant to do, move toward it and it will come to you.”

—Gloria Dunn

“Each friend represents a world in us, a world possibly not born until they arrive, and it is only by this meeting that a new world is born.”

—Anais Nin

Literature

"A true friend stabs you in the front."

—Oscar Wilde

"The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes."

—Marcel Proust

"The only way to have a friend is to be one."

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

"Success is often the result of taking a misstep in the right direction."

—Al Bernstein

"If we are unable to create fictions to fill those gaps [in our senses] we become insane."

—Mark Z. Danielewski,

On how our minds create fictions to fill the voids
of what our senses miss in perception.

"Do not be too timid and squeamish about your actions. All life is an experiment."

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

"Patterning your life around other's opinions is nothing more than slavery."

—Lawana Blackwell,

The Dowry of Miss Lydia Clark, 1999

"The smartest people ask the most questions"

—Robert Greenberg

"Have we not a perpetual inclination, in the teeth of our best judgment, to violate that which is Law, merely because we understand it to be such?"

—Edgar Allen Poe, "The Black Cat"

Literature

"Whosoever be—ith a man, must be a nonconformist."

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

"The only people for me are the mad ones, the ones who are mad to live, mad to talk, mad to be saved, desirous of everything at the same time, the ones who never yawn or say a commonplace thing, but burn, burn, burn, like fabulous yellow roman candles exploding like spiders across the stars and in the middle you see the blue centerlight pop and everybody goes "Awww!"

—Jack Kerouac, *On the Road*

"One by one, they were all becoming shades. Better pass boldly into that other world, in the full glory of some passion, than fade and wither dimly with age."

—James Joyce, "Dubliners, The Dead"

"Every writer is a frustrated actor who recites his lines in the hidden auditorium of his skull."

—Rod Serling

"How quick bright things come to confusion."

—*A Midsummer Night's Dream*

**"The best people possess a feeling
for beauty, the courage to take
risks, the discipline to tell the
truth, the capacity for sacrifice.
Ironically, their virtues make them
vulnerable; they are often wounded,
sometimes destroyed."**

- Ernest Hemingway

Literature

Is there any possible formula to follow in order to be a good novelist?

"Ninety-nine percent talent ... ninety-nine percent discipline ... ninety-nine percent work. He must never be satisfied with what he does. It never is as good as it can be done. Always dream and shoot higher than you know you can do. Don't bother just to be better than your contemporaries or predecessors. Try to be better than yourself. An artist is a creature driven by demons. He don't know why they choose him and he's usually too busy to wonder why. He is completely amoral in that he will rob, borrow, beg, or steal from anybody and everybody to get the work done."

—William Faulkner

"One of the symptoms of an approaching nervous breakdown is the belief that one's work is terribly important."

—Bertrand Russell

"The purpose of literature is to turn blood into ink."

—T.S. Eliot



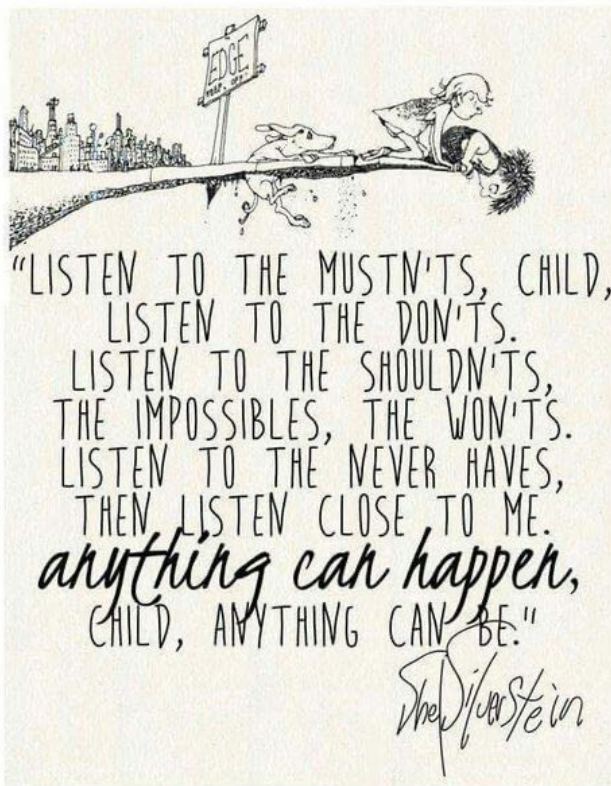
Literature

"If there's a story that you want to read, but it hasn't been written yet, then you must write it."

—Toni Morrison

"There is nothing more powerful than an idea whose time has come."

—Victor Hugo



"Everyone has literature inside of them."

—Anna Deavere Smith

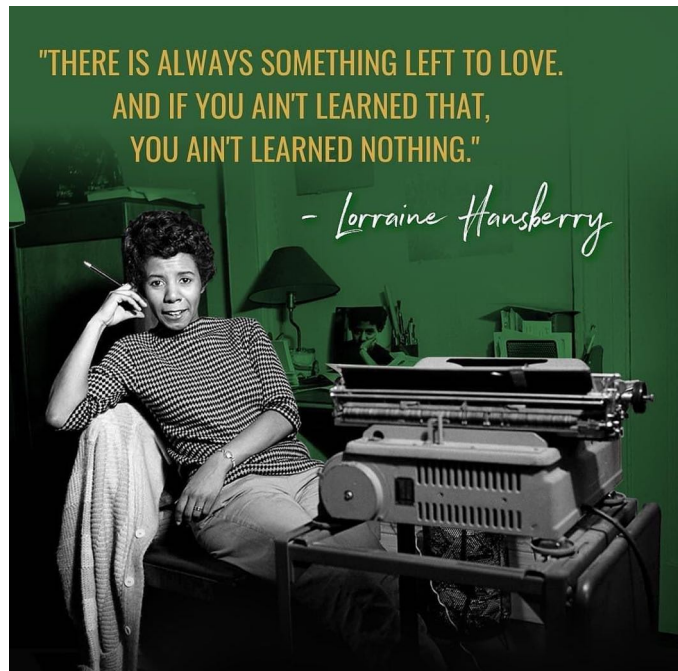
"I became insane, with long intervals of horrible sanity..."

—Edgar Allan Poe

"Write what you feel. Write because of that need for expression."

—Dorothy Fields

Love



Sonnet XXIX

When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes
I all alone beweep my outcast state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself, and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,
Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee, and then my state,
Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate;
For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

—Wm. Shakespeare

Love

“Looking for Love with All The Wrong Notions”

I got so wrapped up in the psychobabble of oppositional defiance disorder Friday I forgot to send you a valentine.

After 25 years of inexcusable verbosity, I regularly get requests for reprints of merely two of my columns. One is a Christmas column that the editor has formed the flattering habit of rerunning each Christmas Day. The other is a column about love. This the editor politely dismisses, having correctly appraised me as no kind of Casanova.

But so many of you have asked for an encore of the love column that I thought I'd risk bringing it out for a bow. It's been tucked away for four years but, as far as I know, nothing much has changed the dynamics of love in the meantime...

A definition of love is a handy thing to have. A lot of people go through life looking for one and never find it. A lot of people don't even know they are supposed to look.

Millions of songs have been written on the subject. But love songs are a bad place to look for a definition of love. Most so-called love songs aren't about love at all. They are about lust or ego.

The lust songs fall into the “I-gotta-have-you-because-you-make-me-feel-so-good” category. If you think about them a little, you'll see they really aren't very romantic. They could be written, for example, about a car. As in “Toyota... Oh What You Do For Me!”

But lust is not love. And picking a person to love isn't the same as picking a car to love. In a way, that's too bad. Most lovers learn a lot more about the cars they choose than the mate they choose. That's why the divorce rate is so high. That's why couples who agree to split up argue about who gets to keep the Honda.

Eventually, we all get rid of our cars. Usually long before they are worn out. We just get tired of them. Another car comes rolling off the assembly line and we like it better. That becomes the car we gotta have. We lust anew. The law of lust is that the new lust is always better than the

Love

old lust. If you confuse love with lust, you're apt to trade in lovers or spouses as often as you trade in cars. And, secretly, you're going to wish there was some kind of leasing program.

Preachers preach more sermons about lust than they preach about ego. But, when it comes to counterfeit love, ego is probably more dangerous than lust. There are ego "love songs" too. They are written for collectors, not lovers. "You belong to me," they say. "Be mine. Whatever you do, wherever you go, you can't get away from me."

Juke boxes are full of these sugar-coated threats. Misty-eyed lovers croon them to each other on the dance floor. But they are the most frightening kind of so-called love songs. They are love songs for stalkers.

Maybe the strangest thing you hear about love is that it is possible to fall in love. As if love were an open manhole.

"I fell in love with him. I just couldn't help it. It just happened." You hear that stuff all the time. It's pretty revolting, really. It makes love seem like a rash.

"I suddenly broke out in love, Doctor. Down here in this embarrassing spot. I can't explain it. I don't know how I got it, really. Maybe it will just clear up."

You're smart to stay away from somebody who claims that love is something he caught from you-- like a stomach flu. Next week, if his resistance is low, he may catch it from somebody else.

So much for what love isn't. But what is it? I've got an answer to that question. And the answer is my tardy valentine to you.

It's a borrowed answer. Only the very lucky among us are smart enough to discover what love is without help. There was a time in my life when I needed such help. When it was very important for me to know what love is. And even more important to know what love isn't.

Love

I found the answer in M. Scott Peck's wonderful book "The Road Less Traveled." I read a lot and I recommend a lot of books to people. But Peck's book is just about the only book I recommend to everybody.

Peck says this: "Love is the will to extend one's self for the purpose of nurturing one's own or another's spiritual growth."

Love, in other words, is not a feeling. It's a decision. An act of will. It has a goal. Feelings don't have goals. But love's goal is to become better and make the loved one better. It has a price tag. Feelings don't have price tags. The price is work. The work of giving. Not giving a dozen roses or a pebble of polished carbon glued to a gold circle. Giving the best you've got to make somebody else better. And, in giving, becoming better yourself.

If the relationship you're in doesn't make you a better person, then it isn't love. And a lot of people are in relationships that actually make them worse. If you've ever said or thought, "I don't like myself as much when I'm around him," you're not in love. You're in trouble.

Whatever else you heard on Valentine's Day, that's what love is. Don't expect to see it on the soaps. Or go shopping for it at Victoria's Secret.

Since I borrowed the definition, I can peddle it without conceit. So draw a heart around this column and send it to your special someone. You missed Valentine's Day, but, when it comes to love, the rule is better late than never.

—Dick Feagler
Cleveland Plain Dealer Feb. 17, 1995

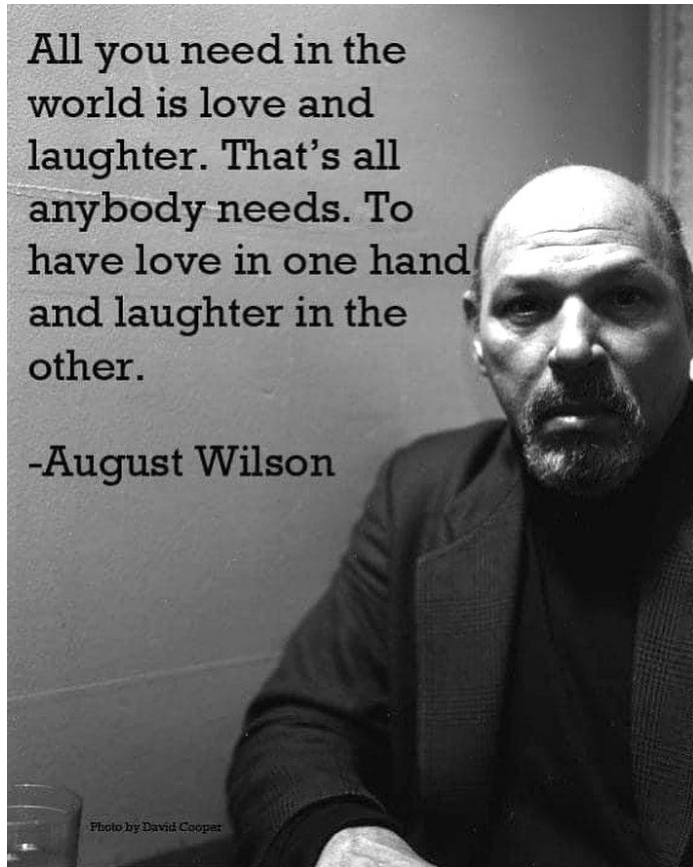
"Brave people love openly, whatever or whomever it may be. Love loyally and fully. The saddest people are the loudest, and they hate everything. The lovers need to get louder."

—Marian Seldes

"Why love if losing hurts so much? I have no answers anymore; only the life I have lived. The pain now is part of the happiness then."

—Anthony Hopkins

Love



"You have to love everyone out of their struggles and into their element. This is true of everyone. I do the loving on sets and stages and, occasionally, in what is called real life. But if you don't have love--and respect--for the person, you'll never achieve anything worthy. It starts with love."

--Arthur Penn

"The biggest disease today is not leprosy or tuberculosis...it is the lack of love and charity; the terrible indifference towards one's neighbor."

—Mother Teresa

"What rules we had, as a family, stemmed from the fact that all of us had been adopted by each other. We've always had equal amounts of gratitude and respect mixed in with our love for each other. Susan, an only child who never had any roots, and I, a lone wolf who got married twenty years too late, were adopted by the kids as much as they were by us."

Love

Somehow, without lecturing or threatening or studying any books, we all followed the same rules, from the time the kids were very young:

- Life has been created for you to enjoy, but you won't enjoy it unless you pay for it with some good, hard work. This is one price that will never be marked down.
- You can work at whatever you want to as long as you do it as well as you can and clean up afterwards and you're at the table at mealtime and in bed at bedtime.
- Respect what the others do. Respect Dad's harp, Mom's paints, Billy's piano, Alex's set of tools, Jimmy's designs, and Minnie's menagerie.
- If anything makes you sore, come out with it. Maybe the rest of us are itching for a fight too.
- If anything strikes you funny, out with that too. Let's all the rest of us have a laugh.
- If you have an impulse to do something you're not sure is right, go ahead and do it. Take a chance. Chances are, if you don't you'll regret it—unless you break the rules about mealtime or bedtime, in which case you'll sure as hell regret it.
- If it's a question of whether to do what's fun or what is supposed to be good for you, and nobody is hurt by whichever you do, always do what's fun.
- If things get too much for you and you feel the whole world's against you, go stand on your head. If you can think of anything crazier to do, do it.
- Don't worry about what other people think. The only person in the world important enough to conform to is yourself.
- Anybody who mistreats a pet or breaks a pool cue is docked a month's pay."

—From "Harpo Speaks"
by Harpo Marx with Rowland Barber

Love

“Whoever walks a furlong without sympathy walks to his own funeral.”

—Walt Whitman

“I have a holistic need to work and to have huge ties of love in my life. I can't imagine eschewing one for the other.”

—Meryl Streep

“Love yourself first and everything else falls into line. You really have to love yourself to get anything done in this world.”

—Lucille Ball

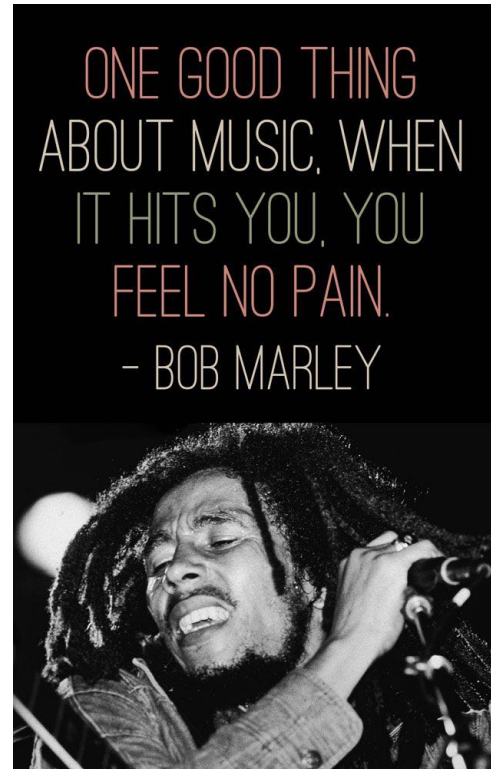
“A loving heart is the beginning of all knowledge.”

—Thomas Carlyle

“A laugh, to be joyous, must flow from a joyous heart, for without kindness, there can be no true joy.”

—Thomas Carlyle

Music



"To play a wrong note is insignificant; to play without passion is inexcusable."

—Ludwig van Beethoven

"I think you start out trying to sound like somebody else," he said. "Even Ray Charles was trying to sound like Nat King Cole, but there already was one. So, he really had to dig deep and find out if there was something on another level that he was yet to discover. At the same time, I don't really think there is anything genuinely new under the sun. You get to be king of the glove compartment or king of the fishbowl for a while, and then you're gone. I found a voice. I think there are other voices in there and I'm still looking for it, ...It's more like an actor — I play a lot of murderers or husbands. Someday I'd like to play a coal miner or a snake charmer or something. I think inside every song there are other songs. But I also think, inside your voice, there are other voices that you have yet to discover and that's kind of why you are here."

—Tom Waits

Music

“Enjoy every sandwich.”

—Warren Zevon

This article from the Houston Chronicle about a more inspiring than usual performance by Perlman in 1995 was forwarded to me today. Maybe you haven't heard it before: On Nov. 18, 1995, Itzhak Perlman, the violinist, came on stage to give a concert at Avery Fisher Hall at Lincoln Center in New York City. If you have ever been to a Perlman concert, you know that getting on stage is no small achievement for him. He was stricken with polio as a child, and so he has braces on both legs and walks with the aid of two crutches.

To see him walk across the stage one step at a time, painfully and slowly, is an unforgettable sight. He walks painfully, yet majestically, until he reaches his chair. Then he sits down, slowly, puts his crutches on the floor, undoes the clasps on his legs, tucks one foot back and extends the other foot forward. Then he bends down and picks up the violin, puts it under his chin, nods to the conductor and proceeds to play.

By now, the audience is used to this ritual. They sit quietly while he makes his way across the stage to his chair. They remain reverently silent while he undoes the clasps on his legs. They wait until he is ready to play. But this time, something went wrong. Just as he finished the first few bars, one of the strings on his violin broke. You could hear it snap—it went off like gunfire across the room. There was no mistaking what that sound meant.

There was no mistaking what he had to do. People who were there that night thought to themselves: “We figured that he would have to get up, put on the clasps again, pick up the crutches and limp his way off stage—to either find another violin or else find another string for this one. But he didn't. Instead, he waited a moment, closed his eyes and then signaled the conductor to begin again. The orchestra began, and he played from where he had left off. And he played with such passion and such power and such purity as they had never heard before. Of course, anyone knows that it is impossible to play a symphonic work with just three strings. I know that, and you know that, but that night Itzhak Perlman refused to know that. You could see him modulating, changing, recomposing the piece in his head. At one point, it sounded like he was de—tuning the strings to get new sounds from them that they had never made before.

Music

When he finished, there was an awesome silence in the room. And then people rose and cheered. There was an extraordinary outburst of applause from every corner of the auditorium. We were all on our feet, screaming and cheering, doing everything we could to show how much we appreciated what he had done.

He smiled, wiped the sweat from his brow, raised his bow to quiet us, and then he said, not boastfully, but in a quiet, pensive, reverent tone, "You know, sometimes it is the artist's task to find out how much music you can still make with what you have left."

What a powerful line that is. It has stayed in my mind ever since I heard it. And who knows? Perhaps that is the [way] of life—not just for artists but for all of us. So, perhaps our task in this shaky, fast changing, bewildering world in which we live is to make music, at first with all that we have, and then, when that is no longer possible, to make music with what we have left.

—Anonymous

"If slaughterhouses had glass walls, everyone would be a vegetarian."

—Paul McCartney

"It's the sense of touch. In any real city, you walk, you know? You brush past people; people bump into you. In LA, nobody touches you. We're always behind this metal and glass. I think we miss that touch so much, that we crash into each other, just so we can feel something."

—Crash

"Quit worrying about stupid things. you have four years to be irresponsible here. relax. work is for people with jobs. you'll never remember class time, but you'll remember time you wasted hanging out with your friends. so, stay out late. go out on a Tuesday with your friends when you have a paper due Wednesday. spend money you don't have. drink 'til sunrise. the work never ends, but college does."

—Tom Petty

"and she said: you are a miracle but that is not all; you are also a stiff drink and i am on call; you are a party and i am a school night and i'm lookin' for my door key but you are my porch light and you'll never know, dear just how much i loved you you'll probably think this was just

Music

my big excuse but i stand committed to a love that came before you and the fact that i adore you is but one of my truths"

—Ani Defranco

"The good thing about music, when it hits, you feel no pain"

—Bob Marley

"If I were giant—sized, on top of it all, then tell me what in the world would I go on for, if I had it all."

—Dave Matthews

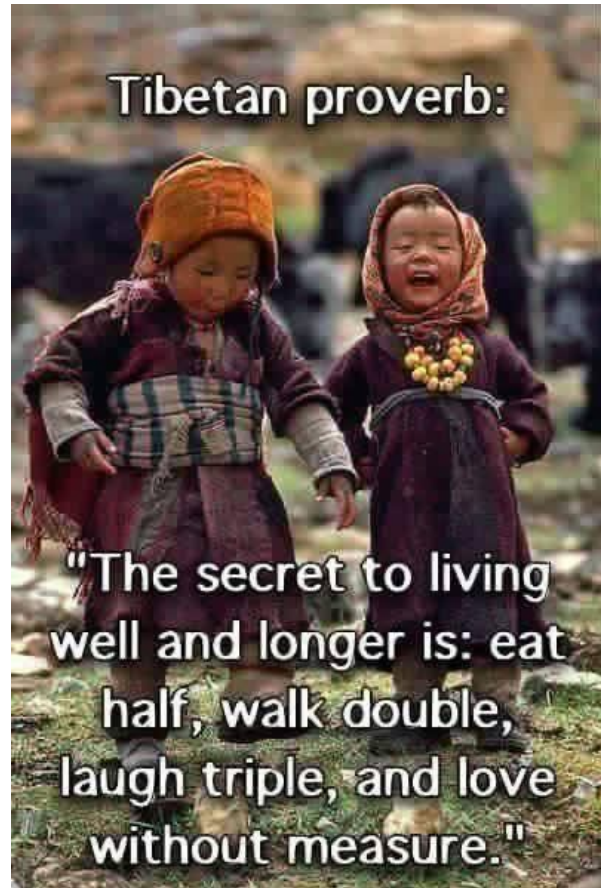
"The hardest part has been maintaining a small head—remaining down to earth. So many people try to make you more than you are. This business has changed a lot of good people and a lot of good families, and I don't want that to happen to me."

—Brandy

"I want to do a musical movie. Like Evita, but with good music."

—Elton John

Philosophy



"The soul has greater need of the ideal than the real. It is by the real that we exist, it is by the ideal that we live."

—Victor Hugo

"We're all somewhat courageous, and we're all considerably cowardly. We're all imperfect, and life is simply a perpetual, unending struggle against those imperfections."

—Sidney Poitier

The Measure of a Man: A Spiritual Autobiography

"A man with one watch always knows what time it is. A man with two is never sure."

—Chinese Proverb

Philosophy

“Put your principles into practice — now. Stop the excuses and the procrastination. This is your life! You aren’t a child anymore. The sooner you set yourself to your spiritual program, the happier you will be. Separate yourself from the mob. Decide to be extraordinary and do what you need to do — now.”

—Epictetus

“Heaven preserve me from littleness and pleasantness and smoothness. Give me great glaring vices, and great glaring virtues, but preserve me from the neat little neutral ambiguities. Be wicked, be brave, be drunk, be reckless, be dissolute, be despotic, be an anarchist, be a suffragette, be anything you like, but for pity’s sake be it to the top of your bent. Live fully, live passionately, live disastrously. Let’s live, you and I, as none have ever lived before.”

—Vita Sackville West
October 25, 1918

“If You Want to Go Fast, Go Alone. If You Want to Go Far, Go Together.”

—African Proverb

We pay a heavy price for our fear of failure. It is a powerful obstacle to growth. It assures the narrowing of the personality and prevents exploration and experimentation. There is no learning without some fumbling. If you want to keep on learning, you must keep on risking failure all your life. It’s as simple as that. I am vividly reminded of Goethe’s saying that ‘People will always be making mistakes as long as they are striving after something.’”

—John W. Gardner

“Knowledge is learning something every day. Wisdom is letting go of something every day.”

—Zen Proverb

“In my travels, I found that nothing can take the place of persistence. Talent won’t; there is nothing more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius won’t, because unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education won’t. The world is full of educated derelicts. I think persistence and determination alone are most important.”

—Harry Houdini

Philosophy

“Courage is just a muscle; it gets stronger with practice. People never really test their spirit until they are faced with adversity, and that in turn, creates spirit and an authentic vigor in life.”
—Bess Weiss

“Do that which scares you the most. Afterwards, find the courage.”
—Anonymous

“All tedious research is worth one moment of inspiration.”
—Anonymous

The paradox of our time in history is that we have taller buildings but shorter tempers, wider freeways, but narrower viewpoints. We spend more, but have less. We buy more, but enjoy less. We have bigger houses and smaller families, more conveniences, but less time. We have more degrees but less sense, more knowledge, but less judgment, more experts, yet more problems, more medicine, but less wellness. We drink too much, smoke too much, spend too recklessly, laugh too little, drive too fast, get too angry, stay up too late, get up too tired, read too little, watch TV too much, and pray too seldom. We have multiplied our possessions, but reduced our values. We talk too much, love too seldom, and hate too often. We've learned how to make a living, but not a life. We've added years to life not life to years. We've been all the way to the moon and back, but have trouble crossing the street to meet a new neighbor. We conquered outer space but not inner space. We've done larger things, but not better things. We've cleaned up the air, but polluted the soul. We've conquered the atom, but not our prejudice. We write more, but learn less. We plan more, but accomplish less. We've learned to rush, but not to wait. We build more computers to hold more information, to produce more copies than ever, but we communicate less and less. These are the times of fast foods and slow digestion, big men and small character, steep profits and shallow relationships. These are the days of two incomes but more divorce, fancier houses, but broken homes. These are days of quick trips, disposable diapers, throw—away morality, one-night stands, overweight bodies, and pills that do everything from cheer to quiet, to kill. It is a time when there is much in the showroom window and nothing in the stockroom. A time when technology can bring this letter to you, and a time when you can choose either to share this insight, or to just hit delete. Remember: spend some time with your loved ones, because they are not going to be around forever. Remember, say a kind word to someone who looks up to you in awe, because that little person soon will grow up and leave your side. Remember, to give a warm hug to the one

Philosophy

next to you, because that is the only treasure you can give with your heart and it doesn't cost a cent. Remember, to say, "I love you" to your partner and your loved ones, but most of all mean it. A kiss and an embrace will mend hurt when it comes from deep inside of you. Remember to hold hands and cherish the moment for someday that person will not be there again. Give time to love, give time to speak and give time to share the precious thoughts in your mind. To all my friends in my life, thanks for being there!

—"The Paradox of Our Time"

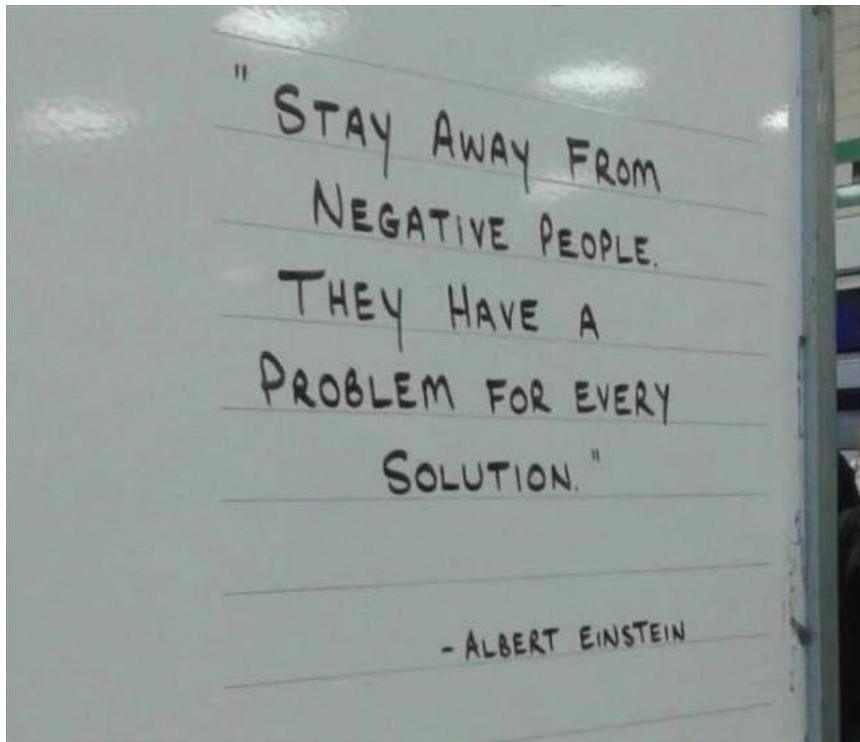
19 THINGS THAT IT TOOK ME 40 YEARS TO LEARN

1. Never, under any circumstances, take a sleeping pill and a laxative on the same night.
2. If you had to identify, in one word, the reason why the human race has not achieved, and never will achieve, its full potential, that word would be "meetings."
3. There is a very fine line between "hobby" and "mental illness."
4. People who want to share their religious views with you almost never want you to share yours with them.
5. And when God, who created the entire universe with all of its glories, decides to deliver a message to humanity, He WILL NOT use, as His messenger, a person on cable TV with a bad hairstyle.
6. You should not confuse your career with your life.
7. No matter what happens, somebody will find a way to take it too seriously.
8. When trouble arises and things look bad, there is always one individual who perceives a solution and is willing to take command. Very often, that individual is crazy.
9. Nobody cares if you can't dance well. Just get up and dance.
10. Never lick a steak knife.
11. Take out the fortune before you eat the cookie.
12. The most powerful force in the universe is gossip.
13. You will never find anybody who can give you a clear and compelling reason why we observe daylight savings time.
14. You should never say anything to a woman that even remotely suggests that you think she's pregnant unless you can see an actual baby emerging from her at that moment.
15. There comes a time when you should stop expecting other people to make a big deal about your birthday. That time is age eleven.

Philosophy

16. The one thing that unites all human beings, regardless of age, gender, religion, economic status or ethnic background, is that, deep down inside, we ALL believe that we are above average drivers.
17. The main accomplishment of almost all organized protests is to annoy people who are not in them.
18. A person who is nice to you, but rude to the waiter, is not a nice person. (This is very important. Pay attention. It never fails.)
19. Your friends love you anyway.

—Dave Barry



INSTRUCTIONS FOR LIFE

1. Take into account that great love and great achievements involve great risk.
2. When you lose, don't lose the lesson.
3. Follow the three R's:
 - Respect for self,
 - Respect for others, and
 - Responsibility for all your actions.

Philosophy

4. Remember that not getting what you want is sometimes a wonderful stroke of luck.
5. Learn the rules so you know how to break them properly.
6. Don't let a little dispute injure a great friendship.
7. When you realize you've made a mistake, take immediate steps to correct it.
8. Spend some time alone every day.
9. Open your arms to change, but don't let go of your values.
10. Remember that silence is sometimes the best answer.
11. Live a good, honorable life. Then when you get older and think back, you'll be able to enjoy it a second time.
12. A loving atmosphere in your home is the foundation for your life.
13. In disagreements with loved ones, deal only with the current situation. Don't bring up the past.
14. Share your knowledge. It's a way to achieve immortality.
15. Be gentle with the earth.
16. Once a year, go someplace you've never been before.
17. Remember that the best relationship is one in which your love for each other exceeds your need for each other.
18. Judge your success by what you had to give up in order to get it.
19. Approach love and cooking with reckless abandon.

—The Dali Lama

"We must either let the Law of Love rule us through and through or not at all. Love among ourselves based on hatred of others breaks down under the slightest pressure. The fact is such love is never real love. It is an armed peace. And so, it will be in this great movement in the West against war. War will only be stopped when the conscience of mankind has become sufficiently elevated to recognize the undisputed supremacy of the Law of Love in all the walks of life. Some say this will never come to pass. I shall retain the faith till the end of my earthly existence that this shall come to pass...

...Non—violence is a weapon of the strong. With the weak, it might easily be hypocrisy. Fear and love are contradictory terms. Love is reckless in giving away, oblivious as to what it gets in return. Love wrestles with the world as with itself and ultimately gains a mastery over all other feelings. My daily experience, as of those who are working with me, is that every problem

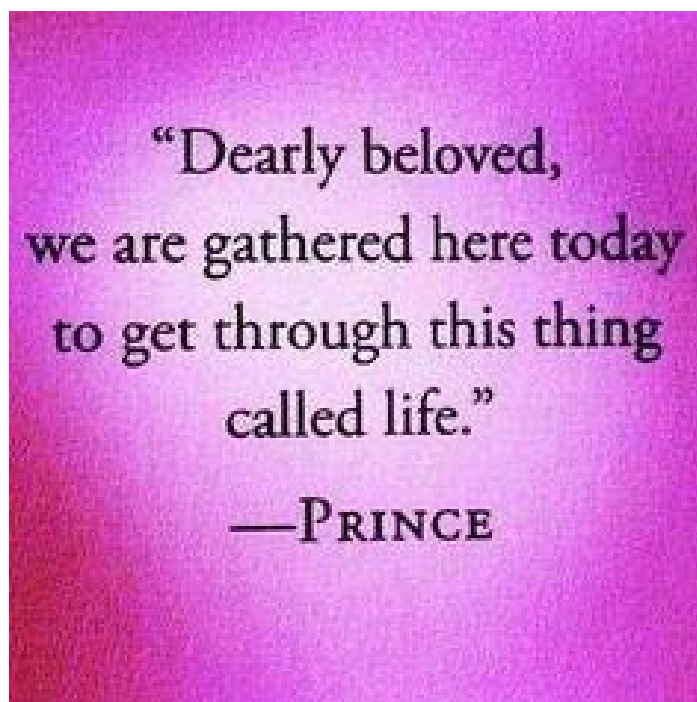
Philosophy

would lend itself to solution if we are determined to make the law of truth and non—violence the law of life. For truth and non—violence are, to me, faces of the same coin.

Whether mankind will consciously follow the law of love I do not know. But that need not perturb us. The law will work, just as the law of gravitation will work whether we accept it or no. And just as a scientist will work wonders out of various applications of the laws of nature, even so a man who applies the law of love with scientific precision can work greater wonders. For the force of non—violence is infinitely more wonderful and subtle than the force of nature, like for instance electricity.

The person who discovered for us the law of love was a far greater scientist than any of our modern scientists. Only our explorations have not gone far enough and so it is not possible for everyone to see all its workings. Such, at any rate, is the hallucination, if it is one, under which I am laboring. The more I work at this law, the more I feel the delight in life, the delight in the scheme of this universe. It gives me a peace and a meaning of the mysteries of nature that I have no power to describe.

—Mahatma Gandhi



Philosophy

Sand & Stone

A story tells that two friends were walking through the desert. During some point of the journey, they had an argument, and one friend slapped the other one in the face. The one who got slapped was hurt, but without saying anything, wrote in the sand: "TODAY MY BEST FRIEND SLAPPED ME IN THE FACE."

They kept on walking until they found an oasis, where they decided to take a bath. The one who had been slapped got stuck in the mire and started drowning, but the friend saved him. After he recovered from the near drowning, he wrote on a stone: "TODAY MY BEST FRIEND SAVED MY LIFE."

The friend who had slapped and saved his best friend asked him, "After I hurt you, you wrote in the sand and now, you write on a stone, why?" The other friend replied: "When someone hurts us we should write it down in sand where winds of forgiveness can erase it away. But, when someone does something good for us, we must engrave it in stone where no wind can ever erase it."

LEARN TO WRITE YOUR HURTS IN THE SAND AND TO CARVE YOUR BENEFITS IN STONE.

—Anonymous

Lessons from the Geese

As each goose flaps its wings, it creates an "uplift" for the bird following. By flying in a 'V' formation, the whole flock adds 71% more flying range than if each bird flew alone.

LESSON: People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going quicker and easier because they are traveling on the thrust of one another.

When a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of flying alone and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the birds immediately in front.

LESSON: If we have as much sense as a goose, we will join in formations with those who are headed where we want to go.

Philosophy

When the lead goose gets tired, it rotates back into the formation and another goose flies at the point position.

LESSON: It pays to take turns doing the hard tasks and sharing leadership with people, as with geese—interdependent with one another.

The geese in formation honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.

LESSON: We need to make sure our honking from behind is encouraging; not something less helpful.

When a goose gets sick or wounded or shot down, two geese drop out of formation and follow their fellow member down to help provide protection. They stay with this member of the flock until he or she is able to fly again or dies. Then they launch out on their own, with another formation, or to catch up with their own flock.

LESSON: If we have as much sense as the goose, we'll stand by one another like they do.

—Anonymous

A philosophy professor stood before his class and had some items in front of him. When the class began, wordlessly he picked up a very large and empty mayonnaise jar and proceeded to fill it with rocks, about 2" in diameter. He then asked the students if the jar was full? They agreed that it was. So, the professor then picked up a box of pebbles and poured them into the jar. He shook the jar lightly. The pebbles, of course, rolled into the open areas between the rocks. He then asked the students again if the jar was full. They agreed it was. The professor picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar. Of course, the sand filled up everything else. He then asked once more if the jar was full. The students responded with a unanimous "yes". The professor then produced two cans of beer from under the table and proceeded to pour the entire contents into the jar effectively filling the empty space between the sand. The students laughed. "Now," said the professor, as the laughter subsided, "I want you to recognize that this jar represents your life. The rocks are the important things—your family, your partner, your health, your children—things that if everything else was lost and only they remained, your life would still be full. "The pebbles are the other things that matter like your job, your house, your car. The sand is everything else—the small stuff." "If you put the sand

Philosophy

into the jar first," he continued "there is no room for the pebbles or the rocks. The same goes for your life. If you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff, you will never have room for the things that are important to you. Pay attention to the things that are critical to your happiness. Play with your children. Take time to get medical checkups. Take your partner out dancing. There will always be time to go to work, clean the house, give a dinner party and fix the disposal." "Take care of the rocks first—the things that really matter. Set your priorities. The rest is just sand." One of the students raised her hand and inquired what the beer represented. The professor smiled. "I'm glad you asked. It just goes to show you that no matter how full your life may seem, there's always room for a couple of beers."

—Anonymous

"A good laugh in a troubled time is like milk and dates in the desert shade."

—Anonymous

"I will not let anyone walk through my mind with their dirty feet."

—Mahatma Gandhi



"There are three kinds of men. The one that learns by reading. The few who learn by observation. The rest of them have to pee on the electric fence for themselves."

—Will Rogers

Philosophy

“The ultimate result of shielding men from the effects of folly is to fill the world with fools.”

—Herbert Spencer

English Philosopher (1820—1903)

If you give a person charity with a sad or sour expression on your face, it is as if you gave him nothing. Conversely, if you just greet your friend with a smile, even if you physically gave him nothing, it is as if you gave him all the beautiful presents, physical blessings and assistance in the world.

—Anonymous

“If you want to improve, you must be content to be thought foolish and stupid.”

—Epictetus

Instructions for Life in the New Millennium:

1. Take into account that great love and great achievements involve great risk.
2. When you lose, don't lose the lesson.
3. Follow the three R's: Respect for self, respect for others and responsibility for all your actions.
4. Remember that not getting what you want is sometimes a wonderful stroke of luck.
5. Learn the rules so you know how to break them properly.
6. Don't let a little dispute injure a great friendship.
7. When you realize you've made a mistake, take immediate steps to correct it.
8. Spend some time alone every day.
9. Open your arms to change, but don't let go of your values.
10. Remember that silence is sometimes the best answer.
11. Live a good, honorable life. Then when you get older and think back, you'll be able to enjoy it a second time.
12. A loving atmosphere in your home is the foundation for your life.
13. In disagreements with loved ones, deal only with the current situation. Don't bring up the past.
14. Share your knowledge. It's a way to achieve immortality.
15. Be gentle with the earth.
16. Once a year, go some place you've never been before.

Philosophy

17. Remember that the best relationship is one in which your love for each other exceeds your need for each other.
18. Judge your success by what you had to give up in order to get it.
19. Approach love and cooking with reckless abandon.

—The Dalai Lama

“Whenever morality is based on theology, whenever right is made dependent on divine authority, the most immoral, unjust, infamous things can be justified and established.”

—Ludwig Feuerbach
Philosopher (1804—1872)

“He that troubleth his own house, shall inherit the wind.”

—Old Testament

“That's what we're all doing, all the time, whether we know it or not. Whether we like it or not. Creating something on the spur of the moment with the materials at hand. We might just as well let the rest of it go, join the party, and dance our hearts out.”

—Alan Arkin

“All journeys have secret destinations of which the traveler is unaware.”

—Martin Buber

“While we ourselves are the living graves of murdered beasts, how can we expect any ideal conditions on this earth?”

—George Bernard Shaw

“We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit.”

—Aristotle

Do It Anyway

People are often unreasonable, irrational, and self—centered. Forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives. Be kind anyway.

If you are successful, you will win some unfaithful friends and some genuine enemies. Succeed anyway.

Philosophy

If you are honest and sincere people may deceive you. Be honest and sincere anyway.

What you spend years creating, others could destroy overnight. Create anyway.

If you find serenity and happiness, some may be jealous. Be happy anyway.

The good you do today, will often be forgotten. Do good anyway.

Give the best you have, and it will never be enough. Give your best anyway.

In the final analysis, it is between you and God. It was never between you and them anyway.

—Mother Teresa

“Every friend should have a fair—sized cemetery in which to bury the faults of his friends.”

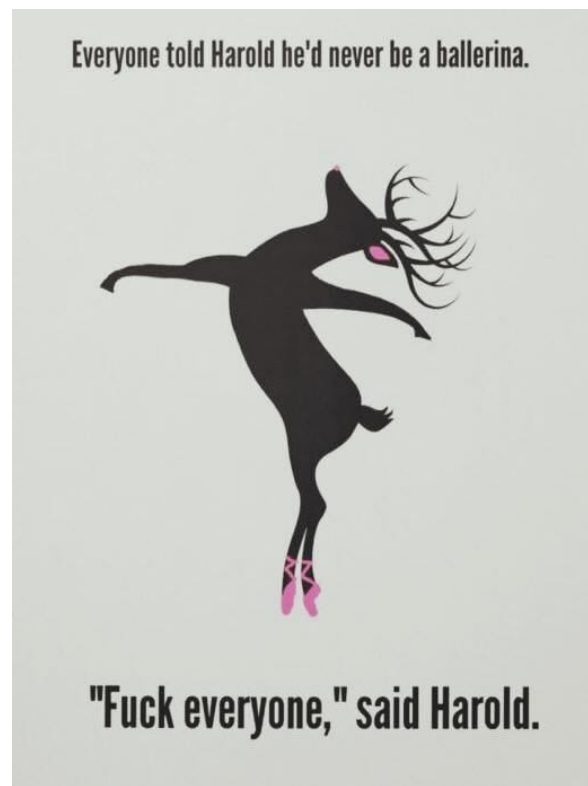
—Henry Brooke Adams

“To be conscious that you are ignorant is a great step to knowledge”.

—Benjamin Disraeli

“A man is not old until regrets take the place of dreams.”

—John Barrymore



Philosophy

“No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.”

—Eleanor Roosevelt

“The man who has no imagination has no wings.”

—Mohammed Ali

“If I have seen farther than others it is because I was standing on the shoulders of giants.”

—Sir Isaac Newton

“Imagination is more important than knowledge.”

—Albert Einstein

“Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony.”

—Mahatma Gandhi

“Whatever you do will be insignificant, but it is very important that you do it.”

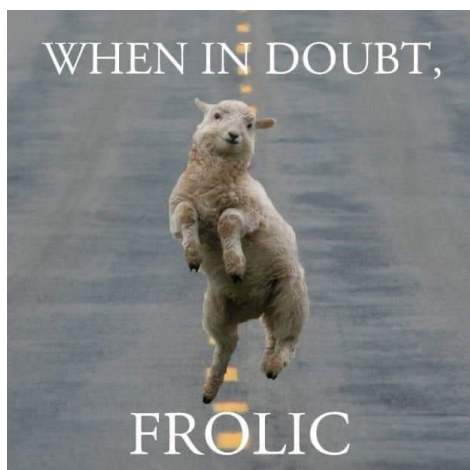
—Mahatma Gandhi

“We can shape clay into a pot, but it is the emptiness inside that holds whatever we want.”

—Lao Tzu

“Logic opens the mind; Emotion opens the heart.”

—Ken Farmer



Philosophy

"Finish each day and be done with it. You have done what you could do. Some blunders and absurdities have crept in; forget them as soon as you can. Tomorrow is a new day. You shall begin it serenely and with too high a spirit to be encumbered with your old nonsense."

—Emerson

"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."

—Marianne Williamson

"Love generously. Praise loudly. Live fully."

—Elias Porter, via M. Ainsworth

"If you can't be a good example, then you'll just have to be a horrible warning."

—Catherine Aird, via Poe

"And the day came when the risk to remain closed in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom."

—Anais Nin (Elizabeth Appell)

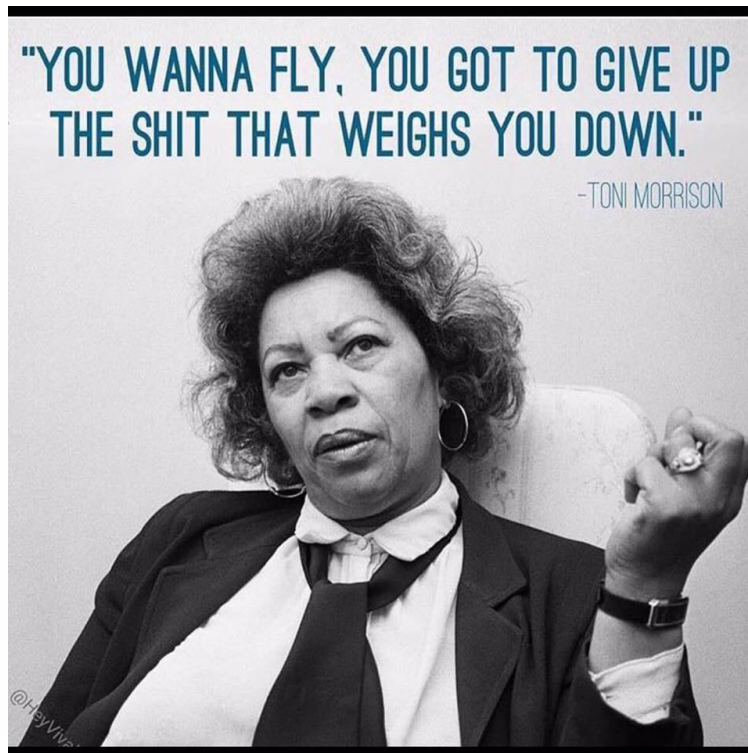
"Life is either a daring adventure or nothing."

—Helen Keller

"Some people never go crazy. What truly horrible lives they must lead."

—Charles Bukowski

Philosophy



“Action is a great restorer and builder of confidence. Inaction is not only the result, but the cause, of fear. Perhaps the action you take will be successful; perhaps different action or adjustments will have to follow. But any action is better than no action at all.”

—Norman Vincent Peale

“Now and then it's good to pause in our pursuit of happiness and just be happy.”

—Guillaume Apollinaire (1880—1918)
poet, playwright, art critic

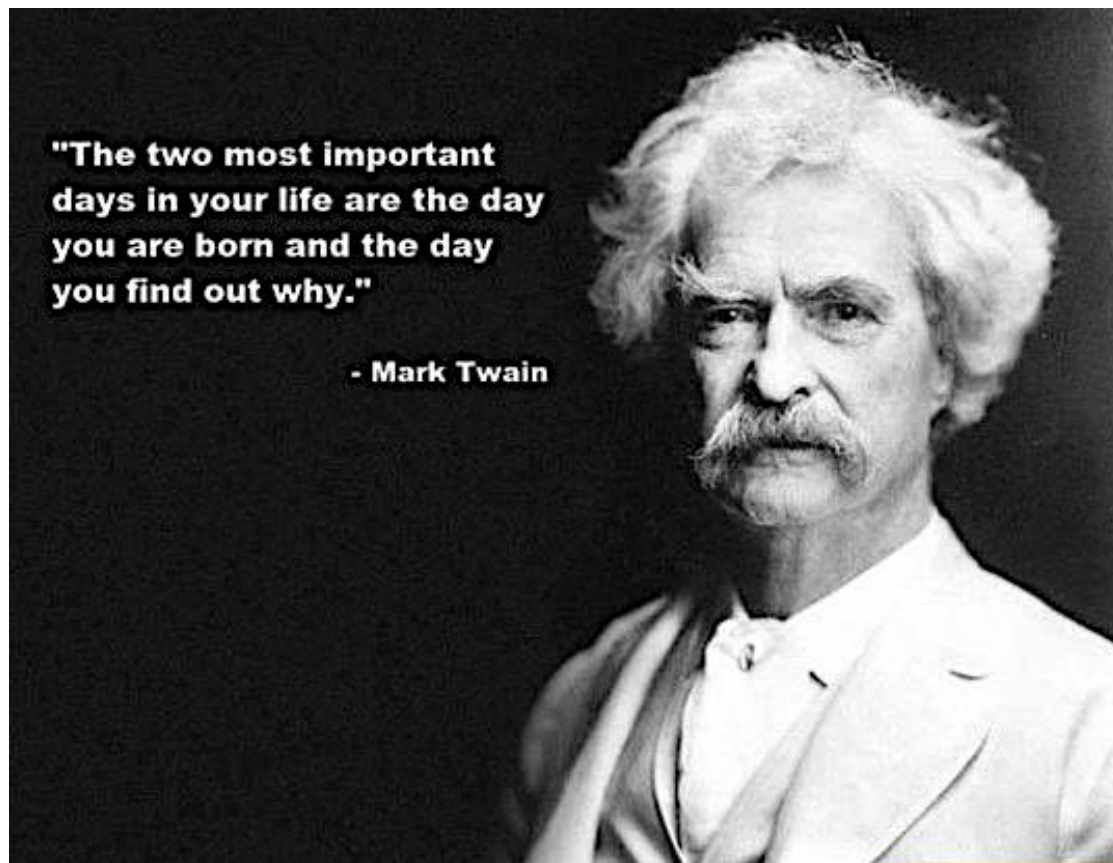
“There is no need for temples, no need for complicated philosophies. My brain and my heart are my temples; my philosophy is kindness.”

—Dalai Lama

“We do one thing or another, we stay the same or we change. Congratulations if you've changed.”

—Mary Oliver

Philosophy



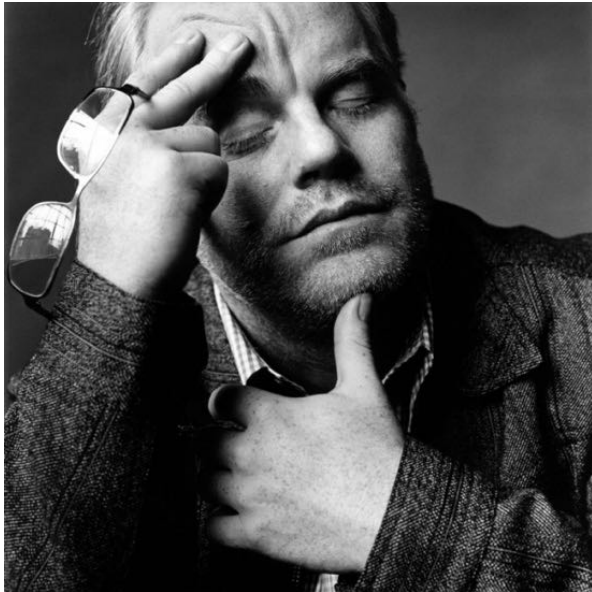
"You say grace before meals. All right. But I say grace before the concert and the opera, and grace before the play and pantomime, and grace before I open a book, and grace before sketching, painting, swimming, fencing, boxing, walking, playing, dancing and grace before I dip the pen in the ink."

—G.K. Chesterton (1874—1936), English poet

"Don't plant your bad days. They grow into weeks. The weeks grow into months. Before you know it you got yourself a bad year. Take it from me. Choke those little bad days. Choke 'em down to nothin'. They're your days. Choke 'em."

—Tom Waits

Philosophy



"The only true currency in this bankrupt world is what you share with someone else when you're uncool."

—Philip Seymour Hoffman
(Lester Bangs from *Almost, Famous*)

"Nothing has ever been said about God that hasn't already been said better by the wind in the pine trees."

—Thomas Merton

"There are a thousand hacking at the branches of evil to one who is striking at the root."

—Henry David Thoreau

"I am always regretting the fact that I am not as wise as the day I was born."

—Henry David Thoreau

"The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong."

—Gandhi

"You must be the change you want to see in the world."

—Gandhi

Philosophy

"Whenever you are confronted with an opponent, conquer him with love."

—Gandhi

"An eye for an eye only makes the whole world blind."

—Gandhi

"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."

—Gandhi

"Live simply so that others may simply live."

—Gandhi

"A human being is part of the whole called by us universe, a part in time and space. We experience ourselves, our thoughts and feelings as something separate from the rest. A kind of optical delusion of consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty. The true value of a human being is determined by the measure and the sense in which they have obtained liberation from the self. We shall require a substantially new manner of thinking if humanity is to survive."

—Albert Einstein
(1945)

"You cannot solve a problem from the same consciousness that created it. You must learn to see the world anew."

—Albert Einstein

"Try not to let school get in the way of your education."

—Albert Einstein

Philosophy

“Do silly things. Foolishness is a great deal more vital and healthy than our straining and striving after a meaningful life.”

— Anton Chekhov



“It's a real moron who waits for the world (and the people in it) to inform him or her what life holds. Come on! We are the authors of our life; we are the architects, the designers. Build the life you think you deserve, and then deserve it. Work your ass off. It's great fun. I pity the person who looks to the stars or cards or so-called wise men or fashion or anything but their own heart to tell them how to think or live or be. Do what only you can do and do it well and do it now. Right now! Time's wasting, and time needs you.”

—Ruth Gordon/Interview with James Grissom/1984/

“People say that what we're all seeking is a meaning for life. I don't think that's what we're really seeking. I think that what we're seeking is an experience of being alive, so that our life experiences on the purely physical plane will have resonances with our own innermost being and reality, so that we actually feel the rapture of being alive.”

—Joseph Campbell, *The Power of Myth*

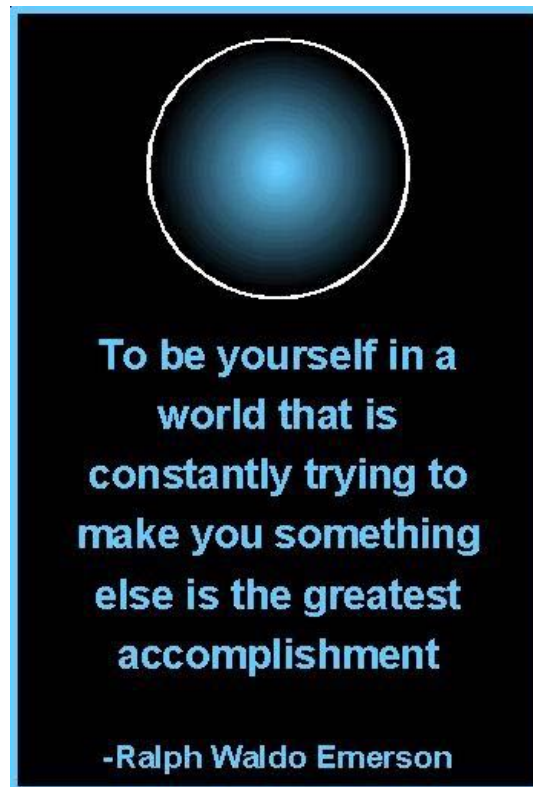
“I will not let anyone walk through my mind with their dirty feet.”

—Mahatma Gandhi

“You can't stay in your corner of the forest waiting for others to come to you. You have to go to them some times.”

—Winne the Pooh

Philosophy



"Respond to every call that excites your spirit."

—Rumi

"I must learn to love the fool in me—the one who feels too much, talks too much, takes too many chances, wins sometimes and loses often, lacks self—control, loves and hates, hurts and gets hurt, promises and breaks promises, laughs and cries. It alone protects me against that utterly self—controlled, masterful tyrant whom I also harbor and who would rob me of my human aliveness, humility, and dignity but for my Fool."

—Theodore I. Rubin

"Courage is knowing what not to fear."

—Plato

"Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear—not absence of fear."

—Mark Twain

Philosophy

“We all came into this world naked. The rest is all drag.”

—RuPaul

“To be fully alive, fully human, and completely awake is to be continually thrown out of the nest.”

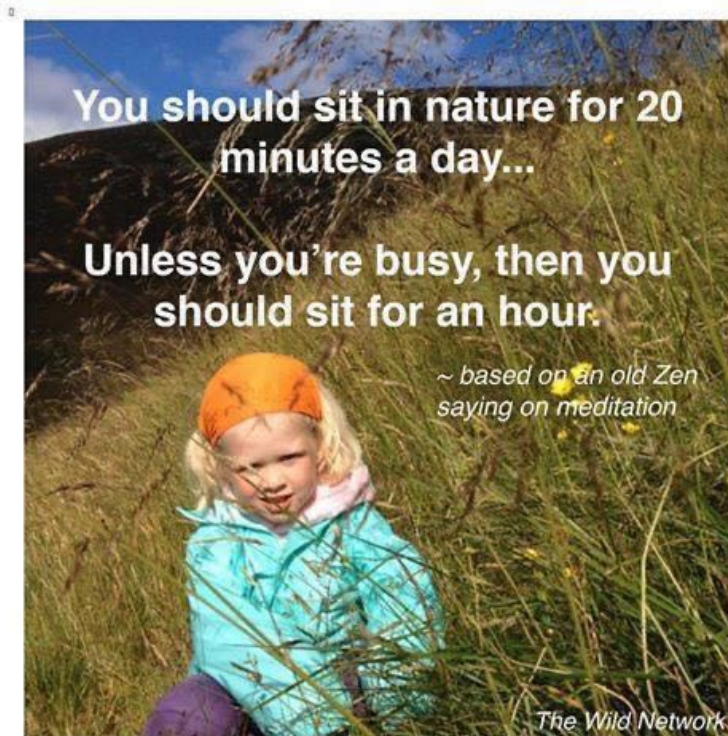
~ Pema Chödrön



“Be soft. Do not let the world make you hard. Do not let pain make you hate. Do not let the bitterness steal your sweetness. Take pride that even though the rest of the world may disagree, you still believe it to be a beautiful place.”

—Kurt Vonnegut

Philosophy



"I don't think that people accept the fact that life doesn't make sense. I think it makes people terribly uncomfortable."

—David Lynch

"To laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty; to find the best in others; to leave the world a bit better whether by a healthy child, a garden patch, or a redeemed social condition; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is to have succeeded."

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

"There will be no one like us when we are gone, but then there is no one like anyone else, ever. When people die, they cannot be replaced. They leave holes that cannot be filled, for it is the fate — the genetic and neural fate — of every human being to be a unique individual, to find his own path, to live his own life, to die his own death ... And now, weak, short of breath,

Philosophy

my once-firm muscles melted away by cancer, I find my thoughts, increasingly, not on the supernatural or spiritual, but on what is meant by living a good and worthwhile life — achieving a sense of peace within oneself. I find my thoughts drifting to the Sabbath, the day of rest, the seventh day of the week, and perhaps the seventh day of one's life as well, when one can feel that one's work is done, and one may, in good conscience, rest."

—Oliver Sacks

"We choose our joys and sorrows long before we experience them."

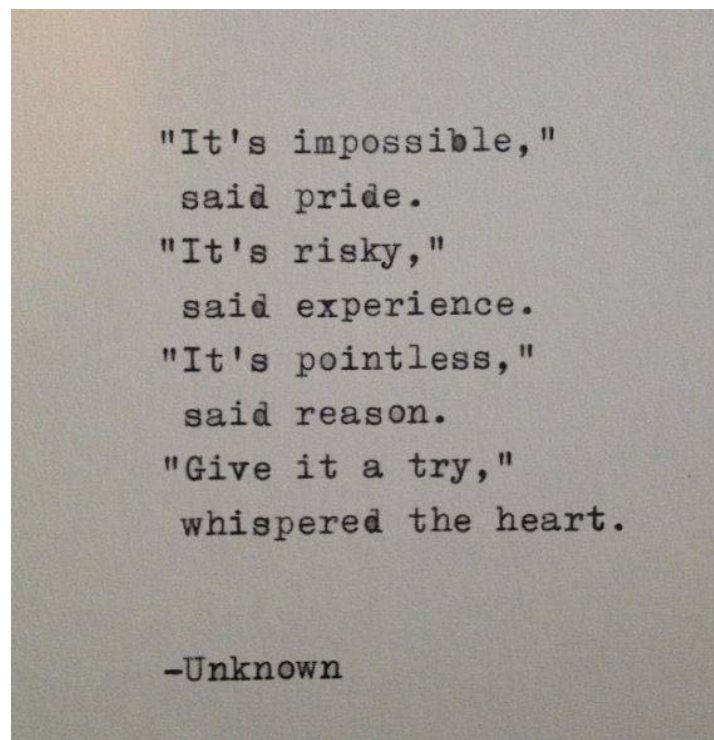
—Kahlil Gibran

"Every search begins with beginner's luck. And every search ends with the victor's being severely tested."

—The Alchemist, The Kalif Ali

"His heart whispered: 'Be aware of the place where you are brought to tears. That is where I am, and that is where your treasure is.'"

—The Alchemist, The Kalif Ali



Philosophy

"In silence one can receive more because all one's activities become concentrated at one point. There is only one real rhythm; in silence you hear it. When you live to the rhythm of this silence, you become it, slowly; everything you do, you do to it."

—Mother Meera

"I destroy my enemy when I make him my friend."

—Abraham Lincoln

"When I do good, I feel good. When I do bad, I feel bad. That's my religion."

—Abraham Lincoln

"Everybody can be great. Because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve... You don't have to know the second theory of thermodynamics in physics to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love."

—Martin Luther King

"If you want to know the past, look at your present life. If you want to know the future, look at your present."

—Buddha

"Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius and power and magic in it."

—Goethe

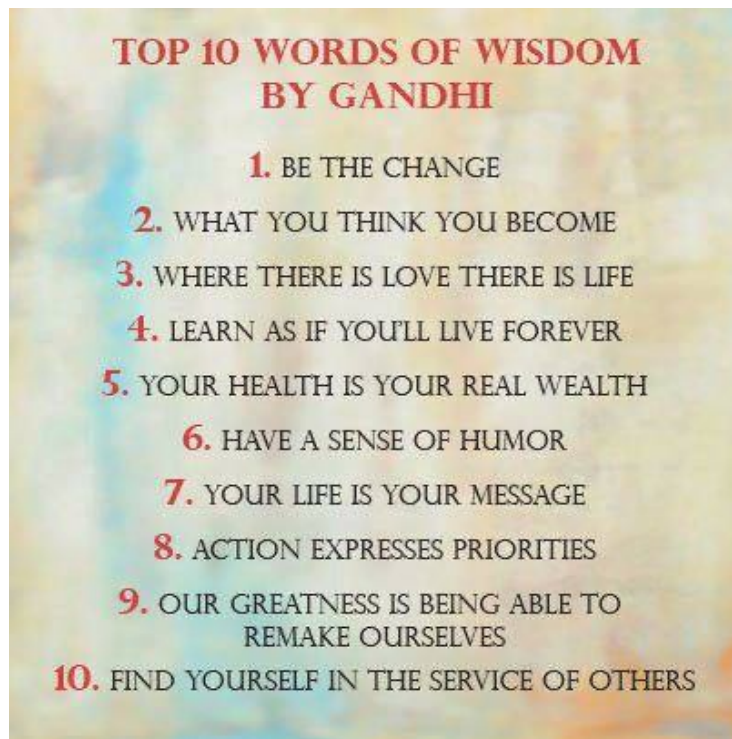
"The Sun, with all the planets revolving around it, and depending on it, can still ripen a bunch of grapes as though it had nothing else in the Universe to do."

—Galileo

"We don't see things as they are. We see them as we are."

—Talmud

Philosophy



"I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I do know: the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought and found how to serve."

—Albert Schweitzer

"Don't feel sorry for yourself if you have chosen the wrong road—turn around!"

—Edgar Cayce

"This is the true joy in life... being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one ... being a force of Nature instead of a feverish selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy ... I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community and as long as I live it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can. I want to be thoroughly used up when I die. For the harder I work the more I live. I rejoice in life for its own sake. Life is no brief candle to me. It's a sort of splendid torch which I've got to hold up for the moment and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing on to future generations."

—George Bernard Shaw

Philosophy

Real compassion includes wisdom and so it makes *judgments* of care and concern: it says some things are good, and some things are bad, and I will choose to act only on those things that are informed by wisdom and care. Giving a severe alcoholic a case of whiskey because he wants it and you want to be “kind” is not being kind at all. It is showing idiot compassion, not real compassion.

Zen calls this the difference between “grandmother Zen” and “real Zen.” In order to awaken from the dream of samsara, the ego itself must be really kicked around, often severely. Otherwise you will simply continue to play your favorite games. Grandmother Zen doesn’t challenge you. In order to be “kind,” grandmother Zen will let you sleep a little late if you want, and stop meditating early if you don’t like how it’s going, and allow you to wallow in you. But real Zen uses a very big stick, and lots of loud yelling, and there are occasionally broken bones and certainly shattered egos. Real compassion kicks butt and takes names, and it is not pleasant on certain days. If you are not ready for this fire, then find a new-age, sweetness-and-light, soft-speaking, perpetually smiling teacher, and learn to relabel your ego with spiritual-sounding terms. But stay away from those who practice real compassion, because they will fry your ass, my friend. What most people mean by “compassion” is: please be nice to my ego. Well, your ego is your own worst enemy, and anybody being nice to it is not being compassionate to you.

“And above all, watch with glittering eyes the whole world around you because the greatest secrets are always hidden in the most unlikely places. Those who don't believe in magic will never find it.”

—Roald Dahl

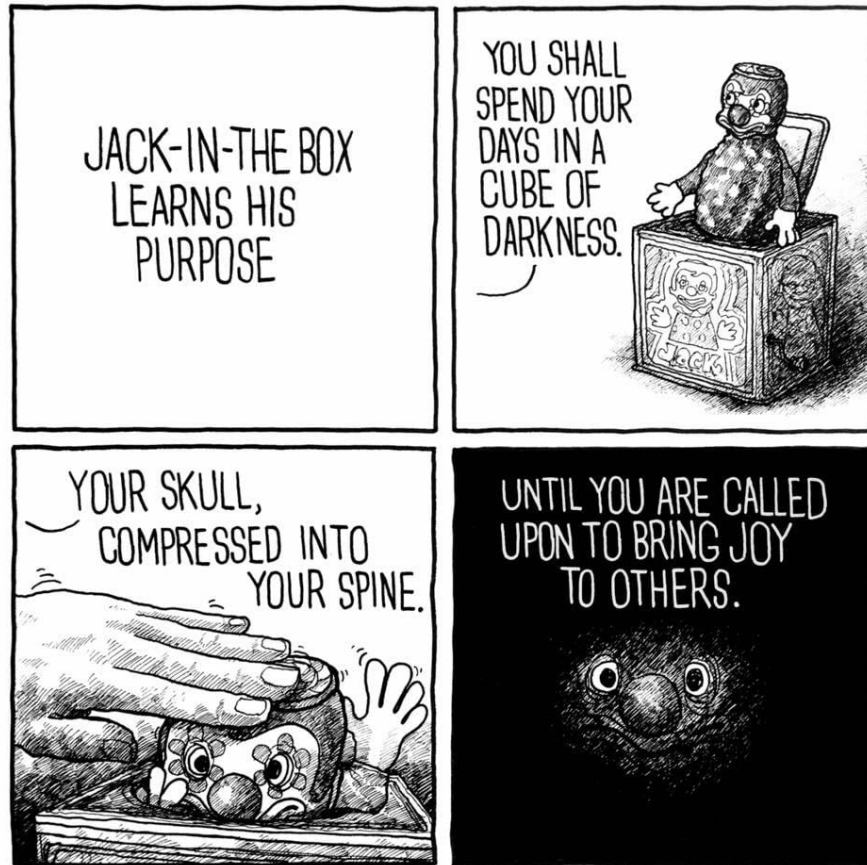
“We are such spendthrifts with our lives, the trick of living is to slip on and off the planet with the least fuss you can muster. I’m not running for sainthood. I just happen to think that in life we need to be a little like the farmer, who puts back into the soil what he takes out.”

—Paul Newman

“The person who says it cannot be done, should not interrupt the person doing it.”

—Chinese Proverb

Philosophy



The secret of The Muppets is they're not very good at what they do. Kermit's not a great host, Fozzie's not a good comedian, Miss Piggy's not a great singer... Like, none of them are actually good at it, but they fucking love it. And they're like a family, and they like putting on the show. And they have joy. And because of the joy, it doesn't matter that they're not good at it. And that's like what we should all be. Muppets.
-Brett Goldstein

Philosophy

life is like a helicopter
i don't know how to operate a
helicopter

"It is not the clear-sighted who rule the world. Great achievements are accomplished in a blessed, warm fog."

—Joseph Conrad



"When you realize how perfect everything is you will tilt your head back and laugh at the sky."

—Buddha

"When I examine myself and my methods of thought, I come to the conclusion that the gift of fantasy has meant more to me than any talent for abstract, positive thinking."

—Albert Einstein

"The pursuit of truth and beauty is a sphere of activity in which we are permitted to remain children all our lives."

—Albert Einstein

Philosophy

"I hope that in this year to come, you make mistakes. Because if you are making mistakes, then you are making new things, trying new things, learning, living, pushing yourself, changing yourself, changing your world. You're doing things you've never done before, and more importantly, you're Doing Something. So that's my wish for you, and all of us, and my wish for myself. Make New Mistakes. Make glorious, amazing mistakes. Make mistakes nobody's ever made before. Don't freeze, don't stop, don't worry that it isn't good enough, or it isn't perfect, whatever it is: art, or love, or work or family or life. Whatever it is you're scared of doing, Do it. Make your mistakes, next year and forever."

—Neil Gaiman

"I will not be a common man. I will stir the smooth sands of monotony. I do not crave security. I wish to hazard my soul to opportunity."

—Peter O'Toole

"I am a great believer in luck and I find the harder I work the more I have of it."

—Thomas Jefferson

"I think we are drawn to dogs because they are the uninhibited creatures we might be if we weren't certain we knew better. They fight for honor at the first challenge, make love with no moral restraint, and they do not for all their marvelous instincts appear to know about death. Being such wonderfully uncomplicated beings, they need us to do their worrying"

—George Bird Evans

"Constant kindness can accomplish much. As the sun makes ice melt, kindness causes misunderstanding, mistrust, and hostility to evaporate."

—Albert Schweitzer

"Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new."

—Albert Einstein

"One of the hardest things in life is having words in your heart that you don't utter."

—James Earl Jones

Philosophy

"He who seeks shall find."

—Sophocles

"Be bold. Envision yourself living a life that you love. Believe, even if you can only muster your faith for just this moment, believe that the sort of life you wish to live is, at this very moment, just waiting for you to summon it up. And when you wish for it, you begin moving toward it, and it, in turn, begins moving toward you."

—Suzan-Lori Parks

"Those who say it can't be done are usually interrupted by others doing it."

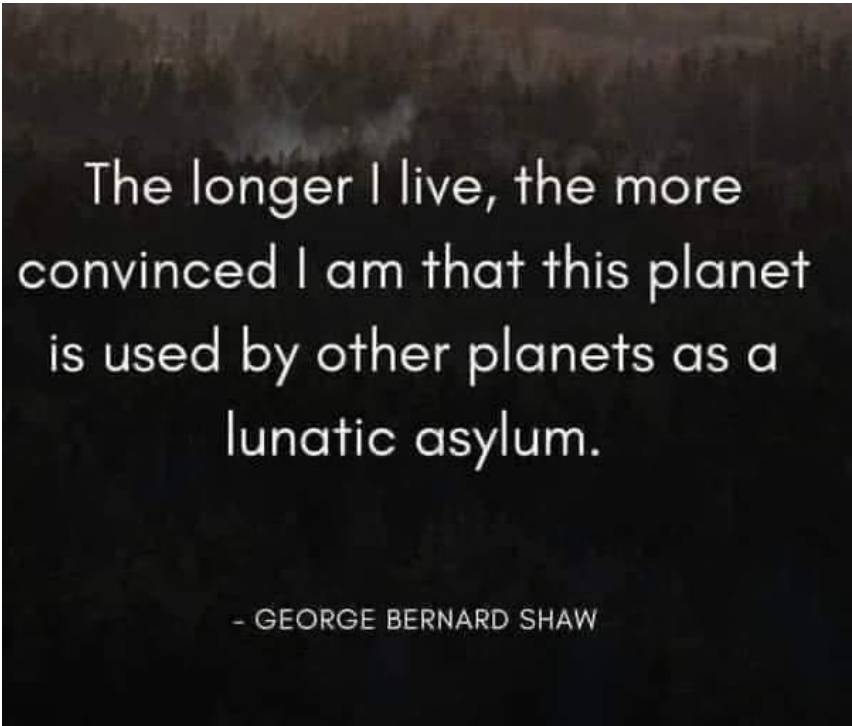
—James Baldwin

"He knows not his own strength that has not met adversity."

—Ben Jonson

"Never do but one thing at a time, and never put off till tomorrow what you can do today."

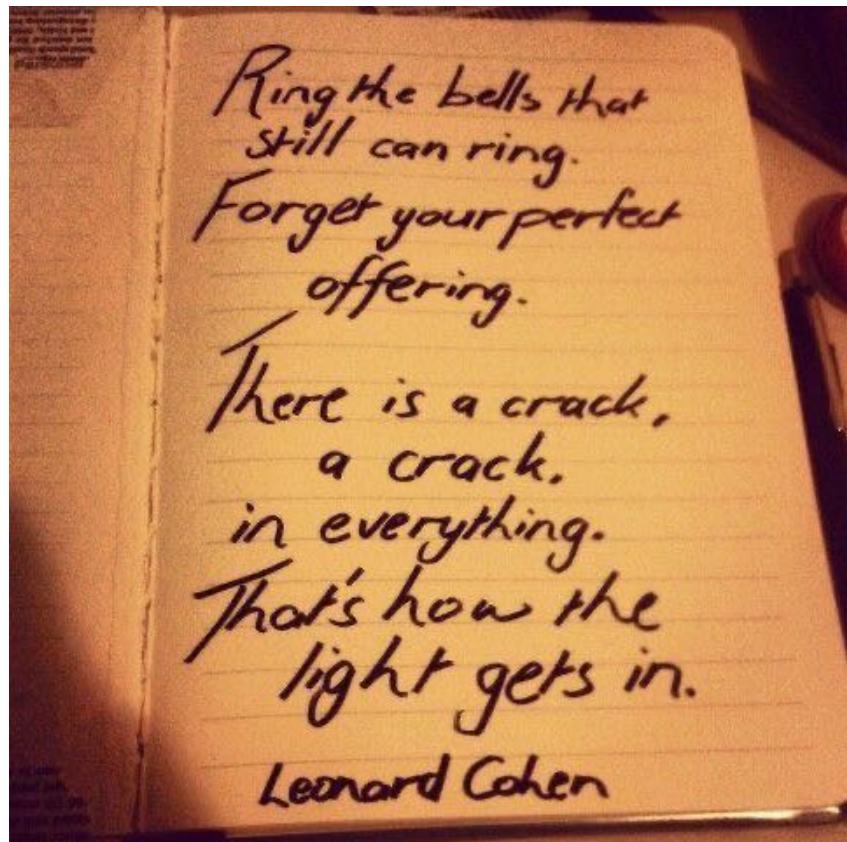
—Lope de Vega



The longer I live, the more
convinced I am that this planet
is used by other planets as a
lunatic asylum.

- GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

Poetry



We are the music makers,
And we are the dreamers of dreams,
Wandering by lone sea-breakers,
And sitting by desolate streams;
World-losers and world-forsakers,
On whom the pale moon gleams:
Yet we are the movers and shakers
Of the world for ever, it seems.

—Arthur O' Shaughnessy (1844—1881)

"What is now proved was once only imagined."

—William Blake

Poetry

SPEAK OUT

And a vast paranoia sweeps across the land
And America turns the attack on its Twin Towers
Into the beginning of the Third World War
The war with the Third World

And the terrorists in Washington
Are drafting all the young men
And no one speaks

And they are rousting out
All the ones with turbans
And they are flushing out
All the strange immigrants
And they are shipping all the young men
To the killing fields again

And no one speaks

And when they come to round up
All the great writers and poets and painters
The National Endowment of the Arts of Complacency
Will not speak

While all the young men
Will be killing all the young men
In the killing fields again

So now is the time for you to speak
All you lovers of liberty
All you lovers of the pursuit of happiness
All you lovers and sleepers
Deep in your private dreams

Poetry

Now is the time for you to speak
O silent majority
Before they come for you

—Lawrence Ferlinghetti

“A Brave and Startling Truth”
We, this people, on a small and lonely planet
Traveling through casual space
Past aloof stars, across the way of indifferent suns
To a destination where all signs tell us
It is possible and imperative that we learn
A brave and startling truth
And when we come to it
To the day of peacemaking
When we release our fingers
From fists of hostility
And allow the pure air to cool our palms

When we come to it
When the curtain falls on the minstrel show of hate
And faces sooted with scorn and scrubbed clean
When battlefields and coliseum
No longer rake our unique and particular sons and daughters
Up with the bruised and bloody grass
To lie in identical plots in foreign soil

When the rapacious storming of the churches
The screaming racket in the temples have ceased
When the pennants are waving gaily
When the banners of the world tremble
Stoutly in the good, clean breeze

Poetry

When we come to it
When we let the rifles fall from our shoulders
And children dress their dolls in flags of truce
When land mines of death have been removed
And the aged can walk into evenings of peace
When religious ritual is not perfumed
By the incense of burning flesh
And childhood dreams are not kicked awake
By nightmares of abuse

When we come to it
Then we will confess that not the Pyramids
With their stones set in mysterious perfection
Nor the Gardens of Babylon
Hanging as eternal beauty
In our collective memory
Not the Grand Canyon
Kindled into delicious color
By Western sunsets

Nor the Danube, flowing its blue soul into Europe
Not the sacred peak of Mount Fuji
Stretching to the Rising Sun
Neither Father Amazon nor Mother Mississippi who, without favor,
Nurture all creatures in the depths and on the shores
These are not the only wonders of the world

When we come to it
We, this people, on this minuscule and kithless globe
Who reach daily for the bomb, the blade and the dagger
Yet who petition in the dark for tokens of peace
We, this people on this mote of matter
In whose mouths abide cankerous words

Poetry

Which challenge our very existence
Yet out of those same mouths
Come songs of such exquisite sweetness
That the heart falters in its labor
And the body is quieted into awe

We, this people, on this small and drifting planet
Whose hands can strike with such abandon
That in a twinkling, life is sapped from the living
Yet those same hands can touch with such healing, irresistible tenderness
That the haughty neck is happy to bow
And the proud back is glad to bend
Out of such chaos, of such contradiction
We learn that we are neither devils nor divines

When we come to it
We, this people, on this wayward, floating body
Created on this earth, of this earth
Have the power to fashion for this earth
A climate where every man and every woman
Can live freely without sanctimonious piety
Without crippling fear

When we come to it
We must confess that we are the possible
We are the miraculous, the true wonder of this world
That is when, and only when
We come to it."

—Maya Angelou

The following is from the Washington Post Style Invitational contest that asks readers to submit "instructions" for something (anything), but written in the style of a famous person. The winning entry was *The Hokey Pokey* (as written by W. Shakespeare).

Poetry

O proud left foot, that ventures quick within
Then soon upon a backward journey lithe.
Anon, once more the gesture, then begin:
Command sinistral pedestal to writhe.
Commence thou then the fervid Hokey—Poke,
A mad gyration, hips in wanton swirl.
To spin! A wilde release from Heaven's yoke.
Blessed dervish! Surely canst go, girl.
The Hoke, the poke—banish now thy doubt
Verily, I say, 'tis what it's all about.

—William Shakespeare
(Jeff Brechlin, Potomac Falls)

He who binds himself to a joy
does the winged life destroy;
But he who kisses the joy
as it flies
Lives in eternity's sunrise.

—William Blake

If I feel depressed I will sing.
If I feel sad I will laugh.
If I feel ill I will double my labor.
If I feel fear I will plunge ahead.
If I feel inferior I will wear new garments.
If I feel uncertain I will raise my voice.
If I feel poverty I will think of wealth to come.
If I feel incompetent I will remember past success.
If I feel insignificant I will remember my goals.
Today I will master my emotions.

—Og Mandino

Poetry



Inventory

Four be the things I am wiser to know:
Idleness, sorrow, a friend, and a foe.

Four be the things I'd been better without:
Love, curiosity, freckles, and doubt.

Three be the things I shall never attain:
Envy, content, and sufficient champagne.

Three be the things I shall have till I die:
Laughter and hope and a sock in the eye.

DOROTHY PARKER

This day I will make the best day of my life.
This day I will drink every minute to its full.
I will savor its taste and give thanks.
I will maketh every hour count and each minute I will trade only for something of value.
Each minute of today will be more fruitful than hours of yesterday.
My last must be my best.
I will live this day as if it is my last.
And if not, I shall fall to my knees and give thanks.

—Og Mandino

"Follow your inner moonlight; don't hide the madness."

—Allen Ginsberg

"We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time."

—T. S. Eliot

Poetry

“What we call the beginning is often the end. And to make an end is to make a beginning. The end is where we start from.”

—T. S. Eliot

“Love the earth and sun and animals,
Despise riches, give alms to everyone that asks,
Stand up for the stupid and crazy,
Devote your income and labor to others...
Re—examine all you have been told at school or church or in any book;
Dismiss whatever insults your own soul;
And your very flesh shall be a great poem.”

—Walt Whitman

“The only people for me are the mad ones,
the ones who are mad to live, mad to talk,
mad to be saved, desirous of everything at
the same time, the ones who never yawn or
say a commonplace thing, but burn, burn,
burn, like fabulous yellow roman candles
exploding like spiders across the stars...”

—Jack Kerouac

“Hold fast to dreams, for if dreams die, life is a broken-winged bird that cannot fly.”

—Langston Hughes

“It matters not
The job you've got
As long as you do it well.
The things that are made
By plans well laid,
The test of time will tell.
But how can you count,

Poetry

Or know the amount,
Or the value of a man?
By the show displayed,
Or the beauty made,
By the touch of the juggler's hand."

—Robert Nelson, *The Butterfly Man* (8.26.12)

"Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion
be your tutor: suit the action to the word, the
word to the action; with this special o'erstep not
the modesty of nature: for any thing so overdone is
from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the
first and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the
mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature,
scorn her own image, and the very age and body of
the time his form and pressure."

—Hamlet

"We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."

—Tennyson

"Take, if you must, this little bag of dreams, Unloose the cord, and they will wrap you round."

—William Butler Yeats

I would rather be ashes than dust!
I would rather that my spark should burn out in a brilliant blaze than it should be stifled by
dry—rot.
I would rather be a superb meteor, every atom of me in magnificent glow, than a sleepy and
permanent planet.
The function of man is to live, not to exist.

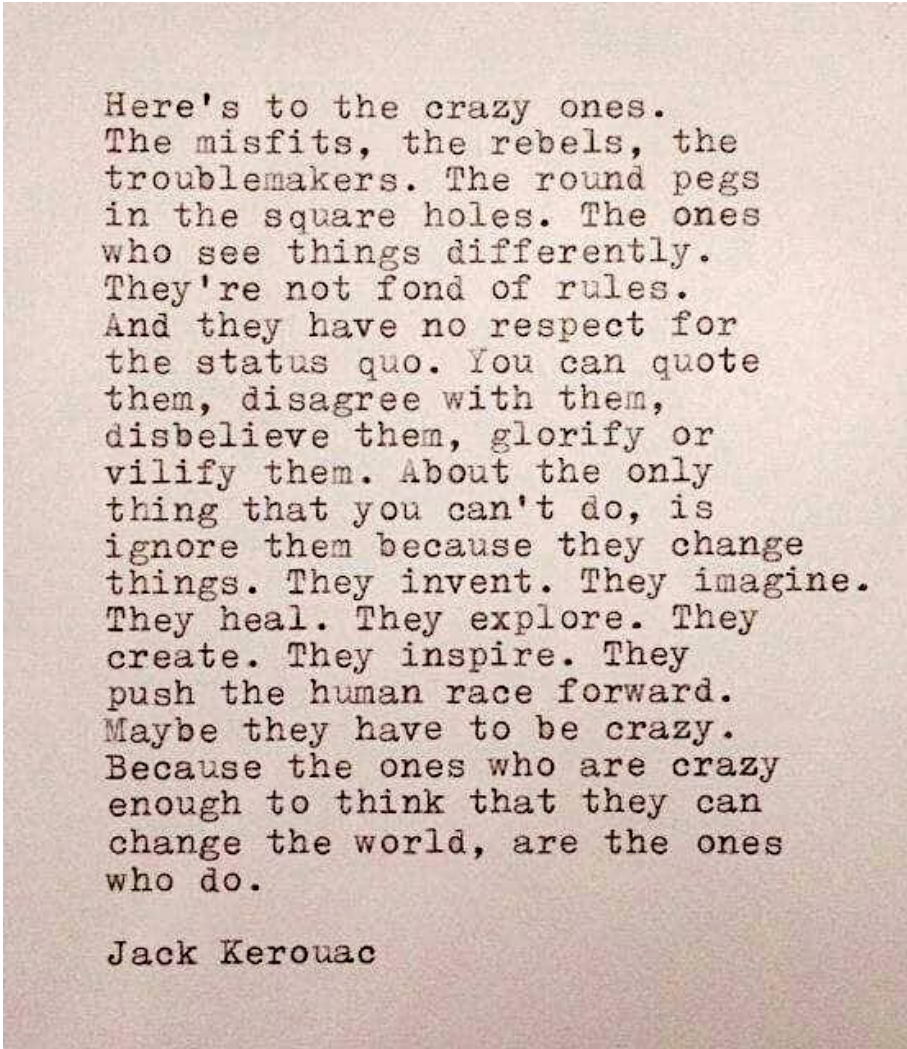
Poetry

I shall not waste my days trying to prolong them.
I shall use my time.

—Jack London

“Have more than thou showest; Speak less than thou knowest.”

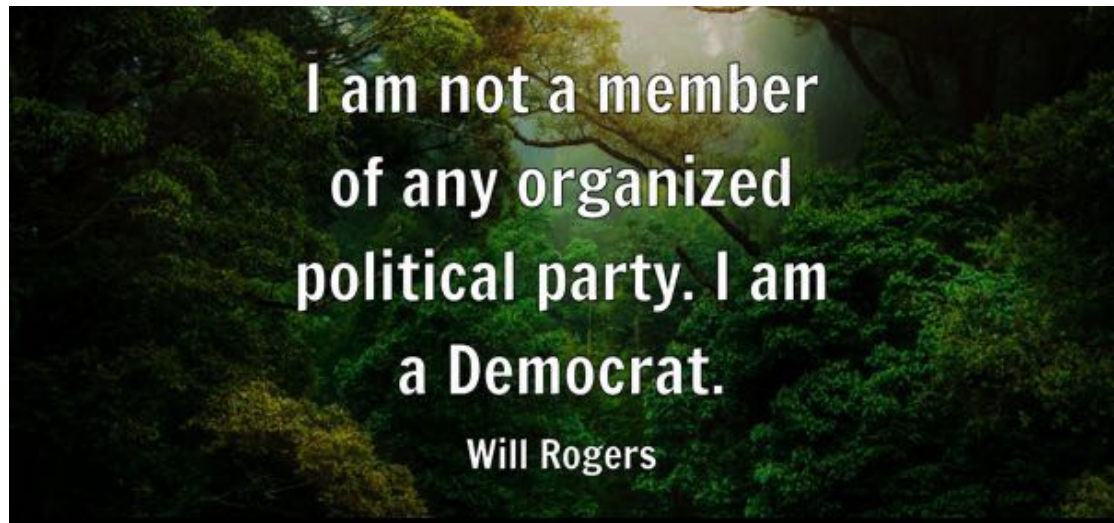
—Shakespeare



Here's to the crazy ones.
The misfits, the rebels, the
troublemakers. The round pegs
in the square holes. The ones
who see things differently.
They're not fond of rules.
And they have no respect for
the status quo. You can quote
them, disagree with them,
disbelieve them, glorify or
vilify them. About the only
thing that you can't do, is
ignore them because they change
things. They invent. They imagine.
They heal. They explore. They
create. They inspire. They
push the human race forward.
Maybe they have to be crazy.
Because the ones who are crazy
enough to think that they can
change the world, are the ones
who do.

Jack Kerouac

Politics



“When someone blunders, we say that he makes a misstep. Is it then not clear that all the ills of mankind, all the tragic misfortunes that fill our history books, all the political blunders, all the failures of the great leaders have arisen merely from a lack of skill in dancing.”

—Molière

“Suppose you were an idiot. And suppose you were a member of Congress. But I repeat myself.”

—Mark Twain

“We contend that for a nation to try to tax itself into prosperity is like a man standing in a bucket and trying to lift himself up by the handle.”

—Winston Churchill

“I don't make jokes. I just watch the government and report the facts.”

—Will Rogers

“So convenient a thing it is to be a 'reasonable creature', since it enables one to find or make a Reason for everything one has a mind to do.”

—Ben Franklin

Politics

How Things Work in Real Life

Start with a cage containing five monkeys. Inside the cage, hang a banana on a string and place a set of stairs under it. Before long, a monkey will go to the stairs and start to climb towards the banana. As soon as he touches the stairs, spray all of the other monkeys with cold water.

After a while, another monkey makes an attempt with the same result all the other monkeys are sprayed with cold water. Pretty soon, when another monkey tries to climb the stairs, the other monkeys will try to prevent it.

Now, put away the cold water. Remove one monkey from the cage and replace it with a new one. The new monkey sees the banana and wants to climb the stairs. To his surprise and horror, all of the other monkeys attack him. After another attempt and attack, he knows that if he tries to climb the stairs, he will be assaulted.

Next, remove another of the original five monkeys and replace it with a new one. The newcomer goes to the stairs and is attacked. The previous newcomer takes part in the punishment with enthusiasm! Likewise, replace a third original monkey with a new one, then a fourth, then the fifth. Every time the newest monkey takes to the stairs, he is attacked. Most of the monkeys that are beating him have no idea why they were not permitted to climb the stairs or why they are participating in the beating of the newest monkey.

After replacing all the original monkeys, none of the remaining monkeys have ever been sprayed with cold water. Nevertheless, no monkey ever again approaches the stairs to try for the banana. Why not? Because as far as they know that's the way it's always been done around here.

And that, my friends, is how government policy begins.

—Anonymous

“Terrorism is the war of the poor; War is the terrorism of the rich.”

—Peter Ustinov

Politics

“Success is going from failure to failure without a loss of enthusiasm.”

—Winston Churchill

“Keep asking questions or else it becomes a religion.”

—Bill Maher

“Always acknowledge a fault. This will throw those in authority off their guard and give you an opportunity to commit more.”

—Mark Twain

“I must say that acting was good training for the political life that lay ahead of us.”

—Nancy Reagan

“The trouble with most people is not what they don't know, but what they know for certain that isn't true.”

—Mark Twain

When asked to cut arts funding in favour of the war effort, he simply replied ‘then what are we fighting for?’

—Winston Churchill

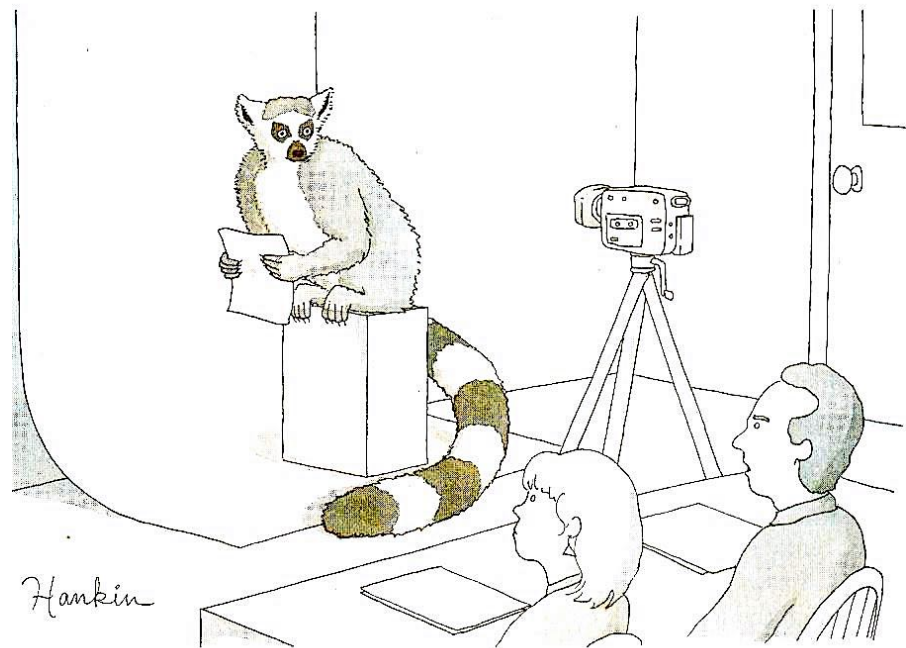
“We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future.”

—Franklin D. Roosevelt

“There is nobody in this country who got rich on his own. Nobody. You built a factory out there—good for you. But I want to be clear. You moved your goods to market on the roads the rest of us paid for. You hired workers the rest of us paid to educate. You were safe in your factory because of police forces and fire forces that the rest of us paid for. You didn't have to worry that marauding bands would come and seize everything at your factory... now look. You build a factory and it turned into something terrific or a great idea—God bless! Keep a big hunk of it. But part of the underlying social contract is you take a hunk of that and pay forward for the next kid who comes along.”

—Elizabeth Warren

Show Business



*"I'm sorry. We don't want a ring-tailed lemur.
We want a ring-tailed-lemur type."*

"Hollywood is a place where they place you under contract instead of under observation."

—Walter Winchell

"A critic is a man who knows the way but can't drive the car."

—Kenneth Tynan

"The Hollywood tradition I like best is called 'sucking up to the stars.'"

—Johnny Carson

"Hello." he lied.

—Don Carpenter, quoting a Hollywood agent.

Show Business

"My tears stuck in their little ducts, refusing to be jerked."

—Peter Stack, movie review



Paco Tolson 🙌
@PacoHellYeah

The business of [#theatre](#) demands you have a completely fortified heart to withstand all the rejection, but the craft of theatre demands your heart be wide open so to create vulnerability and truth. And the effort of sustaining both states is...a lot

"The dead actor requested in his will that his body be cremated and ten percent of his ashes thrown in his agent's face."

—Unknown

"An associate producer is the only guy in Hollywood who will associate with a producer."

—Fred Allen

"If I had my life to live again, I'd make the same mistakes, only sooner."

—Tallulah Bankhead

New York Times Arts

THEATER: The Demon Seesaw Actors Ride

By FRANK LANGELLA; Frank Langella will appear as Prospero in "The Tempest," scheduled to open at the Roundabout Theater in November

Published: September 17, 1989

Show Business

His hands were trembling so much I thought he was going to break into a hundred pieces like a Tom and Jerry cartoon character. He had been sitting at a nearby table in an L.A. actors' hangout and as he got up to leave, he threw me a "We've never met, but I know you" wave. I waved back and asked him to join my table. He hesitated a beat, then came over.

I was having a late supper with an actress friend, keeping a date we'd made in New York earlier that week. We three exchanged perfunctory L.A. versus New York clichés: the requisite "Love your work" phrase and avoidance of the "What are you doing?" question. The trembling hands continued throughout our 10-minute conversation. I resisted the urge to ask him if he was all right because something inside me understood the tremble and knew the answer.

This man had once been at the top of our profession. A series of successful films and an Oscar nomination had capped a hot streak lasting some four or five years in the mid-70's. Things turned bad. He was now 50 and forgotten. Facing me was an actor climbing the ladder again. Lightly tanned, clean—shaven, eggshell thin, in a blazer and tie; the hands trembling to hold onto the bottom rungs once more. He excused himself and said he was off to see a midnight movie. "I want to get lost in the dark of the theater," he said.

My friend and I fell silent, wondered if we could have been more solicitous, and decided it was best not to invade a shell that seemed barely held together. But his tremble stayed with me through dinner and after I drove her home. It awoke a fear in me. It became a symbol of the questions I had been asking myself more persistently each year. Why do actors live the lives we do?

Some basic truths about us, some fundamentals: married, single, divorced, rich, broke, breaking in or holding on, the morning after Oscar, Tony or Emmy, or struggling along without recognition; whether we are newcomers, superstars, an enduring light, a flash in the pan, a has-been or a comeback king, from low self-esteem to insufferable arrogance—"We are the seesaw kids. Kids who hold on tight and wait, wait for the call, the audition, the part, the review—and then we do it again. Those are the ground rules. You accept them if you are an actor. And you accept the demons."

—Frank Langella

Show Business

One veteran character actor told me he is so excited when the job comes to a close. He takes himself and his wife to Martha's Vineyard and for four or five days he is in bliss. "And then," he said, "every time the phone rings, I am running up the dock like an old fool, thinking 'Oh, God, please don't hang up. I hope it is work.' 'I've got money now,'" he said, "but that's no comfort." Another actor, 34 years old, told me when he's waiting he drives back and forth across the United States calling his agent every few days from phone booths. He has no money and no comfort. And another, convinced each time his illnesses are not hypochondriacal, drives himself to doctors' offices and waits for test results. One actress does health spas, another buys and sells houses, a third designs gardens. "Dangerous things, gardens," she said. "You never want to come out of them." A not unsuccessful man with an Oscar told me that when he is out of work an inertia so great overwhelms him that he is practically catatonic. He could not leave his home during one period for over three months. "Why?" I asked. "Fear," he said.

And fear encourages the demon's insecurity and uncertainty. An elderly actress was over for dinner. When we sat down she threw back a straight Scotch and said, "You know what I did today? I did a general get—to—know—you, they call it, at a new agency I've just signed with. Look, I don't expect them to kiss my backside, but I have been at this for 38 years and I sat there as kids younger than my children said things like, 'She'd be great as so—and—so's wife in his new series' or 'How good are your contacts in town? Who do you know personally?' " She was torn between her insecurity and need to be accepted and her anger at expecting and not receiving the treatment she felt her lifetime of achievement had entitled her to.

An agent once said to me when I mentioned I was in my third month of unemployment, "How I envy you! You can sleep late; take the kids to the park; go on holiday." "Why don't I take the keys to your office," I said, "lock the doors, send home your staff and let you know when you can come back to work. Wait until I have something for you." He laughed, but didn't get it. How could he? How could anyone who has not experienced unemployment several times a year every year of his working life. No matter how often an actor may tell himself that a refusal is not necessarily a rejection, the word "No" only deepens his self—doubt.

And, even when employed, the actor is still stalked by uncertainty. A great Broadway star once told me that during the entire rehearsal period of one of her many triumphs, she got out of her taxi 20 blocks before the rehearsal studio and walked the entire way in order to stop shaking. "I

Show Business

was certain I was going to be fired," she said. I recalled that when I was a young actor my famous leading lady asked if I would drive her to the first day of rehearsals out of town. "Sure," I said, too cocky to be nervous myself. She got into my car; we drove three blocks and she promptly vomited. "Wait until there is more at stake," she said. "You'll know what it's like." And, as the seesaw rocked back and forth for me, I remembered her words.

I remembered again when years later a close friend of mine called and said, "You're back in town. Let's have dinner." It had been close to 10 months since we had seen each other. We met at a local restaurant. When last I'd seen him, he and his wife had bought a beautiful Bel Air house, one Mercedes and one Jaguar and put their children in private schools. During our dinner he freely admitted that it had all gone bad for them. As we waited in the garage, he told me the house was sold, so, too, the cars, and they were now living in a two—bedroom apartment in West Hollywood. A wreck of a car was brought up by the attendant. "Ah, well," he said, "back to coach. Keeps you humble." He drove away smiling, with a wave.

In between actors' waves to each other there are months and even years of travel to foreign countries, divorces, awards, clinics, love affairs, feuds, and yet whenever we meet we pick up the thread again.

Though sometimes it's more the needle than the thread. Actors can be immensely cruel to one another. There are times when you meet an actor you don't know and he greets you with hostility or condescension or even dismissal. It can be blown away sometimes—and sometimes it develops into downright hatred. A difference in acting styles, position on a set, or being surrounded by too many assistants, can cause actors to polarize. If your career moves ahead or drops behind a friend, the friendship is jeopardized. Your demons against his.

And those demons themselves are competing with an irrevocable one: aging. One strong, up—from—the—floor fighter of an actress said to me, "I won't be seeing you for a while, darling. I'm off to play the mother in a TV pilot. Can you imagine? The mother!" she said again. And then totally without rancor, she said, "You know, I never dreamed it would turn out like this. I thought it would always be Phaedra or Shaw or working with the great directors. I never dreamed."

Show Business

One lunch by a pool a young friend of mine said of a 50—ish actor walking by our table, "Look at him. A fine figure of a has—been." I laughed, but it stung. A sag in your career or a sag in your chin, and you're a party joke. And, if someone else isn't noticing your graying hair or expanding waistline, you are. The actors' anxiety over aging is more acute than most. Part of the product starts to wear out and the consumer wants a new one.

Several years ago, on the set of a film, eight of us between the ages of 35 and 50 sat around the table. I studied my face—lifted, hair—dyed, over tanned, lipo—bellied, toupeed, capped—teeth and skin—peeled colleagues. One friend said, "I'm making it at last—at 48—I'm making it. I'm going to dye my hair, pump my muscles and smile my way to stardom."

That smile can be difficult to maintain. In Paris one early morning, waiting to be fitted for a beard, I noticed in the booth next to me one of the world's great beauties. As she was being fitted for a wig, the man attending her said, when an old film of hers was mentioned, meaning no harm, "God, you were beautiful then." She smiled, looked him in the eye, and said, without a trace of bitterness, "Ah, well, we all have our moment, don't we." When the moment passes, it requires of the older actor a profound dignity. Those who age gracefully before the public do so while struggling privately to let go of that for which they were initially loved.

And deeper inside us, past vanity, past fear, past the waiting, past uncertainty and insecurity, there is a demon I can find no name for.

One early morning I looked out the window of the rented house in the country where I was working. Sitting poolside, wrapped in a fur coat, smoking a cigarette, surrounded by empty champagne bottles, was my leading lady. It was 6 A.M. I went down and sat next to her. A long silence and then she said, "I can't. I can't any more. I can't go where I have to go inside to be really good and survive. I hate revealing myself and I despise myself for wanting to be liked."

I fear the demons like every other actor. But more than their existence, I fear their departure from me. I need them. They keep away the nameless one. Actors have a legitimate claim on the word "survivor." But just surviving is a victory with no spoils. I want the spoils, and I'll take the pain that goes with getting them.

Show Business

With each new role comes a test of heart, mind and spirit. Through the work an actor finds his place in society. Up against a task larger than himself, he can transform and overcome. More than suffering, more than success, more than defeat, the work strengthens and illuminates. It calms the tremble. It steadies the seesaw.

Upon finding out that Irving Thalberg had hired Spencer Tracy to join MGM “What do we need another galoot for? We've already got Wallace Beery.”

—Louis B. Mayer

“Be yourself; everyone else is already taken.”

—Oscar Wilde



Lauren Gunderson
@LalaTellsAStory



Notes I always give on every single one of my plays in production:

- Go faster. Speak with urgency, pick up your cues, keep the energy driving until you hit the pause. Earn the pause. Crash into it. It makes the funny things funnier and the drama more gripping. Promise.

Show Business

"I will not retire while I've still got my legs and my makeup box."

—Bette Davis

"What other people think of you is none of your business."

—Paulo Coelho

"Be so good they can't ignore you."

—Steve Martin

"You've gotta be original. Because if you're like someone else, what do they need you for?"

—Bernadette Peters

"Don't compare your career to anyone else's. It's tough when you're in a business that's competitive. I was having a difficult time with that in college. Now, I'm having to learn to be patient and be where I am."

—Danielle Brooks

"We all deal with failure. If you're lucky enough to have a long career, it's part of the experience."

—David Henry Hwang

"Success is like failure. It's how you perceive it. It's what you do with it, not how you achieve it."

—Stephen Sondheim

"Work hard, do the best you can, don't ever lose faith in yourself and take no notice of what other people say about you."

—Noel Coward

"Don't accept that others know you better than you know yourself."

—Sonia Friedman

"If you're not invited to the party, throw your own!"

—Diahann Carroll

Show Business

YOU WILL BE
TOO MUCH
FOR SOME
PEOPLE.
THOSE
AREN'T
YOUR PEOPLE.

“Don’t expect a pat on the back for merely doing your job, but know that you’ll get one for doing it exceptionally well.”

—Lea Salonga

“Don’t try to be anyone else but yourself, because you are singular, and your greatest asset is your individuality.”

—Sutton Foster

“You can’t get it right all the time, but you can try your best. If you’ve done that, all that’s left is to accept your shortcomings and have the courage to try to overcome them.”

—Idina Menzel

“Not everyone is going to like what you do or what you have to offer; however, if you can’t see yourself doing anything else, and you have the drive and ambition, get the training and go for it.”

—Kristin Chenoweth

“All you can do is do good work, and do the good work for the sake of doing good work and your evolution as an artist.”

—Audra McDonald

Show Business

"You can't judge your success by someone else's. You can't be afraid to fail."

—Patina Miller

"Don't listen to anyone who doesn't know how to dream."

—Liza Minnelli

"Some people dream of success, while other people get up every morning and make it happen."

—Wayne Huizenga

"No one ever made a difference by being like everyone else."

—P.T. Barnum

"Don't wait for people to tell you who you are. Show them."

—Laura Benanti

"You just have to be open and ready, and let it all happen."

—Angela Lansbury



Show Business

"In my entire career I sang the way I wanted to six times. The rest of the time I just did the best I could."

~Beverly Sills



"Always be a first—rate version of yourself, instead of a second—rate version of somebody else."

—Judy Garland

"You have got to discover you, what you do, and trust it."

—Barbra Streisand

"At the end of the day, give up your worries and give thanks for the journey."

—Ben Vereen

"Time goes on. So, whatever you're going to do. Do it. Do it now. Don't wait."

—Robert De Niro

Show Business

John Steinbeck • Office: 206 East 72nd Street • New York 21, N. Y. • Tel. Office REgent 7-3442
Home REgent 7-5515

April 28, 1955

Miss Marilyn Monroe
Waldorf Towers
Room 2728
New York City, N. Y.

Dear Marilyn:

In my whole experience I have never known anyone to ask for an autograph for himself. It is always for a child or an ancient aunt, which gets very tiresome, as you know better than I. It is therefore, with a certain nausea that I tell you that I have a nephew-in-law who lives in Austin, Texas, whose name is Jon Atkinson. He has his foot in the door of puberty, but that is only one of his problems. You are the other.

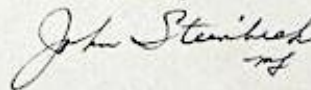
I know that you are not made of celestial ether, but he doesn't. A suggestion that you have normal functions would shock him deeply and I'm not going to be the one to tell him.

On a recent trip to Texas, my wife made the fatal error of telling Jon that I had met you. He doesn't really believe it, but his respect for me has gone up even for lying about it.

Now, I get asked for all kinds of silly favors, so I have no hesitation in asking one of you. Would you send him, in my care, a picture of yourself, perhaps in pensive, girlish mood, inscribed to him by name and indicating that you are aware of his existence. He is already your slave. This would make him mine.

If you will do this, I will send you a guest key to the ladies' entrance of Fort Knox and, furthermore, I will like you very much.

Yours sincerely



js:mf

"You never know how far you're gonna go if you don't jump."

—Robbie Fairchild

Show Business

"You are enough. You are so enough. It's unbelievable how enough you are."

—Sierra Boggess

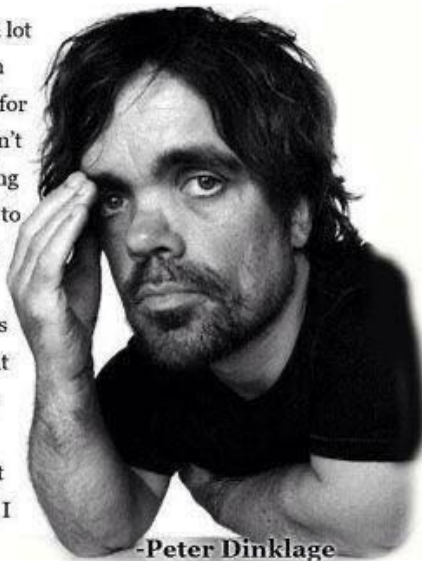
"If you gauge how you're doing on whether somebody is responding vocally or not, you're up a creek. You can't do that; you kind of have to be inside of your work... And tell the story every day. Tell the story. Tell the story. Regardless of how people are responding, tell the story."

—Billy Porter

"You'll learn as you live a bit longer that there are very few people who are really interested in who you are and what you're doing: That handful who do care and who do want to see you do well are treasures. Hold them very dear and very close to you. Forgive them almost anything. Be there for them. But most of life is solitary and hard--you work and you study and you fail and you do the damned things over and over again. And this is your responsibility. Most people, as I've said, are stupid and lazy and really only concerned with getting through the next couple of hours with silliness and stimulation and something to eat. Be polite. Look ahead. Ignore them. Do the work. Move forward."

—Katharine Hepburn/Interview with James Grissom

"I hate that word — 'lucky.' It cheapens a lot of hard work. Living in Brooklyn in an apartment without any heat and paying for dinner at the bodega with dimes — I don't think I felt myself lucky back then. Doing plays for 50 bucks and trying to be true to myself as an artist and turning down commercials where they wanted a leprechaun. Saying I was lucky negates the hard work I put in and spits on that guy who's freezing his ass off back in Brooklyn. So I won't say I'm lucky. I'm fortunate enough to find or attract very talented people. For some reason I found them, and they found me."



—Peter Dinklage

Show Business

"All the world's a stage. Some of us just have better seats."

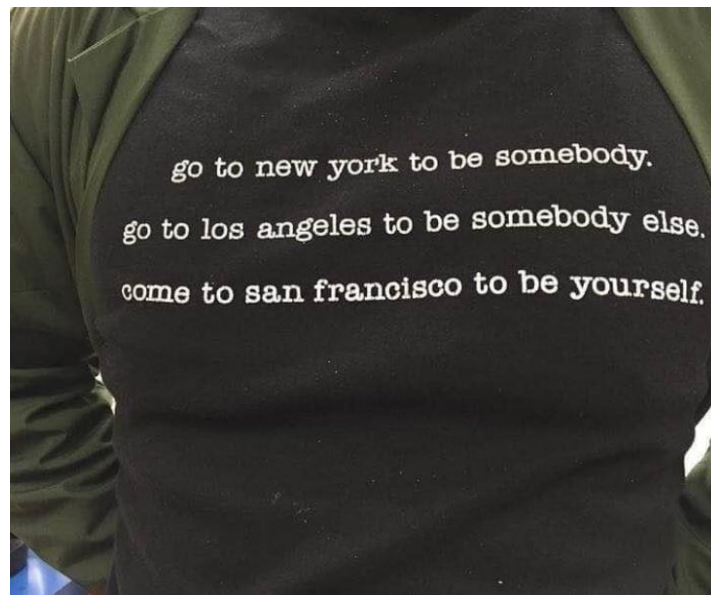
—Unknown

"She runs the gamut of emotions from A to B."

—Dorothy Parker

"Laugh at yourself, but don't ever aim your doubt at yourself. Be bold. When you embark for strange places, don't leave any of yourself safely on shore. Have the nerve to go into unexplored territory."

—Alan Alda



"I'm no fool—I brought a hanky 'cause I knew it was going to get very, very emotional. Because this is something that, you know it's a kind of, you sort of sit at home and you watch these shows. And you think 'Well, what about me?' You know? (laughing) And you can't help it! You're a human being.

I want to say that there's this David Byrne song—you all know it! ...Most of you know it. (speaking lower) Maybe a *few* of you know it. 'You may find yourself living in a shotgun shack. You may find yourself behind the wheel of a large automobile.

Show Business

And you say to yourself “this is not my beautiful house, this is not my beautiful wife. How did I get here?” How did I get here? I have absolutely no earthly idea how I got here. I really don’t.

I came from nothing. I came from the most isolated place in the United States: Hawaii. And I spent most of my time reading books in libraries. And I had a mediocre education. But somehow or another I was mesmerized by the idea that someone would get up in a pool of light and be completely and utterly transformed. And transfigured. And beautiful. And that, when the light hit them, they had something not just to say—but something to reveal.

And I remember when I was a kid I saw Edith Piaf on television, and I saw her... I think it was the first time I’d ever seen a human being do what she did. Which was to completely unzip her skin and show her soul. And I... I never really recovered from it. I really felt that I understood what that was. And that I could do it.

And subsequently in my life, I saw many people do it. People that I learned to love. I saw Tina Turner, I saw Aretha, I saw Janis Joplin. I saw so many people, so many men, so many women. And I fell in love with them, and I fell in love with the idea of what they did.

And I have to say, when I say ‘How did I get here?’ I say it because I... I... I never looked up. I had my nose to the grindstone every moment of my life. I worked like a f--- animal. I did. I worked like an animal. I couldn’t help myself. I was compelled to work. I was simply compelled. And now that I’m older, sometimes I think ‘Was it the hormones? Was it a dream? Was I just swept up in some vast illusion? What **was** it?’ Because now I’ve slowed down and I look back.

But I have to say that it was—talk about “Mr. Toad’s Wild Ride”—it was a hell of a ride. I had a blast. Even though it was work, it was work that I loved with all my heart. And it was work that brought me into contact with the most brilliant minds and the most wonderful wits and the most brilliant music. Things that made my heart soar and my heart sing. So even though I had my nose down, I heard it all, I saw it all, and I loved it all. And I have to say thank you so much to the Kennedy Center for validating this insane dream that I had when I was just a kid. I thank you from the bottom of my heart.”

—Bette Midler, 44th Kennedy Center Honor recipient
(Tracey Salazar)

Show Business

“He had delusions of adequacy ”

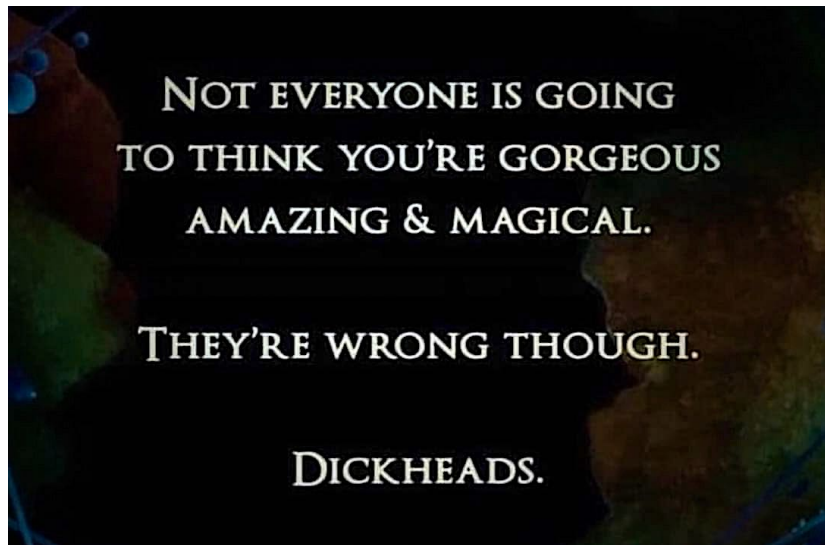
—Walter Kerr

“Have a belief in yourself that is bigger than anyone’s disbelief.”

—August Wilson

“Don’t wait for something big to occur. Start where you are, with what you have, and that will always lead you into something greater.”

—Norm Lewis



“Laughter is much more important than applause. Applause is almost a duty. Laughter is a reward.”

—Carol Channing

“Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better.”

—Samuel Beckett

“Always give them the old fire, even when you feel like a squashed cake of ice.”

—Ethel Merman

Show Business

“I believe in serendipity, but I also believe there are times when you have to be the one who lines up everything so it can fall into place.”

—Susan Stroman

Bryan Cranston on auditions,
from his autobiography *Life in Parts*

Breck suggested that I focus on process rather than outcome. I wasn't going to the audition to get anything: a job or money or validation. I wasn't going to compete with the other guys. I was going to give something. I wasn't there to get a job. I was there to do a job. Simple as that. I was there to give a performance. If I attached to the outcome, I was setting myself up to expect, and thus to fail.

My job was to focus on character. My job was to be interesting. My job was to be compelling. Take some chances. Serve the text. Enjoy the process.

And this wasn't some semantic sleight of hand, it wasn't some subtle form of barter or gamesmanship. There was to be no predicting or manipulating, no thinking of the outcome. Outcome was irrelevant. I couldn't afford any longer to approach my work as a means to an end.

Once I made the switch, I was no longer a supplicant. I had power in any room I walked into. Which meant I could relax. I was free.

“I'm a great housekeeper. I get divorced. I keep the house.”

—Zsa Zsa Gabor

Stories



"It's a human need to be told stories. The more we're governed by idiots and have no control over our destinies, the more we need to tell stories to each other about who we are, why we are, where we come from, and what might be possible."

—Alan Rickman

"Somewhere in our DNA we know that stories are out there to help us understand what we're doing here on this planet."

—Theresa Rebeck

"Everyone deserves to have their story fully told."

—Dominique Morisseau

Stories

A water bearer in India had two large pots, each hung on each end of a pole which he carried across his neck. One of the pots had a crack in it, and while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water at the end of the long walk from the stream to the master's house, the cracked pot arrived only half full.

For a full two years this went on daily, with the bearer delivering only one and a half pots full of water in his master's house. Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments, perfect to the end for which it was made. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it was able to accomplish only half of what it had been made to do.

After two years of what it perceived to be a bitter failure, it spoke to the water bearer one day by the stream. "I am ashamed of myself, and I want to apologize to you." "Why?" asked the bearer. "What are you ashamed of?"

"I have been able, for these past two years, to deliver only half my load because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your master's house. Because of my flaws, you have to do all of this work, and you don't get full value from your efforts," the pot said.

The water bearer felt sorry for the old cracked pot, and in his compassion he said, "As we return to the master's house, I want you to notice the beautiful flowers along the path."

Indeed, as they went up the hill, the old cracked pot took notice of the sun warming the beautiful wild flowers on the side of the path, and this cheered it some. But at the end of the trail, it still felt bad because it had leaked out half its load, and so again it apologized to the bearer for its failure. The bearer said to the pot, "Did you notice that there were flowers only on your side of your path, but not on the other pot's side?"

That's because I have always known about your flaw, and I took advantage of it. I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back from the stream, you've watered them. For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate my master's table. Without you being just the way you are, he would not have this beauty to grace his house."

Stories

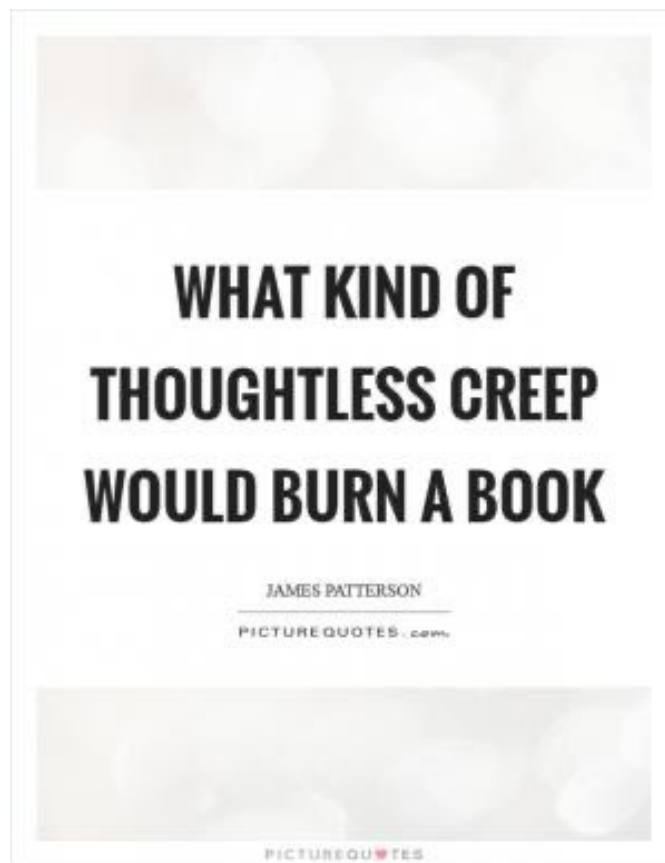
Moral: Each of us has our own unique flaws. We're all cracked pots. But it's the cracks and flaws we each have that make our lives together so very interesting and rewarding. You've just got to take each person for what they are, and look for the good in them. There is a lot of good out there. There is a lot of good in you!

Blessed are the flexible, for they shall not be bent out of shape.

Remember to appreciate all the different people in your life! Or as I like to think of it—if it hadn't been for the crackpots in my life, it would have been pretty boring and life certainly would have been much less interesting...

Thank you all my crackpot friends

—Anonymous



Stories

The Cab Ride

Twenty years ago, I drove a cab for a living. When I arrived at 2:30 a.m., the building was dark except for a single light in a ground floor window. Under these circumstances, many drivers would just honk once or twice, wait a minute, then drive away. But I had seen too many impoverished people who depended on taxis as their only means of transportation. Unless a situation smelled of danger, I always went to the door. This passenger might be someone who needs my assistance, I reasoned to myself.

So, I walked to the door and knocked. "Just a minute", answered a frail, elderly voice. I could hear something being dragged across the floor. After a long pause, the door opened. A small woman in her 80's stood before me. She was wearing a print dress and a pillbox hat with a veil pinned on it, like somebody out of a 1940's movie. By her side was a small nylon suitcase. The apartment looked as if no one had lived in it for years. All the furniture was covered with sheets. There were no clocks on the walls, no knickknacks or utensils on the counters. In the corner was a cardboard box filled with photos and glassware. "Would you carry my bag out to the car?" she said. I took the suitcase to the cab, then returned to assist the woman.

She took my arm and we walked slowly toward the curb. She kept thanking me for my kindness. "It's nothing," I told her. "I just try to treat my passengers the way I would want my mother treated". "Oh, you're such a good boy", she said. "When we got in the cab, she gave me an address, then asked, "Could you drive through downtown?" "It's not the shortest way," I answered quickly. "Oh, I don't mind," she said. "I'm in no hurry. I'm on my way to a hospice". I looked in the rearview mirror. Her eyes were glistening.

"I don't have any family left," she continued. "The doctor says I don't have very long." I quietly reached over and shut off the meter. "What route would you like me to take?" I asked.

For the next two hours, we drove through the city. She showed me the building where she had once worked as an elevator operator. We drove through the neighborhood where she and her husband had lived when they were newlyweds. She had me pull up in front of a furniture warehouse that had once been a ballroom where she had gone dancing as a girl. Sometimes

Stories

she'd ask me to slow in front of a particular building or corner and would sit staring into the darkness, saying nothing.

As the first hint of sun was creasing the horizon, she suddenly said, "I'm tired. Let's go now." We drove in silence to the address she had given me. It was a low building, like a small convalescent home, with a driveway that passed under a portico. Two orderlies came out to the cab as soon as we pulled up. They were solicitous and intent, watching her every move. They must have been expecting her. I opened the trunk and took the small suitcase to the door. The woman was already seated in a wheelchair.

"How much do I owe you?" she asked, reaching into her purse.

"Nothing," I said.

"You have to make a living," she answered.

"There are other passengers," I responded. Almost without thinking, I bent and gave her a hug. She held onto me tightly.

"You gave an old woman a little moment of joy," she said. "Thank you."

I squeezed her hand, then walked into the dim morning light. Behind me, a door shut. It was the sound of the closing of a life.

I didn't pick up any more passengers that shift. I drove aimlessly, lost in thought. For the rest of that day, I could hardly talk. What if that woman had gotten an angry driver, or one who was impatient to end his shift? What if I had refused to take the run, or had honked once, then driven away? On a quick review, I don't think that I have done anything more important in my life. We're conditioned to think that our lives revolve around great moments. But great moments often catch us unaware—beautifully wrapped in what others may consider a small one.

—Anonymous

Stories

A father said to his daughter "You have graduated with honors, here is a car I bought many years ago. It is pretty old now. But before I give it to you, take it to the used car lot downtown and tell them I want to sell it and see how much they offer you for it."

The daughter went to the used car lot, returned to her father and said, "They offered me \$1,000 because they said it looks pretty worn out."

The father said, now "Take it to the pawn shop." The daughter went to the pawn shop, returned to her father and said, "The pawn shop offered only \$100 because it is an old car."

The father asked his daughter to go to a car club now and show them the car. The daughter then took the car to the club, returned and told her father, "Some people in the club offered \$100,000 for it because "it's an iconic car and sought by many collectors."

Now the father said this to his daughter, "The right place values you the right way," If you are not valued, do not be angry, it means you are in the wrong place. Those who know your value are those who appreciate you... Never stay in a place where no one sees your value.

—Anonymous

Fiorello La Guardia was mayor of New York City during the worst days of the Great Depression and all of WWII. He was adored by many New Yorkers who took to calling him the "Little Flower," because of his name and the fact that he was so short and always wore a carnation in his lapel. He was a colorful character—he rode the New York City fire trucks, raided city "speakeasies" with the police department, took entire orphanages to baseball games and, when the New York newspapers went on strike, he got on the radio and read the Sunday funnies to the kids. One bitterly cold night in January of 1935, the mayor turned up at a night court that served the poorest ward of the city. La Guardia dismissed the judge for the evening and took over the bench himself. Within a few minutes, a tattered old woman was brought before him, charged with stealing a loaf of bread. She told La Guardia that her daughter's husband had deserted her, her daughter was sick, and her two grandchildren were starving. But the shopkeeper, from whom the bread was stolen, refused to drop the charges. "It's a real bad neighborhood, Your Honor," the man told the mayor. "She's got to be punished to teach other people around here a lesson."

Stories

La Guardia sighed. He turned to the woman and said, "I've got to punish you. The law makes no exceptions. Ten dollars or ten days in jail." But even as he pronounced sentence, the mayor was already reaching into his pocket. He extracted a bill and tossed it into his famous hat, saying, "Here is the ten dollar fine which I now remit; and furthermore, I am going to fine everyone in this courtroom fifty cents for living in a town where a person has to steal bread so that her grandchildren can eat. Mr. Bailiff, collect the fines and give them to the defendant."

The following day, New York City newspapers reported that \$47.50 was turned over to a bewildered woman who had stolen a loaf of bread to feed her starving grandchildren. Fifty cents of that amount was contributed by the grocery store owner himself, while some seventy petty criminals, people with traffic violations, and New York City policemen, each of whom had just paid fifty cents for the privilege of doing so, gave the mayor a standing ovation.

Someone beautifully said, "Sympathy sees and says, 'I'm sorry.' Compassion sees and says, 'I'll help.'" When we learn the difference, we can make a difference.

—Anonymous

ROUTINE IS MEDICINE
MOVEMENT IS MEDICINE
SLEEP IS MEDICINE
BREATH IS MEDICINE
CONSISTENCY IS MEDICINE
LAUGHTER IS MEDICINE
STORYTELLING IS MEDICINE

Stories

STORY NUMBER ONE

Many years ago, Al Capone virtually owned Chicago. Capone wasn't famous for anything heroic. He was notorious for enmeshing the windy city in everything from bootlegged booze and prostitution to murder. Capone had a lawyer nicknamed "Easy Eddie." He was his lawyer for a good reason. Eddie was very good! In fact, Eddie's skill at legal maneuvering kept Big Al out of jail for a long time. To show his appreciation, Capone paid him very well. Not only was the money big, but Eddie got special dividends. For instance, he and his family occupied a fenced-in mansion with live-in help and all of the conveniences of the day. The estate was so large that it filled an entire Chicago City block. Eddie lived the high life of the Chicago mob and gave little consideration to the atrocity that went on around him. Eddie did have one soft spot, however. He had a son that he loved dearly. Eddie saw to it that his young son had the best of everything: clothes, cars, and a good education. Nothing was withheld. Price was no object. And, despite his involvement with organized crime, Eddie even tried to teach him right from wrong. Eddie wanted his son to be a better man than he was. Yet, with all his wealth and influence, there were two things he couldn't give his son; that he couldn't pass on a good name and a good example.

One day, Easy Eddie reached a difficult decision. Easy Eddie wanted to rectify wrongs he had done. He decided he would go to the authorities and tell the truth about Al "Scar face" Capone, clean up his tarnished name and offer his son some semblance of integrity. To do this, he would have to testify against The Mob, and he knew that the cost would be great. So, he testified. Within the year, Easy Eddie's life ended in a blaze of gunfire on a lonely Chicago Street. But in his eyes, he had given his son the greatest gift he had to offer, at the greatest price he would ever pay.

STORY NUMBER TWO

World War II produced many heroes. One such man was Lieutenant Commander Butch O'Hare. He was a fighter pilot assigned to the aircraft carrier Lexington in the South Pacific. One day his entire squadron was sent on a mission. After he was airborne, he looked at his fuel gauge and realized that someone had forgotten to top off his fuel tank. He would not have enough fuel to complete his mission and get back to his ship. His flight leader told him to return to the carrier. Reluctantly, he dropped out of formation and headed back to the fleet. As

Stories

he was returning to the mother ship he saw something that turned his blood cold. A squadron of Japanese aircraft were speeding their way toward the American fleet. The American fighters were gone on a sortie, and the fleet was all but defenseless. He couldn't reach his squadron and bring them back in time to save the fleet. Nor could he warn the fleet of the approaching danger. There was only one thing to do. He must somehow divert them from the fleet. Laying aside all thoughts of personal safety, he dove into the formation of Japanese planes. Wing—mounted 50 caliber's blazed as he charged in, attacking one surprised enemy plane and then another. Butch wove in and out of the now broken formation and fired at as many planes as possible until all his ammunition was finally spent. Undaunted, he continued the assault. He dove at the planes, trying to clip a wing or tail in hopes of damaging as many enemy planes as possible and rendering them unfit to fly. Finally, the exasperated Japanese squadron took off in another direction. Deeply relieved, Butch O'Hare and his tattered fighter limped back to the carrier. Upon arrival he reported in and related the event surrounding his return. The film from the gun—camera mounted on his plane told the tale. It showed the extent of Butch's daring attempt to protect his fleet. He had in fact destroyed five enemy aircraft. This took place on February 20, 1942, and for that action Butch became the Navy's first Ace of W.W.II, and the first Naval Aviator to win the Congressional Medal of Honor. A year later Butch was killed in aerial combat at the age of 29. His hometown would not allow the memory of this WW II hero to fade, and today, O'Hare Airport in Chicago is named in tribute to the courage of this great man. So, the next time you find yourself at O'Hare International, give some thought to visiting Butch's memorial displaying his statue and his Medal of Honor. It's located between Terminals 1 and 2.

SO, WHAT DO THESE TWO STORIES HAVE TO DO WITH EACH OTHER? Butch O'Hare was Easy Eddie's son.

—Anonymous

The 22 rules of storytelling, according to Pixar

By Emma Coats

#1: You admire a character for trying more than for their successes.

#2: You gotta keep in mind what's interesting to you as an audience, not what's fun to do as a writer. They can be v. different.

#3: Trying for theme is important, but you won't see what the story is actually about til you're at the end of it. Now rewrite.

#4: Once upon a time there was _____. Every day, _____. One day _____. Because of that, _____. Because of that, _____. Until finally _____.

#5: Simplify. Focus. Combine characters. Hop over detours. You'll feel like you're losing valuable stuff but it sets you free.

#6: What is your character good at, comfortable with? Throw the polar opposite at them. Challenge them. How do they deal?

#7: Come up with your ending before you figure out your middle. Seriously. Endings are hard, get yours working up front.

#8: Finish your story, let go even if it's not perfect. In an ideal world you have both, but move on. Do better next time.

#9: When you're stuck, make a list of what WOULDN'T happen next. Lots of times the material to get you unstuck will show up.

#10: Pull apart the stories you like. What you like in them is a part of you; you've got to recognize it before you can use it.

#11: Putting it on paper lets you start fixing it. If it stays in your head, a perfect idea, you'll never share it with anyone.

#12: Discount the 1st thing that comes to mind. And the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th – get the obvious out of the way. Surprise yourself.

#13: Give your characters opinions. Passive/malleable might seem likable to you as you write, but it's poison to the audience.

#14: Why must you tell THIS story? What's the belief burning within you that your story feeds off of? That's the heart of it.

#15: If you were your character, in this situation, how would you feel? Honesty lends credibility to unbelievable situations.

#16: What are the stakes? Give us reason to root for the character. What happens if they don't succeed? Stack the odds against.

#17: No work is ever wasted. If it's not working, let go and move on - it'll come back around to be useful later.

#18: You have to know yourself: the difference between doing your best & fussing. Story is testing, not refining.

#19: Coincidences to get characters into trouble are great; coincidences to get them out of it are cheating.

#20: Exercise: take the building blocks of a movie you dislike. How d'you rearrange them into what you DO like?

#21: You gotta identify with your situation/characters, can't just write 'cool'. What would make YOU act that way?

#22: What's the essence of your story? Most economical telling of it? If you know that, you can build out from there.

Theater



"I regard the theatre as the greatest of all art forms, the most immediate way in which a human being can share with another the sense of what it is to be a human being."

—Thornton Wilder

"Theatre is the happiest loophole of escape for those who have secretly put their childhood in their pockets and have gone off with it to play to the end of their days."

—Max Reinhardt

"I am enclosing two tickets to the first night of my new play; bring a friend, if you have one."

—George Bernard Shaw to Winston Churchill

"Cannot possibly attend first night, will attend second... if there is one."

—Winston Churchill, in response

Theater

"Humanity takes itself too seriously. It is the world's original sin. If the caveman had known how to laugh, history would have been different."

—Oscar Wilde

"Without art, the crudeness of reality would make the world unbearable."

—George Bernard Shaw

"I gave a speech, as one does, as one ages, to a room of students of the theatre, of film, of the performing arts. They shone with ambition, but I soon found myself annotating virtually every sentence I uttered, and this is not terribly comfortable: It badly alters the flow of things. They looked at me blankly when I mentioned Tennessee [Williams], and I had to throw out the play titles, at which they nodded their heads and murmured the names of Marlon Brando and Elizabeth Taylor. That was their reference to Tennessee Williams. It seemed not to matter that a man, a person, had written the play that became the film that became something they did in a scene in a class. There was no line of succession. They did not know who Julie Harris was or Bette Davis or Harold Clurman or the Group Theatre and Lee Strasberg was a building where you could take classes. Now it is alarming to be old, and nothing makes a person feel quite so old as to talk of one's influences and of things that he feels are important and to have several hundred blank faces look at you with bewilderment. I don't want to annotate everything, and I think there is a serious lack of investment or intention toward this thing, this art, this craft to which you aspire. I think you have to know more than what is current and 'hot,' to use a loathsome word. I think you have to be familiar with the foundation of the work and understand it's what you're standing on."

—Mike Nichols

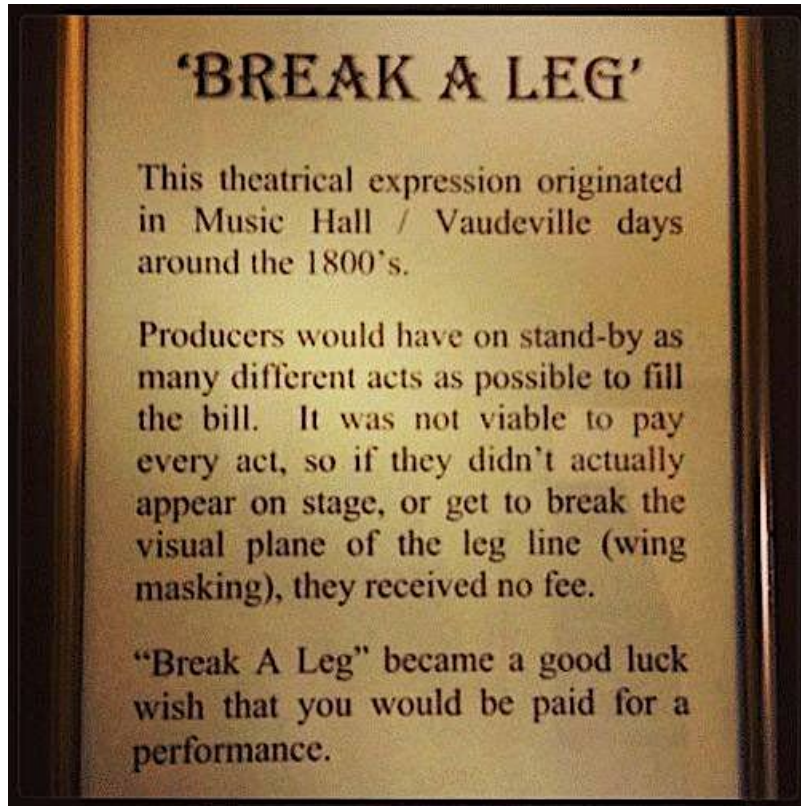
"It's not colour-blind, it's colour-rich! With this political statement, we close our eyes to these differences, and for me it's the opposite: we should open our eyes to the richness of life. It's not marvelous to be blind, but to have your eyes wide open."

—Peter Brook

"People disappoint you. Lovers disappoint you. But theatrical memorabilia stay with you, as long as you keep it under clear plastic."

—Sylvia Miles

Theater



"In 1606, Shakespeare's theatre was forced to close because of the plague. So, he wrote, King Lear, Macbeth, and Antony and Cleopatra."

—Anonymous

"The theatre should reflect America as it's lived in today. And that is a multicultural America. The more you go to a theatre and the more you hear stories you aren't necessarily familiar with, the more open you become."

—Lynn Nottage, playwright

"What is there left for us, that have seen the newly discovered stability of things changed from an enthusiasm to a weariness, but to labor with a high heart, though it may be with weak hands, to rediscover an art of the theatre that shall be joyful, fantastic, extravagant, whimsical, beautiful, resonant, and altogether reckless?"

—William Butler Yeats

Theater



“Confront the dark parts of yourself, and work to banish them with illumination and forgiveness. Your willingness to wrestle with your demons will cause your angels to sing.”

—August Wilson

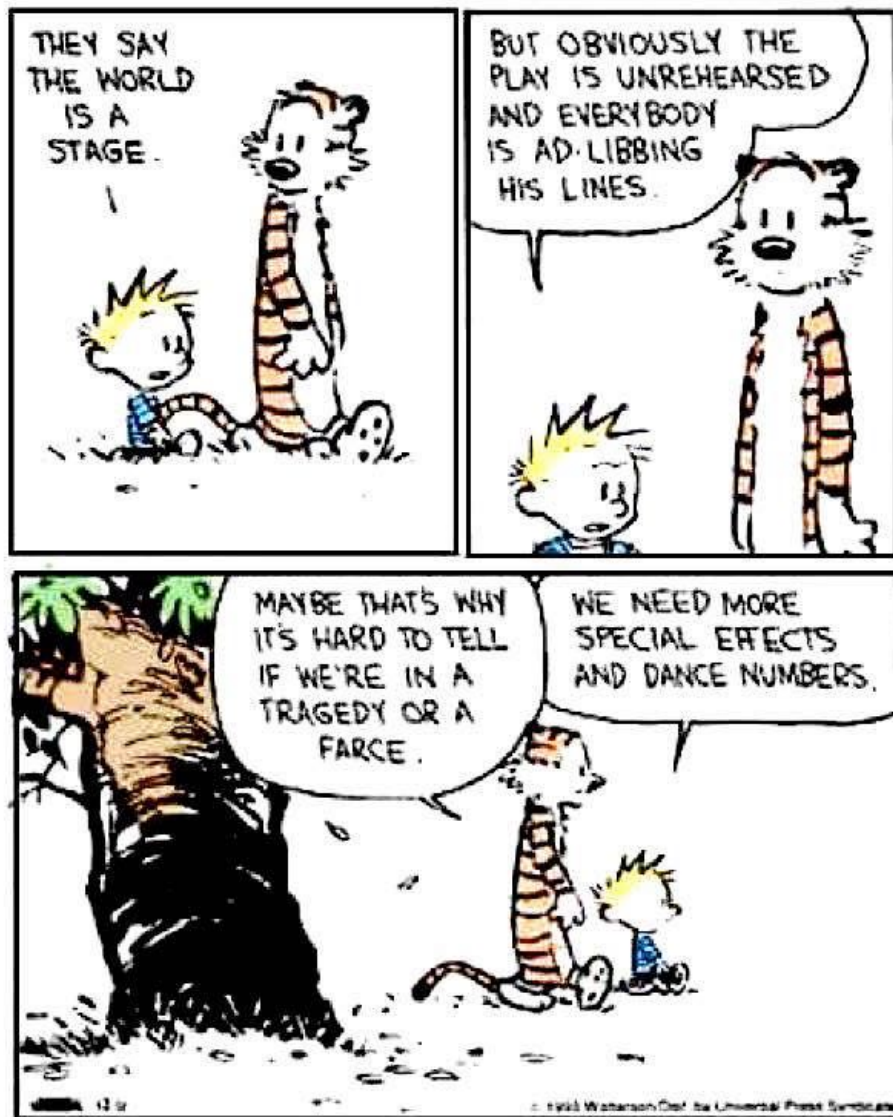
“Those who succeed and do not push on to greater failure are the spiritual middle-classes. Their stopping at success is the proof of their compromising insignificance. How pretty their dreams must have been. Only through the unobtainable does man achieve a hope worth living and dying for, and so attain himself.”

—Eugene O’Neill

“Your comprehension of plays is a positive and serious hindrance to you; instead of eagerly sawing all sorts of wood for the sake of learning to saw, you refuse to saw anything except Spanish mahogany and Rosewood, and the result will be that you will not get on as fast as the student who is interested not in the wood, but in the sawing. Where do you suppose I should be now if I had refused to write about anybody less than Dante or Goethe or Molière or Shakespeare or Michelangelo or Mozart? You must take on all sorts of jobs until you are perfectly handy at doing anything you want with your instrument, which is your face plus your figure plus your voice.”

—George Bernard Shaw to Molly Tompkins

Theater



Polite Applause, A Guide to Theatergoing Etiquette

1. You should arrive at the theater far too early. This will allow you ample opportunity to complain aloud about finding parking, the punishing cost of the tickets, how uncomfortable the theater seats are, how there's no place to stash your coat and your shins, and how fiendishly tedious the last 12 plays and musicals you've seen have been, particularly those events that the critics proclaimed, "soaringly evasive, yet brilliant." But at least you're not late.

Theater

2. While waiting for the show to begin, it's fun to read the various bios in Playbill, but please do not keep repeating in a vigorous, braying tone, "Never heard of 'em!"
3. Unwrap all hard candies well before curtain, so that the distracting rustle of this activity will not occur during the performance. For some reason, the crackle of cellophane will rivet an audience more than Sir Ian McKellen in *Richard III*, or Kathleen Turner in *the raw*.
4. There are only three reasons for ever carrying a cell phone into the theater. One: You're awaiting an organ donation. And make that a major organ, not merely a lung or a leg. Two: Your wife is about to give birth to your first child (subsequent children are old news). Three: You're a world leader who could be called upon in a nuclear emergency (and even then, your phone must be set on vibrate). As for everyone else, you are just not important enough for anyone to call you at the theater, even during the 11th year of *The Phantom of the Opera*. It is permissible, however, for performers onstage in *Phantom* to receive calls.
5. If your companion is hard of hearing, do not explain the onstage action by shouting a running commentary, such as, "Now King Lear is hugging her! Go figure!" When your favorite star makes an entrance, restrain the urge to howl, "Frank Langella—I love you!" Mr. Langella has undoubtedly heard this phrase countless times before, especially alone at his dressing room mirror.
6. If the person in the seat next to you begins to snore audibly, nudge him awake. Then whisper, "You missed the nudity."
7. When a latecomer finally appears and, as is always the case, forces an entire row of decent, punctual people to stand up so that she can stumble to her seat, murmur to that criminal: "Everyone hates you. Not just the people in this theater. Everyone."
8. Never arrive at the theater dead drunk, unless you're an English actor starring in the play.
9. You are entitled to the use of only one armrest. The other one belongs to the large, smelly, chatty stranger sitting next to you, the individual with the soggy umbrella, the bursting shopping bags, the dripping burrito, and the swine flu.

Theater

10. If you are offended by the show's crude language or overt sexual content, protest by seeing it several more times.
11. Do not leap out of your seat and race up the aisle skipping the curtain call in a calculated attempt to get first dibs on your car or taxi. What if, at the Pearly Gates, you discover that God is an actor?
12. If you bring small children with you to a show, after duct taping and shackling the adorable toddlers, remind them that, "If you fidget, Simba will die horribly."
13. If your little boy enjoys musicals, this does not necessarily indicate that he's homosexual. If he insisted on attending all six productions in the Kennedy Center's Sondheim retrospective, he may just have exceptional good taste. If he refers to his kindergarten teacher as, "Very Melissa Errico, but in a good way," remember that Michelangelo was gay, too.
14. A standing ovation is not automatically mandated by a show's massive budget, or by the entire cast lining up and grinning maniacally while they raise their arms. Rise and cheer only if you are truly moved to do so, or if you really love ABBA that much.
15. Is it appropriate to attend a show during previews, and then to go online via your Palm Pilot to dish the first act at intermission? Yes... but only if the show's creators are allowed equal time to discuss your breath and your hairpiece.

—Paul Rudnick

On Reviews: "If you believe the good ones, you have to believe the bad ones."

—Anonymous

"Are you in earnest? Seize this very minute! Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it. Only engage, and then the mind grows heated. Begin, and then the work will be completed."

—Jean Anouilh

Theater

“The thing that makes you exceptional, if you are at all, is inevitably that which must also make you lonely.”

—Lorraine Hansberry

“Whoever has the luck to be born a character can laugh even at death. Because a character will never die! A man will die, a writer, the instrument of creation: but what he has created will never die!”

—Luigi Pirandello

“Of all the noises known to man, opera is the most expensive.”

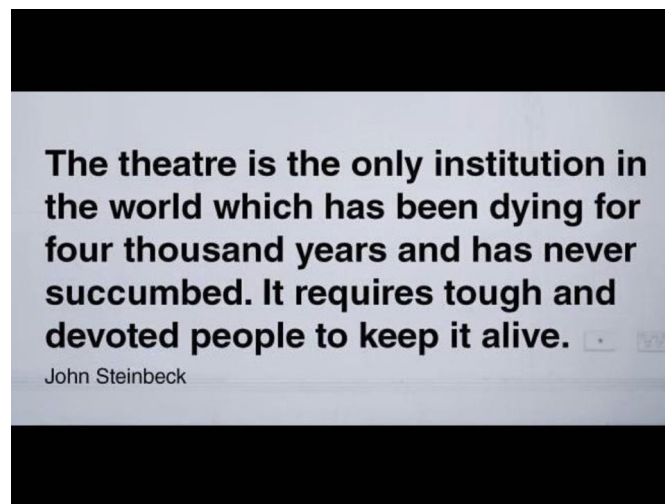
—Molière

“Mona Lisa looks as if she has just been sick, or is about to be.”

—Noel Coward

“Either that wallpaper goes, or I do.”

—Oscar Wilde, on his deathbed



“My characters have nothing. I'm working with impotence, ignorance... that whole zone of being that has always been set aside by artists as something unusable—something by definition incompatible with art.”

—Samuel Beckett

Theater

"A day without laughter is a day wasted."

—Charlie Chaplin

"The virtue of dress rehearsals is that they are a free show for a select group of artists and friends of the author, and where for one unique evening the audience is almost expurgated of idiots."

—Alfred Jarry

"Theatergoing is a communal act, movie going a solitary one."

—Robert Brustein

"I love Actors and by extension, the theater. I love the minutia that surrounds them both. I love listening and telling Green Room war stories. I love the onstage triumphs and yes, I love even the disasters. I love the adrenaline that shoots through when some heroic actor saves the day. I love performance. That time when the human beings onstage interact with the human beings in the audience and together they create the event ...of performance. It's one of life's most civilized experiences."

—Robert Prosky

"People, though they may not know it, come to the theater to hear the truth and celebrate it with each other. Though they are continually disappointed, the urge is so inbred and primal they still come. Your task [as an actor] is to tell the truth. It's a high calling..."

—David Mamet

"Theater is a verb before it is a noun, an act before it is a place."

—Martha Graham

"Theater and storytelling have the power to change lives."

—Liesl Tommy

Theater

There is a certain immortality involved in theater, not created by monuments and books, but through the knowledge the actor keeps to his dying day that on a certain afternoon, in an empty and dusty theater, he cast a shadow of a being that was not himself but the distillation of all he had ever observed; all the unsingable heartsong the ordinary man may feel but never utter, he gave voice to. And by that he somehow joins the ages.

-Arthur Miller

A letter came to me a few years ago from a long-retired actress who had, as a youngster, been taken to see Edwin Booth play King Lear. It seems that towards the end of the play, when the mad Lear was brought face to face with his daughter Cordelia, there was a sharp pause, then—for a second that couldn't quite be caught or measured—a startled, desperate, longing flicker of near-recognition stirred somewhere behind the old man's eyes, and then—nothing. The entire audience rose, without thinking, to its feet. It didn't cheer. It simply stood up. It was as though a single electrical discharge had passed from one body on the stage, instantaneously, through a thousand bodies in the auditorium. Something had been plugged into a socket; two forces had met.

This meeting is what the theater is all about; it is its greatest power... The theater gains its natural—and unique-effect not from the mere presence of live actors, or the happy accident of an occasional lively audience, but from the existence of a live relationship between these two indispensable conspirators, signaling to one another through space.

—Walter Kerr, *The Theater in Spite of Itself*

Theater

“A play in a book is only the shadow of a play, ...hardly more than an architect's blueprint of a house not yet built. ...The color, ... the structural pattern in motion, the quick interplay of live beings, suspended like fitful lightning in a cloud, these things are the play, not words on paper nor thoughts and ideas of an author.”

—Tennessee Williams

“I do not want to know another thing about what a nice guy or gal someone on the stage is: This is entirely irrelevant to me. Some sort of desperation has crept into our theatre—all of our arts, really, but we're discussing theatre—where we feel a defensive wall is erected around the meretriciousness of our work by highlighting how hard someone has worked; how many hours they've put in at the soup kitchen; how many hours they spent researching the aphasic mind in order to replicate the actions of one; how many ribbons sweep across their breast in support of causes; how much they love their lives and how lucky they feel to be on Broadway!

There is very little art, but there is a great deal of boosterism. Fill the seats; buy a T-shirt; post something on the Internet; send out an e-mail blast.

I'm in my eighties, and I think I should have left this earth never knowing what an e—mail blast was.

I saw a play recently that was festooned with understudies: Not the actual understudies, but the hired, primary actors, all of whom performed (if that is the word) precisely like a competent, frightened understudy who got a call at dinner and who raced down to take over a role. No depth; no sense of preparation. These were actors who had learned their lines and who had showed up. And that is all.

I spoke to the director afterwards. By all accounts a nice and talented and smart guy. I asked him why a particular part in this play—a Group Theatre classic—had been given to this certain actor. He's a great guy, was the response. Prince of a fellow. Well, perhaps, but send him home to be a prince to his wife and children; he is a shattering mediocrity. But nice and easy counts far too much these days. Another director told me—proudly—that he had just completed his third play in which there wasn't one difficult player; not one distraction; not one argument. Can

Theater

I add that these were among the most boring plays of our time? They were like finely buffed episodes of Philco Playhouse: tidy, neat, pre—digested, and forgotten almost immediately, save for the rage I felt at another missed opportunity.

All great work comes to us through various forms of friction. I like this friction; I thrive on it. I keep hearing that Kim Stanley was difficult. Yes, she was: in the best sense of the word. She questioned everything; nailed everything down; got answers; motivated everyone to work at her demonically high standard. Everyone improved, as did the project on which she was working, whether it was a scene in class, a TV project, a film, or a play. Is that difficult? Bring more of them on.

Is Dustin Hoffman difficult? You bet. He wants it right; he wants everything right, and that means you and that means me. I find it exhilarating, but in our current culture, they would prefer someone who arrived on time, shared pictures of the family, hugged everyone and reminded them of how blessed he is to be in a play, and who does whatever the director asks of him.

Is Warren Beatty difficult? Only if you're mediocre or lazy. If you work hard and well, he's got your back, your front, and your future well in hand. He gets things right—for everybody.

No friction. No interest. No play. No film. It's very depressing.

I don't want to know about your process. I want to see the results of it. I'll gladly help an actor replicate and preserve and share whatever results from all the work that has been done on a part, but I don't want to hear about it. I've worked with actors who read a play a couple of times and fully understood their characters and gave hundreds of brilliant performances. I don't know how they reached that high level of acting, and I don't care. My job is to provide a safe environment, to hold you to the high standards that have been set by the playwright, the other actors, and by me. I hold it all together, but I don't need to know that your second—act scene is so true because you drew upon the death of your beloved aunt or the time your father burned your favorite doll.

Theater

Now the process is public, and actors want acclimation for the work they've put into the work that doesn't work. Is this insane? Read the newspapers, and there is an actor talking about his intentions with a part. I've pulled strands of O'Neill into this character, and I'm looking at certain paintings and photographs to gain a certain texture. And then you go to the theatre and see the performance of a frightened understudy. But a great gal or guy. Sweet. Loves the theatre.

Every year or so, I tell myself I'm going to stop going to see plays. It's just too depressing. But I remember how much I love what theatre can be and what theatre was, and I go back, an old addict, an old whore who wants to get the spark going again.

I don't think we can get the spark going again because the people working in the theatre today never saw the spark, so they can't get it going or keep it going if it walked right up to them and asked for a seat.

It's a job, a career step, a rehabilitation for a failed TV star or aging film star. I got a call from one of these actresses, seeking coaching. I need my cred back, she said.

This is not what the theatre is supposed to be, but it is what the theatre now is.

I don't want to just shit on the theatre: It's bad everywhere, because it's all business, real—estate space with actors. It's no longer something vital. I used to think that the theatre was like a good newspaper: It provided a service; people wanted and needed it; revenue was provided by advertisers who bought space if the paper delivered, but profit was not the motive—the motive was the dissemination of truth and news and humor. Who goes to the theatre at all now? I think those in the theatre go because it's an occupational requirement: They want to keep an eye on what the other guys are going, and they want to rubberneck backstage with those who might use them in the future. But who are the audiences? They want relief not enlightenment. They want ease. This is fatal.

I talk to Sidney Lumet. I talk to Mike Nichols. I ask them if I'm the crazy old man who hates everything. You might be, they say, but you're not wrong. They have the same feelings, but they work them out or work around them in different ways.

Theater

The primary challenges of the theatre should not always be getting people to give a shit about it. The primary challenge should be to produce plays that reach out to people and change their lives. Theatre is not an event, like a hayride or a junior prom—it's an artistic, emotional experience in which people who have privately worked out their stories share them with a group of people who are, without their knowledge, their friends, their peers, their equals, their partners on a remarkable ride."

—Arthur Penn, Director

"My experiences in the theatre—or anywhere for that matter—have been a perfect reflection of what I brought to it. My experience in the theatre has been that artists do not compete with each other; they support each other. Others compete and bicker and degrade, but they are not artists. So, choose your company carefully. I have been supported and helped and improved every time I had a play produced, because I want to hear and know and apply what everyone brings to the experience. So, my time in the theatre has been open and supportive and productive and wonderful. It wasn't always successful, easy, or good, but it was always more than I dreamed it would be."

—Arthur Miller/Interview with James Grissom

"Write plays that matter. Raise the stakes. Shout, yell, holler, but make yourself heard. It's time for playwrights to reclaim the theatre. We do that by speaking from the heart about the things that matter most to us."

—Terrence McNally

"Do you know what a playwright is? A playwright is someone who lets his guts hang out on the stage."

—Edward Albee

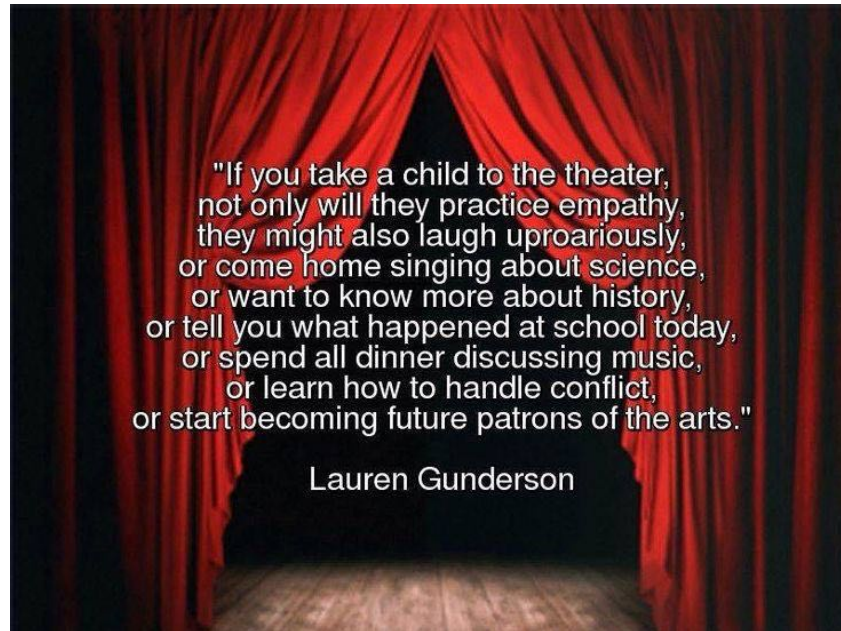
"Unless the theatre can ennoble you, make you a better person, you should flee from it."

—Constantine Stanislavsky

"Hell is a half-filled auditorium."

—Robert Frost

Theater



"Life may be a mess: You may have a hundred crises forcing their way into your mind and your heart. But—and I stress this—the theatre and the person you bring to the theatre must be pure and clear and ready only for the work at hand. Your fellow actors, the stage manager, the dresser—they don't need to know the drama you have at home or in your life. Pour it all into the performance. Blow away the audience with your intensity, but don't alienate or alarm your coworkers with the diary of your life. And the theatre becomes therapy. So does the commute to the theatre. Just wash it all away, store it, command it to sit and be still. You'll work a lot of it out in the performance, so that by the time you face down the problem at home, it's smaller and it knows its place, and it knows that you've been made stronger by giving to others, by prioritizing, by doing the right thing."

—Colleen Dewhurst/Interview with James Grissom/1990

"The theatre is one of the most useful and expressive instruments for a country's edification, the barometer which registers its greatness or decline. A theatre which in every brand, from tragedy to vaudeville, is sensitive and well oriented, can in a few years change the sensibility of a people, and a broken-down theatre, where wings have given way to cloven hoofs, can coarsen and benumb a whole nation."

—Federico Garcia Lorca
1934's *The Authority of the Theatre*

Theater

"We go to the theatre night after night in the hope, the dream that someone might actually tell the truth."

—Mike Daisey

"I will accept anything in the theatre... provided it amuses or moves me. But if it does neither, I want to go home."

—Noel Coward

Q: Are you enjoying it?

A: Our director, Edris (Cooper-Anifowoshe), is I think the perfect director for me. She allows us room to experiment, but you know she's going after something and she won't be stopped. There are times when it feels like we're a highly trained cadre being led on some stealth mission. It's difficult work. Lives could be lost if we make the wrong move. But we're all intent on completing the mission and everyone returning alive.

Nothing gets to me like being onstage, being in a room and having whatever happens that night count for the people who are there. It's always something you feel you need to respect and really show up for. I'd say that next to marriage and fatherhood, I can't think of anything that compares with it. Now, I did put it third, but it's right up there.

—Carl Lumbly in *Blue/Orange* by Joe Penhall

"It is a law of life that man cannot live for himself alone. Extreme individualism is insanity. The world's problems are also our personal problems. Health is achieved through maintaining our personal truth in a balanced relation of love to the rest of the world. No expression is more emblematic of this relation than the creative act which we call art. No art by its very constitution typifies the social nature of that creative act more than the theatre."

—Harold Clurman, *The Fervent Years*

"The theatre is the only institution in the world which has been dying for four thousand years and has never succumbed. It requires tough and devoted people to keep it alive."

—John Steinbeck

Theater



"If an artist really wishes to commit artistic suicide, he will become primarily obsessed with the business of the theatre, with the so-called trends among the audience. This is death. Of course, we are all aware of how the theatre and its audience keep changing, but the development of an artist remains the same, and you have to be utterly devoted to becoming the best artist in your field as you can. Be strong and pure as so many advised me. Stay on the right track. ...Don't you think that we all thought the theatre was entirely upended whenever an Osborne or an Orton or a Pinter arrived? We all thought we, the old ones, were superfluous, aged, worthless. We still have a place, if we're good, if we're needed. Be good and be needed. There is no period of fashion for good: It is eternal. Let others worry about trends and box office and top-of-mind awareness, whatever the hell that is. There is a place—there will always be a place—for art that is done well and purely. My advice to all artists is to become that person, and in addition to being needed, you will be valued and protected."

—John Gielgud/Interview with James Grissom/1991.

From the "Artistic Suicide"

"The theatre is as essential to civilization as safe, pure water."

—Vanessa Redgrave

Theater

“Negativity is fatal to all things, particularly any creative endeavor. You need to trust others in order to trust yourself, the work, the director, the entire bizarre and beautiful enterprise of the theatre or film, and negativity, gossip, anger—these all destroy the entire foundation on which you will need to stand. Try never to say anything of a fellow player or a play or a character that you would not want to hear said about yourself. Grow deaf and sweetly smiling when faced with gossip. Move along. Do your work. In time everything will earn the high standing you have demanded for it.”

—Alec Guinness/Interview with James Grissom/1991

“The theatre is an art form. Remember that. It is a vast undertaking, much bigger than all of us who work in it. Of course, we are going to fail—we are taking on a huge task, an almost impossible one. I know that people—even people engaged in working within the theatre—look at us and wonder why we can't be better all the time. Why can't we succeed more often? Why did we fail to engage an audience? Why did we lose the award? Why are things so bad? If you ever look at an art form and there is always success, and there are always full houses, and the magazines crow about its value, you can know that no chances have been taken, easy roads have been constructed and utilized. Risk breeds failure, but risk also breeds brilliance. It is important that all of us get out of our artistic comfort zones and risk a few things—risk everything! Aim higher. Do some damage to yourself. Try something you never dreamed possible. Everyone improves when this risk is taken, and you can't be discouraged if the reviews are disdainful or confused; if the audiences don't come; if people wonder why you can't just give them that smooth cream that calms them and puts them to sleep. It takes one person to say YES—to giving you the money to write and produce a play; to taking a part and giving you everything they have; to buying a ticket and submitting to your experiment; to taking the baton you've handed them and agreeing to run with it, to try something similar. YES! YES! It only takes one person. Be the first person to say it. Say it often. Affirm people. Show up. Make things happen for everyone. Say YES.”

—Tennessee Williams

“It is not the place of the theatre to show the correct path, but only to offer the means by which all possible paths may be examined.”

—Augusto Boal

Theater

"Movies will make you famous; Television will make you rich; But theatre will make you good."
—Terrence Man

"Great theatre is about challenging how we think and encouraging us to fantasize about a world we aspire to."
—Willem Dafoe

"The mission of the theatre, after all, is to change, to raise the consciousness of people to their human possibilities."
—Arthur Miller

"Nothing in theatre has any meaning before or after. Meaning is now."
—Peter Brook

"The pit of a theatre is the one place where the tears of virtuous and wicked men alike are mingled."
—Denis Diderot

"If a gun is hanging on the wall in the first act, it must fire in the last."
—Anton Chekhov

"Drama is action, sir. Action, and not confounded philosophy."
—Luigi Pirandello

"I don't want to see the uncut version of anything."
—Jean Kerr

"Art, especially the stage, is an area where it is impossible to walk without stumbling. There are in store for you many successful seasons; there will be great misunderstandings and deep disappointments...you must be prepared for all this, expect it and nevertheless, stubbornly, fanatically follow your own way."
—Chekhov

Code of Ethics

Part of the great tradition of the theatre is a code of ethics which belongs to every worker on the legitimate stage. This code, while tacit, has been observed throughout the centuries and will continue long after us. It is neither superstition, nor dogma nor a statute enforced by law. It is an attitude toward craftsmanship, a respect for associates and a dedication toward the audience. This code outlines a self-discipline which, far from robbing one of individuality, increases personal esteem and dignity through cooperation and common purpose. The result is perfection which encompasses all that is meant by "Good Theatre."

The Show Must Go On! I will never miss a performance.

I shall play every performance to the best of my ability, regardless of how small my role or large my personal problems.

I will respect my audience regardless of size or station.

I shall never miss an entrance or cause a curtain to be late by my failure to be ready.

I shall forego all social activities which interfere with rehearsals and will always be on time.

I shall never leave the theatre building or stage area until I have completed my performance.

I shall remember that my aim is to create illusion, therefore, I will not destroy that illusion by appearing in costume and make-up off stage or outside the theatre.

I will not allow the comments of friends, relatives or critics to change any phase of my work without proper authorization.

I will not alter lines, business, lights, properties, settings, costumes or any phase of the production without consultation with and permission from the director.

I shall accept the director's advice in the spirit in which it is given for he sees the production as a whole and my role as a portion thereof.

I shall look upon the production as a collective effort, demanding my utmost cooperation, hence I will forego the gratification of ego for the demands of the play.

I will be patient and avoid temperamental outbursts, for they create tension and serve no useful purpose.

I shall respect the playwright, remembering that "A work of art is not a work of art until it is finished."

I shall never blame my co-workers for my own failure.

I will never engage in caustic criticism of another artist's work from jealousy or an urge to increase my own prestige.

I shall inspire the public to respect me and my craft through graciousness in accepting both praise and constructive criticism.

I will use stage properties and costumes with care knowing they are the tools of my craft and a vital part of the production.

I will observe backstage courtesy and shall comport myself in strict compliance with rules of the theatre in which I work.

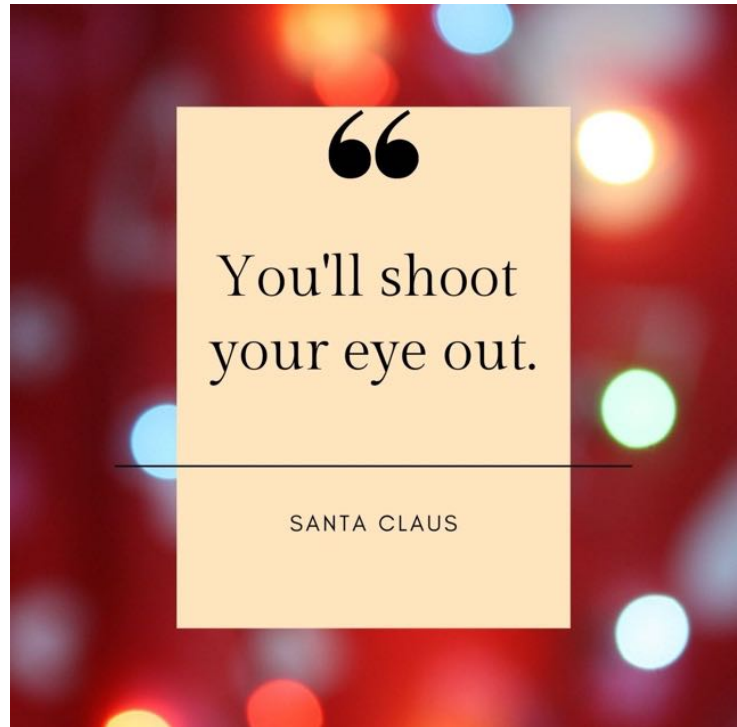
I shall never lose my enthusiasm for the theatre because of disappointment or failure for they are the lessons by which I learn.

I shall direct my efforts in such a manner that when I leave the theatre it will stand as a greater institution for my having labored there.

*—Kathleen Freeman
The Circle Players, 1945*

~m.m.

Miscellaneous



"Among the great disappointments of modern life is the fact that something as fun as a giant inflatable slide springing from the side of a massive flying machine exists—but may only be used in near-death situations, when one is least inclined to enjoy it."

—Hank Campbell

"Izzy—wizzy, let's get busy."

—Anonymous

The very existence of flame-throwers proves that some time, somewhere, someone said to themselves, 'You know, I want to set those people over there on fire, but I'm just not close enough to get the job done.'"

—George Carlin

"Never attempt to teach a pig to sing; it wastes your time and annoys the pig."

—Robert Heinlein

Miscellaneous

Top 10 Reasons to Procrastinate:

1.

—Anonymous

Take this quiz:

1. Name the five wealthiest people in the world.
2. Name the last five Heisman trophy winners.
3. Name the last five winners of the Miss America contest.
4. Name ten people who have won the Nobel or Pulitzer Prize.
5. Name the last half dozen Academy Award winners for best actor and actress.
6. Name the last decade's worth of World Series winners.

How did you do? The point is, none of us remember the headliners of yesterday. These are no second-rate achievers. They are the best in their fields. But the applause dies. Awards tarnish. Achievements are forgotten. Accolades and certificates are buried with their owners. Here's another quiz. See how you do on this one:

1. List a few teachers who aided your journey through school.
2. Name three friends who have helped you through a difficult time.
3. Name five people who have taught you something worthwhile.
4. Think of a few people who have made you feel appreciated.
5. Think of five people you enjoy spending time with.
6. Name half a dozen heroes whose stories have inspired you.

Easier? The lesson: The people who make a difference in your life are not the ones with the most credentials, the most money, or the most awards. They are the ones that truly care. Don't worry about the world coming to an end today. It's already tomorrow in Australia.

—Charles Schultz

Miscellaneous

Sometimes you might feel like no one's there for you, but you know who's always there for you?

Laundry.

Laundry will always be there for you.



Miscellaneous

INNER STRENGTH...

If you can start the day without caffeine,
If you can be cheerful, ignoring aches and pains,
If you can resist complaining and boring people with your troubles,
If you can eat the same food every day and be grateful for it,
If you can understand when loved ones are too busy to give you time,
If you can overlook when people take things out on you,
If you can take criticism and blame without resentment,
If you can face the world without lies and deceit,
If you can conquer tension without medical help,
If you can relax without liquor,
If you can sleep soundly every night,
Then... you are probably the family dog

—Anonymous

Ever wonder why Officer's quarters are called Staterooms? Officer quarters aboard a warship and/or passenger cabins aboard a passenger liner. It is derived from the paddlewheel riverboats that steamed up and down the major rivers and waterways of the United States during the 1800's. The first—class cabins aboard were named after various states in the union (New York, Virginia, Pennsylvania, etc.).

—Anonymous

Main Entry: vis·cer·al

Pronunciation: 'vi—s&—r&l, 'vis—r&l

Function: adjective

1 : felt in or as if in the viscera : DEEP <visceral conviction>

2 : not intellectual : INSTINCTIVE, UNREASONING <visceral drives>

3 : dealing with crude or elemental emotions : EARTHY <a visceral novel>

—Webster's Dictionary

Miscellaneous

Use the third letter of your first name to determine your new first name:

a = poopsie ; b = lumpy ; c = buttercup ; d = gidget; e = crusty ; f = greasy ; g = fluffy ; h = cheeseball; i = chim—chim ; j = stinky ; k = flunky ; l = boobie ; m = pinky ; n = zippy ; o = goober ; p = doofus ; q = slimy ; r = loopy ; s = snotty ; t = tulefel ; u = dorkey ; v = squeezit ; w = oprah ; x = skipper ; y = dinky ; z = zsa—zsa

Use the second letter of your last name to determine the first half of your new last name:

a = apple; b = toilet; c = giggle; d = burger; e = girdle ; f = barf ; g = lizard ; h = waffle ; i = cootie ; j = monkey ; k = potty ; l = liver ; m = banana ; n = rhino ; o = bubble ; p = hamster ; q = toad ; r = gizzard ; s = pizza ; t = gerbil ; u = chicken ; v = pickle ; w = chuckle ; x = tofu ; y = gorilla ; z = stinker > > >

Use the fourth letter of your last name to determine the second half of your new last name:

a = head ; b = mouth ; c = face ; d = nose ; e = tush ; f = breath ; g = pants ; h = shorts ; i = lips ; j = honker ; k = butt ; l = brain ; m = tushie ; n = chunks ; o = hiney; p = biscuits ; q = toes ; r = buns s = fanny ; t = sniffer ; u = sprinkles ; v = kisser ; w = squirt ; x = humperdinck ; y = brains ; z = juice

—From “Captain Underpants and
the Perilous Plot of Professor Poopyants”
by Dave Pilkey

“He has all the virtues I dislike and none of the vices I admire.”

—Winston Churchill

“I have never killed a man, but I have read many obituaries with great pleasure.

—Clarence Darrow

“He has never been known to use a word that might send a reader to the dictionary.”

—William Faulkner (about Ernest Hemingway)

Miscellaneous

"Poor Faulkner. Does he really think big emotions come from big words?"

—Ernest Hemingway (about William Faulkner)

"Thank you for sending me a copy of your book; I'll waste no time reading it."

—Moses Hadas

"I didn't attend the funeral, but I sent a nice letter saying I approved of it."

—Mark Twain

"He has no enemies, but is intensely disliked by his friends."

—Oscar Wilde

"I feel so miserable without you; it's almost like having you here"

—Stephen Bishop

"He is a self-made man and worships his creator."

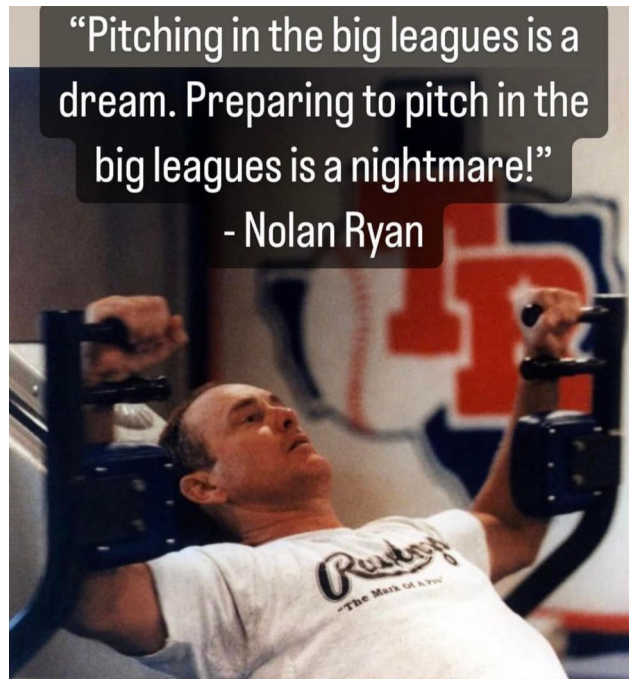
—John Bright

A city is where you can sign a
petition, boo the chief justice,
fish off a pier, gaze at a
hippopotamus, buy a flower at
the corner, or get a good
hamburger or a bad girl at 4 A.M.
A city is where sirens make white
streaks of sound in the sky and
foghorns speak in dark grays. San
Francisco is such a city.

Herb Caen

LIKESUCCESS.com

Miscellaneous



PAINTING:
"The arrival of the electric bill."
Oil on canvas.



Miscellaneous

"I've just learned about his illness. Let's hope it's nothing trivial."

—Irvin S. Cobb

"He is not only dull himself; he is the cause of dullness in others."

—Samuel Johnson

"He is simply a shiver looking for a spine to run up.

—Paul Keating

"He loves nature in spite of what it did to him."

—Forrest Tucker

"His mother should have thrown him away and kept the stork."

—Mae West

"Some cause happiness wherever they go; others, whenever they go."

—Oscar Wilde

"He uses statistics as a drunken man uses lamp-posts... for support rather than illumination."

—Andrew Lang (1844-1912)

"He has Van Gogh's ear for music."

—Billy Wilder

"I've had a perfectly wonderful evening. But I'm afraid this wasn't it."

—Groucho Marx

"Better to remain silent and thought a fool, than to open your mouth and remove all doubt."

—Mark Twain

"Why do you sit there looking like an envelope without any address on it?"

—Mark Twain

Miscellaneous

MERCE CUNNINGHAM STUDIO 55 BETHUNE STREET NYC NY 10014

10 RULES FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

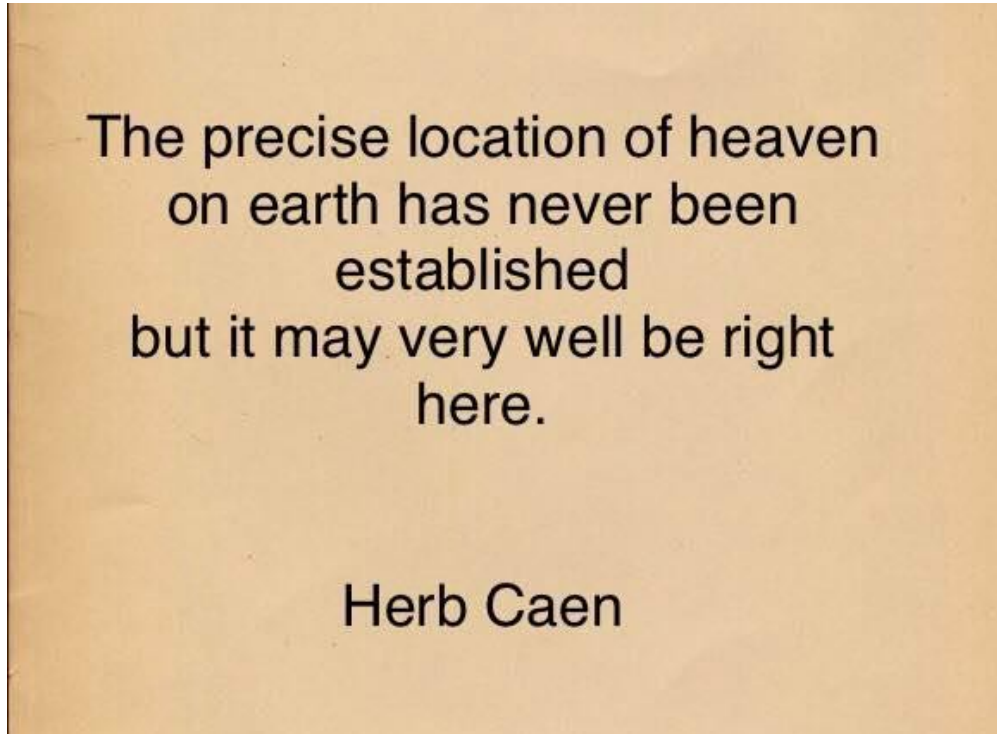
FROM JOHN CAGE

- Rule 1: Find a place you trust, and then, try trusting it for awhile.
- Rule 2: (General Duties as a Student)
Pull everything out of your teacher.
Pull everything out of your fellow students.
- Rule 3: (General Duties as a Teacher)
Pull everything out of your students.
- Rule 4: Consider everything an experiment.
- Rule 5: Be Self Disciplined. This means finding someone wise or smart and choosing to follow them. To be disciplined is to follow in a good way. To be self disciplined is to follow in a better way.
- Rule 6: Follow the leader. Nothing is a mistake. There is no win and no fail. There is only make.
- Rule 7: The only rule is work. If you work it will lead to something. It is the people who do all the work all the time who eventually catch onto things. You can fool the fans--but not the players.
- Rule 8: Do not try to create and analyze at the same time. They are different processes.
- Rule 9: Be happy whenever you can manage it. Enjoy yourself. It is lighter than you think.
- Rule 10: We are breaking all the rules, even our own rules and how do we do that? By leaving plenty of room for "x" qualities.

Helpful Hints:

Always Be Around.
Come or go to everything.
Always go to classes.
Read everything you can get your hands on.
Look at movies carefully and often.
SAVE EVERYTHING. It may come in handy later.

Miscellaneous



The exchange between Winston Churchill & Lady Astor: She said, "If you were my husband, I'd give you poison." He said, "If you were my wife, I'd drink it."

"He can compress the most words into the smallest idea of any man I know."

—Abraham Lincoln

"There's nothing wrong with you that reincarnation won't cure."

—Jack E. Leonard

"They never open their mouths without subtracting from the sum of human knowledge."

—Thomas Brackett Reed

"He inherited some good instincts from his Quaker forebears, but by diligent hard work, he overcame them."

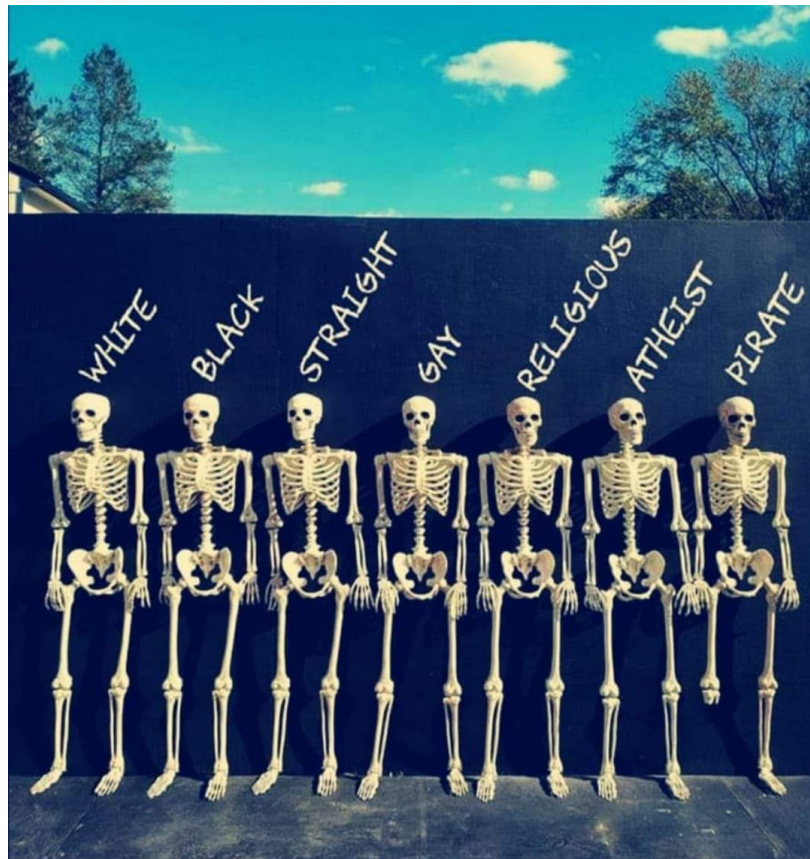
—James Reston (about Richard Nixon)

Miscellaneous

“I have no wish to defend my ‘vices’ with propaganda, making out that they are in fact virtues which others should follow.

I am only saying that I distrust people who show no sign of naughtiness or self-indulgence.”

— Alan Watts, *In My Own Way*



Biography

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Ken Sonkin is an award-winning director/actor who is based in San Francisco. He earned a BFA in acting from the Ohio State University, trained at The National Theatre Conservatory, and holds an MFA from the American Conservatory Theater. He is a member of Actors' Equity Association, the Screen Actors Guild, and is represented by JE Talent, LLC.

His work has been seen at many Bay Area theaters including American Conservatory Theater, Berkeley Rep, CenterREP, The Magic Theater, Z Space, San Francisco Playhouse, 42nd Street Moon, Berkeley Playhouse, San Jose Stage Company, Marin Shakespeare Festival, Sonoma Rep (associate artist), Contra Costa Civic Theatre, as well as regionally at the Grove Shakespeare Festival (LA), Pacific Resident Theater (LA), Seacoast Rep (NH), Pennsylvania Centre Stage, and The Denver Center Theatre Company.

He has taught at A.C.T., The National Theatre Conservatory, Stanford University, Northwestern University, Cornell College, Solano College, Sonoma State University, Oklahoma Summer Arts Institute, University of San Francisco, and The San Francisco Ballet School. He is also a member of the National Alliance of Acting Teachers.

Television credits include *Nash Bridges*, *Moonlighting*, *The Late Show*, *A&E's Comedy on The Road*, *Molson Canadian Comedy Relief*, *The Hawaiian Moving Company*, *Who Stole the Baby Tiger Cub?* and numerous PBS programs, including hosting *Pass the Hat* and *Video Field Trips*. As a magician, Ken was voted the #1 Street Performer in San Francisco, regularly played Hollywood's Magic Castle, and performed for Queen Elizabeth II of England.

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