

Quotations That We Use and Think About

Space matters. We read our physical environment like we read a human face.

— Tom Kelley

Never doubt that a small group of committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

— Margaret Mead

One day we must come to see that peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek, but that it is a means by which we arrive at that goal.

— Martin Luther King, Jr

Over-emphasis on facts and figures and total ignorance of people is making the system unsustainable.

— Mani Shankar Aiyar

Most variables of the systems may change with time, but what remains constant is ethics.

— Orhan Guvenen

Not many years ago I began to play the cello. Most people would say that what I am doing is "learning to play" the cello. But these words carry into our minds the strange idea that there exist two very different processes: (1) learning to play the cello; and (2) playing the cello. They imply that I will do the first until I have completed it, at which point I will stop the first process and begin the second. In short, I will go on "learning to play" until I have "learned to play" and then I will begin to play. Of course, this is nonsense. There are not two processes, but one. We learn to do something by doing it. There is no other way.

— John Holt

Do something, do something to that, and then do something to that.

— Jasper Johns

Non-profit is a negative term and tells us only what these institutions are not. But at least it shows that all these institutions, whatever their specific concerns, have something in common.... And we now begin to realize what that "something" is. It is that they do something very different from either business or government. Business supplies, either goods or services. Government controls. A business has discharged its task when the customer buys the product, pays for it, and is satisfied with it. Government has discharged its function when its policies are effective. The "non-profit" institution neither supplies goods or services nor controls. Its "product" is neither a pair of shoes nor an effective regulation. Its product is a changed human being. The non-profit institutions are human-change agents. Their "product" is a cured patient, a child that learns, a young man or woman grown into a self-respecting adult; a changed human life altogether.

— Peter F. Drucker

There is a vitality, a life force, a quickening that is translated through you into action. And since there is only one of you in all time, this expression is unique, and if you block it, it will never exist through any other medium, and be lost; the world will not have it. It is not your business to determine how good it is, not how it compares with other expressions. It is your business to keep it yours clearly and directly, to keep the channel open.

— Martha Graham

There is, however, no ground for the separation of the series of events [the environment] which precede the organic processes from these processes. The whole situation is of a single piece....What lies back of this separation is the mutually determining character of the organism and the environment...The reflection of the organism in the environment and the reflection of the environment in the organism are essential phases in the maintenance of the life process that constitutes conscious intelligence. — George Herbert Mead

“The 'meaning' of an intellectual concept...is a habit-change; meaning by a habit-change a modification of a person's tendencies toward action.... — Charles Peirce

The basic character of habit is that every experience enacted and undergone modifies the one who acts and undergoes, while this modification affects, whether we wish it or not, the quality of subsequent experiences. For it is a somewhat different person who enters into them....But there is another aspect of the matter....Every genuine experience has an active side which changes in some degree the objective conditions under which experiences are had....An experience is always what it is because of a transaction taking place between an individual and what, at the time, constitutes his environment. —John Dewey

[Behaviour] is at the same time a producer of evolutionary change as well as a resultant of it, since it is the animal's behaviour which to a considerable extent determines the nature of the environment to which it will submit itself and the character of the selective forces with which it will consent to wrestle. — C. H. Waddington

That is just what behavior is: a mixture of choice from, and effect upon, the environment, exerting optimal control over exchanges. Learning is no exception.... any piece of knowledge is connected with an action and that to know an object or a happening is to make use of it... — Jean Piaget

The important thing in any learning is to be able to use it, to go beyond it, in the direction of still further learning and activity. — Eleanor Duckworth

There is no true word that is not at the same time a praxis. — Paulo Freire

If you want to teach people a new way of thinking, don't bother trying to teach them. Instead, give them a tool, the use of which will lead to new ways of thinking. — Buckminster Fuller

You cannot teach a man anything; you can only help him find it within himself. — Galileo

I cannot teach anybody anything. I can only make them think. — Socrates

Those who know how to think need no teachers. — Mahatma Gandhi

One of the deepest and strangest of all human moods is the mood which will suddenly strike us perhaps in a garden at night, or deep in sloping meadows, the feeling that every flower and leaf has just uttered something stupendously direct and important, and that we have by a prodigy of imbecility not heard or understood it. There is a certain poetic value, and that a

genuine one, in this sense of having missed the full meaning of things. There is beauty, not only in wisdom, but in this dazed and dramatic ignorance. — G. K. Chesterton

We used to go to the Catskill Mountains. We lived in New York and the Catskill Mountains is the place where people went in the summer. There was a big group of people there but the fathers would all go back to New York to work during the week and only come over in the weekend. On the weekends, when my father came, he would take me for walks in the woods and would tell me various things about, interesting things that were going on in the woods -- which I'll explain in a minute. But the other mothers see this, of course, thought this was wonderful and that the other fathers should take their sons for walks. They tried to work on them but they didn't get anywhere at first. And they wanted my father to take all the kids, but he didn't want to because he had a special relationship to me -- we had a personal thing together. So it ended up that the other fathers had to take their children for walks the next weekend. The next Monday when they were all back to work we were, all the kids were playing in the field and one kid said to me "See that bird, what kind of bird is that?" And I said, "I haven't the slightest idea what kind of bird it is." He says, "It's a brown throated thrush," or something. "Your father doesn't tell you anything." But it was the opposite, my father had taught me, looking at a bird he says, "Do you know what that bird is? It's a brown throated thrush. -- but in Portuguese it's a - - -, in Italian a ---." He says, "In Chinese, it's a ---, in Japanese a ---, etcetera." "Now," he says, "You know all the languages, you want to want to know what the name of that bird is and when you've finished with all that," he says, "you'll know absolutely nothing whatever about the bird. You only know about humans in different places and what they call the bird." "Now," he says, "let's look at the bird and what it's doing...."

He had taught me to notice things. One day when I was playing with what we call an "express wagon" which is a little wagon which has a railing around it for children to play with that they can pull around -- it had a ball in it, I remember this, it had a ball in it -- and I pulled the wagon and I noticed something about the way the ball moved. So I went to my father and I said, "Say, Pop, I noticed something. When I pull the wagon, the ball rolls to the back of the wagon; it rushes to the back of the wagon. And when I'm pulling it along and I suddenly stop, the ball rolls to the front of the wagon," and I say, "Why is that?" And he said that, he says nobody knows. He said, "The general principle is that things that are moving try to keep on moving and things that are standing still tend to stand still unless you push on them hard." And he says this tendency is called inertia, but nobody knows why it's true. Now that's a deep understanding. He doesn't give me a name. He knew the difference between knowing the name of something and knowing something, which I learned very early. — Richard Feynman

If we couldn't laugh at ourselves, that would be the end of everything. — Niels Bohr