

QUOTATIONS THAT SPEAK TO OUR TIME

These are quotations that speak to me about the big issues of our time. I hope they do so for you too.

"Energy is the only life and is from the body. Energy is eternal delight. Exuberance is beauty. He who desires but acts not breeds pestilence. Expect poison from standing water. The cistern contains; the fountain overflows. If the fool would persist in folly he would become wise."

William Blake (from the floor of the Blake Room at the Tate Art Gallery, London)

"Truly it is in the darkness that one finds the light, so when we are in sorrow, then is this light is nearest of all to us."

"If the only prayer you ever said was thank you, it would be enough."

Meister Eckhart

"The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again, and expecting different results."

Albert Einstein

"Indeed whether it be in the smallest community or the highest councils of nations or the world, there is a need for those simple principles according to which we have conducted our own life. These include accepting the integrity and bona fides of everyone no matter how they may differ from ourselves; loyalty no matter how much the circumstances regarding those to whom one is loyal may have changed; frankness and honesty no matter how embarrassing that may prove; and a presumption that however we may differ there are more important things we share. In other words what is required is that the mutual respect that underlies the mere possibility of negotiation should always inform the way we relate to one another as representatives of different nations and different sectors of the world community. Such a change — for it would mean some change! — would be part of building the new post-colonial global order on the international system established some 50 years ago to ensure that the world never again experienced the destructive violence of economic crisis and world war. It would be part of democratising the world in which we live. It is a necessary condition for world peace and development."

Nelson Mandela, Independent Lecture, Dublin, 12 April 2000.

"There is a movement, not easily discernable, at the heart of things to reverse the awful centrifugal force of alienation, brokenness, division, hostility and disharmony. God has set in motion a centripetal process, a moving towards the Centre, towards unity, harmony, goodness, peace and justice; one that removes barriers."

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, No Future without Forgiveness, Rider, 1999

“We are sometimes inclined to think that the same things are monotonously repeated over and over again in the history of creation. That is because the season is too long by comparison with the brevity of our individual lives, and the transformation too vast and too inward by comparison with our superficial and restricted outlook, for us to see the progress of what is tirelessly taking place in and through all matter and spirit.”

Teilhard de Chardin, *Le Milieu Divin*.

‘There is an Indian proverb or axiom that says that everyone is in a house with four rooms, a physical, a mental, an emotional and a spiritual. Most of us tend to live in one room most of the time but, unless we go into every room every day, even if only to keep it aired, we are not a complete person.’

Godden, R, (1990) *A House with Four Rooms*

"All of us South Africans were less than whole than we would have been without apartheid. Those who were privileged lost out as they became more uncaring, less compassionate, less humane and therefore less human; for this universe is constructed in such a way that unless we live in accordance with its moral laws we will pay a price. Our humanity is bound together in what the Bible calls "the bundle of life". Our humanity is caught up in that of all others. We are human because we belong"

Desmond Tutu, *No Future without Forgiveness*, Rider 1999.

“Yet the form of modernity the West has offered to the rest of the world, has been tied to a capitalist ethos and economics which has brought not only growing gaps in income between the top 20% of the world's wealthy and the bottom 20% (that gap was 30:1 in 1960, 60:1 in 199-0, and 76:1 in 1998) but also a worldview which has been militantly materialistic, insisting that institutions or social practices be judged rational, productive and efficient only to the extent that they maximize money and power. Though we've told ourselves we were offering economic well being (which is true, for a section of third world populations), and claimed that would bring democracy and human rights as well, the actual experience of many people is that they are being offered a cultural economic package in which consumption is the highest good, and cannot be constrained for the sake of preserving the world's environment or human values. This is a new religion, as much as we once acknowledged communism to be a religion as well, and the human consequences of this religion are already visible in many Western societies: a collection of individuals who know how to "look out for number one" but who are emotionally and spiritually illiterate, narcissistic, and have great difficulty in sustaining lasting relationships or building solid families. Human relationships are frequently reduced to "what's in it for me" and our capacity to respond to nature with awe is replaced by a narrow pragmatism that sees commodities rather than mystery.”

Rabbi Michael Lerner

A New Bottom Line "A first step in developing that third path is to seek A New Bottom Line so that we judge institutions productive, efficient and rational not only to the extent that they maximize wealth and power but also to the extent that they maximize our capacities to be caring, ecologically aware, ethically and spiritually sensitive, and capable of responding to the universe with awe, wonder and radical amazement at the grandeur of creation."

Rabbi Michael Lerner, Tikkun Community, A New Bottom Line at www.tikkun.org

"Yes, men and boys receive privilege and status from patriarchy, but it is a poisoned privilege for which they pay a heavy price. If traditional, patriarchal socialization takes aim at girls' voices, it takes aim at boys' hearts - makes them lose the deepest, most sensitive and empathic parts of themselves. Men aren't even allowed to be depressed, which is why they engage so often in various forms of self-numbing, from sex to alcohol and drugs to gambling and workaholism. Patriarchy strikes a Faustian bargain with men.

Maybe at some earlier stage in human evolution, Patriarchy was what was needed just for the species to survive. But today, there's nothing threatening the human species but humans. We've conquered our predators, we've subdued nature almost to extinction, and there are no more frontiers to conquer or to escape into so as to avoid having to deal with the mess we've left behind. Frontiers have always given capitalism, Patriarchy's economic face, a way to avoid dealing with its shortcomings. Well, we're having to face them now in this post-frontier era and inevitably - especially when we have leaders who suffer from toxic masculinity - that leads to war, the conquering of new markets, and the destruction of the earth."

**Jane Fonda Speech at the National Women's Leadership Summit - June, 2003
Washington, D.C.**

"Management as a barrier to national creativity

To compete in global markets, companies must embrace continuous innovation. This can only be achieved by leveraging intellectual capital and the creativity of employees. Before this can happen there must be high-trust cultures in both the corporate environment and the broader society. At present, too many businesses are structured and managed on the basis of low trust. Management too often still demands employee compliance rather than encouraging personal creativity. Many employees feel disempowered and alienated, even in the "new" sectors of high technology. They do not feel themselves as stakeholders in the future of their companies and therefore lack incentive to create and innovate. To be competitive in the future global economy will require a revolution in the culture and practices of British management. Their attitudes and assumptions are the major barrier to Britain becoming a high performance economy. These also prevent organisations from realising the potential of ICTs (information and communication technologies) for cutting costs through transforming work patterns. Far more companies need to learn lessons from the "alternative" cultures and work patterns of Silicon Valley and the .com businesses."

Professor Richard Scase, in Britain in 2010.

"Somehow I think we are just working too hard. So for me, transformation is happening, it is not something you do. Certainly we have to figure out appropriate responses, but my learning recently is that the total organism of the Homo Sapiens in its several parts (countries, companies, what have you) seems to be engaged in an evolutionary process which is enabling us to cope with the emerging reality. All of this is occurring (I think) not because we have figured things out, but in spite of the fact we haven't. We do have a choice, but it is rather more about accepting the emerging organisational (life) form---or not, and if not, we like the dinosaurs will simply disappear.

*I am not the sort to throw my hands in the air in defeat, but neither do I feel the necessity to work overly hard at something which seems to be doing pretty well by itself. No guarantees of course, but I think we are going to make it. If there is a key it is all about self organising systems. I think that is what we are essentially. **We just like to pretend we have done all this good work. Could be".***

Harrison Owen in a letter to the author

"It is possible to prepare for the future without knowing what it will be"

Meg Wheatley

"The best way to predict the future is to create it"

Peter Drucker.

"In our experience, enormous struggles with implementation are created every time we deliver changes to the organisation rather figuring out how to involve people in their creation."

Wheatley, M and Kellner-Rogers, M, 1998

"It is common to hear that people resist change. In reality, people do not resist change; they resist having change imposed on them."

Capra, F, 2002

"You can't impose change on anything alive. It will always react, it will never obey. This is one of the principles I've embraced for years. And instead, what people do is change the plan, file it away and never look at it again, or modify it. We look at all that and we say they are resisting change, but they're not. They are responding like all life does- they are reacting. And they are actually being quite creative."

Meg Wheatley

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