

A COLLECTION OF QUOTATIONS, PRAYERS, & BLESSINGS
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If we could read the secret history of our enemies, we should find in each person's life sorrow and suffering enough to disarm all hostility. -Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, poet (1807-1882)

Live a balanced life - Learn some and think some, and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day some. -Robert Fulghum, author (1937-)

When a train goes through a tunnel and it gets dark, you don't throw away the ticket and jump off. You sit still and trust the engineer. -Corrie Ten Boom, author and Holocaust survivor

More die in the United States of too much food than of too little. -John Kenneth Galbraith, economist (1908-)

There is no rule more invariable than that we are paid for our suspicions by finding what we suspect. -Henry David Thoreau, naturalist and author (1817-1862)

There is no greatness where there is not simplicity, goodness, and truth. -Leo Tolstoy, novelist and philosopher (1828-1910)

Better than a thousand days of diligent study is one day with a great teacher. -Japanese proverb

He is the best physician who is the most ingenious inspirer of hope. -Samuel Taylor Coleridge, poet, critic, and philosopher (1772-1834)

You can't wake a person who is pretending to be asleep. -Navajo Proverb

Every society honors its live conformists and its dead troublemakers. -Mignon McLaughlin, author

If I seem to take part in politics, it is only because politics encircles us today like the coil of a snake from which one cannot get out, no matter how much one tries. I wish therefore to wrestle with the snake. -Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948)

Will: "I have nothing. I owe a great deal, and the rest I leave to the poor."
Rabelais

“If a person is indeed wise, he does not bid you enter the house of his wisdom – but rather leads you to the threshold of your own.” Kahlil Gibran

If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being. And who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart?
-Alexander Solzhenitsyn, novelist, Nobel laureate (1918-)

“Remember, one of you will some day close the eyes of the other.”
--Martin Marty, a University of Chicago church historian and one of the editors of Christian Century magazine. He said that when he occasionally marries people, he has a "grim provocative word that brings realism to premarital counseling.

“Don’t seek to find out what the world needs. Rather seek that which makes you come alive, for what the world really needs is you when you have come alive.”
H. Thurman

Kindness in words creates confidence. Kindness in thinking creates profoundness. Kindness in giving creates love. -Lao Tzu, philosopher (6th century B.C.)

Until lions have their historians, tales of the hunt shall always glorify the hunter. -African proverb

Life is a long lesson in humility. -James M. Barrie, writer (1860-1937)

Hatred never ceases by hatred
But by love alone is healed.
This is the ancient and eternal law.
--The Buddha

It is said an Eastern monarch once charged his wise men to invent him a sentence to be ever in view, and which should be true and appropriate in all times and situations. They presented him the words: "And this, too, shall pass away." How much it expresses! How chastening in the hour of pride! How consoling in the depths of affliction! -Abraham Lincoln, 16th U.S. President (1809-1865)

In relation to the above quote, Dave Hetland wrote:
Thanks, Jim, for the quote. I'm reminded of the frequently used passage in the New Testament: "And it came to pass..."

Alan Watts quote: I left the church not because they didn't practice what they preached, but because they preached.

Why is it that we rejoice at a birth and grieve at a funeral? It is because we are not the person involved. -Mark Twain, author and humorist (1835-1910)

The moment one gives close attention to anything, even a blade of grass, it becomes a mysterious, awesome, indescribably magnificent world in itself. -Henry Miller, novelist (1891-1980)

Any persons whom you have ever met, even if you have just exchanged a glance on a bus, have become part of your being, and consequently you are in some sense ultimately responsible for them. You carry them in your heart. Swami Venkatesananda

Remember that a lone amateur built the Ark. A large group of professionals built the Titanic. Dave Barry

The question is not can they reason? Nor can they talk? But can they suffer? -Jeremy Bentham, jurist and philosopher (1748-1832)

Attention is what allows us to perceive and act upon the information that comes to us. If we're not paying attention, we're not going to get it. Attention is the coin of the realm; attention is what we pay. -Nicki Scully, author of The Golden Cauldron.

What can I do to be of service to God's children today? (paraphrase). -Peace Pilgrim

You cannot do a kindness too soon, for you never know how soon it will be too late. -Ralph Waldo Emerson, writer and philosopher (1803-1882)

In everyone's life, at some time, our inner fire goes out. It is then burst into flame by an encounter with another human being. We should all be thankful for those people who rekindle the inner spirit. -Albert Schweitzer, philosopher, physician, and musician (1875-1965)

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

Patriotism is often an arbitrary veneration of real estate above principles. -George Jean Nathan, author and editor (1882-1958)

Conversation, n. A fair to the display of the minor mental commodities, each exhibitor being too intent upon the arrangement of his own wares to observe those of his neighbor. -Ambrose Bierce, writer (1842-1914) [The Devil's Dictionary]

“When you take a stand, it shapes who you are. It sets your priorities. It wakes you up in the morning, and it dresses you. It puts you to bed at night. There’s deep spirituality in that way of being.” - Lynne Twist, founding executive of the Hunger Project.

Nobody in the game of football should be called a genius. A genius is somebody like Norman Einstein. -Joe Theisman, Former quarterback

“The moment we begin to fear the opinions of others and hesitate to tell the truth that is in us, and from motives of policy are silent when we should speak, the divine floods of light and life flow no longer into our souls.” –Elizabeth Cady Stanton

There is no terror in the bang, only in the anticipation of it. -Alfred Hitchcock, film-maker (1899-1980)

An eye for an eye leaves everyone blind. -Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948)

The most effective kind of education is that a child should play amongst lovely things. -Plato, philosopher (427-347 BCE)

I have always imagined that paradise will be a kind of library. -Jorge Luis Borges, writer (1899-1986)

Nothing that grieves us can be called little: by the eternal laws of proportion a child's loss of a doll and a king's loss of a crown are events of the same size. -Mark Twain, author and humorist (1835-1910)

We elders have to forget our retirement. We need to forget Florida and Phoenix, turn 180 degrees, and face the adolescents and the children. Imagine a line drawn in the sand; you reach over and try to take one adolescent and bring him over into adulthood. That’s the real job of elders in many traditional cultures. – Robert Bly

"Knowing who you are and why you came here-that you are a child of God and that you came here to heal and be healed-is more important than knowing what you want to do. What you want to do is not the important question. The question to ask is, "When I do anything, how should I do it?" And the answer is, "Kindly." People don't normally associate business with kindness, because business has come to be regarded as simply a tool for making money. Miracle-workers are not in business only to make money; they're in business to inject love into the world."
---A Return To Love (Marianne Williamson?)

"The Atonement means putting love first. In everything. In business as well as everything else. You're in business to spread love. Your screenplay should spread love. Your hair salon should spread love. Your agency should spread love. Your life should spread love. The key to a successful career is realizing that it's not separate from the rest of your life, but is rather an extension of your most basic self. And your most basic self is love."
---A Return To Love

To see a world in a grain of sand, / And a heaven in a wild flower, / Hold infinity in the palm of your hand, / And eternity in an hour. -William Blake, poet, engraver, and painter (1757-1827)

He who hesitates is sometimes saved.

Just as appetite comes by eating so work brings inspiration. -Igor Stravinsky, composer (1882-1971)

Listening

A remarkable coincidence, or maybe some farsighted linguist planned it so, is that "listen" and "silent" contain the same letters. Good listening begins with silence. The fewer words we interject while someone is voicing her thoughts, the more thoughts we'll hear. From "How to listen to your kids: Let your child finish her thoughts before commenting" by Dr. Ray Guarendi

" Forgiveness is our mystical function, but it's often a gradual and quite painful process. Forgiveness doesn't mean that we pretend to like whom we do not like, or turn a blind eye to the evils of the world. Commitment to God's love doesn't destroy our capacity for discernment. But the way of divine compassion--though not an easy path, though often counterintuitive--is the next step in humanity's evolutionary journey. It's the only step that will enable us to survive the storm of hatred raging around the world." Marianne Williamson

"He had grown up in a country run by politicians who sent the pilots to fly the bombers to kill the babies to make the world safe for children to grow up in."
Ursula LeGuin

"Ministry is not just for ministers: In the new spirituality, a minister is anyone who chooses to use our resources to tend to the wounded heart of the world. Anything we do can be a ministry, from menial labor to the highest professional endeavor. It is our ministry if it is an activity we use to spread peace and forgiveness and love."
Everyday Grace

We who lived in concentration camps can remember the men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. They may have been few in number, but they offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms -- to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way. -Viktor Frankl, author, neurologist and psychiatrist, Holocaust survivor (1905-1997)

No mistake is more common and more fatuous than appealing to logic in cases which are beyond her jurisdiction. -Samuel Butler, writer (1835-1902)

"[In regard to the varying effectiveness of different kinds of placebos], capsules containing colored beads are more effective than colored tablets, which are superior to white tablets with corners, which are better than round white tablets. Beyond this, intramuscular saline injections are superior to any tablet but inferior to intravenous injections. Tablets taken from a bottle labeled with a well-known brand name are superior to the same tablets taken from a bottle with a typed label. My favorite is a doctor who always handled placebo tablets with forceps, assuring the patient that they were too powerful to be touched by hand."
(From "The Science of Consciousness", edited by Max Velmans, p. 168.)

When a thing is funny, search it carefully for a hidden truth. -George Bernard Shaw, writer, Nobel laureate (1856-1950)

"With every human encounter, God gives us the chance to recreate our world. We can extend beyond the boundaries of our isolated existence and bless the person, salute the angel, open our hearts to the similarly wounded one who stands before us. Or we can refuse to do those things, feeling the pain of having someone else withhold from us their blessing, their salute, their love. There is nothing and no one outside us, so much as there are mirrors everywhere. Every person is a part of us, and we are a part of every person. Sacred the chalice that holds us together, and painful the thoughts that would tear us apart. Both are within us. It is ours to choose.

And we do choose. Constantly.

May we choose the divine."

Everyday Grace

You can never solve a problem on the level on which it was created. -Albert Einstein, physicist, Nobel laureate (1879-1955)

Each man carries within him the soul of a poet who died young. -Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve, literary critic (1804-1869)

Dear God,

When I take time to notice, I have many things to be grateful for.

When I awoke this morning, I was comfortable and warm in a bed.

I arose from bed without assistance.

While preparing breakfast, I noted that I can choose what I would like to eat from a variety of foods in my pantry.

I hear clothes tumbling in the dryer and I am grateful I don't have to hang them outside like my Grandma used to do.

The furnace is blowing warm air across my feet, yet I did not have to build a fire or search for firewood.

After taking a long, hot shower--I selected clothes from a closet that is packed with possibilities.

I listen to children playing down the street, waiting to go to school.

My neighborhood is peaceful and quiet, free from tanks or soldiers.

I consider my friends and family and smile as I bless them all

In a few minutes, I will get in my car and drive to a job that I love.

I am grateful for the many readers who write and share their stories and love.

I am grateful that I am able to donate time and money to those in need.

I am grateful that I can pay my bills.

I am grateful for the ability to share from Your abundant blessings.

I am grateful for the vision of paradise that You have planted

in my mind and that I can do many things to help

achieve this glorious vision.

Today dear God, I count my blessings and give You my thanks.

I gratefully let it be .Amen

Do you love me because I'm beautiful, or am I beautiful because you love me? -Oscar Hammerstein II, lyricist (1895-1960)

I learned long ago that being Lewis Carroll was infinitely more exciting than being Alice. -Joyce Carol Oates, writer (1938-)

"When any of us awaken, the entire world is brought closer to Heaven. In asking for healing, we are not just asking for our own health, but rather we are asking that the idea of sickness be removed from the mind of God's Son. As shown in A Course in Miracles, 'If the mind can heal the body, but the body cannot heal the mind, then the mind must be stronger than the body.' Forgiveness is the ultimate preventative medicine as well as the greatest healer. We heal the body by remembering that it is not who we really are. We are spirits and not bodies, we are eternally healthy and we are incapable of sickness. These are merely statements of the truth about ourselves. and it is always truth that sets us free."
A Return to Love

When I am working on a problem I never think about beauty. I only think about how to solve the problem. But when I have finished, if the solution is not beautiful, I know it is wrong. -R. Buckminster Fuller, engineer, designer, and architect (1895-1983)

"Our barriers to love are rarely consciously chosen. They are our efforts to protect the places where the heart is bruised. Somewhere, sometime, we felt as though an open heart caused us pain or humiliation. We loved with the openness of a child, and someone didn't care, or laughed, or even punished us for the effort. In a quick moment, perhaps a fraction of a second, we made a decision to protect ourselves from ever feeling that pain again. We would never again allow ourselves to be so vulnerable. We built emotional defenses. We tried to build a fortress across our heart, to protect us from any cold assault. The only problem is, according to the Course, that we create what we defend against."
A Return to Love

The deeper that sorrow carves into your being the more joy you can contain. Is not the cup that holds your wine the very cup that was burned in the potter's oven? -Kahlil Gibran, mystic, poet, and artist (1883-1931)

It is in deep solitude that I find the gentleness with which I can truly love my brothers. The more solitary I am the more affection I have for them. Solitude and silence teach me to love my brothers for what they are, not for what they say. -Thomas Merton, writer (1915-1968)

Dear God,
Who would You have me serve today?
I accept my assignment to be Your hands and feet, to share a smile and a hug.
I greet this day with joy in my heart, knowing that there is work for me to do.
Hold our world in Your heart.
Show us how to serve and love one another.
May Your peace prevail.
Amen
--Ric Beattie

"You have to learn to seek first the kingdom of heaven, the place of stillness and quiet at the highest level of which you are capable, and then the heavenly influences can pour into you, recreate you and use you for the salvation of all human kind."
--White Eagle, from: The Quiet Mind

In the stillness of meditation, I am renewed

Dear God,
In the quiet of this moment, I relax into awareness of Your presence.
I turn my attention to the peace which passes all understanding.
Teach me Your ways and strengthen my faith.
From this holy place, I am renewed and inspired.
As I place my life on Your altar, I am reborn.
In silence, I listen and You speak to my heart.
Filled with love, I bless the world.
May it be on Earth as it is in Heaven.
And so it is.
Amen
--Ric Beattie

"All this is simply to say that all life is interrelated. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality; tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. As long as there is poverty in this world, no man can be totally rich even if he has a billion dollars. As long as diseases are rampant and millions of people cannot expect to live more than twenty or thirty years, no man can be totally healthy, even if he just got a clean bill of health from the finest clinic in America. Strangely enough, I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. You can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be. This is the way the world is made."
--Martin Luther King, Jr.
from his commencement speech "The American Dream" delivered at Lincoln University on June 6, 1961 and reprinted in: A Testament of Hope

A friend is one to whom one may pour out all the contents of one's heart, chaff and grain together, knowing that the gentlest of hands will take and sift it, keep what is worth keeping, and with a breath of kindness blow the rest away.

- Arabian Proverb

It's a poor sort of memory that only works backward. -Lewis Carroll, mathematician and writer (1832-1898)

Dear God,

Thank You for this connection we call prayer.

As I go about the activities of this day, may I maintain a deep sense of Your presence and power.

I choose to live fully now.

May my thoughts and actions extend love to everyone I meet.

In whatever ways present themselves, I choose to share justice, compassion and hope with all your people.

Your peace touches every area of my life,

May my living bear witness to this truth.

And so it is.

Amen

--Ric Beattie

Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. -Dwight D. Eisenhower, U.S. general and 34th president (1890-1969)

"All of us have heard this term 'preventive war' since the earliest days of Hitler. I recall that is about the first time I heard it. In this day and time...I don't believe there is such a thing; and, frankly, I wouldn't even listen to anyone seriously that came in and talked about such a thing."

--President Dwight Eisenhower, 1953

"Humility brings peace for it does not claim that you must rule the universe, nor judge all things as you would have them be."

---The Song of Prayer

I like to believe that people in the long run are going to do more to promote peace than our governments. Indeed, I think that people want peace so much that one of these days governments had better get out of the way and let them have it. -Dwight D. Eisenhower, U.S. general and 34th president (1890-1969)

"We are not allowed to kill. We are not allowed to be complicit in killing. We are not allowed to commit the crime of silence before these things." -Daniel Berrigan, S.J

To announce that there must be no criticism of the President, or that we are to stand by the President, right or wrong, is not only unpatriotic and servile, but is morally treasonable to the American public. -Theodore Roosevelt, 26th US President (1858-1919)

"How far you go in life depends on your being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving, and tolerant of the weak and strong. Because someday you will have been all of these."
George Washington Carver

Take rest; a field that has rested gives a bountiful crop. -Ovid, poet (43 BCE - CE 17)

Remember the great line from the prayer of St. Francis, Lord, grant that I may not seek so much to be understood as to understand. One must not be afraid of a little silence. Some find silence awkward or oppressive. But a relaxed approach to dialogue will include the welcoming of silence. It is often a devastating question to ask oneself, but it is sometime important to ask - In saying what I have in mind will I really improve on the silence?
- Robert Greenleaf (found in "The Servant as Leader")

Poetry is the art of uniting pleasure with truth. -Samuel Johnson, lexicographer (1709-1784)

"If we just worry about the big picture, we are powerless. So my secret is to start right away doing whatever little work I can do. I try to give joy to one person in the morning, and remove the suffering of one person in the afternoon. . . . That is the secret. Start right now."
--Sister Chan Khong

Few people think more than two or three times a year. I've made an international reputation for myself by thinking once or twice a week.
-George Bernard Shaw, writer, Nobel laureate (1856-1950)

It is not death that is the tragedy of life. It is what you let die when you are alive.
Robert Muller, Author of Most of all, They taught me Happiness

Moral certainty is always a sign of cultural inferiority. The more uncivilized the man, the surer he is that he knows precisely what is right and what is wrong. All human progress, even in morals, has been the work of men who have doubted the current moral values, not of men who have whooped them up and tried to enforce them. The truly civilized man is always skeptical and tolerant, in this field as in all others. His culture is based on "I am not too sure." - H.L.Mencken

A patriot must always be ready to defend his country against its government. -Edward Abbey, naturalist and author (1927-1989)

After two years in Washington, I often long for the realism and sincerity of Hollywood. -Fred Thompson, US senator, lawyer, writer, and actor (1942-)

My feeling is that there is nothing in life but refraining from hurting others, and comforting those who are sad. -Olive Schreiner, author (1855-1920)

Rewards and punishments are the lowest form of education. -Chuang-Tzu, philosopher (4th c. BCE)

He who wishes to secure the good of others has already secured his own. -Confucius (c. 551-479? BC)

A truly great book should be read in youth, again in maturity and once more in old age, as a fine building should be seen by morning light, at noon and by moonlight. -Robertson Davies, writer (1913-1995)

My play was a complete success. The audience was a failure. -Ashleigh Brilliant, writer (1933-)

Remember that there is nothing stable in human affairs; therefore avoid undue elation in prosperity, or undue depression in adversity. -Socrates, philosopher (469?-399 BCE)

Be thou the first true merit to befriend, his praise is lost who stays till all commend. -Alexander Pope, poet (1688-1744)

There is no one, no matter how wise he is, who has not in his youth said things or done things that are so unpleasant to recall in later life that he would expunge them entirely from his memory if that were possible. -Marcel Proust, novelist (1871-1922)

In solitude, when we are least alone. -Lord Byron, poet (1788-1824)

All goes onward and outward, nothing collapses.
And to die is different from what anyone supposed,
and luckier.

Walt Whitman, Song of Myself

Each man takes care that his neighbor shall not cheat him. But a day comes
when he begins to care that he does not cheat his neighbor. Then all goes
well -- he has changed his market-cart into a chariot of the sun. -Ralph
Waldo Emerson, writer and philosopher (1803-1882)

To do nothing is sometimes a good remedy. -Hippocrates, physician
(460-c.377 BCE)

Be kind for everyone you meet is fighting a great battle. -Philo
God comes to the hungry in the form of food. -Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi

No snowflake ever falls in the wrong place. -Zen saying

When money speaks, the truth keeps silent. -Russian proverb

To give pleasure to a single heart by a single kind act is better than a thousand
head-bowings in prayer. -Saadi, poet (c. 1200 AD)

All know that the drop merges into the ocean but few know that the ocean
merges into the drop. -Kabir, reformer, poet (late 15th century)

In the faces of men and women I see God. -Walt Whitman, poet (1819-1892)
A man is not old until his regrets take the place of dreams. -Yiddish proverb

If you don't find God in the next person you meet, it is a waste of time looking for
him further. -Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948)

...Mother Teresa, who, when asked by an interviewer what she says to God when
she prays, replied: "I don't say anything. I just listen." When the interviewer asked
what she hears God say, Mother Teresa answered: "He doesn't say anything. He
just listens. And if you can't understand that, I can't explain it to you."

It would indeed be ironic if, in the name of national defense, we would sanction
the subversion of one of those liberties which make the defense of our nation
worthwhile. -Earl Warren, jurist (1891-1974)

I thank Thee first because I was never robbed before; second, because although
they took my purse they did not take my life; third, because although they took
my all, it was not much; and fourth because it was I who was robbed, and not I
who robbed. -Matthew Henry, minister (1662-1714)

Beware of bugs in the above code; I have only proved it correct, not tried it. - Donald Knuth, computer scientist (1938-)

It is only those who have neither fired a shot nor heard the shrieks and groans of the wounded who cry aloud for blood, more vengeance, more desolation. War is hell. -William Tecumseh Sherman, Union General in the American Civil War (1820-1891)

No matter how far you have gone on the wrong road, turn back. -Turkish proverb

You can put your boots in the oven, but that don't make 'em biscuits.

Patience is also a form of action. -Auguste Rodin, sculptor (1840-1917)

Autumn is a second spring when every leaf is a flower. -Albert Camus, writer and philosopher (1913-1960)

Columnist Russell Baker suggested, once, that there would be fewer collisions if the manufacturers would assign less aggressive names to their cars, such as Kittens, Bunny Rabbits, and Feather Dusters.

Substitute damn every time you're inclined to write very; your editor will delete it and the writing will be just as it should be. -Mark Twain, author and humorist (1835-1910)

Woody Allen said, "Life [is] full of loneliness and misery and suffering and unhappiness, and it's all over much too quickly."

A book lying idle on a shelf is wasted ammunition. Like money, books must be kept in constant circulation. Lend and borrow to the maximum. -Henry Miller, novelist (1891-1980)

If you torture data sufficiently, it will confess to almost anything. -Fred Menger, chemistry professor (1937-)

When will our consciences grow so tender that we will act to prevent human misery rather than avenge it? -Eleanor Roosevelt, diplomat and writer (1884-1962)

Being rich is having money; being wealthy is having time. -Stephen Swid, Executive

Religion can help us be kind, sincere, and honest. But all too often we cherry-pick its teachings to condemn those we don't agree with. Religion also comes handy in other less-than-sublime purposes. What could be better than exploiting religion for a politician to sway people and strengthen his hold on power?

As many rivers flow to merge in one ocean, many paths for spiritual enlightenment can achieve the same goal. The problem begins when we want to portray our religion as the best: "mine is the one true religion and all others are false." Such religious fervor leads to endless violence.

No other cause in human history has resulted in as many killings.

If we could remember that God doesn't live in a church, temple, or mosque, there would be no need to preach to anyone, no need to save anyone's soul.

The best we can do is save ourselves and improve our own lives and/or afterlives. Imagine a world where we don't feel a need to condemn anyone because "the book of my religion says so."

Now that I'm done pontificating, let's see this week a few words relating to religion.

-Anu Garg]

"Show me a sane man and I will cure him for you." Carl Jung

"Wherever there's injustice, oppression, and suffering, America will show up six months late and bomb the country next to where it's happening."

P.J. (Patrick Jake) O'Rourke

"Here we are,
all healthy and safe and snug,
with food for the winter.
Let's be thankful for what we have."

"I am," Pa said.

From On the Banks of Plum Creek
by Laura Ingalls Wilder

Out in a Colorado monastery lives a rather wild child of God named Theophane the Monk. Theophane tells the following story:

There's a monk who will never give you advice, but only a question. I am told his questions could be very helpful. I sought him out. "I am a parish priest," I said, "I'm here on retreat. Could you give me a question?" "Ah, yes," he answered. "My question is, 'What do they need?'" I came away disappointed. I spent a few hours with the question, writing out answers, but finally I went back to him. "Excuse me," I said. "Perhaps I didn't make myself clear. Your question has been helpful, but I wasn't interested in thinking about my ministry during this retreat.

Rather

I wanted to think seriously about my own spiritual life. Could you give me a question for my own spiritual life?" "Ah, I see," the monk replied. "Then the question is, 'What do they REALLY need?'"

The taproot of violence in our society today is our intent to use nuclear weapons. Once we have agreed to that, all other evil is minor in comparison. Until we squarely face the question of our consent to use nuclear weapons, any hope of large scale improvement of public morality is doomed to failure.

Richard T. McSorley, SJ

A great war leaves the country with three armies - an army of cripples, an army of mourners, and an army of thieves. German Proverb

The nuclear weapons (of the enemy) may destroy our bodies, but our intent to use nuclear weapons destroys our souls.

Richard T. McSorley, SJ

"The civilized have created the wretched, quite coldly and deliberately, and do not intend to change the status quo; are responsible for their slaughter and enslavement; rain down bombs on defenseless children whenever and wherever they decide that their "vital interests" are menaced, and think nothing of torturing a man to death: these people are not to be taken seriously when they speak of the "sanctity" of human life, or the "conscience" of the civilized world. " James Baldwin - page 489 of COLLECTED ESSAYS (1998), from chapter one of "The Devil Finds Work" (orig. pub. 1976)

As Saint Augustine would say, the weapon with which we would attempt to destroy the enemy would pass through our own heart to reach him

Thomas Merton

Flattery is like chewing gum. Enjoy it but don't swallow it. -Hank Ketcham, comic artist (1920-2001)

Then it was as if I suddenly saw the secret beauty of their hearts, the depths of their hearts where neither sin nor desire nor self-knowledge can reach, the core of their reality, the person that each one is in God's eyes. If only they could see themselves as they really are. If only we could see each other that way all the time, there would be no more war, no more hatred, no more cruelty, no more greed.....

I suppose the big problem would be that we would fall down and worship each other.

Thomas Merton

One may well ask: " How can you advocate breaking some laws and obeying others?" The answer lies in the fact that there are two types of laws: Just and unjust. I would be the first to advocate obeying just laws. One has not only a legal but a moral responsibility to obey just laws. Conversely, one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws. I would agree with St. Augustine that "an unjust law is no law at all."

....One who breaks an unjust law must do so openly, lovingly, and with a willingness to accept the penalty. I submit that an individual who breaks a law that conscience tells him is unjust, and who willingly accepts the penalty of imprisonment in order to arouse the conscience of the community over its injustice, is in reality expressing the highest respect for law.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

And then there is the question of prayer, which consists for the most part in insisting that God do for us what we are unwilling to do for one another.

Resolve: Let's do for one another what we would have God do for all. This is known as God-like activity.

Daniel Berrigan, SJ

Man is subject to innumerable pains and sorrows by the very condition of humanity, and yet, as if nature had not sown evils enough in life, we are continually adding grief to grief and aggravating the common calamity by our cruel treatment of one another: Joseph Addison

War is so unjust and ugly that all who wage it must try to stifle the voice of conscience within themselves. -Leo Tolstoy, novelist and philosopher (1828-1910)

When asked what he would like for an epitaph, Mencken wrote, "If, after I depart this vale, you ever remember me and have thought to please my ghost, forgive some sinner and wink your eye at some homely girl."

Robert Benchley said, "It took me fifteen years to discover that I had no talent for writing, but I couldn't give it up because by that time I was too famous."

"What kind of victory is it when someone is left defeated? What difference does it make to the dead, the orphans, and the homeless, whether the mad destruction is wrought under the name of totalitarianism or the holy name of liberty and democracy. What is a war criminal? Was not war itself a crime against God and humanity, and, therefore, were not all those who sanctioned, engineered and conducted wars, war criminals? The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong. Non-cooperation with evil is a sacred duty." Gandhi
In a discussion (years ago) with Pablo Casals, there seemed to be agreement that the most serious part of the problem of world peace was that the individual felt helpless.

Following is Pablo Casals' response:

"The answer to helplessness is not so very complicated." Don Pablo said. " A man can do something for peace without having to jump into politics. Each man has inside him a basic decency and goodness. If he listens to it and acts on it, he is giving a great deal of what it is the world needs most. It is not complicated but it takes courage. It takes courage for a man to listen to his own goodness and act on it. Do we dare to be ourselves? This is the question that counts."

Have Courage

Be awake to reality

Act in concert with your deepest values

From Acceptance and Commitment Therapy

Whenever people say 'We mustn't be sentimental,' you can take it they are about to do something cruel. And if they add 'We must be realistic,' they mean they are going to make money out of it. -Brigid Brophy, writer (1929-1995)

We are never more discontented with others than when we are discontented with ourselves. -Henri Frederic Amiel, philosopher and writer (1821-1881)

"Let no man think we can deny civil liberty to others and retain it for ourselves. When zealous agents of the Government arrest suspected "radicals" without warrant, hold them without prompt trial, deny them access to counsel and admission of bail....we have shorn the Bill of Rights of its sanctity..." -- Robert M. Lafollette, Sr. (1855-1925) U.S. Senator - Source: The Progressive, March 1920

"The Old Ones say, love is all anyone needs. Love doesn't go away nor can love be divided. Once you commit an act of love, you'll find it continues. Love is like setting up dominos one behind the other. Once you hit the first domino, it will touch the second one which will touch the third one and so on. Every love act or love thought has an affect on each person as well as touching the whole world. If you live a life filled with love, the results will affect your friends, relatives and other people, even after you go to the other side. So... Love."

- Hu'acan (John P. Vidal), 20 August 1949 - December 15, 2006

Every man feels instinctively that all the beautiful sentiments in the world weigh less than a single lovely action. -James Russell Lowell, poet, editor, and diplomat (1819-1891)

This is my living faith, an active faith, a faith of verbs: to question, explore, experiment, experience, walk, run, dance, play, eat, love, learn, dare, taste, touch, smell, listen, argue, speak, write, read, draw, provoke, emote, scream, sin, repent, cry, kneel, pray, bow, rise, stand, look, laugh, cajole, create, confront, confound, walk back, walk forward, circle, hide, and seek. To seek: to embrace the questions, be wary of answers. -Terry Tempest Williams, naturalist and author (1955-)

If the stars should appear one night in a thousand years, how would men believe and adore. -Ralph Waldo Emerson, writer and philosopher (1803-1882)

A wise man will make haste to forgive, because he knows the true value of time, and will not suffer it to pass away in unnecessary pain. -Samuel Johnson, lexicographer (1709-1784)

Let your capital be simplicity and contentment. -Henry David Thoreau, naturalist and author (1817-1862)

Almost all our faults are more pardonable than the methods we resort to to hide them. -Francois de La Rochefoucauld, writer (1613-1680)

The older I grow, the more I listen to people who don't talk much. -Germain G. Glien

"I realized then that when people are happy they become kind."
Jung Chang

O God, help me to believe the truth about myself no matter how beautiful it is!
Macrina Wiederkehr quoted in A Grateful Heart edited by M. J. Ryan

Voltaire's insouciant view: the art of medicine consists in amusing the patient while nature cures the disease.

Don't Change

I was a neurotic for years. I was anxious and depressed and selfish.
Everyone kept telling me to change.

I resented them, and I agreed with them, and I wanted to change, but simply couldn't, no matter how hard I tried.

What hurt the most was that, like the others, my best friend kept insisting that I change. So I felt powerless and trapped.

Then, one day, he said to me, "Don't change. I love you just as you are."

Those words were music to my ears: "Don't change. Don't change. Don't change . . . I love you as you are."

I relaxed. I came alive. And suddenly I changed!

Now I know that I couldn't really change until I found someone who would love me whether I changed or not.
Perhaps a traditional Sufi story, sent to me by Edie Emmons.

The writer Flannery O'Connor was once asked if you had to suffer to be a novelist. She said that anybody who has survived adolescence has suffered enough.

"You cannot truly listen to anyone and do anything else at the same time."
— M. Scott Peck

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