

BEST QUOTES ON PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy is the microscope of thought.

--Victor Hugo

Here is the beginning of philosophy: a recognition of the conflicts between men, a search for their cause, a condemnation of mere opinion...and the discovery of a standard of judgment.

—Epictetus

All definite...knowledge belongs to science; all dogma as to what surpasses definite knowledge belongs to theology. But between theology and science there is a No Man's Land, exposed to attack from both sides. This No Man's Land is philosophy.

--Bertrand Russell

The pre-Socratics, including Thales, Parmenides, and Heraclitus, were the first philosophers. Although their views were sometimes naive, they raised some of the basic questions with which we still struggle.

—Manuel Velasquez and
Vincent Barry

There is an enormous need for philosophies to be rethought in the light of the changing conditions of mankind.

--Alfred North Whitehead

Whence? Whither? Why? How?—These questions cover all philosophy.

—Joseph Joubert

I have tried too in my time to be a philosopher; but, I don't know how, cheerfulness was always breaking in.

--Oliver Edwards

Socrates neither set out benches for his students, nor sat on a platform, nor set hours for his lecture. He was philosophizing all the time—while he was joking, while he was drinking, while he was soldiering, whenever he met you on the street, and at the end when he was in prison and drinking the poison. He was the first to show that all your life, all the time, in everything you do, whatever you are doing, is the time for philosophy.

--Plutarch

Philosophy is a bully that talks very loud, when the danger is at a distance; but the moment she is hard pressed by the enemy, she is not to be found at her post, but leaves the brunt of the battle to be borne by her humbler but steadier comrade, religion.

—Charles Caleb Colton

What every genuine philosopher (every genuine man, in fact) craves most is praise —although the philosophers generally call it ‘recognition’!

--William James

Hegel set out his philosophy with so much obscurity that people thought it must be profound.

--Bertrand Russell

There is only one thing a philosopher can be relied on to do, and that is to contradict other philosophers.

--William James

Philosophers before Kant had a tremendous advantage over philosophers after Kant in that they didn't have to spend years studying Kant.

--Bertrand Russell

Philosophy traditionally has been nothing less than the attempt to ask and answer, in a formal and disciplined way, the great questions of life that ordinary men put to themselves in reflective moments.

—*Time Magazine*

Philosophy begins with wonder. Although many of us may lack a knowledge of the jargon and history of philosophy, we have all been touched and moved by the feelings of wonderment from which all philosophy derives. We wonder about who we really are; whether God exists; why pain, evil, and sorrow exist; why a close friend was killed; whether science tells us all there really is to know about the universe; whether there is life after death; what true happiness, love, and friendship are; whether standards of taste in music and art are only individual likes and dislikes; whether moral right and wrong are based merely on personal opinion; and whether suicide, abortion, or euthanasia are ever justified. This wonderment and questioning is at the heart of philosophy and begins early in our lives.

—Manuel Velasquez and
Vincent Barry

The unexamined life is not worth living.

--Socrates

The very impossibility in which I find myself to prove that God is not, discloses to me His existence.

—Jean de la Bruyère

We rely upon the poets, the philosophers, and the playwrights to articulate what most of us can only feel, in joy or sorrow. They illuminate the thoughts for which we only grope; they give us the strength and balm we cannot find in ourselves.

Whenever I feel my courage wavering I rush to them. They give me the wisdom of acceptance, the will and resilience to push on.

--Helen Hayes

Why is it that you physicists always require so much expensive equipment? Now the Department of Mathematics requires nothing but money for paper, pencils, and erasers...and the Department of Philosophy is better still. It doesn't even ask for erasers.

—Isaac Asimov

The philosopher Plato once said, 'I am the wisest man alive, for I know one thing... and that is that I know nothing.'

How did he know that?

His wife told him.

—Brian Crane

We only think when we are confronted with a problem.

—John Dewey

The term metaphysics (meaning 'after' or 'beyond' physics) has a curious origin. It arises with Aristotle, who wrote a series of essays on fundamental problems about the classifications or categories of being. Early librarians listed these essays after Aristotle's works on physics. Later philosophers noticed this ordering, and these essays came to be called in Greek *ta meta ta physika biblia*, that is, 'the books that come after the physics.' Subsequently, this was shortened to The Metaphysics, and the topics dealt with in these essays were called 'metaphysics.' Eventually, metaphysics came to be associated with subjects that transcend physics—the supernatural, the occult, and the mysterious.

—Robert Paul Wolff

Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. They govern us in all we do, in all we say, in all we think.

—Jeremy Bentham

Philosophers play a strange game. They know very well that one thing alone counts: Why are we born on this earth? They also know that they will never be able to answer it. Nevertheless, they continue sedately to amuse themselves.

—Jacques Maritain

Almost as soon as children learn to talk, they ask: 'Where did I come from? Where do people go when they die? What's beyond the sky? How did the world start? Who made God? Why is one and one two and not three?' Virtually from the beginning of life, every human being becomes familiar with the questions that form the subject matter of philosophy.

—Manuel Velasquez and
Vincent Barry

There is no religion without love, and people may talk as much as they like about their religion, but if it does not teach them to be good and kind to man and beast, it is all a sham.

—Anna Sewell

The mystery of the beginning of all things is insoluble by us; and I for one must be content to remain an agnostic.

—Charles Darwin

I tried to find Him on the Christian cross, but He was not there. I went to the Temple of the Hindus and to the old pagodas, but I could not find a trace of Him anywhere. I searched on the mountains and in the valleys but neither in the heights nor in the depths was I able to find Him. I went to the Caaba in Mecca, but He was not there either. I questioned the scholars and philosophers, but He was beyond their understanding. I then looked into my heart and it was there where He dwelled that I saw Him. He was nowhere else to be found.

—Jalal ud-Din Rumi

Those who have been eminent in philosophy, politics, poetry, and the arts have all had tendencies toward melancholia.

--Aristotle

What do I know of man's destiny? I could tell you more about radishes.

--Samuel Beckett

That deep emotional conviction of the presence of a superior reasoning power, which is revealed in the incomprehensible universe, forms my idea of God.

--Albert Einstein

The Christian resolution to find the world ugly and bad has made the world ugly and bad.

--Friedrich Nietzsche

It makes all the difference in the world to your life whether you arrive at a philosophy and a religion or not. It makes the difference between living in a world which is merely a constant changing mass of phenomena and living in a significant, ordered universe.

--Mary Ellen Chase

He who influences the thought of his times, influences all the times that follow. He has made his impress on eternity.

--Hypatia

I prefer the company of peasants because they have not been educated sufficiently to reason incorrectly.

--Michel Eyquem
de Montaigne

Philosophy is at once the most sublime and the most trivial of human pursuits. It works in the minutest crannies and it opens out the widest vistas. It 'bakes no bread,' as has been said, but it can inspire our souls with courage; and repugnant as its manners, its doubting and challenging, its quibbling and dialectics, often are to common people, no one of us can get along without the far-flashing beams of light it sends over the world's perspectives.

--William James

Philosophical subjects should never be taught with authority. They are not established sciences; they are full of disputed matters, open questions, and bottomless speculations. It is not the function of the teacher to settle philosophical and political controversies for the pupil, or even to recommend to him any one set of opinions as better than another. Exposition, not imposition, of opinions is the professor's part....The very word education is a standing protest against dogmatic teaching.

--Charles W. Eliot

Philosophy: unintelligible answers to insoluble problems.

--Henry Adams

It takes a very unusual mind to undertake the analysis of the obvious.

--Alfred North Whitehead

A true philosopher is like an elephant: he never puts the second foot down until the first one is solidly in place.

--Bernard de Fontenelle

As for the philosophers, they make imaginary laws for imaginary commonwealths, and their discourses are as the stars, which give little light because they are so high.

--Sir Francis Bacon

Spinoza, the greatest abstract philosopher, left his sister a bed and a small silver pen knife, no money, no land, no house, but his thought has taught the world's greatest thinking men.

--Arthur Brisbane

I think, therefore I am.

--René Descartes

Philosopher: a blind man in a dark room looking for a black hat which isn't there.

--Lord Bowen

My definition of a philosopher is of a man up in a balloon, with his family and friends holding the ropes which confine him to earth and trying to haul him down.

--Louisa May Alcott

One and the same thing can at the same time be good, bad, and indifferent, e.g., music is good to the melancholy, bad to those who mourn, and neither good nor bad to the deaf.

--Benedict Spinoza

The first step in one's career as a philosopher is to arm oneself against ridicule.

--Ernest Renan

You can't do without philosophy, since everything has its hidden meaning which we must know.

--Maxim Gorky

Philosophy is doubt.

--Michel Eyquem
de Montaigne

All philosophies, if you ride them home, are nonsense; but some are greater nonsense than others.

--Samuel Butler

The first step toward philosophy is incredulity.

--Denis Diderot

The philosophy of one century is the common sense of the next.

--Henry Ward Beecher

If everybody contemplates the infinite instead of fixing the drains, many of us will die of cholera.

--John Rich

Man had achieved freedom from—without yet having achieved freedom to—to be himself, to be productive, to be fully awake.

--Erich Fromm

Philosophy may be defined as the art of asking the right questions...Awareness of the problem outlives all solutions. The answers are questions in disguise, every new answer giving rise to new questions.

--Abraham Joshua
Heschel

Philosophy is systematic reflection upon the common experience of mankind.

--Robert Maynard
Hutchins

Science is what you know, philosophy is what you don't know.

--Bertrand Russell

To teach men how to live without certainty and yet without being paralyzed by hesitation, is perhaps the chief thing philosophy can still do.

--Bertrand Russell

What is philosophy but a continual battle against custom?

--Thomas Carlyle

The various opinions of philosophers have scattered through the world as many plagues of the mind as Pandora's box did those of the body, only with this difference, that they have not left hope at the bottom.

--Jonathan Swift

Until philosophers are kings...cities will never cease from ill, nor the human race.

--Plato

Metaphysics is the science of proving what we don't understand.

--Josh Billings

Miracles are so called because they excite wonder. In unphilosophical minds any rare or unexpected thing excites wonder, while in philosophical minds the familiar excites wonder also.

--George Santayana

I believe that in actual fact, philosophy ranks before and above the natural sciences.

--Thomas Mann

Wonder is the feeling of a philosopher, and philosophy begins in wonder.

--Socrates

To teach how to live with uncertainty, and yet without being paralyzed by hesitation, is perhaps the chief thing that philosophy in our age can still do for those who study it.

--Bertrand Russell

A philosopher of imposing stature doesn't think in a vacuum. Even his most abstract ideas are, to some extent, conditioned by what is or is not known in the time when he lives.

--Alfred North Whitehead

Every philosopher...is inescapably a product of his own age and culture, and every philosophy is an historical phenomenon to be understood adequately only in its historical context.

--Theodore Meyer Greene

Any genuine philosophy leads to action and from action back again to wonder, to the enduring fact of mystery.

--Henry Miller

A philosophy that is merely technical and professional misses the point of philosophy: the illumination and enlargement of the human mind on the things that are its most vital concern.

--John Dewey

All serious conversations gravitate towards philosophy.

--Ernest Dimnet

What is the first business of one who practices philosophy? To get rid of self-conceit. For it is impossible for anyone to begin to learn that which he thinks he already knows.

--Epictetus

Philosophy may describe unreason, as it may describe force; it cannot hope to refute them.

--George Santayana

The example of good men is visible philosophy.

--English Proverb

Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself. Such is the first principle of existentialism.

--Jean-Paul Sartre

It must be confessed that the inventors of the mechanical arts have been much more useful to men than the inventors of syllogisms.

--Voltaire

A little philosophy inclineth man's mind to atheism, but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion.

--Francis Bacon

Posterity for the philosopher is what the other world is for the religious man.

--Denis Diderot

What is it to be a philosopher? Is it not to be prepared against events?

--Epictetus

Let no young man delay the study of philosophy, and let no old man become weary of it; for it is never too early nor too late to care for the well-being of the soul.

--Epicurus

One of the main reasons for the existence of philosophy is not that it enables you to find truth (it can never do that) but that it does provide you a refuge for definitions.

--Thomas Ernest Hulme

The object of studying philosophy is to know one's own mind, not other people's.

--William Ralph Inge

Pretend what we may, the whole man within us is at work when we form our philosophical opinions,

--William James

All schools of philosophy, and almost all authors, are rather to be frequented for exercise than for freight.

--Walter Savage Landor

A philosophy is characterized more by the formulation of its problems than by its solution of them.

--Susanne K. Langer

The great philosophers are poets who believe in the reality of their poems.

--Antonio Machado

It has been said that metaphysics is the finding of bad reasons for what we believe upon instinct.

--W. Somerset Maugham

Metaphysics is almost always an attempt to prove the incredible by an appeal to the unintelligible.

--H. L. Mencken

Wonder is the foundation of all philosophy, inquiry the progress, ignorance the end.

--Michel Eyquem
de Montaigne

Every philosophy is the philosophy of some stage of life.

--Nietzsche

To make light of philosophy is to be a true philosopher.

--Blaise Pascal

Philosophers—We are full of things which take us out of ourselves.

--Blaise Pascal

A great philosophy is not a flawless philosophy, but a fearless one.

--Charles Peguy

A man of business may talk of philosophy; a man who has none may practice it.

--Alexander Pope

The philosopher spends in becoming a man the time which the ambitious man spends in becoming a personage.

--Joseph Roux

Philosophers are as jealous as women; each wants a monopoly of praise.

--George Santayana

Philosophy has a fine saying for everything—For Death it has an entire set.

--Laurence Sterne

A Chinaman of the T'ang Dynasty—and, by which definition, a philosopher—dreamed he was a butterfly, and from that moment he was never quite sure that he was not a butterfly dreaming it was a Chinese philosopher.

--Tom Stoppard

That's why I love philosophy: no one wins.

--Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki

To be a philosopher is not merely to have subtle thoughts, nor even to found a school, but so to love wisdom as to live according to its dictates, a life of simplicity, independence, magnanimity, and trust.

--Henry David Thoreau

When one man speaks to another man who doesn't understand him, and when the man who's speaking no longer understands, it's metaphysics.

--Voltaire

Philosophy begins in wonder. And, at the end, when philosophic thought has done its best, the wonder remains.

--Alfred North Whitehead

It was through the feeling of wonder that men now and at first began to philosophize.

--Aristotle

The discovery of what is true, and the practice of that which is good, are the two most important objects of philosophy.

--Voltaire

The greater philosopher a man is, the more difficult it is for him to answer the foolish questions of common people.

--Henryk Sienkiewicz

Proverbs may not improperly be called the philosophy of the common people.

—James Howell

Pure logic is the ruin of the spirit.

—Antoine de
Saint-Exupery

Philosophy: A route of many roads leading from nowhere to nothing.

--Ambrose Bierce

In philosophy, it is not the attainment of the goal that matters, it is the things that are met with by the way.

--Havelock Ellis

When he to whom one speaks does not understand, and he who speaks himself does not understand, this is metaphysics.

--Voltaire

Keep quiet and people will think you a philosopher.

--Latin Proverb

There are very few original thinkers in the world; the greatest part of those who are called philosophers have adopted the opinions of some who went before them.

--Dugald Stewart

Life is a ticklish business; I have resolved to spend it in reflecting upon it
--Schopenhauer

Philosophy did not find Plato already a nobleman, it made him one.
--Seneca

A man gazing on the stars is proverbially at the mercy of the puddles on the road.
--Alexander Smith

Logic is nothing more than a knowledge of words.
--Charles Lamb

A philosopher will not believe what he sees because he is too busy speculating on what he does not see.
--Bernard de Fontenelle

Four thousand volumes of metaphysics will not teach us what the soul is.
--Voltaire

Philosophies are worth just as much as their creators. The greater the philosopher, the more true his philosophy.
--Albert Camus

What is a philosopher? He is a man who contrasts nature with law, reason with usage, his conscience with public opinion, and his judgment with error.
--S. R. N. Chamfort

Most philosophers have too narrow a concept of the variety of man's habits and possibilities.
--Elias Canetti

He who enjoys every kind of learning and eagerly studies and hungers for still more knowledge can justly be termed a true philosopher.
--Plato

There is no end to trouble for the state or for mankind until the philosophers rule, or until kings and rulers take up the study of philosophy properly and seriously, and until politics and philosophy work together and those who follow only the one or the other are excluded from government.
--Plato

Like medicine, philosophy has many drugs, very few good remedies, and practically no specifics.

--S. R. N. Chamfort

To philosophize is to doubt.

--Michel Eyquem
de Montaigne

Philosophy is not a body of doctrine but an activity.

--Ludwig Wittgenstein

There is no other start to philosophy but wonder.

--Plato

Philosophy triumphs easily over past and future evils, but is herself defeated by the evils of today.

--La Rochefoucauld

He that, in the ordinary affairs of life, would admit of nothing but direct plain demonstration would be sure of nothing in this world but of perishing quickly.

--John Locke

That which needs to be proved cannot be worth much.

--Nietzsche

All beliefs are demonstrably true. All men are demonstrably in the right. Anything can be demonstrated by logic.

--Saint-Exupery

There is nothing so ridiculous but some philosopher has said it.

--Marcus Tullius Cicero

Shall I show you the sinews of a philosopher? 'What sinews are those?'—A will undisappointed; evils avoided; powers daily exercised; careful resolutions; unerring decisions.

--Epictetus

The greater the philosopher, the more difficult it is for him to answer the questions of the average man.

--Unknown

Philosophy is an orderly way of discussing subjects we don't know anything about.
--Unknown

Logic, n. The art of thinking and reasoning in strict accordance with the limitations and incapacities of the human misunderstanding.
--Ambrose Bierce

Logic is like the sword—those who appeal to it shall perish by it.
--Samuel Butler

Man has such a predilection for systems and abstract deductions that he is ready to distort the truth intentionally, he is ready to deny the evidence of his senses only to justify his logic.
--Dostoevsky

The want of logic annoys. Too much logic bores. Life eludes logic, and everything that logic alone constructs remains artificial and forced.
--Andre Gide

What eludes logic is the most precious element in use and one can draw nothing from a syllogism that the mind has not put there in advance.
--Andre Gide

Logic is not satisfied with assertion. It cares nothing for the opinions of the great—nothing for the prejudices of the many, and least of all for the superstitions of the dead.
--Robert G. Ingersoll

Logic is the art of making truth prevail.
--La Bruyere

The last function of reason is to recognize that there are an infinity of things which surpass it.
--Pascal

Reason cannot save us, nothing can; but reason can mitigate the cruelty of living.
--Philip Rieff

Pure logic is the ruin of the spirit.
--Saint-Exupery

Reason deserves to be called a prophet; for in showing us the consequence and effect of our actions in the present, does it not tell us what the future will be?

--Schopenhauer

The man who listens to Reason is lost: Reason enslaves all whose minds are not strong enough to master her.

--George Bernard Shaw

A mind all logic is like a knife all blade. It makes the hand bleed that uses it.

--Rabindranath Tagore

In the discovery of secret things and in the investigation of hidden causes, stronger reasons are obtained from sure experiments and demonstrated arguments than from probable conjectures and the opinions of philosophical speculators of the common sort.

--William Gilbert

One cannot conceive anything so strange and so implausible that it has not already been said by one philosopher or another.

--René Descartes

To ridicule philosophy is really to philosophize.

--Blaise Pascal

A nihilist is a man who does not bow to any authorities, who does not take any principle on trust, no matter with what respect that principle is surrounded.

--Ivan Sergeyevech
Turgenev

It is the man of science, eager to have his every opinion regenerated, his every idea rationalized, by drinking at the fountain of fact, and devoting all the energies of his life to the cult of truth, not as he understands it, but as he does not yet understand it, that ought properly to be called a philosopher.

--Charles Sanders Pierce

Truth is the object of philosophy, but not always of philosophers.

--John Churton Collins

In philosophy it is not the attainment of the goal that matters, it is the things that are met with by the way.

--Havelock Ellis

A philosopher of imposing stature doesn't think in a vacuum. Even his most abstract ideas are, to some extent, conditioned by what is or is not known in the time when he lives.

--Alfred North Whitehead

It appears to me that in Ethics, as in all other philosophical studies, the difficulties and disagreements, of which history is full, are mainly due to a very simple cause: namely to the attempt to answer questions, without first discovering precisely what question it is which you desire to answer.

--George Edward Moore

There is but one truly serious philosophical problem, and that is suicide. Judging whether life is or is not worth living amounts to answering the fundamental question of philosophy.

--Albert Camus

There is one disadvantage which the man of philosophical habits of mind suffers, as compared with the man of action. While he is taking an enlarged and rational view of the matter before him, he lets his chance slip through his fingers.

--Oliver Wendell
Holmes, Sr.

When he that speaks, and he to whom he speaks, neither of them understand what is meant, that is metaphysics.

--Voltaire

Philosophy is the art and law of life, and it teaches us what to do in all cases.

--Seneca

True philosophy invents nothing; it merely establishes and describes what is.

—Victor Cousin

The sum of philosophy is to learn what is just in society, and beautiful in nature and the order of the world.

--Anthony Ashley Cooper,
Earl of
Shaftesbury

Philosophy is the art of living.

--Plutarch

It is a maxim received among philosophers themselves, from the days of Aristotle down to those of Sir William Hamilton, that philosophy ceases where truth is acknowledged.

--Lord Edward
Bulwer-Lytton

Philosophy is the science which considers truth.

--Aristotle

Philosophy, when superficially studied, excites doubt; when thoroughly explored, it dispels it.

--Francis Bacon

Philosophy, if rightly defined, is nothing but the love of wisdom.

--Marcus Tullius Cicero

Philosophy goes no further than probabilities, and in every assertion keeps a doubt in reserve.

--James Anthony Froude

God created man in His own image, says the *Bible*; philosophers reverse the process: they create God in theirs.

--G. C. Lichtenberg

All the progress we have made in philosophy, that is, all that has been made since the Greeks, is the result of that methodical skepticism which is the element of human freedom.

--Charles S. Pierce

The central theme of modern philosophy is skepticism. Given the intense confrontation between religion and science, it became an important weapon in the hands of philosophers and scientists, who wished to liberate themselves from the dead hand of authoritarian theology.

--Paul Kurtz

Life is a paradox. Every truth has its counterpart which contradicts it; and every philosopher supplies the logic for his own undoing.

--Elbert Hubbard

The business of the philosopher is well done if he succeeds in raising genuine doubt.
--Morris R. Cohen

Philosophy means, first, doubt; and afterwards the consciousness of what knowledge means, the consciousness of uncertainty and of ignorance, the consciousness of limit, shade, degree, possibility. The ordinary man doubts nothing and suspects nothing.

--Henri Frédéric Amiel

Philosophy means the complete liberty of the mind, and therefore independence of all social, political, or religious prejudice....It loves one thing only—truth.

--Henri Frédéric Amiel

Philosophy...is not a presumptuous effort to explain the mysteries of the world by means of any superhuman insight or extraordinary cunning, but has its origin and value in an attempt to give a reasonable account of our own personal attitude toward the more serious business of life.

--Josiah Royce

A philosophy is characterized more by the formulation of its problems than by its solution of them.

--Susanne K. Langer

Philosophical arguments are not directed against people, but against statements, or theories, or other arguments. All these have been proposed by people, they stand in their own right and are true or false regardless of the personality or character or reliability of their authors.

--Roger James

Philosophy is the cultivation of the mental faculties; it roots out vices and prepares the mind to receive proper seed.

--Marcus Tullius Cicero

Philosophy is the love of wisdom and the endeavor to attain it.

--Seneca

Philosophy is common sense in a dress suit.

--Oliver S. Braston

There is no record in human history of a happy philosopher.

--H. L. Mencken

Philosophy—the thoughts of men about human thinking, reasoning and imagining, and the real values in human existence.

--Charles W. Eliot

Those that study particular sciences and neglect philosophy are like Penelope's wooers, who made love to the waiting-women.

--Aristippus

Until philosophers take to government, or those who now govern become philosophers, so that government and philosophy unite, there will be no end to the miseries of the states.

--Plato

Every philosopher knows that his own system rests on no surer foundations than the rest, but he maintains it because it is his own. There is not one of them who, if he chanced to discover the difference between truth and falsehood, would not prefer his own lie to the truth which another had discovered.

--Jean-Jacques Rousseau

The beginning of philosophy is the recognition of the conflict between opinions.

--Epictetus

The quest for certainty blocks the search for meaning. Uncertainty is the very condition to impel man to unfold his powers.

--Erich Fromm

Philosophy will clip an Angel's wings
Conquer all mysteries by rule and line,
Empty the haunted air, the gnomed mine—
Unweave a rainbow.

--John Keats

One's task is not to turn the world upside down, but to do what is necessary at the given place and with a due consideration of reality.

--Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Be a philosopher but, amid all your philosophy be still a man.

--David Hume

In other words, apart from the known and the unknown, what else is there?
--Harold Pinter

All philosophy lies in two words, sustain and abstain.
--Epictetus

Philosophy has a fine saying for everything—for Death it has an entire set.
--Laurence Sterne

The value of philosophy is, in fact, to be sought largely in its very uncertainty. The man who has no tincture of philosophy goes through life imprisoned in the prejudices derived from common sense, from the habitual beliefs of his age or his nation, and from convictions which have grown up in his mind without the co-operation or consent of his deliberate reason. To such a man the world tends to become definite, finite, obvious; common objects arouse no questions, and familiar possibilities are contemptuously rejected.

--Bertrand Russell

Do but observe our grim Philosophers that are perpetually beating their brains on knotty Subjects, and for the most part you'll find 'em grown old before they are scarce young.

--Desiderius Erasmus

The man who is his own lawyer or physician, will be poorly served; but everyone can and must be his own philosopher. He must be, because philosophy deals with ends, not means. It includes the questions, What is good? What is right? What is valid? Since finally the responsibility for his own life must rest squarely upon the shoulders of each, no one can delegate the business of answering such questions to another...(but) concerning the means whereby the valid ends of life may be attained, we seek expert advice.

--Clarence I. Lewis

Here you see the beginning of Philosophy, in the discovery of the conflict of men's minds with one another, and the attempt to seek for the reason of this conflict, and the condemnation of mere opinion, as a thing not to be trusted; and a search to determine whether our opinion is true, and an attempt to discover a standard, just as we discover the balance to deal with weights and the rule to deal with things straight and crooked.

--Epictetus

Philosophy begins with wonder.

--Socrates

Mark you, it is significant that the kind of man who is addicted to philosophy is often unhappy in his children; I suppose because Nature was determined that the taint of wisdom should not be congenital and so become widespread. Cicero's son is known to have been degenerate; and the children of Socrates were more like the mother than the father—as some historian prettily said, meaning, of course, that they were fools.

--Desiderius Erasmus

A man's sexual choice is the result and the sum of his fundamental convictions. Tell me what a man finds sexually attractive and I will tell you his entire philosophy of life.

--Ayn Rand

Logic is a way to go wrong with confidence.

--Charles F. Kettering

Is it necessary to have read Spinoza in order to make out a laundry list?

--Jeanne Detourbey

The object of philosophy is the logical clarification of thought.

--Ludvig Wittgenstein

Philosophy is to the real world as masturbation is to sex.

--Karl Marx

It was through the feeling of wonder that men now and at first began to philosophize.

--Aristotle

Philosophy goes no further than probabilities, and in every assertion keeps a doubt in reserve.

--James A. Froude

Philosophy triumphs easily over past and over future evils, but present evils triumph over philosophy.

--François de La
Rochefoucauld

No stream rises higher than its source. What ever man might build could never express or reflect more than he was. It was no more than what he felt. He could record neither more nor less than he had learned of life when the buildings were built ... His philosophy, true or false, is there.

--Frank Lloyd Wright

Philosophy is the science which considers truth.

--Aristotle

Philosophy is an unusually ingenious attempt to think fallaciously.

--Bertrand Russell

Organic life has developed gradually from the protozoon to the philosopher and this development, we are assured, is indubitably an advancement. Unfortunately it is the philosopher, not the protozoon, who gives the assurance.

--Bertrand Russell

Religion is a man using a divining rod. Philosophy is a man using a pick and shovel.

--Unknown

The fruits of philosophy (are the important thing), not the philosophy itself. When we ask the time, we don't want to know how watches are constructed.

--Georg Christoph
Lichtenberg

It is good a philosopher should remind himself, now and then, that he is a particle pontificating on infinity.

--Ariel and Will Durant

I've always argued that it is just as desirable, just as possible, to have philosopher plumbers as philosopher kings.

--Edith Starrett Green

Philosophy is the art of bewildering oneself methodically.

--Heathiana

I think I think; therefore, I think I am.

--Ambrose Bierce

Making fun of philosophy is really philosophizing.

--Pascal

'God is dead.'—Nietzsche
'Nietzsche is dead.'—God.

--*New York Subway
Graffiti*

Logic doesn't apply to the real world.

--Marvin Lee Minsky

The effort of philosophy. . .is directly aimed at. . .overcoming the limits of human finitude.

--Tsenay Serequeberhan

Philosophy should be an energy; it should find its aim and its effect in the amelioration of mankind.

--Victor Hugo

The noblest of all studies is the study of what man is and of what life he should live.

--Plato

Nothing can be more unphilosophical than to be positive or dogmatical on any subject. When men are the most sure and arrogant, they are commonly the most mistaken and have there given reins to passion without that proper deliberation and suspense which alone can secure them from the grossest absurdities.

--David Hume

If Jesus Christ were to come today, people would not even crucify Him. They would ask Him to dinner, and hear what He had to say, and make fun of it.

--Thomas Carlyle

To do is to be—Rousseau.

To be is to do—Sartre.

Dobedobedo—Sinatra.

--Kurt Vonnegut

He who generalizes generally lies.

--Bertrand Russell

Any two philosophers can tell each other all they know in two hours.

--Justice O. W. Holmes

Any man can be a philosopher if he only thinks enough about his own foolishness.
--Ed Howe

A philosopher is a fool who torments himself while he is alive in order to be famous after he is dead.
--Jean D'Alembert

If you wish to understand a philosopher, do not ask what he says, but find out what he wants.
--Nietzshce

The trouble with a philosopher is that he is always less interested in the means of life than in its meaning.
--Unknown

Philosophers are so highly educated that they can take the simplest thing and quickly turn it into something unintelligible.
--Unknown

Life may teach a philosopher to think, but thinking never teaches him to live.
--Unknown

A philosopher can always see both sides of a question, but no answer.
--Unknown

Formerly we really had philosophers; nowadays we merely have professors of philosophy.
--Unknown

When a philosopher makes a mistake, no one knows the difference.
--Unknown

Some would reject every philosophy, but that rejection is itself a philosophy.
--Herbert Samuel

What we call philosophy today is a complicated method of avoiding all the important problems of life.
--Kenneth Rexroth

The business of philosophy is to show that we are not fools for doing what we do.
--Justice O. W. Holmes

The ordinary man would rather read the life of the cruelest pirate that ever lived than of the wisest philosopher.

--Robert Lynd

He is no mean philosopher who can give a reason for one half of what he thinks.

--Hazlitt

An excellent plumber is infinitely more admirable than an incompetent philosopher. The society which scorns excellence in plumbing because plumbing is a humble activity and tolerates shoddiness in philosophy because it is an exalted activity will have neither good plumbing nor good philosophy. Neither its pipes nor its theories will hold water.

--John W. Gardner

The big task of philosophy amid the new technology is to stand aside and say 'however.'

--Abraham Kaplan

Everything that irritates us about others can lead us to an understanding of ourselves.

--Carl Jung

In the absence of a philosophy, there is no real meaning to work and to life itself.

--Joe Batten

The road to truth is long, and lined the entire way with annoying bastards.

--Alexander Jablovkov

Logic is invincible, because in order to combat logic it is necessary to use logic.

--Pierre Leon Boutroux

Every good mathematician is at least half a philosopher, and every good philosopher is at least half a mathematician.

--Gottlob Frege

Philosopher—A person who confuses you sufficiently to make you believe he knows what he is talking about.

—Unknown

Logic is the anatomy of thought.

--John Locke

Freedom in general may be defined as the absence of obstacles to the realization of desires.

--Bertrand Russell

Man is free because he is free to operate within the framework of his destiny. He is free to deliberate, to make decisions, and to choose between alternatives. He is distinguished from animals by his freedom to do evil or to do good and to walk the high road of beauty or tread the low road of ugly degeneracy.

--Martin Luther King, Jr.

One's philosophy is not best expressed in words; it is expressed in the choices one makes... and the choices we make are ultimately our responsibility.

--Eleanor Roosevelt

The philosophy which is so important in each of us is not a technical matter; it is our more or less dumb sense of what life honestly and deeply means. It is only partly got from books; it is our individual way of just seeing and feeling the total push and pressure of the cosmos.

--William James

Dogs and philosophers do the greatest good and get the fewest rewards.

--Diogenes

Knowledge of our duties is the most essential part of the philosophy of life.

--George W. Goethals

All men should strive to learn before they die what they are running from, and to, and why.

--James Thurber

The trouble with the world is that the stupid are cocksure and the intelligent are full of doubt.

--Bertrand Russell

Poets are the sense, philosophers the intelligence of humanity.

--Samuel Beckett

The man of science is a poor philosopher.

--Albert Einstein

The reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore all progress depends on the unreasonable man.

--George Bernard Shaw

I stick my finger in existence. It smells of nothing.

--Søren Kierkegaard

I could never figure out — or probably did not take the trouble to figure out — what the great philosophical problems are about. The momentous statements I come across are at best a storm in a teacup. There are quite a number of people who have a vested interest in the stuff, make a noble living out of it, and they conspire with one another to keep it alive.

--Eric Hoffer

I don't have any evidence whatsoever for being a deist. I can't beat you in an argument, but I do it because it makes me feel more comfortable.

--Martin Gardner

Since philosophy now criticizes everything it comes across, a critique of philosophy would be nothing less than a just reprisal.

—Friedrich Von Schlegel

All *Bibles* are man-made.

--Thomas A. Edison

Religions do a useful thing: they narrow God to the limits of man. Philosophy replies by doing a necessary thing: it elevates man to the plane of God.

--Victor Hugo

Philosophers are very severe towards other philosophers because they expect too much.

--George Santayana

Philosophy consists very largely of one philosopher arguing that all others are jackasses. He usually proves it, and I should add that he also usually proves that he is one himself.

—H. L. Mencken

'I have done my best.' That is about all the philosophy of living one needs.

--Lin Yutang

Religion is a means of exploitation employed by the strong against the weak; religion is a cloak of ambition, injustice and vice.

--Georges Bizet

Religion is an illusion, and it derives its strength from its readiness to fit in with our instinctual wishful impulses.

--Sigmund Freud

Those predisposed to dismiss philosophy—some of my best friends—might hear in Whitehead's kudos to Plato a well-aimed jeer at philosophy's expense. That an ancient Greek could still command contemporary relevance, much less the supremacy Whitehead claimed for him, does not speak well for the field's rate of progress.

--Rebecca Newberger
Goldstein

Whatever the one generation may learn from the other, that which is genuinely human no generation learns from the foregoing...Thus, no generation has learned from another to love, no generation begins at any other point than at the beginning, no generation has a shorter task assigned to it than had the previous generation.

--Søren Kierkegaard

Virtually every scientific area of inquiry began with a question or an insight from a philosopher. Democritus proposed the atom; Ionian philosophers invented what we now think of as the scientific method; Aristotle founded biology. In mathematics and physics, the metaphysical problems considered by Plato are still being debated.

--Rebecca Newberger
Goldstein

Philosophy doesn't merely tell us about the subjective, leaving the objective world to science....The finest scientific thinking will always be driven and informed by the philosophical spirit. The grand forward push of human knowledge requires each of us to begin by trying to think independently, to recognize that knowledge is more than information, to see that we are moral beings who must closely interrogate both ourselves and the world we inhabit—to live, as Socrates recommended, an examined life.

--Clancy Martin

The safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato.

--Alfred North Whitehead

Are there different kinds of knowledge? If there are, how can each be obtained? What are their source? What are their limits? Rationalists endorse reason, arguing that only rational knowledge is certain. Empiricists contend that reason can only relate the facts that are presented by the senses.

—René Magritte

Leisure is the mother of philosophy.

—Thomas Hobbes

Life is a tragedy for those who feel, and a comedy for those who think.

— Jean de La Bruyère

If the *Old Testament* were a reliable guide in the matter of capital punishment, half the people in the United States would have to be killed tomorrow.

—Steve Allen

Love of God is not always the same as love of good.

--Herman Hesse

If the universe is running down like a clock, the clock must have been wound up at a date which we could name if we knew it. The world, if it is to have an end in time, must have had a beginning in time.

--Dean Inge

It is not the answer that enlightens, but the question.

--Eugene Ionesco

Desire is the essence of a man.

--Baruch Spinoza

What we have in us of the image of God is the love of truth and justice.

--Demosthenes

Dubito ergo sum—I doubt therefore I am.

--Kayvan Sylvan

I have too much respect for the idea of God to make it responsible for such an absurd world.

--Georges Duhamel

Faith: not wanting to know what is true.

--Friedrich Nietzsche

No real blood flows in the veins of the knowing subject constructed by Locke, Hume, and Kant, but rather the diluted extract of reason as a mere activity of thought.

--Wilhelm Dilthey

No man was ever yet a great poet, without being at the same time a profound philosopher.

--Samuel Taylor
Coleridge

By nature's kindly disposition most questions which it is beyond a man's power to answer do not occur to him at all.

--George Santayana

There are no eternal facts, as there are no absolute truths.

--Friedrich Nietzsche

The reason we want to go on and on is because we live in an impoverished present.

--Alan Watts

Man - a creature made at the end of the week's work when God was tired.

—Mark Twain

Religion is regarded by the common people as true, by the wise as false, and by the rulers as useful.

—Lucius Annaeus Seneca

Because philosophy arises from awe, a philosopher is bound in his way to be a lover of myths and poetic fables. Poets and philosophers are alike in being big with wonder.

—Thomas Aquinas

Even the weakest disputant is made so conceited by what he calls religion, as to think himself wiser than the wisest who think differently from him.

—Walter Savage Landor

That man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all the labors of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that the whole temple of man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins—all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain, that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand. Only within the scaffolding of these truths, only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built.

—Bertrand Russell

Philosophy as practice does not mean its restriction to utility or applicability, that is, to what serves morality or produces serenity of soul.

—Karl Jaspers

The worth of a civilization or a culture is not valued in the terms of its material wealth or military power, but by the quality and achievements of its representative individuals - its philosophers, its poets and its artists.

—Herbert Read

Reason can never be popular. Passions and feelings may become popular, but reason will always remain the sole property of a few eminent individuals.

—Johann Wolfgang von
Goethe

The most important questions in life can never be answered by anyone except oneself.

—John Fowles

Those who ponder big questions for a living don't necessarily behave better, or think more clearly, than regular people do. In one study 573 professors—about a third of them ethicists—were asked about their personal behavior and beliefs. Sixty percent of the ethicists rated eating red meat as 'morally bad,' but only 27 percent said they didn't regularly eat it. Ethicists and political philosophers were no more likely to vote than other kinds of professors, nor were ethicists more likely to donate blood or register as organ donors. On no issue did ethicists show unequivocally better behavior than the two comparison groups.

—Emma Green

In thus pointing out certain respects in which philosophy resembles literature more than science, I do not mean, of course, to imply that it would be well for philosophy if it ceased to aim at scientific rigor.

—Morris Raphael Cohen

We have to believe in free-will. We've got no choice.

—Isaac Bashevis Singer

The First Law of Philosophy: For every philosopher, there exists an equal and opposite philosopher. The Second Law of Philosophy: They're both wrong.

—Unknown

Philosophy teaches us to bear with equanimity the misfortunes of others.

—Oscar Wilde

Intuition does not in itself amount to knowledge, yet cannot be disregarded by philosophers and psychologists.

—Corliss Lamont

Don't LOOK at anything in a physics lab.
Don't TASTE anything in a chemistry lab.
Don't SMELL anything in a biology lab.
Don't TOUCH anything in a medical lab.
and, most importantly:
Don't LISTEN to anything in a philosophy department.

—Unknown

The failure of modern civilization is partly due to defective logic.

—M. K. Bradby

With what ease do they indulge in daydreams, when they invent innumerable worlds and measure the sun, moon and stars, and the earth, as though by thumb and thread, and render a reason for thunder, winds, eclipses and other inexplicable things, without the least hesitation, as though they had been the secret architects of all the works of nature or as though they and come down to us from the councils of the gods.

—Erasmus

There is only knowledge from a point of view.

—Jean-Paul Sartre

You philosophers are lucky men. You write on paper and paper is patient. Unfortunate Empress that I am, I write on the susceptible skins of living beings.

—Catherine the Great

The philosopher creates, he doesn't reflect.

—Gilles Deleuze

Music is essentially useless, as life is.

—George Santayana

There are more truths in twenty-four hours of a man's life than in all the philosophies.

—Raoul Vaneigem

Man's main task in life is to give birth to himself, to become what he potentially is.

—Erich Fromm

There are three modes of bearing the ills of life, by indifference, by philosophy, and by religion.

—Charles Caleb Colton

God is a challenge because there is no proof of his existence and therefore the search must continue.

—Donald Knuth

The 'kingdom of Heaven' is a condition of the heart - not something that comes 'upon the earth' or 'after death.'

—Friedrich Nietzsche

You see many stars at night in the sky but find them not when the sun rises; can you say that there are no stars in the heaven of day? So, O man! because you behold not God in the days of your ignorance, say not that there is no God.

—Voltaire

The word philosophy comes from the greek words *philein*, meaning 'to love,' and *sophia*, meaning 'wisdom.' Philosophy is the love of wisdom. It is the pursuit of wisdom about what it means to be a human being, what the fundamental nature of God and reality are, what the sources and limits of our knowledge are, and what is good and right in our lives and in our societies.

—Manuel Velasquez and
Vincent Barry

The feeling of wonder is the mark of the philosopher, for all philosophy has its origins in wonder.

—Plato

The goal of philosophy is to enable us to decide the answers to...questions for ourselves—to make up our own minds about our self-identity, life, knowledge, art, religion, and morality without solely depending on the authority of parents, peers, television, teachers, or society....The goal of philosophy, then, is autonomy: the freedom of being able to decide for yourself what you will believe in by using your own reasoning abilities.

—Manuel Velasquez and
Vincent Barry

We have all been touched and moved by the feelings and questions of wonderment from which all philosophy derives.

—Auguste Rodin

We can help one another to find out the meaning of life, no doubt. But in the last analysis the individual person is responsible for living his own life and for ‘finding himself.’ Others can give you a name or a number, but they can never tell you who you really are. That is something you yourself can only discover from within.

—Thomas Merton

Philosophy can help satisfy ‘actualizing needs’ (the need for self-fulfillment, realization of one’s potential) by (1) helping us develop our own opinions and beliefs, (2) increasing our self-awareness, (3) equipping us to deal with uncertainty, (4) eliciting creativity, and (5) aiding us in clearly conceptualizing our value systems.

—Manuel Velasquez and
Vincent Barry

Philosophy means liberation from the two dimensions of routine, soaring above the well known, seeing it in new perspectives, arousing wonder and the wish to fly.

—Walter Kaufmann

Philosophy is man’s quest for the unity of knowledge: it consists in a perpetual struggle to create the concepts in which the universe can be conceived as a universe and not a multiverse.

—William Halverson

Plato is philosophy and philosophy Plato.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Philosophical questions are continually raised in our everyday life and conversations. Consider, for example, the following statements, which all invoke philosophical issues: Sociology is not a science. Drugs reveal new levels of reality. History never repeats itself. Every religion has the same core of truth. We should all be left free to do our own thing, as long as we don't hurt anyone else. All truth depends on your point of view. The most important thing you can do is find out who you are. This could all be a dream.

—Mark Woodhouse

Is there any knowledge in the world which is so certain that no reasonable man could doubt it?

—Bertrand Russell

The actions of man are never free; they are always the necessary consequence of his temperament, of the ideas he has received, including his true or false notions of happiness, and of those opinions that are strengthened by example, by education, and by daily experience....Man is not a free agent in any instant of his life.

—Baron Paul Henri
d'Holbach

Human curiosity, the urge to know, is a powerful force and is perhaps the best secret weapon of all in the struggle to unravel the workings of the natural world.

—Aaron Klug

Man is not fully conditioned and determined; he determines himself whether to give in to conditions or stand up to them. In other words, man is ultimately self-determining. Man does not simply exist, but always decides what his existence will be, what he will become in the next moment. By the same token, every human being has the freedom to change at any instant....A human being is not one thing among others. Things determine each other, but man is ultimately self-determining. What he becomes—within the limits of endowment and environment—he has made out of himself. In the concentration camps, for example, in this living laboratory and on this testing ground, we watched and witnessed some of our comrades behave like swine while others behaved like saints. Man has both potentialities within himself. Which one is actualized depends on decisions but not on conditions.

—Victor Frankl

The great fault of all ethics hitherto has been that they believed themselves to have to deal only with the relations of man to man. In reality, however, the question is what is his attitude to the world and all life that comes within his reach. A man is ethical only when life, as such, is sacred to him, that of plants and animals as that of his fellow men, and when he devotes himself helpfully to all life that is in need of help.

—Albert Schweitzer

Everyone is selfish; everyone is doing what he believes will make himself happier. The recognition of that can take most of the sting out of accusations that you're being 'selfish.' Why should you feel guilty for seeking your own happiness when that's what everyone else is doing, too?...

To find constant, profound happiness requires that you be free to seek the gratification of your own desires. It means making positive choices.

If you slip into the Unselfishness Trap, you'll spend a good part of your time making negative choices—trying to avoid censure of those who tell you not to think of yourself....

If someone finds happiness by doing 'good works' for others, let him. That doesn't mean that's the best way for you to find happiness.

And when someone accuses you of being selfish, just remember that he's only upset because you aren't doing what he selfishly wants you to do.

—Harry Browne

The adjusted American lacks self-approval; that is to say, he has not developed a self-image that he can believe is both accurate and acceptable. The culture abounds with misdirections, which the adjusted American acquires....Perhaps above all he learns to seek self-acceptance indirectly, by seeking to substitute the good opinions of others for self-approval. It is thus that he becomes 'other directed.'

—Gail and Snell Putney

Man's search for meaning is a primary force in his life and not a 'secondary rationalization' of instinctual drives. This meaning is unique and specific in that it must and can be fulfilled by him alone; only then does it achieve a significance that will satisfy his own will to meaning. There are some authors who contend that meaning and values are 'nothing but defense mechanisms, reaction formation and sublimation.' But as for myself, I would not be willing to live merely for the sake of my 'defense mechanisms,' nor would I be ready to die merely for the sake of my 'reaction formations.' Man, however, is able to live and even to die for the sake of his ideals and values!

—Viktor Frankl

Many talk like philosophers and live like fools.

—H. G. Gohn

When a speculative philosopher believes he has comprehended the world once and for all in his system, he is deceiving himself; he has merely comprehended himself and then naïvely projected that view upon the world.

—Carl G. Jung

Indeed, it is of the essence of man....that he can lose himself in the jungle of his existence, within himself, and thanks to his sensation of being lost can react by setting energetically to work to find himself again.

—Jose Ortega Y Gasset

Of all created creatures man is the most detestable. Of the entire brood he is the only one that possesses malice. Also he is the only creature that has a nasty mind.

—Mark Twain

Men are not gentle, friendly creatures wishing for love, who simply defend themselves if they are attacked, but...a powerful measure of desire for aggressiveness has to be reckoned as part of their instinctual endowment. The result is that their neighbor is to them not only a possible helper or sexual object, but also a temptation to them to gratify their aggressiveness...to seize his possessions, to humiliate him, to cause him pain, to torture and to kill him...

Anyone who calls to mind the atrocities of the early migrations, of the invasion of the Hun or the so-called Mongols under Genghis Khan and Tamerlane, of the sacks of Jerusalem by the pious crusaders, even indeed the horrors of the last world war, will have to bow his head humbly before the truth of this view of man.

—Sigmund Freud

One of the most revolutionary concepts to grow out of clinical experience is the growing recognition that the inmost core of man's nature, the deepest layers of his personality, the base of his 'animal nature,' is positive in nature—is basically socialized, forward moving, rational, and realistic.

—Carl Rogers

Man is but a reed, the weakest thing in nature, but he is a thinking reed.

—Blaise Pascal

Man is a rational animal who always loses his temper when he is called upon to act in accordance with the dictates of reason.

—Oscar Wilde

One of the gross deficiencies of science is that it has not yet defined what sets man apart from other animals

—René Dubos

The use of such concepts as individual freedom, initiative, and responsibility has, therefore, been well reinforced. When we turn to what science has to offer, however, the hypothesis that man is not free is essential to the application of scientific method to the study of human behavior. The free inner man who is held responsible for the behavior of the external biological organism is only a prescientific substitute for the kinds of causes which are discovered in the course of a scientific analysis. All these alternatives lie outside the individual.

—B. F. Skinner

Man is a biodegradable but non-recyclable animal blessed with opposable thumbs capable of grasping at straws.

—Bernard Rosenberg

Man will do nothing unless he has first understood that he must count on no one but himself; that he is alone, abandoned on earth in the midst of his infinite responsibilities; without help, with no other aim than the one he sets himself, with no other destiny than the one he forges for himself on this earth

—Jean-Paul Sartre

Atheistic existentialism, of which I am a representative, declares...that if God does not exist there is at least one being whose existence comes before its essence, a being which exists before it can be defined by any conception of it. That being is man....What do we mean by saying that existence precedes essence? We mean that man first of all exists, encounters himself, surges up in the world—and he finds himself afterwards. If man as the existentialist sees him as not definable, it is because to begin with he is nothing. He will not be anything until later, and then he will be what he makes of himself. Thus, there is no human nature, because there is no God to have a conception of it. Man simply is. Not that he is simply what he conceives himself to be, but he is what he wills.

—Jean-Paul Sartre

It is simply the mind clouded over by impure desires and impervious to wisdom, that obstinately persists in thinking of 'me' and 'mine.'

—Buddha

In the last analysis, the question ‘what is a human?’ is one of the most important that we can ask....Life’s meaning and purpose, what we ought to do, what we hope to accomplish—all are profoundly affected by what we consider human nature.

—Pablo Picasso

I had no plans except ‘to lead my own life.’ In order to do that I had to ‘get off the track.’ This metaphorical track I visualized very precisely as an endless stretch of steel rails on rotting sleepers. You were born unto a certain track, as a train is put on its run according to the timetable; and once on the track, you no longer had free will. Your life was determined...by outside forces; the rail of steel, stations, shunting points. If you accepted that condition, running on rails became a habit which you could no longer break. The point was to jump off the track before the habit was formed, before you became encased in a rattling prison. To change the metaphor: reason and routine kept people in a straitjacket which made their living flesh rot beneath it.

—Arthur Koestler

I think that yesterday was a crisis in my life. I finished the first part of Renouvier’s second ‘Essais’ and see no reason why his definition of Free Will—‘the sustaining of thought because I choose to when I might have other thoughts’—need be the definition of an illusion. I will assume for the present—until next year—that it is no illusion. My first act of free will shall be to believe in free will.

—William James

The familiar lament, ‘I don’t know who I am,’ once thought to belong only to the crisis of adolescence, to be resolved by the adult stage, is heard not only from teenagers but from adults of all ages. Education, status, ‘success,’ material security or lack of it, seem to have little bearing upon the unhappiness and loneliness in the life of those who have found no focus or identity or pattern of meaning in their existence.

—Aaron Ungersma

Those who study geometry use visible figures and reason about them. But they are not thinking of these, but of the ideals which they resemble. They are thinking of a perfect square or a perfect line, and so on, and not of the imperfect figures they draw....The visible figures they draw are merely replicas and what they are seeking is to understand the ideals which can be known only by the mind.

—Plato

Philosophy is the highest music.

—Plato

The supreme ideal of Greece is to save the ego from anarchy and chaos. The supreme ideal of the Orient is to dissolve the ego into the infinite and to become one with it.

—Kimon Friar

In all our activities there is an end which we seek for its own sake, and everything else is a means to this end.... Happiness is [this] ultimate end. It is the end we seek in all that we do.

—Aristotle

Every art and every inquiry, and likewise every activity, seems to aim at some good. This is why the good is defined as that at which everything aims.

But sometimes the end at which we are aiming is the activity itself while other times the end is something else that we are trying to achieve by means of that activity. When we are aiming at some end to which the activity is a means, the end is clearly a higher good than the activity....

Now if in all our activities there is some end which we seek for its own sake, and if everything else is a means to this same end, it obviously will be our highest and best end. Clearly there must be some such end since everything cannot be a means to something else since then there would be nothing for which we ultimately do anything and everything would be pointless. Surely from a practical point of view it is important for us to know what this ultimate end is so that, like archers shooting at a definite mark, we will be more likely to attain what we are seeking [in all our actions].

—Aristotle

Virtue, therefore, must also aim at the mean. For human virtue deals with our feelings and actions, and in these we can go to excess or we can fall short or we can hit the mean. For example, it is possible to feel fear, confidence, desire, anger, pity, pleasure,...And so on, either too much or too little—both of which extremes are bad. But to feel these at the right times, and on the right occasions, and towards the right persons, and with the right object, and in the right fashion, is the mean between the extremes and is the best state, and is the mark of virtue. In the same way, our actions can also be excessive or can fall short or can hit the mean.

Virtue, then, deals with those feelings and actions in which it is wrong to go too far and wrong to fall short but in which hitting the mean is praiseworthy and good.... It is a habit or acquired ability to choose....what is moderate or with hits the mean as determined by reason.

—Aristotle

The highest that man can attain in these matters is wonder.

—Goethe

The feeling of anger can also be excessive, deficient, or moderate. The man who occupies the middle state is said to have the virtue of gentleness, while the one who exceeds in anger has the vice of irascibility, while the one who is deficient in anger has the vice of apathy.

—Aristotle

If God did not exist it would be necessary to invent Him. But all nature cries aloud that He does exist that there is a supreme intelligence, an immense power, an admirable order, and everything teaches us our own dependence on it.

—Voltaire

Theism is a belief in a personal God who is creator of the world and with whom we may come into intimate contact. This God is the basis for the view of the human as divine, as having an immortal soul and a supernatural destiny.

—William Blake

There is, then, so truly a Being that which nothing greater can be conceived, that It cannot even be conceived not to exist; and this being Thou art, O Lord, our God.

—Saint Anselm

The celestial order and the beauty of the universe compel me to admit that there is some excellent and eternal Being, who deserves the respect and homage of men.

--Marcus Tullius Cicero

I see little evidence in this world of the so-called goodness of God. On the contrary, it seems to me that, on the strength of His daily acts, He must be set down a most stupid, cruel and villainous fellow.

—H. L. Mencken

If God is all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-present, as traditionalists claim, then God must be everything. If God is everything, He can't be separate from anything. If God is all-powerful, there can be no world outside God. Hence, all of nature, everything that is, must be God.

—Baruch Spinoza

Has God any dwelling-place save earth and sea, the air of heaven and virtuous hearts? Why seek the Deity further? Whatever we see is God, and wherever we go.

—Lucan

Atheism denies the existence...of a self-consistent, omnipotent, omniscient, righteous and benevolent being who is distinct from and independent of what has been created.

—Ernest Nagel

God does not know everything and never has known everything.

—Maurice Maeterlinck

It is wrong for a man to say that he is certain of the objective truth of any proposition unless he can produce evidence which logically justifies that certainty.

—Thomas Huxley

We have not the slightest objection to believe anything you like, if you will give us good grounds for belief; but, if you cannot, we must respectfully refuse, even if that refusal should wreck morality and insure our damnation several times over. We are quite content to leave the decision of the future. The course of the past has impressed us with the firm conviction that no good ever comes of falsehood, and we feel warranted in refusing even to experiment in that direction.

—Thomas Huxley

Most intellectual people do not believe in God, but they fear him just the same.

—Wilhelm Reich

Death is the true inspiring genius, or the muse of philosophy....Indeed, without death men could scarcely philosophize.

—Arthur Schopenhauer

If only God would give me some clear sign! Like making a large deposit in my name at a Swiss bank.

—Woody Allen

There are many paths to god, my son. I hope yours will not be too difficult.

—Lew Wallace

To say, 'Do not decide, but leave the question open,' is itself a decision, just like deciding yes or no, and is attended with the same risk of losing the truth.

—William James

Reason refuses its homage to a God who can be fully understood.

—M. F. Tupper

I contemplate the order of nature in the hope of finding God, and I see omnipotence and wisdom; but I also see much else that disturbs my mind and excites anxiety. The sum of all this is objective uncertainty.

—Søren Kierkegaard

The Buddha's precept of conduct—abstinence from taking life, taking what is not given, exploitation of the passions, lying, and intoxication—are voluntarily assumed rules of expedience, the intent of which is to remove the hindrances to clarity of awareness. Failure to observe the precepts produces bad 'karma' not because karma is a law or moral retribution, but because all motivated and purposeful actions, whether conventionally good or bad, are karma insofar as they are directed to the grasping of life. Generally speaking, the conventionally 'bad' actions are rather more grasping than the 'good.'

—Alan Watts

There must be something which is the cause of the Being, Goodness, and other perfections of things, and this we call God....The eternal law is the plan in God's mind in accordance which every motion of the universe is governed.

—Thomas Aquinas

Some truths about God exceed the capacity of our human reason. An example of this is the truth that God is three persons in one. But there are some truths that reason by its very nature is also able to discover. Examples of these are the truths that God exists, that there is only one God, and similar truths. In fact, these truths about God have been proved by several philosophers who have relied completely on the light of their natural reason.

—Thomas Aquinas

God is the uncreated creator that causes everything to exist.

—Thomas Aquinas

It is impossible for a word to be applied univocally to both God and the creatures he produces. For when an effect is not equal to the power of the cause that produced it, the effect receives only an imperfect likeness of the cause: that is, the effect will be like the cause only to an imperfect degree....Thus, when the word 'wise' is applied to human beings, the word in a way comprehends and includes in its meaning the thing to which it refers [i.e., imperfect wisdom as we experience it and as God produced it]. But this is not so when the word is applied to God. For when the word 'wise' is applied to God it refers to something [perfect wisdom] that exceeds the meaning of the word and which is not comprehended.

—St. Thomas Aquinas

If God does not exist, it would of course be impossible to prove it; and if he does exist it would be folly to attempt it.

—Søren Kierkegaard

Before any craftsman makes something, he must have in his mind an idea of what he will make. Similarly, before a ruler governs his subjects, he must have in his mind some idea of what his subjects are to do. The craftsman's idea of what he will make constitutes a plan of the object to be made (it is also part of what we call his skill). And the ruler's idea of what his subjects are to do constitutes a kind of law....Now since God is the wise Creator of the universe, He is like a craftsman who makes something. And He is also like the ruler since he governs every act and motion of every single creature. Consequently, the idea in God's wise mind, according to which everything was created, can be called a plan (or an ideal model, or even a part of God's skill); and since everything is also governed according to this same idea, it can also be called a law. So the eternal law is nothing more than a plan in God's mind, in accordance with which every act and motion of the universe is directed.

—St. Thomas Aquinas

I noticed that while I wished to think all things false, it was absolutely essential that the 'I' who thought this should be something, and remarking that this truth, 'I think, therefore I am' was so certain that all the extravagant suppositions of the skeptics were incapable of shaking it, I came to the conclusion that I could receive it as the First Principle of the philosophy I was seeking.

—René Descartes

As soon as I had completed the entire course of study at the close of which one is usually received into the ranks of the learned,... I found myself embarrassed with so many doubts and errors that it seemed to me that the effort to instruct myself had no effect other than the increasing discovery of my own ignorance. And yet I was studying at one of the most celebrated Schools in Europe.... I was delighted with the Mathematics because of the certainty of its demonstrations and the evidence of its reasoning.... On the other hand,... I shall not say anything about Philosophy, but that, [although] it has been cultivated for many centuries by the best minds that have ever lived,... nevertheless no single thing is to be found in it which is not subject to dispute, and in consequence which is not dubious.... [A]s to the other sciences, inasmuch as they derive their principles from Philosophy, I judge that one could have built nothing solid on foundations so far from firm.

—René Descartes

This is why, as soon as age permitted me to emerge from the control of my tutors, I entirely quitted the study of letters. And resolving to seek no other knowledge than that which could be found in myself, or at least in the great book of the world, I employed the rest of my youth in travel, in seeing courts and armies, in speaking with men of diverse temperaments and conditions, in collecting varied experiences, in proving myself in the various predicaments in which I was placed by fortune, and under all circumstances bringing my mind to bear on the things which came before it, so that I might derive some profit from my experience.

—René Descartes

Considering also that of all those who have hitherto sought for the truth in the sciences, it is been the mathematicians alone who have been able to succeed in... producing reasons which are evident and certain.

—René Descartes

Let us settle ourselves, and work and wedge our feet downward through the mud and slush of opinion, and prejudice and tradition, and delusion, and appearance, that alluvion which covers the globe.... till we come to a hard bottom of rocks in place, which we can call reality.

—James Thompson

Reality, however, has a sliding floor.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

As a conscious being I am involved in a story. The perceiving part of my mind tells me a story of a world around me. The story tells of familiar objects. It tells of colors, sounds, scents belonging to these objects; of boundless space in which they have their existence, and of an ever-rolling stream of time bringing change and incident. It tells of other life than mine busy about its own purposes.

As a scientist I have become mistrustful of the story. In many instances it has become clear that things are not what they seem to be. According to the storyteller, I have now in front of me a substantial desk; but I have learned from physics that the desk is not at all the continuous substance that it is supposed to be in the story. Is a host of tiny electric charges darting hither and thither with inconceivable velocity. Instead of being the solid substance, my desk is more like a swarm of gnats.

So I have come to realize that I must not put overmuch confidence in the storyteller who lives in my mind.

—Sir Arthur Eddington

The true lover of knowledge is always striving after being.... He will not rest at those multitudinous phenomena whose existence is appearance only.

—Plato

Every object is either a part of the whole world, or an aggregate of parts. The greatest of all bodies, or sensible objects, is the world itself; which we behold when we look round about us from this point of the same which we call the earth. Concerning the world, as it is one aggregate of many parts, the things that fall under inquiry are but few; and those we can determine, none. Of the whole world we may inquire what is its magnitude, what its duration, and how many there be, but nothing else.

—Thomas Hobbes

There exists no kind of spiritual substance or entity of a different nature from that of which matter is composed.

—Hugh Elliot

An age of science is necessarily an age of materialism. Ours is a scientific age, and it may be said with truth that we are all materialists now.

—Hugh Elliot

The great majority of mankind are satisfied with appearances, as though they were realities and are often more influenced by the things that seem than by those that are.

—Niccolò Machiavelli

All the Choir of Heaven and the furniture of the world, in a word all those bodies which compose the mighty frame of the world, have no substance without a mind; so long as they are not actually perceived,... they have no existence at all.

—Helmut Wimmer

Laws of Nature are God's thoughts thinking themselves out in the orbits and the tides.

—C. H. Parkhurst

Great men are they who see that spiritual is stronger than any material force, that thoughts rule the world.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Pragmatism is the attitude of looking away from first things, principles, 'categories,' supposed necessities; and of looking towards last things, fruits, consequences, facts.

—William James

All philosophy arises out of people's continual struggles to deal with social and moral problems. Two important observations follow from this fact. One, philosophy cannot be understood without an awareness of the social forces that have produced it. Two, and more important here, any philosophy or doctrine has worth only to the degree that it assists people in resolving their problems.

—John Dewey

Philosophy originated not out of intellectual material, but out of social and emotional material.

—John Dewey

There are people for whom even the reality of the external world constitutes a grave problem. I do not address them; I presuppose a minimum of reason in my readers.

—Paul Feyerabend

Materialists and madmen never have doubts.

—G. K. Chesterton

The aim of phenomenology is described as a study of experiences with a view to bringing out their 'essences,' their underlying 'reason.' Phenomenology is the philosophical school that contends that being is the underlying reality, that what is ultimately real is our consciousness, which itself is being. For the founder of phenomenology, Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), the overriding reality is the consciousness itself. You can think away everything, but you cannot think away thought. What is ultimately real is pure consciousness, which we reach by removing attention from the specific experiences that occupy it.

—Maurice
Merleau-Ponty

Zen points out that our precious 'self' is just an idea... When we are no longer identified with the idea of ourselves, the entire relationship between subject and object, knower and known undergoes a sudden and revolutionary change. It becomes a real relationship, a mutuality in which the subject creates the object just as much as the object creates the subject. The knower no longer feels himself to be independent of the known; the experiencer no longer feels himself to stand apart from the experience. If we are looking for a concrete reality, we shall find it between the individual and the world, 'as the concrete coin is 'between' the abstract, Euclidean surfaces of its two sides.'

—Alan Watts

What I really lack is to be clear in my mind what I am to do, not what I am to know, except insofar as a certain understanding must precede every action. The thing is to understand myself, to see what God really wishes me to do; the thing is to find the truth which is true for me, to find the idea for which I can live and die. What would be the use of discovering so-called objective truth, of working through all the systems of philosophy and of being able if required, to review them all and show up the inconsistencies within each system;—what good would it do me to be able to develop a theory of the state and combine all the details into a single whole, and so construct a world in which I did not live, but only held up to the view of others; what good would it do me to be able to explain the meaning of Christianity if it had no deeper significance for me and for my life;—what good would it do me if truth stood before me, cold and naked, not caring whether I recognized her or not, and producing in me a shudder of fear rather than a trusting devotion? I certainly do not deny that I still recognize any imperative of understanding and that through it one can work upon men, but it must be taken up into my life, and that is what I now recognize as the most important thing.

—Søren Kierkegaard

We cannot step down or step up to any kind of ‘reality’ except the reality of our drives.

—Friedrich Nietzsche

Life itself is essential assimilation, injury, violation of the foreign and the weaker, suppression, hardness, the forcing of one’s own forms upon something else, ingestion and—at least in its mildest form—exploitation.

—Friedrich Nietzsche

Since there is no God, there can be no one to conceive of a human nature. Without a human nature, we are free to be what we choose. There is nothing we ought to do, since there is nothing we ought to be. There are no absolutes, no norms of right behavior; we are on our own. We exist; whatever is uniquely ours, whatever makes each of us an individual—our essence—is ours for the making. We do not discover who we are so much as we make it.

—Jean-Paul Sartre

If a man is a thief, he chooses to be one and he chooses all that this decision entails. He could choose to be otherwise, for instance, to be an honest man. He could choose, in effect, a new project rather than the one that he has adopted. Furthermore, he may do this whenever he chooses. In other words, nothing about a thief’s past makes his future inevitable. In fact, there’s no telling how many different projects he could undertake in defining who he will be.

—Jean-Paul Sartre

Consider this table in front of us. It is not what it seems. Leibniz tells us it is a community of souls. Bishop Berkeley tells us it is an idea in the mind of God. Sober science, scarcely less wonderful, tells us it is a vast collection of electric charges in violent motion.

—Bertrand Russell

The Universe, that is the whole mass of things that are, is corporeal, that is to say body; and has the dimensions of magnitude, namely, length, breadth, and depth. Also every part of body is likewise body, and has the like dimensions. And, consequently, every part of the Universe is body, and that which is not body is no part of the Universe. And because the Universe is all, that which is no part of it is nothing, and, consequently, nowhere.

—Thomas Hobbes

Life is but a motion of limbs, the beginning whereof is in some principal part within; why may we not say, that all automata (engines that move themselves by springs and wheels as does a watch) have an artificial life? For what is the heart, but a spring; and the nerves, but so many strings; and the joints, but so many wheels, giving motion to the whole body, such as was intended by the artificer?

—Thomas Hobbes

Each human being is a superbly constructed astonishingly compact, self ambulatory computer.

—Carl Sagan

Specifically, epistemology deals with the nature, basis, and extent of knowledge. Epistemology questions are basic to all other philosophical inquiries. Everything we claim to know, whether in science, history, or everyday life, would amount to little if we were unable to support our claims. Thus, neither a concept of human nature and self, a theory of the universe, nor an assertion of an ordinary event ('This lemon tastes sour' or 'It is raining') escapes the need for justification. Epistemology presents us with the task of explaining how we know what we claim to know, how we can find out what we wish to know, and how we can judge someone else's claim to knowledge.

Epistemology usually addresses a variety of problems: the structure, reliability, extent and kinds of knowledge; truth; logic and language; and science and scientific knowledge.

—Manuel Velasquez and
Vincent Barry

So that in the nature of man, we find three principal causes of quarrel. First, competition; secondly, diffidence; thirdly, glory. The first makes men invade for gain; the second, for safety; and the third, for reputation. The first use of violence, to make themselves masters of other men's persons, wives, children, and cattle; the second, to defend them; the third, for trifles, as a word, a smile, a different opinion, and any other sign of undervalue, either direct in their persons, or by reflection in their kindred, their friends, their nation, their profession, or their name.

—Thomas Hobbes

A man is but what he knows.

—Francis Bacon

All I know is what I read in the papers.

—Will Rogers

When you know a thing, to hold that you know it; and when you do not know a thing, to allow that you do not know it: this is knowledge.

—Confucius

As for me, all I know is that I know nothing.

—Socrates

No one can doubt that a human is a thinking being, that a thinking thing exists, that God exists, and that the world exists. All of this, can be established by reason alone.

—René Descartes

No fact can be real and no statement true unless it has a sufficient reason why it should be thus and not otherwise.

—Gottfried Wilhelm
von Leibnitz

If a man will begin with certainties, he shall end in doubts. But if he will be content to begin with doubts, he shall end in certainties.

—Francis Bacon

What can give us more sure knowledge than our senses? How else can we distinguish between the true and the false?

—Lucretius

No man knows anything distinctly, and no man ever will.

—Xenophanes

We can never arrive at the real nature of things from the outside. However much we investigate, we can never reach anything but images and names. We are like a man who goes round a castle seeking in vain for an entrance and sometimes sketching the facades.

—Arthur Schopenhauer

All the sensory experiences we are having are compatible with our merely dreaming of a world around us while that world is in fact very different from the way we take it to be.

—Henry Russo

Knowledge is the knowing that we cannot know.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Kant holds that the mind possesses mental ‘categories.’ These categories organize our perceptions into the orderly world we experience. The world as we experience it results in part from the sensations provided by our senses, and in part from the workings of the mind. The senses provide the content or stuff of experience; the mind provides its form or orderly structure.

—Marcel Duchamp

A desire of knowledge is the natural feeling of mankind.

—Samuel Johnson

No one is so wrong as the man who knows all the answers.

—Thomas Merton

What everybody echoes as true today, may turn out to be falsehood tomorrow, mere smoke of opinion.

—Henry David Thoreau

The greatest friend of truth is Time, her greatest enemy is Prejudice, and her constant companion is Humility.

—C. C. Fulton

Truth is the highest thing that man may keep.

—Geoffrey Chaucer

Science seeks only the most generally useful systems of classification; these it regards for the time being, until more useful classifications are invented, as 'true.'

—S. I. Hayakawa

Indeed, what the witness thinks is truth consigns truth to the very dubious area of sense data interpretation. Such interpretation must be purely subjective and need not have anything to do with the way things actually are.

—Manuel Velasquez and
Vincent Berry

Every man seeks for truth, but God only knows who has found it.

—Lord Chesterfield

There are four sorts of men:

He who knows not and knows not he knows not: he is a fool—shun him;

He who knows not and knows he knows not: he is simple—teach him;

He who knows and knows not he knows: he is asleep—wake him.

He who knows and knows he knows: he is wise—follow him.

—Lady Burton

We have to live today by what truth we can get today, and be ready tomorrow to call it falsehood.

—William James

Traditionally, ethics has investigated the problem of values in human conduct. Ethics investigates questions involving right conduct, good character, and life fulfillment. It examines the meanings of value terms in order to clarify our moral discourse and to justify ethical judgments. Social and political philosophy concerns questions about social structures and political systems. Social and political philosophy examines values as they relate to the state and the roots of social obligations.

—Manuel Velasquez and
Vincent Berry

Man is the only animal that blushes, or needs to.

—Mark Twain

There's nothing either good or bad,
But thinking makes it so.

—William Shakespeare

Inability to tell good from evil is the greatest worry of man's life.

--Marcus Tullius Cicero

The foundations of morality are like all other foundations: if you dig too much about them the superstructure will come tumbling down.

—Samuel Butler

Egoism contends that we should always act in a way that promotes our own best long-term interests. Although egoists argue about what actions will do this, they agree that once such actions are determined, we should take them. This notion does not imply, however, that we should do whatever we want; often our best immediate interests are not our best long-term ones.

—Manuel Velasquez and
Vincent Berry

When I say that pleasure is the goal of living, I do not mean the pleasures of libertines and the pleasures inherent in positive enjoyment....I mean, on the contrary, the pleasure that consists in freedom from bodily pain and mental agitation. The pleasant life is not the product of one drinking party after another or of sexual intercourse.

... On the contrary, it is the result of sober thinking—namely, investigation of the reasons for every act of choice and aversion, and elimination of those false ideas about the gods and death which are the chief source of mental disturbances.

—Epicurus

Morals are a personal affair; in the war of righteousness every man fights for his own hand.

—Robert Louis Stevenson

Utilitarianism claims that we should always act so as to produce the greatest possible ratio of good to evil for all concerned. Again, as with all consequentialist positions, good and evil are taken to mean nonmoral good and evil.

—Manuel Velasquez and
Vincent Berry

To be happy here is man's chief end,
For to be happy he must needs be good.

—Kirke White

Veracity is the heart of morality.

—Thomas Huxley

Goodness does not more certainly make men happy than happiness makes them good.

—W. S. Landor

To do as you would be done by, is the plain, sure, and undisputed rules of morality and justice.

—Lord Chesterfield

Do not do unto others as you would they should do unto you. Their tastes may not be the same.

—George Bernard Shaw

Morality is washed all round with wisdom, and wisdom is washed all round with morality. It is just as if one should wash one hand with the other or one foot with the other; exactly so is morality washed around with wisdom and wisdom with morality.

—Buddha

One may go wrong in many different ways, but right only in one, which is why it is easy to fail and difficult to succeed—easy to miss the target and difficult to hit it.

—Aristotle

And eye for an eye only ends up making the whole world blind.

—Gandhi

Actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By happiness is intended pleasure and the absence of pain, by unhappiness, pain and the privation of pleasure.

—John Stuart Mill

No reason can be given why the general happiness is desirable, except that each person, so far as he believes it to be attainable, desires his own happiness. This, however, being a fact, we have not only all the proof which the case admits of, but all which it is possible to require, that happiness is a good, that each person's happiness is a good to that person, and the general happiness, therefore, a good to the aggregate of all persons

—John Stuart Mill

What, for example, shall we say of money?... From being a means to happiness, it has come to be itself a principal ingredient of [some] individuals' conception of happiness. The same may be said of the majority of the great objects of human life: power, for example, or fame....In these cases the means have become a part of the end.

...What was once desired as an instrument for the attainment of happiness has come to be desired for its own sake. In being desired for its own sake it is, however, desired as part of happiness. The person is made, or thinks he would be made, happy by its mere possession; and is made unhappy by failure to obtain it. The desire of it is not a different thing from the desire of happiness any more than the love of music or the desire of health. They are included in happiness.

—John Stuart Mill

I spit on your happiness! I spit on your idea of life—that life that must go on, come what may. You are all like dogs that lick everything they smell. You with our promise of a humdrum happiness—provided a person doesn't ask too much of life. I want everything of life, I do; and I want it now! I want it total, complete: otherwise I reject it! I will not be moderate. I will not be satisfied with the bite of cake you offer me if I promise to be a good little girl. I want to be sure of everything this very day; sure that everything will be as beautiful as when I was a little girl. If not, I want to die!

—Antigone in Sophocles
Antigone

Freedom is nothing else but the right to live as we wish.

—Epictetus

I felt that to extract a genuine surrender from the [Japanese] Emperor and his military advisers, they must be administered a tremendous shock which would carry convincing proof of our power to destroy the Empire. Such an effective shock would save many times the number of lives, both American and Japanese, that it would cost....Our enemy, Japan,...had the strength to cost us a million more [lives]....Additional large losses might be expected among our allies and...enemy casualties would be much larger than our own....My chief purpose was to end the war in victory with the least possible cost in lives. ...The face of war is the face of death; death is not an inevitable part of every order that a wartime leader gives. The decision to use the atomic bomb was a decision that brought death to over a hundred thousand Japanese....But this deliberate, premeditated destruction was our least abhorrent choice.

—Henry L. Stimpson

[Is] it permissible, in order to win a just war, to wipe out such an area with death or grave injury, resulting indiscriminately, to the majority of its ten million inhabitants? In my opinion the answer must be in the negative.

...[It] is never permitted to kill directly noncombatants in wartime. Why? Because they are innocent. That is, they are innocent of the violent and destructive action of war, or of any close participation in the violent and destructive action of war.

—John C. Ford

You have no more right to consume happiness without producing it than to consume wealth without producing it.

—George Bernard Shaw

When one who is by nature a worker attempts to enter the warrior class, or one of the soldiers tries to enter the class of guardians, this meddling brings the city to ruin. That then is injustice. But the doing of one's own job by each class is justice and makes the city just.

—Plato

Our object in the construction of the state is the greatest happiness of the whole, and not that of any one class.

—Plato

It is better that some should be unhappy, than that none should be happy, which would be the case in a general state of equality.

—Samuel Johnson

Society never advances.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Equality in society beats inequality, whether the latter be the British-aristocratic sort or of the domestic-slavery sort.

—Abraham Lincoln

Society exists for the benefit of its members; not the members for the benefit of society.

—Herbert Spencer

Government is emphatically a machine: to the disconnected a 'taxing machine,' to the contented a 'machine for securing property.'

—Thomas Carlyle

Hereby it is manifest that during the time men live without a common power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called war, and such a war, as is of every man against every man, and the life of man is solitary, nasty, brutish, and short.

—Thomas Hobbes

The very idea of the power and the right of the People to establish Government, presupposes the duty of every individual to obey the established Government.

—George Washington

Nothing is so galling to a people, not broken in from the birth, as a paternal, or, in other words, a meddling government, a government which tells them what to read and say and eat and drink and wear.

—Thomas B. Macaulay

Our approach to social problems is to decrease their visibility: out of sight, out of mind. This is the real foundation of racial segregation, especially in its most extreme case, the Indian ‘reservation.’ Result of our social effort has been to remove the underlying problems of our society farther and farther from the daily experience and daily consciousness, and hence to decrease, in the mass of the population, the knowledge, skill, resources and motivation necessary to deal with them.

—Philip Slater

Law is nothing else than an ordinance of reason for the common good promulgated by him who has care of the community.

—St. Thomas Aquinas

Any law that uplifts human personality is just. Any law that degrades human personality is unjust. All segregation statutes are unjust because segregation distorts the soul and damages the personality.

—Martin Luther
King, Jr.

Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.

—George Santayana

What experience and history teach us is this—that people and governments never have learned anything from history, or acted on principles deduced from it.

—G. W. F. Hegel

What constitutes the alienation of labor? First, that the work is external to the worker, that is not part of his nature; and that, consequently, he does not fulfill himself in his work but denies himself, has a feeling of misery rather than well-being, does not develop freely his mental and physical energies but is physically exhausted and mentally debased.

—Karl Marx

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

—William Shakespeare

There's this man who lives in the sky; he knows everything, and he sees everything...and he needs your money!

—George Carlin

Research on the inner workings of the brain has helped to resolve the nature-nurture debate—and has dealt a further blow to the idea of free will. Brain scanners have enabled us to peer inside a living person's skull, revealing intricate networks of neurons and allowing scientists to reach broad agreement that these networks are shaped by both genes and environment. But there is also agreement in the scientific community that the firing of neurons determines not just some or most but all of our thoughts, hopes, memories, and dreams.

—Stephen Cave

Believing that free will is an illusion has been shown to make people less creative, more likely to conform, less willing to learn from their mistakes, and less grateful toward one another. In every regard, it seems, when we embrace determinism, we indulge our dark side.

—Stephen Cave

Smilansky [Saul] is convinced that free will does not exist in the traditional sense—and that it would be very bad if most people realized this. 'Imagine,' he told me, 'that I'm deliberating whether to do my duty, such as to parachute into enemy territory, or something more mundane like to risk my job by reporting on some wrongdoing. If everyone accepts that there is no free will, then I'll know that people will say, 'Whatever he did, he had no choice—we can't blame him.' So I know I'm not going to be condemned for taking the selfish option.' This, he believes, is very dangerous for society, and 'the more people accept the determinist picture, the worse things will get.

—Stephen Cave

Theory is splendid but until put into practice, it is valueless.

—James Cash Penney

People often confuse determinism with fatalism. Determinism is the belief that our decisions are part of an unbreakable chain of cause and effect. Fatalism, on the other hand, is the belief that our decisions don't really matter, because whatever is destined to happen will happen—like Oedipus's marriage to his mother, despite his efforts to avoid that fate.

—Stephen Cave

Religion has caused more misery to all of mankind in every stage of human history than any other single idea.

—Madalyn Murray
O'Hair

God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him. How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers? What was holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives: who will wipe this blood off us? What water is there for us to clean ourselves? What festivals of atonement, what sacred games shall we have to invent? Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must we ourselves not become gods simply to appear worthy of it?

—Friedrich Nietzsche

Most thinkers write badly, because they communicate not only their thoughts, but also the thinking of them.

--Nietzsche

In law a man is guilty when he violates the rights of others. In ethics he is guilty if he only thinks of doing so.

—Immanuel Kant

The world's philosophers and theologians searched for answers to the same mysteries.

—Robert Vaughn

It is the rigid dogma that destroys truth; and, please notice, my emphasis is not on the dogma but on the rigidity. When men say of any question, 'This is all there is to be known or said of the subject; investigation ends here,' that is death.

--Alfred North Whitehead

A man has free choice to the extent that he is rational.

—Saint Thomas Aquinas

If you've never met a student from the University of Chicago, I'll describe him to you. If you give him a glass of water, he says, "This is a glass of water. But is it a glass of water? And if it is a glass of water, why is it a glass of water?" And eventually he dies of thirst.

--Shelly Berman

I was a philosophy major with a concentration in yarn.

—Winnie Holzman

It is one of the consolations of philosophy that the benefit of showing how to dispense with a concept does not hinge on dispensing with it.

—Willard Van Orman
Quine

Free will seems to mean the ability to choose with no constraints whatsoever. In that sense, free will of course does not exist; there is no such thing. While this was not apparent to many past thinkers, modern social and natural science have exposed numerous constraints on our choices. In making them, we are restricted by our historical time, ethnic/cultural background, educational achievement, economic and social status, gender, age, temperament, and, yes, our genes and brains, among other influences.

—Forest Hansen

Take from the philosopher the pleasure of being heard and his desire for knowledge ceases.

—Jean-Jacques
Rousseau

Perhaps it is of more value to infuriate philosophers than to go along with them.

—Wallace Stevens

History tells what man has done; art, what man has made; literature, what man has felt; religion, what man has believed; philosophy, what man has thought.

--Benjamin C. Leeming

Logic is neither a science nor an art, but a dodge.

—Benjamin Jowett

Logic: an instrument used for bolstering a prejudice.

—Elbert Hubbard

Traditionally, ethics has investigated the problems of values and human conduct. Ethics investigates questions involving right conduct, good character, and life fulfillment. It examines the meanings of value terms in order to clarify our moral discourse and to justify ethical judgments. Social and political philosophy concerns questions about social structures and political systems. Social and political philosophy examines values as you relate to the state and the roots of social obligations.

—Manuel Velasquez and
Vincent Berry

Every person has free choice. Free to obey or disobey the Natural Laws. Your choice determines the consequences. Nobody ever did, or ever will, escape the consequences of his choices.

—Alfred A. Montapert

There is no need for temples; no need for complicated philosophy. Our own brain, our own heart is our temple; my philosophy is kindness.

--The Dalai Lama

Should it be said that the Greeks discovered philosophy by human wisdom, I reply that I find the Scriptures declare all wisdom to be a divine gift.

--St. Clement

To live without philosophizing is in truth the same as keeping the eyes closed without attempting to open them.

—René Descartes

If you use a philosophy education well, you can get your foot in the door of any industry you please. Industries are like the blossoms on a tree while philosophy is the trunk - it holds the tree together, but it often goes unnoticed.

—Criss Jami

We don't learn anything there [school]. The difference between schoolteachers and philosophers is that school-teachers think they know a lot of stuff that they try to force down our throats. Philosophers try to figure things out together with the pupils.

—Jostein Gaarder

Philosophy is the science which considers truth.

—Aristotle

A novel is never anything but a philosophy put into images.

--Albert Camus

Great thinkers are there not for us to respect unquestioningly, but rather for us to question respectfully.

—Thanh T. Nguyen

Music is a higher revelation than philosophy.

—Beethoven

Philosophy is written in this grand book—I mean the universe—which stands continually open to our gaze, but it cannot be understood unless one first learns to comprehend the language and interpret the characters in which it is written. It is written in the language of mathematics, and its characters are triangles, circles, and other geometrical figures, without which it is humanly impossible to understand a single word of it; without these, one is wandering about in a dark labyrinth.

--Galileo Galilei

Every good mathematician is at least half a philosopher, and every good philosopher is at least half a mathematician.

--Gottlob Frege

History is philosophy teaching by examples.

--Thucydides

A page of history is worth a volume of logic.

--Oliver Wendell
Holmes, Jr.

Philosophy doesn't merely tell us about the subjective, leaving the objective world to science....The finest scientific thinking will always be driven and informed by the philosophical spirit. The grand forward push of human knowledge requires each of us to begin by trying to think independently, to recognize that knowledge is more than information, to see that we are moral beings who must closely interrogate both ourselves and the world we inhabit—to live, as Socrates recommended, an examined life.

--Clancy Martin

Is God willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then he is not omnipotent Is he able, but not willing? Then he is malevolent. Is he both able and willing? Then whence cometh evil? Is he neither able nor willing? Then why call him God?

—Epicurus

Philosophy of science without history of science is empty; history of science without philosophy of science is blind.

—Imre Lakatos

Do there exist many worlds, or is there but a single world? This is one of the most noble and exalted questions in the study of Nature?

--Albertus Magnus

We need to stop looking to politicians to make our world better. Politicians don't make the world a better place. Everything that's ever made the world a better place has come from inventors, engineers, scientists, teachers, artists, builders, philosophers, healers, and people that choose love over hate.

—Don Freeman

The religion of the Indian is the last thing about him that the man of another race will ever understand.

—Charles Eastman

Definitions of Religion

Religion is concerned about experiences which are regarded as of supreme value; devotion towards a power or powers believed to originate, increase, and conserve these values; some suitable expression of this concern and devotion, whether through symbolic rites or through other individual and social conduct.

—Edgar S. Brightman

Any activity pursued in behalf of an ideal and against obstacles and in spite of threats of personal loss because of conviction of its general and enduring value is religious in quality.

—John Dewey

Religion is the ritual cultivation of socially accepted values.

—J. Fisher

Religion is a propitiation of, and dependency on, superior powers which are believed to control and direct the course of nature and human life.

—Sir James G. Frazer

Religion is a theory of man's relation to the universe.

—S. P. Haynes

Religion is a sense of the sacred.

—Sir Julian Huxley

Religion is (subjectively regarded) the organization of all duties as divine commands.

—Immanuel Kant

Religion consists in the perception of the infinite under such manifestations as are able to influence the moral character of man.

—Max Muller

Religion is one's attitude toward whatever he considers to be the determiner of destiny.

—James Bissett Pratt

The essence of religion is the feeling of utter dependence upon the infinite reality, that is, upon God.

—F. Schleiermacher

Religion is man's ultimate concern for the Ultimate.

—Paul Tillich

Religion, as a minimum, is the belief in spiritual beings.

—E. B. Taylor

Religion is a belief in an ultimate meaning of the universe.

—Alfred R. Wallace

A religion, on its doctrinal sides, can thus be described as a system of general truths which have the effect of transforming character when they are sincerely held and vividly apprehended.

—Alfred North
Whitehead

Religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden -- beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church all those who adhere to them.

—Emile Durkheim

Religion is the belief in an ever-living God, that is, in a Divine Mind and Will ruling the Universe and holding moral relations with mankind.

—Harriet Martineau

There is only one religion, though there are hundreds of versions of it.

—George Bernard Shaw

Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature... a protest against real suffering... it is the opium of the people... the illusory sun which revolves around man for as long as he does not evolve around himself.

—Karl Marx

Religion usually has to do with man's relationship to the unseen world, to the world of spirits, demons, and gods. A second element common to all religions is the term salvation. All religions seek to help man find meaning in a universe which all too often appears to be hostile to his interests. The world salvation means, basically, health. It means one is saved from disaster, fear, hunger, and a meaningless life. It means one is saved for hope, love, security, and the fulfillment of purpose.

—David Bradley

Wherever people live, whenever they live, they find themselves faced with three inescapable problems: how to win food and shelter from their natural environment (the problem nature poses), how to get along with one another (the social problem), and how to relate themselves to the total scheme of things (the religious problem). If this third issue seems less important than the other two, we should remind ourselves that religious artifacts are the oldest that archaeologists have discovered.

—Huston Smith

Philosophic Principles: Basic Definitions

AESTHETICS: Aesthetics is the philosophical branch of inquiry concerned with beauty, art and perception.

—Paul Ford

AGNOSTICISM: Obviously, if theism is a belief in a God and atheism is a lack of a belief in a God, no third position or middle ground is possible. A person can either believe or not believe in a God. Therefore, our previous definition of atheism has made an impossibility out of the common usage of agnosticism to mean ‘neither affirming nor denying a belief in God.’ Actually, this is no great loss, because the dictionary definition of agnostic is still again different from Huxley’s definition. The literal meaning of agnostic is one who holds that some aspect of reality is unknowable. Therefore, an agnostic is not simply someone who suspends judgment on an issue, but rather one who suspends judgment because he feels that the subject is unknowable and therefore no judgment can be made. It is possible, therefore, for someone not to believe in a God (as Huxley did not) and yet still suspend judgment (ie, be an agnostic) about whether it is possible to obtain knowledge of a God. Such a person would be an atheistic agnostic. It is also possible to believe in the existence of a force behind the universe, but to hold (as did Herbert Spencer) that any knowledge of that force was unobtainable. Such a person would be a theistic agnostic.

—Gordon Stein

ALTRUISM: A theory of conduct that regards the good of others as the end of moral action. The term (French *altruisme*, derived from Latin *alter*, ‘other’) was coined in the 19th century by Auguste Comte, the founder of Positivism, and adopted generally as a convenient antithesis to egoism. As a theory of conduct, its adequacy depends on an interpretation of ‘the good.’ If the term is taken to mean pleasure and the absence of pain, most altruists have agreed that a moral agent has an obligation to further the pleasures and alleviate the pains of other people. The same argument holds if happiness is taken as the end of life. But critics have asked, if no one has a moral obligation to procure his own happiness, why should anyone else have an obligation to procure happiness for him? Other conflicts have arisen between immediate pain and long-range good, especially when the good envisioned by the doer does not coincide with the vision of the beneficiary.

—*Britannica.com*

ANTHROPOMORPHISM: The showing or treating of animals, gods, and objects as if they are human in appearance, character, or behaviour: The books ‘Alice in Wonderland’, ‘Peter Rabbit’, and ‘Winnie-the-Pooh’ are classic examples of anthropomorphism.

—*Cambridge Dictionary*

ATHEISM: Atheism is usually defined incorrectly as a belief system. Atheism is not a disbelief in gods or a denial of gods; it is a lack of belief in gods. Older dictionaries define atheism as ‘a belief that there is no God.’ Some dictionaries even go so far as to define Atheism as ‘wickedness,’ ‘sinfulness,’ and other derogatory adjectives. Clearly, theistic influence taints dictionaries. People cannot trust these dictionaries

to define atheism. The fact that dictionaries define Atheism as ‘there is no God’ betrays the (mono)theistic influence. Without the (mono)theistic influence, the definition would at least read ‘there are no gods.’

Why should atheists allow theists to define who atheists are? Do other minorities allow the majority to define their character, views, and opinions? No, they do not. So why does everyone expect atheists to lie down and accept the definition placed upon them by the world’s theists? Atheists will define themselves.

Atheism is not a belief system nor is it a religion. While there are some religions that are atheistic (certain sects of Buddhism, for example), that does not mean that atheism is a religion. Two commonly used retorts to the nonsense that atheism is a religion are: 1) If atheism is a religion, then bald is a hair color, and 2) If atheism is a religion, then health is a disease. A new one introduced in 2012 by Bill Maher is, ‘If atheism is a religion, then abstinence is a sexual position.’

The only common thread that ties all atheists together is a lack of belief in gods and supernatural beings. Some of the best debates we have ever had have been with fellow atheists. This is because atheists do not have a common belief system, sacred scripture or atheist Pope. This means atheists often disagree on many issues and ideas. Atheists come in a variety of shapes, colors, beliefs, convictions, and backgrounds. We are as unique as our fingerprints.

—*Atheists.org*

AXIOLOGY: Axiology is the study of values (or of ones values). Our values affect how we do research and what we value in the results of our research....One value that is guaranteed to affect how I approach research, also associated with my religious beliefs, is a belief in the inherent worth and dignity of all people. ...The bigger question in axiology is, what do I value in research? That is, what is the purpose in research? For some people research is about developing an understanding about how something works, or how people behave. It is to investigate some phenomenon. For some research is an internal process, a desire to answer some burning internal curiosity. ...Others research to inform policy – with policy being a way to make the world a better place.

—Rebecca J. Hogue

DEDUCTIVE REASONING: Deductive reasoning, or deduction, is one of the two basic types of logical inference. A logical inference is a connection from a first statement (a ‘premise’) to a second statement (‘the conclusion’) for which the rules of logic show that if the first statement is true, the second statement should be true.

Specifically, deductions are inferences which must be true—at least according to the rules. If you assume that the premise (first statement) is true, then you can deduce other things that have to be true. These are called deductive conclusions.

Examples:

Premise: Socrates is a man, and all men are mortal.

Conclusion: Socrates is mortal.

Premise: This dog always barks when someone is at the door, and the dog didn't bark.

Conclusion: There's no one at the door.

Premise: Sam goes wherever Ben goes, and Ben went to the library.

Conclusion: Sam also went to the library.

Each of these miniature arguments has two premises (joined by the 'and'). These are syllogisms, which provide a model for all deductive reasoning. It is also possible to deduce something from just one statement; but it isn't very interesting; for example, from the premise 'Socrates is a man,' you can certainly deduce that at least one man exists. But most deductions require more than one premise.

You'll also notice that each premise contains a very general claim—something about 'all men' or what the dog 'always' does. This is an extremely common feature of deductions: their premises are general and their conclusions are specific.

—*philosophyterms.com*

DEISM: Deism is the belief in a supreme being, who remains unknowable and un-touchable. God is viewed as merely the 'first cause' and underlying principle of rationality in the universe. Deists believe in a god of nature -- a noninterventionist creator -- who permits the universe to run itself according to natural laws. Like a 'clockmaker god' initiating the cosmic process, the universe moves forward, without needing God's supervision. Deism believes that precise and unvarying laws define the universe as self-operating and self-explanatory. These laws reveal themselves through 'the light of reason and nature.' Reliance on the power of reasoning exchanges faith for human logic. Here are some examples of deist reasoning:

God is identified through nature and reason, not revelation. Deists who believe in God, or at least a divine principle, follow few if any of the other tenets and practices of Christianity, Judaism, or any religion believing in a personal God. Any deist god is an eternal entity whose power is equal to his/her will.

Some deists believe in Jesus Christ, while others do not. Most deists give regard to the moral teachings of Jesus.

The *Bible* is not accepted as the infallible Word of God. Deists refute evidence of Jesus' incarnation of God on earth. They deny the credibility of any writings from the Apostles or any 'Spirit-inspired' writings.

Deism has no creed, articles of faith, or holy book. Neither Satan nor hell exists, only symbols of evil which can be overcome by man's own reasoning.

Man is qualified to decide what reasonable path to follow regarding morals. Deists refer to themselves as 'freethinkers.'

Deists reject revelations and visions. There is no place for the nonsense of miracles and prophecies in an enlightened deist's life.

Deism has no need for ministers, priests, or rabbis. All an individual requires is their own common sense and the ability to contemplate their human condition.

—allaboutphilosophy.org

DETERMINISM: Determinism is a belief in the inevitability of causation. Everything that happens is the only possible thing that could happen. The chains and networks of causes are so powerful and inexorable that every outcome is inevitable. We are already locked in to everything else that is going to happen in the entire future of the universe. If you knew all the causal principles and had enough information about the present, you could predict the future with 100% accuracy. The universe resembles a giant machine, grinding along exactly as it must inevitably continue to do, following rigid rules. That is determinism.

—*Psychology Today*

EMPIRICISM: The Philosophical school of thought that real knowledge comes from the senses. This formed the basis for the foundation of modern science - the reliance on empirical evidence, or evidence that is observable. You have probably heard the expression, 'empirical data' before...it is referring to any data that are observable through the senses.

—*alleydog.com*

EPICUREANISM: A philosophy advanced by Epicurus that considered happiness, or the avoidance of pain and emotional disturbance, to be the highest good and that advocated the pursuit of pleasures that can be enjoyed in moderation.

—*thefreedictionary.com*

EPISTEMOLOGY: Epistemology is the study of the nature and scope of knowledge and justified belief. It analyzes the nature of knowledge and how it relates to similar notions such as truth, belief and justification. It also deals with the means of production of knowledge, as well as skepticism about different knowledge claims. It is essentially about issues having to do with the creation and dissemination of knowledge in particular areas of inquiry.

Epistemology asks questions like: ‘What is knowledge?’, ‘How is knowledge acquired?’, ‘What do people know?’, ‘What are the necessary and sufficient conditions of knowledge?’, ‘What is its structure, and what are its limits?’, ‘What makes justified beliefs justified?’, ‘How we are to understand the concept of justification?’, ‘Is justification internal or external to one's own mind?’

The kind of knowledge usually discussed in Epistemology is propositional knowledge, ‘knowledge-that’ as opposed to ‘knowledge-how’ (for example, the knowledge that ‘ $2 + 2 = 4$ ’, as opposed to the knowledge of how to go about adding two numbers).

—philosophybasics.com

ETHICS: The field of ethics (or moral philosophy) involves systematizing, defending, and recommending concepts of right and wrong behavior. Philosophers today usually divide ethical theories into three general subject areas: metaethics, normative ethics, and applied ethics. Metaethics investigates where our ethical principles come from, and what they mean. Are they merely social inventions? Do they involve more than expressions of our individual emotions? Metaethical answers to these questions focus on the issues of universal truths, the will of God, the role of reason in ethical judgments, and the meaning of ethical terms themselves. Normative ethics takes on a more practical task, which is to arrive at moral standards that regulate right and wrong conduct. This may involve articulating the good habits that we should acquire, the duties that we should follow, or the consequences of our behavior on others. Finally, applied ethics involves examining specific controversial issues, such as abortion, infanticide, animal rights, environmental concerns, homosexuality, capital punishment, or nuclear war.

—*Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

EXISTENTIALISM: Existentialism in the broader sense is a 20th century philosophy that is centered upon the analysis of existence and of the way humans find themselves existing in the world. The notion is that humans exist first and then each individual spends a lifetime changing their essence or nature.

In simpler terms, existentialism is a philosophy concerned with finding self and the meaning of life through free will, choice, and personal responsibility. The belief is that people are searching to find out who and what they are throughout life as they make choices based on their experiences, beliefs, and outlook. And personal choices become unique without the necessity of an objective form of truth. An existentialist believes that a person should be forced to choose and be responsible without the help of laws, ethnic rules, or traditions.

—allaboutphilosophy.org

FIDEISM: An ‘exclusive or basic reliance upon faith alone, accompanied by a consequent disparagement of reason and utilized especially in the pursuit of philosophical or religious truth’. Correspondingly, a fideist is someone who ‘urges reliance on faith rather than reason, in matters philosophical and religious’ and who ‘may go on to disparage and denigrate reason’. Notice, first, that what the fideist seeks, according to this account, is truth. Fideism claims that truths of a certain kind can be grasped only by foregoing rational inquiry and relying solely on faith. Insofar as fideism insists that knowledge of these truths is possible, it must be distinguished from various forms of skepticism with which it otherwise shares certain common features. Notice too that this definition is largely formal; the plausibility of fideism as a philosophical doctrine and the proper extension of the term will therefore depend on the content given to the terms ‘faith’ and ‘reason.’

—Alvin Plantinga

FOUNDATIONALISM: Foundationalism is an aspect of epistemology, the philosophy concerning how we think, patterns of thought, and how we arrive at knowledge. Foundationalism is an answer to the problem of ‘regress’ when trying to justify an argument. All arguments are based on other arguments and are justified by those arguments. Then, those arguments have to be justified, and so on. Foundationalism says that there is a basic set of beliefs that do not need to be justified because they are obviously true. They are axiomatic, like the ‘self-evident’ truths mentioned in the *Declaration of Independence*.

—gotquestions.org

HEDONISM: The word ‘hedonism’ comes from the ancient Greek for ‘pleasure’. Psychological or motivational hedonism claims that only pleasure or pain motivates us. Ethical or evaluative hedonism claims that only pleasure has worth or value and only pain or displeasure has disvalue or the opposite of worth....In general, pleasure is understood broadly below, as including or as included in all pleasant feeling or experience: contentment, delight, ecstasy, elation, enjoyment, euphoria, exhilaration, exultation, gladness, gratification, gratitude, joy, liking, love, relief, satisfaction, Schadenfreude, tranquility, and so on. Pain or displeasure too is understood broadly below, as including or as included in all unpleasant experience or feeling: ache, agitation, agony, angst, anguish, annoyance, anxiety, apprehensiveness, boredom, chagrin, dejection, depression, desolation, despair, desperation, despondency, discomfort, discombobulation, discontentment, disgruntlement, disgust, dislike, dismay, disorientation, dissatisfaction, distress, dread, enmity, ennui, fear, gloominess, grief, guilt, hatred, horror, hurting, irritation, loathing, melancholia, nausea, queasiness, remorse, resentment, sadness, shame, sorrow, suffering, sullenness, throb, terror, unease, vexation, and so on.

—*Stanford Encyclopedia
of Philosophy*

HUMANISM: An outlook or system of thought attaching prime importance to human rather than divine or supernatural matters. Humanist beliefs stress the potential value and goodness of human beings, emphasize common human needs, and seek solely rational ways of solving human problems.

—*google.com*

IDEALISM: Any view that stresses the central role of the ideal or the spiritual in the interpretation of experience. It may hold that the world or reality exists essentially as spirit or consciousness, that abstractions and laws are more fundamental in reality than sensory things, or, at least, that whatever exists is known in dimensions that are chiefly mental—through and as ideas.

Thus, the two basic forms of idealism are metaphysical idealism, which asserts the ideality of reality, and epistemological idealism, which holds that in the knowledge process the mind can grasp only the psychic or that its objects are conditioned by their perceptibility. In its metaphysics, idealism is thus directly opposed to materialism—the view that the basic substance of the world is matter and that it is known primarily through and as material forms and processes. In its epistemology, it is opposed to realism, which holds that in human knowledge objects are grasped and seen as they really are—in their existence outside and independently of the mind.

—*britannica.com*

INDETERMINISM: The scientific assumption that all events in nature are determined is unwarranted; indeed, chance events are perhaps even necessary to account for the diversity of things in the universe. Besides, current theoretical physics recognizes that subatomic events occur in completely random and (in principle) unpredictable ways. A completely caused (determined) event is one that is predictable. But since not every event is completely predictable, not every event is caused.

—*tamu.edu*

INDUCTIVE REASONING: Inductive reasoning is a logical process in which multiple premises, all believed true or found true most of the time, are combined to obtain a specific conclusion.

Inductive reasoning is often used in applications that involve prediction, forecasting, or behavior. Here is an example:

Every tornado I have ever seen in the United States rotated counterclockwise, and I have seen dozens of them.

We see a tornado in the distance, and we are in the United States.

I conclude that the tornado we see right now must be rotating counterclockwise.

A meteorologist will tell you that in the United States (which lies in the northern hemisphere), most tornadoes rotate counterclockwise, but not all of them do. Therefore, the conclusion is probably true, but not necessarily true. Inductive reasoning is, unlike deductive reasoning, not logically rigorous. Imperfection can exist and inaccurate conclusions can occur, however rare; in deductive reasoning the conclusions are mathematically certain.

—whatis.com

LOGIC: Logic investigates and classifies the structure of statements and arguments, both through the study of formal systems of inference and through the study of arguments in natural language. It deals only with propositions (declarative sentences, used to make an assertion, as opposed to questions, commands or sentences expressing wishes) that are capable of being true and false. It is not concerned with the psychological processes connected with thought, or with emotions, images and the like. It covers core topics such as the study of fallacies and paradoxes, as well as specialized analysis of reasoning using probability and arguments involving causality and argumentation theory.

—philosophybasics.com

MATERIALISM: Existence is explainable solely in material terms, with no accounting of spirit or consciousness. Individuals who hold to this belief see the universe as a huge device held together by pieces of matter functioning in subjection to naturalistic laws. Since materialism denies all concepts of Special Creation, it relies on the Theory of Evolution to explain itself, making beliefs in materialism and evolution interdependent.

—allaboutphilosophy.org

METAPHYSICS: Twentieth-century coinages like ‘meta-language’ and ‘metaphilosophy’ encourage the impression that metaphysics is a study that somehow ‘goes beyond’ physics, a study devoted to matters that transcend the mundane concerns of Newton and Einstein and Heisenberg. This impression is mistaken. The word ‘metaphysics’ is derived from a collective title of the fourteen books by Aristotle that we currently think of as making up Aristotle’s Metaphysics. Aristotle himself did not know the word. (He had four names for the branch of philosophy that is the subject-matter of Metaphysics: ‘first philosophy’, ‘first science’, ‘wisdom’, and ‘theology’.) At least one hundred years after Aristotle’s death, an editor of his works (in all probability, Andronicus of Rhodes) titled those fourteen books ‘*Ta meta ta phusika*’—‘the after the physicals’ or ‘the ones after the physical ones’—the ‘physical ones’ being the books contained in what we now call Aristotle’s Physics. The title was probably meant to warn students of Aristotle’s philosophy that they should at-

tempt Metaphysics only after they had mastered ‘the physical ones’, the books about nature or the natural world—that is to say, about change, for change is the defining feature of the natural world.

—*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

MONISM: Reality consists of one substance alone, whether that is mind, matter or God.

—*psychologydictionary.org*

NIHILISM: If you’re one of those people who believe there’s nothing worth believing in, your doctrine is nihilism. In philosophy, nihilism is the complete rejection of moral values and religious beliefs. It is such a negative outlook that it denies any meaning or purpose in life. In political theory, nihilism is carried to an even greater extreme, arguing for the destruction of all existing political and social institutions. The term nihilism was borrowed from German *Nihilismus*, since the doctrine was developed by the German philosopher Friedrich Jacobi. The German word is formed from Latin *nihil* ‘nothing’ plus the suffix *-ismus* ‘a doctrine or theory.’

—*vocabulary.com*

ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT: One of the most fascinating arguments for the existence of an all-perfect God is the ontological argument. While there are several different versions of the argument, all purport to show that it is self-contradictory to deny that there exists a greatest possible being. Thus, on this general line of argument, it is a necessary truth that such a being exists; and this being is the God of traditional Western theism.

Most of the arguments for God’s existence rely on at least one empirical premise. For example, the ‘fine-tuning’ version of the design argument depends on empirical evidence of intelligent design; in particular, it turns on the empirical claim that, as a nomological matter, that is, as a matter of law, life could not have developed if certain fundamental properties of the universe were to have differed even slightly from what they are. Likewise, cosmological arguments depend on certain empirical claims about the explanation for the occurrence of empirical events.

In contrast, the ontological arguments are conceptual in roughly the following sense: just as the propositions constituting the concept of a bachelor imply that every bachelor is male, the propositions constituting the concept of God, according to the ontological argument, imply that God exists. There is, of course, this difference: whereas the concept of a bachelor explicitly contains the proposition that bachelors are unmarried, the concept of God does not explicitly contain any proposition asserting the existence of such a being. Even so, the basic idea is the same: on-

tological arguments attempt to show that we can deduce God's existence from, so to speak, the very definition of God.

—*Internet Encyclopedia
of Philosophy*

ONTOLOGY: Ontology comes from two Greek words: *on*, which means 'being,' and *logia*, which means 'study.' So ontology is the study of being alive and existing... When you see the word *ontology*, think of Hamlet agonizing over 'To be, or not to be' or Descartes stating 'I think, therefore I am.'

—*vocabulary.com*

PLURALISM: The belief that reality consists of many different things or kinds of things. In this sense, it is opposed to the concept of monism, which views all of reality as one substance or whole, or one instance of each kind of thing. Pluralism can also be contrasted with dualism in the philosophy of mind.

The term is also used in a wider sense in several fields of philosophy, to express the idea that there can be no single explanatory system, or view of reality that can explain the totality of life; or that there are many different possible viewpoints or positions of equal validity and importance. In religion, law, and politics, pluralism refers to the co-existence of more than one belief system, legal structure, or political interest group. Societies incorporating a variety of ways of life, moral standards, and religions are referred to as 'pluralistic.'

—*newworldencyclopedia.org*

PRAGMATISM: A philosophical movement that includes those who claim that an ideology or proposition is true if it works satisfactorily, that the meaning of a proposition is to be found in the practical consequences of accepting it, and that unpractical ideas are to be rejected.

—*Internet Encyclopedia
of Philosophy*

RATIONALISM: Rationalism is any view appealing to intellectual and deductive reason (as opposed to sensory experience or any religious teachings) as the source of knowledge or justification. Thus, it holds that some propositions are knowable by us by intuition alone, while others are knowable by being deduced through valid arguments from intuited propositions. It relies on the idea that reality has a rational structure in that all aspects of it can be grasped through mathematical and logical principles, and not simply through sensory experience.

Rationalists believe that, rather than being a 'tabula rasa' to be imprinted with sense data, the mind is structured by, and responds to, mathematical methods of

reasoning. Some of our knowledge or the concepts we employ are part of our innate rational nature: experiences may trigger a process by which we bring this knowledge to consciousness, but the experiences do not provide us with the knowledge itself, which has in some way been with us all along.

—*philosophybasics.com*

REALISM: The viewpoint which accords to things which are known or perceived an existence or nature which is independent of whether anyone is thinking about or perceiving them.

—*britannica.com*

RELATIVISM: Value judgments, as of truth, beauty, or morality, have no universal validity but are valid only for the persons or groups holding them.

—*thefreedictionary.com*

SOCRATIC METHOD: A form of cooperative argumentative dialogue between individuals, based on asking and answering questions to stimulate critical thinking and to draw out ideas and underlying presumptions.

—*google.com*

SOLIPSISM: The view or theory that the self is all that can be known to exist.

—*oxforddictionaries.com*

STOICISM: Stoicism is an ancient Greek philosophy (developed by Zeno of Citium around 300 B.C. as a refinement of Cynicism) which teaches the development of self-control and fortitude as a means of overcoming destructive emotions. It does not seek to extinguish emotions completely, but rather seeks to transform them by a resolute Asceticism (a voluntary abstinence from worldly pleasures), which enables a person to develop clear judgment, inner calm and freedom from suffering (which it considers the ultimate goal).

Stoicism is not just a set of beliefs or ethical claims, but rather a way of life, involving constant practice and training, and incorporating the practice of logic, Socratic dialogue and self-dialogue, contemplation of death, and a kind of meditation aimed at training one's attention to remain in the present moment.

—*philosophybasics.com*

TABULA RASA: Let us then suppose the mind to be, as we say, white paper void of all characters, without any ideas. How comes it to be furnished? Whence comes it by that vast store which the busy and boundless fancy of man has painted on it with an almost endless variety? Whence has it all the materials of reason and knowledge? To this I answer, in one word, from EXPERIENCE.

—John Locke

THEISM: Belief in the existence of a god or gods; specifically : belief in the existence of one God viewed as the creative source of the human race and the world who transcends yet is immanent in the world.

—merriam-webster.com

Gods are fragile things; they may be killed by a whiff of science or a dose of common sense.

—Chapman Cohen

It is the greatest good to the greatest number which is the measure of right and wrong.

--Jeremy Bentham

As long as there are fools and rascals, there will be religions.

—Voltaire

Free will and determinism are like a game of cards: the hand that is dealt you is determinism; the way you play your hand is free will.

--Jawaharlal Nehru

Historians are wont to name technological advances as the great milestones of culture, among them the development of the plow, the discovery of smelting and metalworking, the invention of the clock, printing press, steam power, electric engine, lightbulb, semiconductor, and computer. But possibly even more transforming than any of these was the recognition by Greek philosophers and their intellectual descendants that human beings could examine, comprehend, and eventually even guide or control their own thought process, emotions, and resulting behavior.

With that realization we became something new and different on earth: the only animal that, by examining its own cerebration and behavior, could alter them. This, surely, was a giant step in evolution. Although we are physically little different from the people of three thousand years ago, we are culturally a different species. We are the psychologizing animal.

—Morton Hunt

Who knows why we live, and struggle, and die... Wise men write many books, in words too hard to understand. But this, the purpose of our lives, the end of all our struggle, is beyond all human wisdom.

—Alan Stewart Paton

A 2015 study published in *Science* confirmed that computer science and certain other fields, including physics, math, and philosophy, fetishize ‘brilliance,’ cultivating the idea that potential is inborn. The report concluded that these fields tend to be problematic for women, owing to a stubborn assumption that genius is a male trait.

—Liza Munday

Every major religious framework that still operates, the philosopher Karl Jaspers pointed out, can be traced back to a specific period: from 800 to 200 B.C.—the Axial Age, he called it. The sixth century (roughly a century before Socrates’s prime) was the most fertile interlude, when not only Pythagoras but the Buddha, Confucius, Lao-tzu, and several Hebrew prophets including Ezekiel lived and worked.

—Rebecca Newberger
Goldstein

Plato didn’t philosophize where Socrates had. He abandoned the agora and created the Academy, the first European university, which attracted thinkers—purportedly even a couple of women—from across greater Hellas, including, at the age of 17 or 18, Aristotle. Foremost among the problems they pondered was how to create a society in which a person like Socrates would flourish, issuing stringent calls to self-scrutiny, as relevant now as ever.

—Rebecca Newberger
Goldstein

In establishing the Academy, Plato didn’t forsake the people of the agora, who, as citizens, had to deliberate responsibly about issues of moral and political import. It was with these issues in mind that he wrote his dialogues—great works of literature as well as of philosophy. The dialogues may not represent his true philosophy (in the Seventh Letter, he explained that he had never committed his teachings to writing), but for more than 2,400 years they’ve been good enough for us.

—Rebecca Newberger
Goldstein

He was a wise man who invented God.

—Plato

Whoever wishes to become a philosopher must learn not to be frightened by absurdities.

—Bertrand Russell

I could prove God statistically.

--George Gallup, Jr.

Morality, said Jesus, is kindness to the weak; morality, said Nietzsche, is the bravery of the strong; morality, said Plato, is the effective harmony of the whole. Probably all three doctrines must be combined to find a perfect ethic; but can we doubt which of the elements is fundamental?

--Will Durant

Literature and philosophy both allow past idols to be resurrected with a frequency which would be truly distressing to a sober scientist.

—Morris Raphael Cohen

Man was predestined to have free will.

—Hal Lee Luyah

There is no such thing as society.

—Margaret Thatcher

According to conviction, I am not simply what I am doing now. I am also what I have done, and my conventionally edited version of my past is made to seem almost more the real me than what I am at this moment. For what I am seems so fleeting and intangible, but what I was is fixed and final. It is the firm basis for predictions of what I will be in the future, and so it comes about that I am more closely identified with what no longer exists than with what actually is.

—Alan B. Watts

In spite of the deep-seated craving for love, almost everything else is considered to be more important than love: success, prestige, money, power—almost all our energy is used for the learning of how to achieve these aims, and almost none to learn the art of loving.

Could it be that only those things are considered worthy of being learned with which one can earn money or prestige, and that love, which 'only' profits the soul, but is profitless in the modern sense, is a luxury we have no right to spend energy on?

—Erich Fromm

To be a colored man in America...and enjoy it, you must be greatly daring, greatly stolid, greatly humorous and greatly sensitive. And at all times a philosopher.

--Jessie Fauset
(1882-1961)

'Freedom from fear' could be said to sum up the whole philosophy of human rights.

--Dag Hammarskjöld

To choose doubt as a philosophy of life is akin to choosing immobility as a means of transportation.

—Yann Martel in *Life of Pi*

One of my favorite philosophical tenets is that people will agree with you only if they already agree with you. You do not change people's minds.

—Frank Zappa

Get married, in any case. If you happen to get a good mate, you will be happy; if a bad one, you will become philosophical, which is a fine thing in itself.

—Socrates

Nothing is beautiful, only man: on this piece of naïveté rests all aesthetics, it is the first truth of aesthetics. Let us immediately add its second: nothing is ugly but degenerate man—the domain of aesthetic judgment is therewith defined.

--Friedrich Nietzsche

Socrates called beauty a short-lived tyranny; Plato, a privilege of nature; Theophrastus, a silent cheat; Theocritus, a delightful prejudice; Carneades, a solitary kingdom; Aristotle, that it was better than all the letters of recommendation in the world; Homer, that it was a glorious gift of nature; and Ovid, that it was favor bestowed by the gods.

—Francis Quarles

If most of us are ashamed of shabby clothes and shoddy furniture, let us be more ashamed of shabby ideas and shoddy philosophies.... It would be a sad situation if the wrapper were better than the meat wrapped inside it.

—Albert Einstein

Humans are not in the ballpark to be judging whether God or heaven exist. It's like trying to write a novel with only half the alphabet.

--Eben Alexander

Much more than the other billion or so people in the developed world, we Americans believe—really believe—in the supernatural and the miraculous, and Satan on Earth, in reports of recent trips to and from heaven, and in a story of life’s instantaneous creation several thousand years ago.

We believe that the government and its co-conspirators are hiding all sorts of monstrous and shocking truths from us, concerning assassinations, extraterrestrials, the genesis of AIDS, the 9/11 attacks, the dangers of vaccines, and so much more.

—Kurt Andersen

Were I a philosopher, I should write a philosophy of toys, showing that nothing else in life need to be taken seriously, and that Christmas Day in the company of children is one of the few occasions on which men become entirely alive.

--Robert Lynd

The best of seers is he who guesses well.

—Euripides

Many of the insights of the saint stem from their experience as sinners.

—Eric Hoffer

I believe in God, but not as one thing, not as an old man in the sky. I believe that what people call God is something in all of us. I believe that what Jesus and Mohammed and Buddha and all the rest said was right. It's just that the translations have gone wrong.

—John Lennon

Major religions are examples of ‘noble lies’ aimed at uplifting human stature.

—Jack Miller

No human thing is of serious importance.

—Plato

The philosophy of the classroom today will be the philosophy of government tomorrow.

—Abraham Lincoln

Man is a masterpiece of creation if for no other reason than that, all the weight of evidence for determinism notwithstanding, he believes he has free will.

—Georg C. Lichtenberg

The Christian's Bible is a drug store. Its contents remain the same, but the medical practice changes.

—Mark Twain

I'm online, therefore I am.

—Stewart Lee Beck

What every genuine philosopher (every genuine man, in fact) craves most is praise although the philosophers generally call it recognition!

—William James

The philosopher ought never to try to avoid the duty of making up his mind.

—Mortimer Adler

Darwinism is not merely a support for naturalistic philosophy: it is a product of naturalistic philosophy.

—Phillip E. Johnson

Wonder is what sets us apart from other life forms. No other species wonders about the meaning of existence or the complexity of the universe or themselves.

—Herbert W. Boyer

By believing passionately in something that still does not exist, we create it. The nonexistent is whatever we have not sufficiently desired.

—Franz Kafka

In reading Chesterton, as in reading MacDonald, I did not know what I was letting myself in for. A young man who wishes to remain a sound Atheist cannot be too careful of his reading. There are traps everywhere

—C. S. Lewis

Philosophy is like trying to open a safe with a combination lock: each little adjustment of the dials seems to achieve nothing, only when everything is in place does the door open.

—Ludwig Wittgenstein

Metaphysics is a dark ocean without shores or lighthouse, strewn with many a philosophic wreck.

—Immanuel Kant

There is nothing so absurd but some philosopher has said it.

—Marcus Tullius Cicero

As mortals, we're ruled by conditions, not by ourselves.

—Bodhidharma

Reading Plato should be easy; understanding Plato can be difficult.

—Robin Waterfield

Confronted with the choice between having time and having things, we've chosen to have things. Today it is a luxury to read what Socrates said, not because the books are expensive, but because our time is scarce.

—Gabriel Zaid

Philosophy is a harbor for troubled souls.

—Saint Augustine

Learn and become who you are.

—Friedrich Nietzsche

Nietzsche's academic career was marked by a number of dazzlingly early successes. At 24, he was the youngest tenured faculty member at the University of Basel. But by 28, he had been demoted from wunderkind to pariah, thanks in large part of the publication of his first book, *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872). More a work of creative interpretation than a piece of faithful exegesis, the debut departed sharply from accepted philological method, infuriating Nietzsche's colleagues. It argued that two aesthetic tendencies vied for dominance in ancient Greece: the Dionysian, a primordial blurring of the borders dividing self and world, and the Apollonian, a rationalist paradigm that positioned art as an ordered alternative to the havoc of life. Though Nietzsche regarded these two forces as mutually enhancing—and he lauded tragedy for wedding them—his real allegiance lay with the Dionysian, as his life and work went on to attest.

—Becca Rothfeld

Fundamental progress has to do with the reinterpretation of basic ideas.

—Alfred North
Whitehead

If you would be a real seeker after truth, it is necessary that at least once in your life you doubt, as far as possible, all things.

—Rene Descartes

In actuality, the assumption that there is no freedom leads to the exact opposite of order in human behavior. If we all really felt we were not free to make our own choices of how to face and deal with the conditions set for us by heredity and environment, we would also feel no responsibility for our behavior. And we would be right. We couldn't be blamed for action over which we had no control, so we would make no real effort to act responsibly. We would give free rein to our passions on the grounds that whatever we did was part of the cause-and-effect sequence of events preordained by the conditions. Instead of orderly human conduct, there would be chaos. In fact, much of the irresponsible antisocial behavior that characterizes our modern society stems from the fact that many people have studied or otherwise absorbed this scientific doctrine of determinism. As a result, they have unconsciously excused their own behavior as well as that of others on the grounds that it is determined by factors beyond control.

—James C. Crumbaugh

Whoever it was who searched the heavens with a telescope and found no God would not have found the human mind if he had searched the brain with a microscope.

—George Santayana

Today's problems can't be solved by today's people.

—Barbara Kingsolver

The real problem is what to do with the problem-solvers after the problems are solved.

—Gay Talese

In ancient China, the Taoists taught that a constant inner smile, a smile to oneself, insured health, happiness and longevity. Why? Smiling to yourself is like basking in love; you become your own best friend. Living with an inner smile is to live in harmony with yourself.

—Mantak Chia

We all have the same God, we just serve him differently. Rivers, lakes, ponds, streams, oceans all have different names, but they all contain water. So do religions have different names, and they all contain truth, expressed in different ways forms and times. It doesn't matter whether you're a Muslim, A Christian, or a Jew. When you believe in God, you should believe that all people are part of one family. If you love God, you can't love only some of his children.

—Muhammad Ali

Prophecy class cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances.

—Church Marquee

Discussions are always better than arguments, because an argument is to find out who is right, and a discussion is to find what is right.

—eminentlyquotable.com