

# INDIVIDUALITY, BEST QUOTES ON

Could *Hamlet* have been written by a committee or the *Mona Lisa* painted by a club? Could the *New Testament* have been composed as a conference report? Creative ideas do not spring from groups. They spring from individuals.

--A. Whitney Griswold

It is the mind which creates the world about us, and even though we stand side by side in the same meadow, my eyes will never see what is beheld by yours, my heart will never stir to the emotions with which yours is touched.

--George Gissing

Do not follow where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.

—Muriel Strode

Children are born as individuals. If we fail to see that, if we see them as clay to be molded in any shape we like, the tougher ones will fight back and end up spiteful and wild, while the less strong will lose that uniqueness they were born with.

--Melvin Konner

I live in my own little world, but it's OK. They know me here.

—Lauren Myracle

There is no such thing as a weird human being. It's just that some people require more understanding than others.

--Tom Robbins

He who joyfully marches to music in rank and file has already earned my contempt. He has been given a large brain by mistake, since for him the spinal cord would suffice.

--Albert Einstein

Be yourself and love who you are and be proud, because you were born this way.

--Lady Gaga

A 'no' uttered from the deepest conviction is better than a 'yes' merely uttered to please, or worse, to avoid trouble.

--Mahatma Gandhi

I want each of you to go through life making the most of your individuality. Like it or not, you will go out into the real world and be treated as an adult. Adults show each other no mercy. If you fail to cultivate within yourself a fight-back mentality, society will end up controlling you.

—Tadao Andō

I speak up in class, I get sent to office. Megan speaks up in class, she's a 'strong, assertive model student.' I post a few flyers saying that the vending machines on school property are a sign that our school has sold out to corporate-industrial establishment, I get (what else?) Saturday detention. Megan starts a campaign to serve local foods in the lunchroom (oh, and can we please maybe get rid of the soda machines?) and the local newspaper does a write-up about her. She's like me, only not. Not like me at all. She's the golden girl and I'm...tarnished. So forgive me if I hate her a little.

—Katie Alender

[On school uniforms] Don't these schools do enough damage making all these kids think alike, now they have to make them look alike too? It's not a new idea, either. I first saw it in old newsreels from the 1930s, but it was hard to understand because the narration was in German.

—George Carlin

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

Always remember you're unique, just like everyone else.

—Margaret Mead

Not armies, not nations, have advanced the race; but here and there, in the course of ages, an individual has stood up and cast his shadow over the world.

--E. H. Chapin

All progress has resulted from people who took unpopular positions.

--Adlai Stevenson

The nail that sticks out is hammered down.

--Japanese Proverb

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.

--Robert Frost

The individual is not accountable to society for his actions, insofar as these concern the interests of no person but himself.

--John Stuart Mill

What does education often do? It makes a straight-cut ditch of a free, meandering brook.

--Henry David Thoreau

It is always the minorities that hold the key of progress; it is always through those who are unafraid to be different that advance comes to human society.

--Raymond B. Fosdick

Do not wish to be anything but what you are, and try to be that perfectly.

--St. Francis de Sales

At bottom every man knows well enough that he is a unique being, only once on this earth; and by no extraordinary chance will such a marvelously picturesque piece of diversity in unity as he is, ever be put together a second time.

--Friedrich Nietzsche

The well-developed, well-patterned individual human being is, in a strictly scientific sense, the highest phenomenon of which we have any knowledge; and the variety of individual personalities is the world's highest richness.

--Julian Huxley

Let every man be respected as an individual and no man idolized.

--Albert Einstein

Even when the experts all agree, they may well be mistaken.

--Bertrand Russell

Each man must discover his own way.

--Jean-Paul Sartre

Who can say more than this rich praise, that you alone are you?

--William Shakespeare

Individuality is everywhere to be spared and respected as the root of everything good.

--Johann Richter

In matters of conscience, the law of the majority has no place.

--Mahatma Gandhi

To follow foolish precedents, and wink  
With both our eyes is easier than to think.

--William Cowper

Men become civilized, not in proportion to their willingness to believe, but in proportion to their readiness to doubt.

--H. L. Mencken

The great creative individual is capable of more wisdom and virtue than collective man ever can be.

--John Stuart Mill

The perpetual obstacle to human advancement is custom.

--John Stuart Mill

People should think things out fresh and not just accept conventional terms and the conventional way of doing things.

--R. Buckminster Fuller

The race advances only by the extra achievements of the individual. You are the individual.

--Charles Towne

It is a blessed thing that in every age someone has had the individuality enough and courage enough to stand by his own convictions.

--Robert G. Ingersoll

You can follow the crowd,  
But there's not much cheer  
In always looking  
At someone's rear!

--Jack Tinker

A man who wants to lead the orchestra must turn his back on the crowd.  
--James Crook

The things that are wrong with the country today are the sum total of all the things that are wrong with us as individuals.  
--Charles W. Tobey

Commandment Number One of any truly civilized society is this: Let people be different.  
--David Grayson

I am the master of my fate;  
I am the captain of my soul.  
--William E. Henley

If fifty million people say a foolish thing, it is still a foolish thing.  
--Anatole France

Every individual has a place to fill in the world and is important in some respect whether he chooses to be so or not.  
--Nathaniel Hawthorne

Be Yourself is the worst advice you can give to some people.  
--Tom Masson

Society attacks early when the individual is helpless.  
--B. F. Skinner

No civilization has in it any element which in the last analysis is not the contribution of an individual.  
--Ruth Benedict

It is an absolute perfection...to know how...to get the very most out of one's own individuality.  
--Michel de Montaigne

The best things and best people rise out of their separateness; I'm against a homogenized society because I want the cream to rise.  
--Robert Frost

We forfeit three-fourths of ourselves in order to be like other people.

--Arthur Schopenhauer

Fashion condemns us to many follies; the greatest is to make oneself its slave.

--Napoleon Bonaparte

There is very little difference between one man and another, but what there is is very important.

--William James

Almost all absurdity of conduct arises from the imitation of those whom we cannot resemble.

--Samuel Johnson

I desire to so conduct the affairs of this administration that if, at the end...I have lost every friend on earth, I shall have one friend left, and that friend shall be down inside me.

--Abraham Lincoln

By gnawing through a dyke, even a rat may drown a nation.

--Edmund Burke

I think Dostoevsky was right, that every human being must have a point at which he stands against the culture, where he says, this is me and the damned world can go to hell.

--Logan Pearsall Smith

My great mistake, the fault for which I can't forgive myself, is that one day I ceased my obstinate pursuit of my own individuality.

--Oscar Wilde

Why should we be in such desperate haste to succeed, and in such desperate enterprises? If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer.

--Henry David Thoreau

Originality exists in every individual because each of us differs from the others. We are all primary numbers divisible only by ourselves.

--Jean Guilton

Originality does not consist in saying what no one has ever said before, but in saying exactly what you think yourself.

--James Stephens

Think wrongly, if you please, but in all cases think for yourself.

--Doris Lessing

Every human being is intended to have a character of his own; to be what no others are, and to do what no other can do.

--William Ellery  
Channing

People have one thing in common; they are all different.

--Robert Zend

Society in its full sense...is never an entity separable from the individuals who compose it.

--Ruth Benedict

Where all men think alike, no one thinks very much.

--Walter Lippmann

People should think things out fresh and not just accept conventional terms and the conventional way of doing things.

--Buckminster Fuller

The minority is always wrong—at the beginning.

--Herbert V. Prochnow

Any man more right than his neighbor constitutes a majority of one.

--Henry David Thoreau

He is a poor creature who does not believe himself to be better than the whole world else no matter how ill we may be, nor how we may have fallen, we should not change identity with any other person.

--Samuel Butler

Whatever you may be sure of, be sure of this, that you are dreadfully like other people.

--James Russell Lowell

That cause is strong which has not a multitude, but one strong man behind it.

--James Russell Lowell

To know what you prefer, instead of humbly saying 'Amen' to what the world tells you you ought to prefer, is to have kept your soul alive.

--Robert Louis Stevenson

I do my thing, and you do your thing.

I am not in this world to live up to your expectations

And you are not in this world to live up to mine.

You are you and I am I,

And if by chance we find each other, it's beautiful.

If not, it can't be helped.

--Frederick S. Perls

If all mankind minus one, were of one opinion, and only one person were of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person, than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind.

--John Stuart Mill

Man can will 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

'Tis better to be trampled out by asses' hoofs than be the thing the asses' mind approves.

--John Masefield

Many things that come into the world are not looked into. The individual says 'My crowd doesn't run that way.' I say, don't run with crowds.

--Robert Henri

What is it about us, the public, and what is it about conformity itself that causes us all to require it of our neighbors and of our artists and then, with consummate fickleness, to forget those who fall into line and eternally celebrate those who do not?

--Ben Shahn

I don't have to be what you want me to be.

--Muhammad Ali

We would know mankind better if we were not so anxious to resemble one another.

--Johann Wolfgang Van  
Goethe

In so far as a man conforms, he ceases to exist.

--Max Eastman

Since keeping in step with our fellows is almost as necessary to us as eating, it takes more heroism than an ordinary person can muster to tear himself away from any crowd marching shoulder to shoulder, no matter where it is going.

--Dorothy Canfield Fisher

Men have long begun to suspect that civilization's repression of our primitive impulses has somehow warped what are potentially the most productive forces in human nature. We are increasingly disturbed by the thought that society's passion for obedience and conformity may have overreached itself, causing us to lose in individual happiness perhaps as much as we have gained in group security.

--Dr. Smiley Blanton

I am a believer and a conformist. Anyone can revolt; it is more difficult silently to obey our own interior promptings, and to spend our lives finding sincere and fitting means of expression for our temperaments and our gifts—if we have any.

--Georges Rouault

Individuality is the salt of common life. You may have to live in a crowd, but you do not have to live like it, nor subsist on its food. You may have your own orchard. You may drink at a hidden spring.

--Henry Van Dyke

It saves trouble to be conventional, for you're not always explaining things.

--Myrtle Reed

The hallmark of courage in our age of conformity is the capacity to stand on one's convictions—not obstinately or defiantly (these are gestures of defensiveness not courage) nor as a gesture of retaliation, but simply because these are what one believes.

--Rollo May

Be yourself if you would serve others.

--Henry Van Dyke

The highest courage is to dare to appear to be what one is.

--John Lancaster  
Spalding

Do not depend upon others: there is no grace, no help to be had from the outside.

--Buddha

If we all pulled in one direction, the world would keel over.

--Yiddish Proverb

Men and women one of these days will have the courage to be eccentric. They will do as they like—just as the great ones have always done. The word eccentric is a term of reproach and mild contempt and amusement today, because we live under a system which hates real originality.

--Holbrook Jackson

When people are free to do as they please, they usually imitate each other.

--Eric Hoffer

Some trees grow very tall and straight and large in the forest close to each other, but some must stand by themselves or they won't grow at all.

--Oliver Wendell Holmes

There are no precedents: You are the first You that ever was.

--Christopher Morley

In every concrete individual, there is a uniqueness that defies all formulation. We can feel the touch of it and recognize its taste, so to speak, relishing or disliking, as the case may be, but we can give no ultimate account of it, and we have in the end simply to admire the Creator.

--William James

It's pretty damn hard to bring your uniqueness into actual being if you're always doing the same things as a lot of other people.

--Brendan Francis

He who goes with wolves learns to howl.

--Spanish Proverb

Every individual has some qualities and ways of experiencing that are his own, and it is this fact as well as things that can be called common, shared human characteristics that make him a member of humanity. It is in part the very uniqueness of every individual that makes him, not only a member of a family, race, nation, or class, but a human being.

--Helen Merrell Lynd

While you are alone you are entirely your own master and if you have one companion you are but half your own, and the less so in proportion to the indiscretion of his behavior.

--Leonardo da Vinci

He may well win the race that runs by himself.

--Benjamin Franklin

The longer we live, the more we find we are like other persons.

--Oliver Wendell  
Holmes, Sr.

Try not to beat back the current, yet be not drowned in its waters;  
Speak with the speech of the world, think with the thoughts of the few.

--John Hay

Conformity is the jailer of freedom and the enemy of growth.

--John F. Kennedy

Men are created different; they lose their social freedom and their individual autonomy in seeking to become like each other.

--David Riesman

Custom is the guide of the ignorant.

--English Proverb

There never were, in the world, two opinions alike, no more than two hairs, or two grains; the most universal quality is diversity.

--Michel de Montaigne

He who does anything because it is the custom, makes no choice.

--John Stuart Mill

I only ask to be free. The butterflies are free.

--Charles Dickens

To be nobody-but-myself—in a world which is doing its best, night and day, to make you everybody else—means to fight the hardest battle which any human being can fight, and never stop fighting .

--e. e. cummings

There is no ache more  
Deadly than the striving to be oneself.

--Yevgeniy Vinokurov

We need the faith to go a path untrod,  
The power to be alone and vote with God.

--Edwin Markham

They will say that you are on the wrong road, if it is your own.

--Antonio Porchia

If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music he hears, however measured or far away.

--Henry David Thoreau

We fancy men are individuals; so are pumpkins; but every pumpkin in the field goes through every point of pumpkin history.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

Every individual strives to grow and exclude and to exclude and grow, to the extremities of the universe, and to impose the law of its being on every other creature.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

Singularity is dangerous in everything.

--Fenelon

Anybody who is any good is different from anybody else.

--Felix Frankfurter

Men are born equal but they are also born different.

--Erich Fromm

Man is more interesting than men. God made him and not them in his image.  
Each one is more precious than all.

--Andre Gide

Though all men be made of one metal, yet they be not cast all in one mold.

--John Lyly

When two do the same thing, it is not the same thing after all.

--Publius Syrus

One doesn't discover new lands without consenting to lose sight of the shore for a very long time.

--Andre Gide

What another would have done as well as you, do not do it. What another would have said as well as you, do not say it. What another would have written as well, do not write it. Be faithful to that which exists nowhere but in yourself—and thus make yourself indispensable.

--Andre Gide

Follow your own bent, no matter what people say.

--Karl Marx

If you want to get along, go along.

--Sam Rayburn

Resolve to be thyself, and know that he  
Who finds himself, loses his misery.

--Matthew Arnold

Individualism is a fatal poison. But individuality is the salt of common life. You may have to live in a crowd, but you do not have to live like it, nor subsist on its food. You may have your own orchard. You may drink at a hidden spring. Be yourself if you would serve others.

--Henry Van Dyke

Avoid the crowd. Do your own thinking independently. Be the chess player, not the chess piece.

--Ralph Charell

Individuality is either the mark of genius or the reverse.  
Mediocrity finds safety in standardization.

--Frederick E. Crane

I am my own king, my leader and my guide, guardian of my freedom, and may no law ever remove or alter these rights.

--Beranger de La  
Tour  
d'Albenas

Everyone has a right to his own course of action—that's not too much to ask.

--Moliere

If God had wanted me otherwise, he would have created me otherwise.

--Johann Wolfgang Van  
Goethe

Man is not just an individual, he belongs to the whole; we must always take heed of the whole, for we are completely dependent on it.

--Theodore Fontane

I may not amount to much, but at least I am unique.

--J. J. Rousseau

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

All becomes easy when we follow the current of opinion; it is the ruler of the world.

--Napoleon I

Don't envy anybody. Every person has something no other person has. Develop that one thing and make it outstanding.

--Unknown

In matters of style, swim with the currents...in matters of principle, stand like a rock.

--Thomas Jefferson

The best things and best people rise out of their separateness.

--Robert Frost

Conform and be dull.

--James Frank Dobie

There is really no such creature as a single individual; he has no more life of his own than a cast-off cell marooned from the surface of your skin.

--Lewis Thomas

Instead of boiling up individuals into the species, I would draw a chalk circle round every individuality, and preach to it to keep within that, and preserve and cultivate its identity.

--Jane Welsh Carlyle

Society everywhere is in conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members....The virtue in most request is conformity. Self-reliance is its aversion. It loves not realities and creators, but names and customs.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

Whatever crushes individuality is despotism, by whatever name it may be called.

--John Stuart Mill

The man who goes alone can start today; but he who travels with another must wait till that other is ready.

--Henry David Thoreau

I share no man's opinions; I have my own.

--Ivan Sergeyevich  
Turgenev

You may talk of the tyranny of Nero and Tiberius; but the real tyranny is the tyranny of your next-door neighbor....Public opinion is a permeating influence, and it exacts obedience to itself; it requires us to think other men's thoughts, to speak other men's words, to follow other men's habits.

--Walter Bagehot

If I'm ever to reach any understanding of myself and the things around me, I must learn to stand alone.

--Henrik Ibsen

The strongest man in the world is he who stands most alone.

--Henrik Ibsen

Loyalty to petrified opinion never yet broke a chain or freed a human soul.

--Mark Twain

Independence? That's middle-class blasphemy. We are all dependent on one another, every soul of us on earth.

--George Bernard Shaw

Down to Gehenna or up to the Throne,  
He travels the fastest who travels alone.

--Rudyard Kipling

Don't join too many gangs. Join few if any.  
Join the United States and join the family—  
But not much in between unless a college.

--Robert Frost

The wisest men follow their own direction.

--Euripides

We can't reach old age by another man's road.

--Mark Twain

Be yourself and think for yourself; and while your conclusions may not be infallible they will be nearer right than the conclusions forced upon you by those who have a personal interest in keeping you in ignorance.

--Elbert Hubbard

Who  
cannot resolve upon a moment's notice  
To live his own life, he forever lives  
A slave to others.

--Gotthold Ephraim  
Lessing

Be thine own palace, or the world's thy jail.

--John Donne

How much time he gains who does not look to see what his neighbour says or does or thinks, but only at what he does himself.

--Marcus Aurelius

Independence is for the very few; it is a privilege of the strong.

--Friedrich Nietzsche

Now I know the things I know,  
And do the things I do;  
And if you do not like me so,  
To hell, my love, with you!

--Dorothy Parker

Any man who is really a man must learn to be alone in the midst of others, to think alone for others, and, if necessary, against others.

--Romain Rolland

Every society to which you remain bound robs you of a part of your essence, and replaces it with a speck of the gigantic personality which is its own.

--Jose Rodó

Solitary trees, if they grow at all, grow strong.

--Sir Winston Churchill

It is in solitude that the works of hand, heart and mind are always conceived, and in solitude that individuality must be affirmed.

--Robert Lindner

There never were, since the creation of the world, two cases exactly parallel.

--Lord Chesterfield

Every man is more than just himself; he also represents the unique, the very special and always significant and remarkable point at which the world's phenomena intersect, only once in this way and never again.

--Hermann Hesse

Do as most do, and men will speak well of thee.

--Thomas Fuller

I feel like one who treads alone  
Some banquet-hall deserted,  
Whose lights are fled, whose garlands dead,  
And all but he departed.

--Thomas Moore

Whoso would be a man must be a nonconformist.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

As soon as you can say what you think and not what some other person has thought for you, you are on the way to being a remarkable man.

--Sir James M. Barrie

Those who are ambitious of originality, and aim at it, are necessarily led by others, since they seek to be different from them.

--Richard Whately

But society has now fairly got the better of individuality; and the danger which threatens human nature is not the excess, but the deficiency, of personal impulses and preferences.

--John Stuart Mill

Let me grow as I be  
And try to understand why I want to grow like me;  
Not like my mom want to be  
Nor like my dad hopes I'll be  
Or my teacher thinks I should be  
Please try to understand and help me grow  
Just like me!

--Gladys Andrews  
Fleming

You can muffle the drum, and you can loosen the strings of the lyre, but who shall command the skylark not to sing?

--Kahlil Gibran

In order to seek one's own direction, one must simplify the mechanics of ordinary, everyday life.

--Plato

Paddle your own canoe.

--American Proverb

The surest way to corrupt a youth is to instruct him to hold in higher esteem those who think alike than those who think differently.

--Friedrich Nietzsche

Our wretched species is so made that those who walk on the well-trodden path always throw stones at those who are showing a new road.

--Voltaire

We are discreet sheep; we wait to see how the drove is going, and then go with the drove.

--Mark Twain

Most people can't understand how others can blow their noses differently than they do.

--Turgenev

It gives me great pleasure indeed to see the stubbornness of an incorrigible nonconformist warmly acclaimed.

--Albert Einstein

I was part of that strange race of people aptly described as spending their lives doing things they detest to make money they don't want to buy things they don't need to impress people they dislike.

--Emile Henry Gauvreau

Singularity in the right hath ruined many; happy those who are convinced of the general opinion.

--Benjamin Franklin

We see things not as they are, but as we are. Our perception is shaped by our previous experiences.

--Dennis Kimbro

There is something in every one of you that waits and listens for the sound of the genuine in yourself. It is the only true guide you will ever have. And if you cannot hear it, you will all of your life spend your days on the ends of strings that somebody else pulls.

--Howard Thurman

The thing that makes you exceptional, if you are at all, is inevitably that which must also make you lonely.

--Lorraine Hansberry

You must pay for conformity. All goes well as long as you run with conformists. But you, who are honest men in other particulars, know that there is alive somewhere a man whose honesty reaches to this point also, that he shall not kneel to false gods, and, on the day when you meet him, you sink into the class of counterfeits.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

Risk! Risk anything! Care no more for the opinion of others, for those voices. Do the hardest thing on earth for you. Act for yourself. Face the truth.

--Katherine Mansfield

That every man should regulate his actions by his own conscience, without any regard to the opinions of the rest of the world, is one of the first precepts of moral prudence.

--Samuel Johnson

Leave this hypocritical prating about the masses. Masses are rude, lame, unmade, pernicious in their demands and influence, and need not to be flattered but to be schooled. I wish not to concede anything to them, but to tame, drill, divide, and break them up, and draw individuals out of them.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

It is in vain to hope to please all alike. Let a man stand with his face in what direction he will, he must necessarily turn his back on one half of the world.

--George Dennison  
Prentice

Different doesn't mean inferior.

--Cornel West

I don't give a damn what others say. It's okay to color outside of the lines.

--Jimi Hendrix

Nothing is so unequal as equal treatment of unequal individuals.

--Thomas Jefferson

I am only free when I am me.

--Unknown

We have to remember that for a young person to travel against the grain takes courage. That kind of fortitude needs recognition and nurturing.

--Unknown

The essence of our effort to see that every child has a chance must be to assure each an equal opportunity, not to become equal, but to become different—to realize whatever unique potential of body, mind, and spirit he or she possesses.

--John Fischer

Trust yourself.

Think for yourself.

Act for yourself.

Speak for yourself.

Be yourself.

Imitation is suicide.

--Marva Collins

Differences are not necessarily deficits.

--Mary Frasier

I do not regard myself as handicapped, but I do regard as handicapped those 'normal' people around me who are handicapped when it comes to knowing how to deal with my difference.

--Anonymous Blind  
Scientist

If individuality has no play, society does not advance; if individuality breaks out of all bounds, society perishes.

--Thomas Henry Huxley

Be what you are. This is the first step in becoming better than you are.

—J. C. and A. W. Hare

i am not this hair.

i am not this skin.

i am the soul that lives within.

—Rumi

Only dead fish swim with the stream.

—Malcolm Muggeridge

When you think of the long and gloomy history of man, you find more hideous crimes have been committed in the name of obedience than have ever been committed in the name of rebellion.

--C. P. Snow

To be an individual in a complex and bewildering world is very difficult. Sensing their smallness and relative helplessness, many people are strongly inclined to submerge themselves in what they perceive to be the vastly more powerful identity of the group....Alone they are weak; together, they are a force that commands respect.

--Andrew Malcolm

The free individual feels himself, moreover, too small to cope with the immensity of the world in which he finds himself. Alone, he is no more than a mite in a maelstrom. Because his individual identity seems so insufficient, he feels the need to adopt, by association, another identity that represents the greatness and power that he lacks.

--Louis J. Halle

Irreverence is the champion of liberty and its only sure defense.

--Mark Twain

It is probable that democracy owes more to nonconformity than to any other single movement.

--R. H. Tawney

Every great historic change has been based on nonconformity, has been bought either with the blood or with the reputation of nonconformists.

--Ben Shahn

To be independent is the business of a few only; it is the privilege of the strong.

--Friedrich Nietzsche

Individuality is to be preserved and respected everywhere, as the root of everything good.

--Jean Paul Richter

The dissenter is every human being at those times of his life when he resigns momentarily from the herd and thinks for himself.

--Archibald Macleish

True individualists tend to be quite unobservant; it is the snob, the...sophisticate, the frightened conformist, who keeps a fascinated or worried eye on what is in the wind.

--Louis Kronenberger

He is free who knows how to keep in his own hands the power to decide, at each step, the course of his life, and who lives in a society which does not block the exercise of that power.

--Salvador de Madariaga

The classic liberal understanding of freedom is this: every individual should care for his own interest and mind his own business. No one should deem himself his brother's keeper unless his brother unequivocally asks him to. Every individual is a world unto himself, is a being in himself and is presupposed to be the best judge of his own affairs; everyone should respect the wishes, beliefs, and way of life of others....

--Mieszyslaw Maneli

When we lose the right to be different, we lose the privilege to be free.

--Charles Evans Hughes

Our institutions were not devised to bring about uniformity of opinion; if they had been we might well abandon hope. It is important to remember, as has well been said, 'the essential characteristic of true liberty is that under its shelter many different types of life and character and opinion and belief can develop unmolested and unobstructed.'

--Charles Evans Hughes

The opinion of the majority is not the final proof of what is right.

--Unknown

One can never consent to creep when one feels an impulse to soar.

--Helen Keller

We must respect religiously, reverently, the first indications of individuality.

--Maria Montessori

Celebrate what makes you different! Be yourself and respect the uniqueness of others.

--Unknown

You cannot discover new oceans unless you have the courage to lose sight of the shore.

—André Gide

We must overcome the notion that we must be regular. It robs you of the chance to be extraordinary and leads you to do the mediocre.

--Uta Hagen

If you have anything really valuable to contribute to the world it will come through the expression of your own personality, that single spark of divinity that sets you off and makes you different from every other living creature.

--Bruce Barton

He who walks in another's tracks leaves no footprints.

--Joan Brannon

No two men can be half an hour together but one shall acquire an evident superiority over the other.

--Samuel Johnson

No amount of artificial reinforcement can offset the natural inequalities of human individuals.

--Henry P. Fairchild

People differ in capacity, skill, health, strength; and unequal fortune is a necessary result of unequal condition. Such inequality is far from being disadvantageous either to individuals or to the community.

--Leo XIII

To dream of the person you would like to be is to waste the person you are.

-- Sholem Asch

Discoveries are often made by not following instructions, by going off the main road, by trying the untried.

--Frank Tyger

If a man is in a minority of one, we lock him up.

--Oliver Wendell Holmes

If we listened to our intellect, we'd never have a love affair. We'd never have a friendship. We'd never go into business, because we'd be cynical. Well, that's nonsense. You've got to jump off cliffs all the time and build your wings on the way down.

--Annie Dillard

You cannot put the same shoe on every foot.

--Publius Syrus

A society made up of individuals who were all capable of original thought would probably be unendurable.

--H. L. Mencken

Do not rely completely on any other human being, however dear. We meet all life's greatest tests alone.

--Agnes Campbell  
MacPhail

We must never wipe out or deride the differences amongst us—for where there is no difference, there is only indifference.

--Louis Nizer

Once conform, once do what other people do because they do it, and a lethargy steals over all the finer nerves and faculties of the soul. She becomes all outer show and inward emptiness; dull, callous, and indifferent.

--Virginia Woolf

The world is full of lonely people, all isolated in a private, secret dungeon.

--Loretta Girzartis

The person who tries to live alone will not succeed as a human being. His heart withers if it does not answer another heart. His mind shrinks away if he hears only the echoes of his own thoughts and finds no other inspiration.

--Pearl S. Buck

To be alone is to be different; to be different is to be alone.

--Suzanne Gordon

Turning away from the rest of the world, and turning inward—is death.

--Connie Warner Pepple

Remember always that you have not only the right to be an individual, you have an obligation to be one. You cannot make any useful contribution in life unless you do this.

--Eleanor Roosevelt

I feel we are all islands—in a common sea.

--Anne Morrow  
Lindbergh

The surest way to make a name for yourself is to find out where the crowd is going and then run the other way.

--Joseph P. Martin

Just as modern mass production requires the standardization of commodities, so the social process requires standardization of man, and this standardization is called equality.

--Erich Fromm

Certain defects are necessary for the existence of individuality.

--Johann Wolfgang Van  
Goethe

True individual freedom cannot exist without economic security and independence. People who are hungry and out of a job are the stuff of which dictatorships are made.

--Franklin D. Roosevelt

A majority can never replace the individual...Just as a hundred fools do not make one wise man, a heroic decision is not likely to come from a hundred cowards.

--Adolf Hitler

The great and invigorating influences in American life have been the unorthodox: the people who challenge an existing institution or way of life, or say and do things that make people think.

--Justice William O.  
Douglas

The objector and the rebel who raises his voice against what he believes to be the injustice of the present and the wrongs of the past is the one who hunches the world along.

--Clarence Darrow

Any man who is really a man must learn to be alone in the midst of others, to think alone for others, and if necessary against others.

--Romain Rolland

A man can be himself only so long as he is alone; ...if he does not love solitude, he will not love freedom; for it is only when he is alone that he is really free.

--Schopenhauer

No man or woman is an island. To exist just for yourself is meaningless. You can achieve the most satisfaction when you feel related to some greater purpose in life, something greater than yourself.

--Denis Waitley

Different strokes for different folks.

--African-American Folk  
Saying

The person who follows the crowd will usually go no further than the crowd. The person who walks alone is likely to find himself in places no one has ever seen before.

—Albert Einstein

One who runs alone cannot be outrun by another.

--Ethiopian Proverb

More than ever before, in our country, this is the age of the individual. Endowed with the accumulated knowledge of centuries, armed with all the instruments of modern science, he is still assured personal freedom and wide avenues of expression so that he may win for himself, his family and his country greater material comfort, ease and happiness; greater spiritual satisfaction and contentment.

--Dwight D. Eisenhower

The man who follows the crowd will never be followed by a crowd.

--Richard Spaight  
Donnell

Progress in America has resulted from the freedom of the individual to venture for himself and to assure the gains and take all the losses as they come.

--Robert R. Wason

Beaten paths are for beaten men.

--Eric Johnston

Take the course opposite to custom and you will almost always do well.

--Jean Jacques Rousseau

Do not seek to follow in the footsteps of the men of old; seek what they sought.

--Matsuo Basho

A real individual is self-substantial, a man who builds on his own genes for better or for worse, a man who would hate to be anybody but himself, a man who likes the flesh that sticks to his own ribs, a man who shows his natural face and does not care too much how others like it. A real individual consults himself, waits for the inner lift or fall of feeling, the dependable intimation, the touch of ages, the daemon's voice, the vital omen—and consults others only at the end of his own wits. He is apt to find that an idea ceases to be interesting as soon as it is generally accepted. He is a man who expands with joy in the heart of an enchanted isolation. He is a hive of surprising thoughts and judgments; it is not easy to predict what he will say.

--Henry A. Murray

Individualism is a fruit of organized society. But there is no guarantee that it will survive or develop even in this soil. It is not the result of inaction or apathy. It is not a mere decomposition of society into its primitive constituents, or an atavistic reversal of the process of historical development. Like the artificial oasis redeemed from the desert, it must be perpetually irrigated. Nature has yielded it reluctantly, and seeks every opportunity to reclaim it. It is the most exquisite and fragile flower of that historic human enterprise which is called civilization.

--Ralph Barton Perry

The majority of people display their individuality most in the kind of fool they become.

--Ed Howe

There are only two ways to preserve your freedom and individuality: saying no, and living alone.

--Chamfort

My definition of a free society is a society where it is safe to be unpopular.

--Adlai Stevenson

Believe nothing, O monks, merely because you have been told it...or because it is traditional, or because you yourselves have imagined it. Do not believe what your teacher tells you merely out of respect for the teacher. But whatsoever, after due examination and analysis, you find to be conducive to the good, the benefit, the welfare of all beings—that doctrine believe and cling to, and take it as your guide.

--Buddha

A man's worst difficulties begin when he is able to do as he likes.

--Thomas Henry Huxley

First, is the dangers of futility; the belief there is nothing one man or one woman can do against the enormous array of the world's ills—against misery and ignorance, injustice and violence. Yet many of the world's great movements, of thought and action, have flowed from the work of a single man.

--Robert F. Kennedy

Here is a man who was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another obscure village, where He worked in a carpenter shop until He was thirty, and then for three years He was an itinerant preacher. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never owned a home. He never had a family. He never went to college. He never put his foot inside a big city. He never traveled two hundred miles from the place where He was born. He never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but Himself. He had nothing to do with this world except the naked power of His divine manhood. While still a young man, the tide of public opinion turned against Him. His friends ran away. One of them denied Him. He was turned over to His enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed to a cross between two thieves. His executioners gambled for the only piece of property He had on earth while He was dying—and that was his coat. When he was dead He was taken down and laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend. Nineteen wide centuries have come and gone and today He is the centerpiece of the human race and the leader of the column of progress. I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, and all the navies that ever were built, and all the parliaments that ever sat, all the kings that ever reigned, put together have not affected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as has that One Solitary Life.

--James Allan Francis

Woe to him inside a nonconformist clique who does not conform with nonconformity.

--Eric Hoffer

Freedom is always and exclusively freedom for the one who thinks differently.  
--Rosa Luxemburg

To go against the dominant thinking of your friends, of most of the people you see every day, is perhaps the most difficult act of heroism you can have.  
--Theodore H. White

I desire that there be as many different persons in the world as possible: I would have each one be very careful to find out and preserve his own way.  
--Henry David Thoreau

You don't get harmony when everybody sings the same note.  
--Doug Floyd

Be brave enough to live creatively. The creative is the place where no one else has ever been. You have to leave the city of your comfort and go into the wilderness of your intuition. You can't get there by bus, only by hard work, risking, and by not quite knowing what you're doing. What you'll discover will be wonderful: yourself.  
--Alan Alda

All virtue lies in individual action, in inward energy, in self-determination. There is no moral worth in being swept away by a crowd, even toward the best objective.  
--William Channing

Success is not something that can be measured or worn on a watch or hung on the wall. It is not esteem of colleagues or the admiration of the community...Success is a certain knowledge that you have become yourself, the person you were always meant to be.  
--George Sheehan

The reward for conformity is that everyone likes you except yourself.  
--Rita Mae Brown

Be true to your own art, and congratulate yourself if you have done something strange and extravagant and broken the monotony of a discouraging age. It was a high counsel that I once heard given to a young person: Always do what you are afraid to do.  
--Ralph Waldo Emerson

No one can possibly achieve any real and lasting success or get rich in business by being a conformist.

--J. Paul Getty

Envy is the most stupid of vices, for there is no single advantage to be gained from it.

--Honoré de Balzac

If I agreed with you we'd both be wrong.

--Unknown

Girls need to have all their grandmothers wanted them to have, while looking as pretty as their mothers wanted them to look....You try so hard to be who everyone wants you to be while attempting to maintain some kind of individuality and in the end you seem to lose everything.

--Deborah Spar

Great things are not accomplished by those who yield to trends and fads and popular opinion.

--Jack Kerouac

There is a road, no simple highway,  
Between the dawn and dark of night,  
And if you go no one may follow,  
That path is for your steps alone.

--*The Grateful Dead*

What is genius but the power of expressing a new individuality?

--Elizabeth Barrett  
Browning

When you've got 10,000 people trying to do the same thing, why would you want to be number 10,001?

--Mark Cuban

I'm free. I just do what I want, say what I want, say how I feel, and I don't try to hurt nobody. I just try to make sure that I don't compromise my art in any kind of way, and I think people respect that.

--Erykah Badu

The best thing you've got going for you is individuality.

--Richard Thompson

Art is the most intense mode of individualism that the world has known.

--Oscar Wilde

Most of us really aren't horribly unique. There are 6 billion of us. Put 'em all in one room and very few would stand out as individuals. So maybe we ought to think of worth in terms of our ability to get along as a part of nature, rather than being the lords over nature.

--Herbert Simon

The older I get, the more individuality I find in animals and the less I find in humans.

--Chuck Jones

Individuals will speak their minds, which I think is healthy.

—William P. Leahy

Group conformity scares the pants off me because it's so often a prelude to cruelty towards anyone who doesn't want to—or can't—join the Big Parade.

—Bette Midler

You just have to do your own thing, no matter what anyone says. It's your life.

—Ethan Embry

It's better to be yourself and have no friends than to be like your friends and have no self.

—Unknown

Each individual is unique. We all have equal worth. Young and old, those who can cope and those who need help.

—Kjell Magne Bondevik

It's the only way that YOUR life is gonna have any value to you. If you're just living the same life that everybody else is living what's the point?

—Todd Rundgren

You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose.

—Dr. Seuss

I don't want to apologize for being a dorky, nerdy, offbeat person. I'm not looking for the broad path. I'm looking for my path.

—Hillary Casavant

There is no such thing as a person that nothing has happened to, and each person's story is as different as his fingertips.

—Elsa Lanchester

The easiest thing to be in the world is you. The most difficult thing to be is what other people want you to be. Don't let them put you in that position.

—Leo Buscaglia

A dead thing goes with the stream. Only a living thing can go against it.

—G. K. Chesterton

Nobody realizes that some people expend tremendous energy merely to be normal.

—Albert Camus

It is possible to be different and still be all right. There can be two—or more—answers to the same question, and all can be right.

—Anne Wilson Schaef

Look for your own. Do not do what someone else could do as well as you. Do not say, do not write what someone else could say, could write as well as you. Care for nothing in yourself but what you feel exists nowhere else—and out of yourself create, impatiently or patiently...the most irreplaceable of beings.

—André Gide

I am an individual.

I have dignity and worth.

I am unique.

I deserve respect and I respect others.

I am part of the human family.

I have something special to offer the world.

I am committed to a peaceful world for all of us.

I make a difference, and so do you.

I can accomplish whatever I set out to do, and so can you.

I am the key to peace.

—Naomi Drew

I desire that there be as many different persons in the world as possible; I would have each one be very careful to find out and preserve his own way.

—Henry David Thoreau

The world has many centers, one for each created being,  
And about each one lieth in its own circle.  
Thou standeth but half an ell from me,  
Yet about thee lieth a universe whose center I am not,  
But thou art.

—Thomas Mann

I look in the mirror and who do I see?  
My very own person who looks just like me.  
I look at my eyes, I look at my face,  
Knowing that no one on earth or in space  
Is quite like I am, one of a kind.  
My body is special and so is my mind.  
Each person alive has something special to give.  
We each make a difference each day that we live.  
I love myself and I love others too.  
The world is a special place,  
'Cause it has me and you.

—Naomi Drew

Individuality is only possible if it unfolds from wholeness.

—David Bohm

If you have anything really valuable to contribute to the world it will come through the expression of your own personality, that single spark of divinity that sets you off and makes you different from every other living creature.

—Bruce Barton

It's better to walk alone, than with a crowd going in the wrong direction.

—Internet Meme

My mother told me to be a lady. And for her, that meant be your own person, be independent.

—Ruth Bader Ginsburg

A human being is a single being. Unique and unrepeatable.

—Eileen Caddy

Comparison is the thief of joy.

—Theodore Roosevelt

Being a little weird is just a natural side-effect of being awesome.

—Sue Fitzmaurice

You'll learn, as you get older, that rules are made to be broken. Be bold enough to live life on your terms, and never, ever apologize for it. Go against the grain, refuse to conform, take the road less traveled instead of the well-beaten path. Laugh in the face of adversity, and leap before you look. Dance as though EVERYBODY is watching. March to the beat of your own drummer. And stubbornly refuse to fit in.

—Mandy Hale

To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

I like people who have a sense of individuality. I love expression and anything awkward and imperfect, because that's natural and that's real.

—Marc Jacobs

The one thing that doesn't abide by majority rule is a person's conscience.

—Harper Lee

A lie doesn't become truth,  
Wrong doesn't become right,  
And evil doesn't become good  
Just because it's accepted by a majority.

—Booker T. Washington

I, for one, hope that youth will again revolt and again demoralize the dead weight of conformity that now lies upon us.

—Howard Mumford  
Jones

Be who you are and say what you feel, because those who mind don't matter and those who matter don't mind.

--Bernard M. Baruch

It's okay to be weird...It's not okay to be a freakin' idiot.

—Ged Backland

Why fit in when you were born to stand out?

—Dr. Seuss

You're going to meet people who are intimidated by you. You're different. People don't know how to react or how to accept people who don't follow the crowd...They are not used to someone who doesn't fit in—so instead of bolstering your uniqueness, they'll try to make you feel like you're weird or damaged. I'm here to offer some well-earned advice: Screw them.

—*facebook / the idealist*

He who goes against the fashion is himself its slave.

—Logan Pearsall Smith

The hardest walk is walking alone, but it's also the walk that makes you the strongest.

—Ged Backland

Here's to the crazy ones. The misfits. The rebels. The troublemakers. The round pegs in the square holes. The ones who see things differently. They're not fond of rules. And they have no respect for the status quo. You can quote them, disagree with them, glorify or vilify them. About the only thing you can't do is ignore them. Because they change things. They push the human race forward. And while some may see them as the crazy ones, we see genius. Because the people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world, are the ones who do.

—Rob Siltanen

The great mass of human beings are not acutely selfish. After the age of about thirty they almost abandon the sense of being individuals at all—and live chiefly for others, or are simply smothered under drudgery.

—George Orwell

Every man must do his own growing, no matter how tall his grandfather was.

—Laurence Peters

Why can't I be different and unusual... like everyone else?

—Vivian Stanshall

We have a right, also, in various ways, to act upon our unfavorable opinion of anyone, not to the oppression of his individuality, but in the exercise of ours.

—John Stuart Mill

Why do you have to be a nonconformist like everybody else?

--James Thurber

The conflict between the need to belong to a group and the need to be seen as unique and individual is the dominant struggle of adolescence.

--Jeanne Elium and Don  
Elium

Children are born as individuals. If we fail to see that, if we see them as clay to be molded in any shape we like, the tougher ones will fight back and end up spiteful and wild, while the less strong will lose that uniqueness they were born with.

--Melvin Konner

Each second we live is a new and unique moment of the universe, a moment that never was before and will never be again. And what do we teach our children in school? We teach them that two and two make four and that Paris is the capital of France. When will we also teach them what they are? We should say to each of them....‘Do you know what you are?’ You are a marvel. You are unique. In all of the world there is no other child exactly like you. In the millions of years that have passed there has never been another child like you. And look at your body....what a wonder it is! You may become a Shakespeare, a Michelangelo, a Beethoven. You have the capacity for anything. Yes, you are a marvel. And when you grow up, can you then harm another who is, like you, a marvel? You must cherish one another. You must work; we all must work to make this world worthy of its children. The love of one’s country is a natural thing. But why should love stop at the border? We are all leaves of a tree and the tree is humanity.

--Pablo Casals

Universities where individualism is dreaded as nothing else, wherein manufactures of patent drama, business schools and courses for the propagation of fine embroidery are established on the order of the monied.

--Thomas Beer

The most courageous act is still to think for yourself. Aloud.

—Coco Chanel

I may be no better, but at least I am different.

—Jean-Jacques  
Rousseau

To teach a man how he may learn to grow independently, and for himself, is perhaps the greatest service that one man can do another.

—Benjamin Jowett

The rule for every man is, not to depend on the education which other men have prepared for him—not even to consent to it; but to strive to see things as they are, and to be himself as he is. Defeat lies in self-surrender.

—Woodrow Wilson

We need to nurture uniqueness and independence....Ours must be schools for ego-strength—the child's ego, not the teacher's. 'You can do it!' has to be the teacher's consistent, over-and-over steady slogan: 'You can hang up your own coat....' 'You can pour your own juice....' 'You can climb to the top....' 'You can figure it out.' We have no stake in schools where children learn to color within the lines. No stake in pushing for unnecessary conformity, no stake in children submerging themselves in the group, no stake in everlasting lessons in obediently following the directions.

--James L. Hymes, Jr.

A general State education is a mere contrivance for moulding people to be exactly like one another; and as the mould in which it casts them is that which pleases the dominant power in the government, whether this be a monarch, an aristocracy, or a majority of the existing generation; in proportion as it is efficient and successful, it establishes a despotism over the mind, leading by a natural tendency to one over the body.

—John Stuart Mill

The aim of public education is not to spread enlightenment at all; it is simply to reduce as many individuals as possible to the same safe level, to breed a standard citizenry, to put down dissent and originality.

—H. L. Mencken

If you go with the flow you'll eventually end up over the waterfall.

—Adam R. Gwizdala

The ultimate aim of education is to enable individuals to become the architects of their own education and through that process to continually reinvent themselves.

—Elliot W. Eisner

Education, for most people, means trying to lead the child to resemble the typical adult of his society...but for me and no one else, education means making creators....You have to make inventors, innovators...not conformists.

—Jean Piaget

The American Indian was an individualist in religion as in war. He had neither a national army nor an organized church.

—Charles Eastman

A graduation ceremony is an event where the commencement speaker tells thousands of students dressed in identical caps and gowns that ‘individuality’ is the key to success.

—Robert Orben

Follow your passion, stay true to yourself, never follow someone else’s path. Unless you’re in the woods and you’re lost and you see a path, then by all means you should follow that... Be true to yourself and everything will be fine.

—Ellen DeGeneres

There must always be a struggle between a father and son, while one aims at power and the other at independence.

--Samuel Johnson

This is the hope of many adolescent girls—to capture a parent’s heart with love for them as they are, as people. They reject the notion of being loved just because they are the child of the parent. They want the parent to fall in love with them all over again, because being new, they deserve a new love.

--Terri Apter

A student’s greatest thinking will come from his or her ability to break away—not to conform.

—Unknown

If everyone is thinking alike, then somebody isn’t thinking.

--George S. Patton

Any intelligent fool can make things bigger and more complex... It takes a touch of genius—and a lot of courage to move in the opposite direction.

--Albert Einstein

Sadly, children's passion for learning often ends when they encounter a world that seeks to educate them for conformity and obedience only.

—Robert John Meehan

Humanity's survival does not depend on reducing differences to a common identity, but on learning to live creatively with differences.

—Unknown

There was a time in our schools when teachers and administrators seemed quite insensible to the fact that children differed in ability, aptitude, interests, and therefore in achievement. If a pupil did not learn well, it was assumed that this was a sign that he was lazy and the way to cure that was by application of the rod. Today we know that children do differ in almost every conceivable way and that these individual differences, very large in some cases, have much to do with school achievement as well as personal adjustment, and success in school as well as out. Modern tests and testing procedures have done much to bring out the fact of such differences and to quantify them. That is, tests not only reveal that the differences exist but also tell us their extent or size.

—J. Wayne Wrightstone

As I told the students every time I visited a campus, you are the director of your own movie, and if you aren't enjoying what you are doing, change it.

—Gary Johnson

The girl clones at Singer Grove were just like the ones in Texas; they knocked themselves out to be like everyone else and then bragged about how they were different. All their differences put into a pot and boiled down wouldn't spice baby food. By trying to brag about how different they were, they just really showed how alike they were, because all their differences were alike.

—E. L. Konigsburg

Create your own path. Don't blindly follow the masses... because most of the time the 'M' is silent.

—Abhishek Shukla

A true survivor is someone who, after 12+ years of being schooled, remains independent in their thinking.

—Mokokoma  
Mokhonoana

Make sure your weird light shines bright so other weirdos know where to find you.  
—Sue Fitzmaurice

School forces unique individuals to think, act, and, look alike.  
—Mokokoma  
Mokhonoana

For in today's generation of teenagers finding acceptance is hard, especially for those who dare to be different—then it's impossible.  
—Rebecah McManus

Success, recognition, and conformity are the bywords of the modern world where everyone seems to crave the anesthetizing security of being identified with the majority.  
—Martin Luther King,  
Jr.

Be brave enough to live life creatively. The creative place where no one else has ever been.  
—Alan Alda

I was brought up to believe that there is no virtue in conforming meekly to the dominant opinion.  
—Jane Jacobs

I was encouraged to believe that simple conformity results in stagnation for a society, and that American progress has been largely owing to the opportunity for experimentation, the leeway given initiative, and to a gusto and a freedom for chewing over odd ideas. I was taught that the American's right to be a free individual, not at the mercy of the state, was hard-won and that its price was eternal vigilance, that I too would have to be vigilant.  
—Jane Jacobs

School children make up their own rules and enforce their own conformities. They feel safest when leisure time is rationed and dosed. They like to wear uniforms, and they frown on personal idiosyncrasies. Deviance is the mark of an outsider.  
—Louise Kaplan

A student's greatest thinking will come from his or her ability to break away—not to conform.  
--Unknown

## **AFTER SCHOOL SPECIAL**

Dear Mr. Schneider,  
I attended your elementary  
School almost thirty years ago  
And I'm very sure that  
You will remember  
Me.

My name is Suzy.  
I'm that hyperactive girl  
From the Egyptian family  
Who used to always play dead  
On the playground during  
Recess.

You used to keep me  
After school a lot,  
And then my father would  
Force me to make the long  
Walk home in the cold or rain.  
Sometimes I would arrive  
After dark.

I'm writing to tell you  
That I was bored as a kid.  
I was bored by your curriculum  
And the way I was always taught a  
Bunch of useless  
Junk.

I did not like being locked up  
In a prison of scheduled time  
Learning about irrelevant material,  
And watching belittling cartoons and  
Shows approved by academia that  
Made me even more  
Bored.

As a kid  
Who was constantly  
Growing, evolving, and  
Being shaped by all around me,  
I wanted to travel,  
See other kids  
In the world like me,  
To understand what was going  
On amongst us and around us,  
To know what we were here for  
And what was our real purpose  
For existence.

I have some questions  
I would like to ask you, Mr. Schneider,  
Now that I know that you are no  
Longer a school principal,  
But the new superintendent  
Of the entire school  
District.

I want to know  
Why racism today  
Was not clearly explained to me  
Even though we covered events  
That happened long ago.  
I want to know why you  
Never shared with us  
Why other countries  
Never liked us,  
Why we are taught to compete,  
To be divided in teams,  
And why conformity is associated  
With popularity, while  
Eccentricity is considered  
Undesirable?

I want to know  
Why my cafeteria lunches  
Were slammed packed

With bottom-tier  
Processed junk food  
Only suitable  
For pigs?  
And why is it  
That whenever a bully  
Slammed a kid into a locker for  
His lunch money,  
Nobody explained to us  
That egotism, selfishness and greed  
Were the seeds of  
War?

I want to know  
Why we were never taught  
To stick up for each other,  
To love one another, and that  
Segregation sorted by the  
Occupations of our fathers,  
The neighborhoods we lived in, our houses,  
Choices of sport, wealth, clothing,  
Color of our skin  
And the texture of our hair  
Should never, ever  
Divide us?

And lastly,  
I want to know why  
Is it that whenever I pledged  
Allegiance to the flag,  
I was never told that I was  
Actually hailing to the  
Chief?

You used to say that  
I was a troubled child,  
A misfit, and that I needed  
Obedience training,  
But you never acknowledged that  
I was the fastest runner in the district

And that I took the school  
To State and Nationals to compete  
In the Spelling Bee among kids  
Grades higher than me.  
And that it was me,  
Who won that big trophy  
That sat in your office when you  
Used to detain me for hours  
And tell me I was no  
Good.

Mr. Schneider,  
If we are not taught truths as kids,  
Then how do you expect us to  
Grow up to be truthful citizens?  
If we are only being taught the written way,  
And it has not shown positive effects  
In societies of yesterday or today,  
Then how can we progress as a  
United and compassionate  
Nation?  
What good is it,  
To memorize the histories  
Of our forefathers,  
Without learning what could be  
Gained from their lessons and mistakes  
To improve our future  
Tomorrows?

And finally,  
I want to thank you;  
For I know you have a tough job  
Dealing with rebellious children like me.  
Your job of mass processing and boxing  
The young minds of America has not been an easy one,  
And I congratulate you  
On your recent promotion.

But I sincerely want to thank you,  
Thank you,  
And thank you,  
For always pointing out  
That I was  
Different.

—Suzy Kassem

You are unique. You have different talents and abilities. You don't have to always follow in the footsteps of others. And most important, you should always remind yourself that you don't have to do what everyone else is doing and have a responsibility to develop the talents you have been given.

—Roy T. Bennett

### **THINK AS YOU LIKE BUT BEHAVE LIKE OTHERS**

If you make a show of going against the times, flaunting your unconventional ideas and unorthodox ways, people will think that you only want attention and that you look down upon them. They will find a way to punish you for making them feel inferior. It is far safer to blend in and nurture the common touch. Share your originality only with tolerant friends and those who are sure to appreciate your uniqueness.

—Robert Greene

### **ABOUT SCHOOL**

He always wanted to say things. But no one understood.  
He always wanted to explain things. But no one cared.

Sometimes he would just draw and it wasn't anything.

He wanted to carve it in stone or write it in the sky.

He would just lie out on the grass and look up in the sky  
and it would be only him and the sky and the things  
that needed saying.

And it was after that, that he drew the picture. It was a  
beautiful picture. He kept it under his pillow and  
would let no one see it.

And he would look at it every night and think about it.

And when it was dark, and his eyes were closed, he  
could still see it.

And it was all of him. And he loved it.

When he started school, he brought it with him. Not to show anyone, but just to have it with him like a friend.

It was funny about school.

He sat in a square, brown desk like all the other square, brown desks and he thought it should be red. And his room was a square, brown room. Like all the other rooms. And it was tight and close. And stiff.

He hated to hold the pencil and the chalk, with his arms stiff and his feet flat on the floor, stiff, with the teacher watching and watching.

And then he had to write numbers. And they weren't anything. They were worse than the letters that could be something if you put them together.

And the numbers were tight and square and he hated the whole thing.

The teacher came and spoke to him. She told him to wear a tie like all the other boys. He said he didn't like them and she said it didn't matter.

After that they drew. And he drew all yellow and it was the way he felt about morning and it was beautiful.

The teacher came and smiled at him. 'What's this?' she asked. 'Why don't you draw something like Ken's drawing? Isn't it beautiful?'

It was all questions.

After that his mother bought him a tie and he always drew airplanes and rocket ships like everyone else. And he threw the old picture away.

And when he lay out alone looking at he sky, it was big and blue and all of everything, but he wasn't anymore.

He was square inside and brown, and his hands were stiff, and he was like everyone else. And the thing inside him that needed saying didn't need saying anymore.

It had stopped pushing. It was crushed. Stiff. Like everything else.

-- Juliet Bonnay

School forces unique individuals to think, act, and, look alike.

—Mokokoma  
Mokhonoana

Like everyone else I am what I am: an individual, unique and different, with a lineal history of ancestral promptings and urgings; a history of dreams, desires, and of special experiences, all of which I am the sum total.

—Charlie Chaplin

The writer in Western civilization has become not a voice of his tribe, but of his individuality.

--Aharon Appelfeld

Avoid the crowd. Do your own thinking independently. Be the chess player, not the chess piece.

—Ralph Charell

I would always encourage people of any age not to be so quick to follow other people's truths but to search and follow your own moral code and live by your own integrity, and mostly just be brave.

—Jewel Kilcher

Never before has a generation of parents faced such awesome competition with the mass media for their children's attention. While parents tout the virtues of premarital virginity, drug-free living, nonviolent resolution of social conflict, or character over physical appearance, their values are daily challenged by television soaps, rock music lyrics, tabloid headlines, and movie scenes extolling the importance of physical appearance and conformity.

--Marianne E. Neifert

Women are all the same—they all want to be different.

—Unknown

Art is individualism, and individualism is a disturbing and disintegrating force. Therein lies its immense value. For what it seeks to disturb is monotony of type, slavery of custom, tyranny of habit, and the reduction of man to the level of a machine.

--Oscar Wilde

Individuality of expression is the beginning and end of all art.

--Johann Wolfgang Van  
Goethe

I...found myself saying to myself—I can't live where I want to—I can't go where I want to—I can't do what I want to—I can't even say what I want to....I decided I was a very stupid fool not to at least paint as I wanted to and say what I wanted to when I painted as that seemed to be the only thing I could do that didn't concern anybody but myself.

--Georgia O'Keeffe

The key to success for Sony, and to everything in business, science and technology is never to follow the others.

--Masaru Ibuka

No one can possibly achieve any real and lasting success or 'get rich' in business by being a conformist.

--J. Paul Getty

Government is necessary, not because man is naturally bad, but because man is by nature more individualistic than social.

--Thomas Hobbes

No matter how lonely you get or how many birth announcements you receive, the trick is not to get frightened. There's nothing wrong with being alone.

--Wendy Wasserstein

Being alone and liking it is, for a woman, an act of treachery, an infidelity far more threatening than adultery.

--Molly Haskell

I wonder if living alone makes one more alive. No precious energy goes in disagreement or compromise. No need to augment others, there is just yourself, just truth—a morsel—and you.

--Florida Scott-Maxwell

Conformity may not always reign in the prosperous bourgeois suburb, but it ultimately always governs.

--Louis Kronenberger

The individual has always had to struggle to keep from being overwhelmed by the tribe. If you try it, you will be lonely often, and sometimes frightened. But no price is too high to pay for the privilege of owning yourself.

—Friedrich Nietzsche

Imperfection is beauty, madness is genius and it's better to be absolutely ridiculous than absolutely boring.

—Marilyn Monroe

Do not fear to be eccentric in opinion, for every opinion now accepted was once eccentric.

—Bertrand Russell

The deepest problems of modern life derive from the claim of the individual to preserve the autonomy and individuality of his existence in the face of overwhelming social forces, of historical heritage, of external culture, and of the technique of life.

—Georg Simmel

Great spirits have always encountered violent opposition from mediocre minds. The mediocre mind is incapable of understanding the man who refuses to bow blindly to conventional prejudices and chooses instead to express his opinions courageously and honestly.

—Albert Einstein

Some people say you are going the wrong way, when it's simply a way of your own.

—Angelina Jolie

To find out what is truly individual in ourselves, profound reflection is needed; and suddenly we realize how uncommonly difficult the discovery of individuality is.

—C. G. Jung

The price we pay for being different may be severe.

—Unknown

The supreme goal of man is to fulfill himself as a creative, unique individual according to his own innate potentialities and within the limits of reality.

--Carl Jung

The shoe that fits one person pinches another; there is no recipe for living that suits all cases. Each of us carries his own life-form—an indeterminable form which cannot be superseded by any other.

--Carl Gustav Jung

If you follow the crowd, you will likely get no further than the crowd. If you walk alone, you're likely to end up in places no one has ever been before. Being an achiever is not without its difficulties, for peculiarity breeds contempt. The unfortunate thing about being ahead of your time is that when people finally realize you were right, they'll simply say it was obvious to everyone all along. You have two choices in life. You can dissolve into the main stream, or you can choose to become an achiever and be distinct. To be distinct, you must be different. To be different, you must strive to be what no else but you can be.

—Alan Ashley-Pitt

Constantly seeking approval means you're perpetually worried that others are forming negative judgments of you. This steals the fun, ingenuity, and spontaneity from your life. Flip the switch on this habit. If you're lucky enough to have something that makes you different from everybody else, don't be ashamed and don't change. Uniqueness is priceless. In this crazy world that's trying to make you like everyone else, find the courage to keep being your remarkable self. It takes a lot of courage to stand alone, but being unapologetically YOU is worth it!

—John Geiger

A man's worst difficulties begin when he is able to do as he likes.

--Thomas Huxley

Enjoy your own life without comparing it with that of another.

--Marquis de Condorcet

It's important to run not on the fast track, but on your track. Pretend you have only six months to live, and make three lists: the things you have to do, want to do, and neither have to do nor want to do. Then, for the rest of your life, forget everything on the third list.

--Robert Eliot

Live all you can; it's a mistake not to. It doesn't so much matter what you do in particular, so long as you have your life. If you haven't had that, what have you had?

--Henry James

I prefer to be true to myself, even at the hazard of incurring the ridicule of others, rather than to be false, and to incur my own abhorrence.

--Frederick Douglass

Could singlehood be, rather than a state of emergency or a problem that had to be solved, a positive life choice? Is a single person always the unmatched half of something, or could he or she be complete as is?

--Marion Winik

The first step toward success is taken when you refuse to be a captive of the environment in which you first find yourself.

—Mark Caine

I am inclined to think that being a success is tied up very closely with being one's own kind of individual.

—Eleanor Roosevelt

When psychologists Catherine Caldwell-Harris and Ayse Ayçiçeği compared U.S. and Turkish samples, they found that having 'an orientation inconsistent with societal values' is a risk factor for poor mental health. The findings support what the researchers call the personality-culture clash hypothesis: 'Psychological adjustment depends on the degree of match between personality and the values of surrounding society.' To the extent that introverts feel the need to explain, apologize, or feel guilty about what works best for them, they feel alienated not only from society but from themselves.

—Laurie A. Helgoe

It takes courage to grow up and become who you really are.

—e. e. cummings

Our need for security has led us into an insane attachment to things. We really must understand that the lust for affluence in contemporary society is psychotic. It is psychotic because it has completely lost touch with reality. We crave things we neither need nor enjoy. 'We buy things we do not want to impress people we do not like'. Where planned obsolescence leaves off, psychological obsolescence takes over. We are made to feel ashamed to wear clothes or drive cars until they are worn out. The mass media have convinced us that to be out of step with fashion is to be out of step with reality. It is time we awaken to the fact that conformity to a sick society is to be sick.

—Richard J. Foster

Human history is the sad result of each one looking out for himself.

--Julio Cortázar

Whether you try too hard to fit in or you try too hard to stand out, it is of equal consequence: you exhaust your significance.

—Criss Jami

Fashion is one human being's unconquerable will to look just like all the others.

—Unknown

Respect is not fear and awe; it...is the ability to see a person as he is, to be aware of his unique individuality. Respect, thus, implies the absence of exploitation. I want the loved person to grow and unfold for his own sake, and in his own ways, and not for the purpose of serving me.

--Erich Fromm

Don't be into trends. Don't make fashion own you, but you decide what you are, what you want to express by the way you dress and the way to live.

—Gianni Versace

The most important phase of living with a person is respect for that person as an individual.

—Millicent Carey  
McIntosh

Fitting in is death. Remember that. You want to stand apart from your peers. Always.

—Michael Frank

A child is like a butterfly in the wind. Some can fly higher than others, but each one flies the best it can. Why compare one against the other? Each one is different. Each one is special. Each one is beautiful.

—*Womenworking.com*

What you have, what you are—your looks, your personality, your way of thinking—is unique. No one in the world is like you. So capitalize on it.

—Jack Lord

I am not plain, or average or—God forbid—vanilla. I am peanut butter rocky road with multicolored sprinkles, hot fudge and a cherry on top.

—Wendy Mass

If you are always trying to be normal, you will never know how amazing you can be.  
—Maya Angelou

Remember always that you not only have the right to be an individual, you have an obligation to be one.

--Eleanor Roosevelt

I'm just like you, only I'm different because I'm me.

--Jim Coleman

Look into any man's heart you please, and you will always find, in every one, at least one black spot which he has to keep concealed.

--Henrik Ibsen

As individuals, we are shaped by story from the time of birth; we are formed by what we are told by our parents, our teachers, our intimates.

—Helen Dunmore

If you end up with a boring miserable life because you listened to your mom, your dad, your teacher, your priest, or some guy on television telling you how to do your shit, then you deserve it.

—Frank Zappa

Fashion is about dressing according to what's fashionable. Style is more about being yourself.

—Oscar de la Renta

For men and women are not only themselves; they are also the region in which they were born, the city apartment or the farm in which they learned to walk, the games they played as children, the old wives' tale they overheard, the food they ate, the schools they attended, the sports they followed, the poems they read, and the God they believed in.

—W. Somerset Maugham

One day our descendants will think it incredible that we paid so much attention to things like the amount of melanin in our skin or the shape of our eyes or our gender instead of the unique identities of each of us as complex human beings.

—Franklin Thomas

Whatever you may be sure of, be sure of this—you are dreadfully like other people.

--James Russell Lowell

It's not other people's job to make you happy and fulfilled; it's yours. It's important to always be nice and respectful of others, but it's even more important to be nice and respectful toward yourself. You have to live with yourself the rest of your life, so stop being so hard on yourself. Focus on your strengths and lead by example. You are special and unique in every way. And if other people don't appreciate you for who you are, it's their loss. Remember, there are some people who don't even like chocolate cake!

—Unknown

Most people live their life around what other people do.

--Tom Scholz

Be yourself. People don't have to like you, but you don't have to care.

—Ged Backland

Be yourself; everyone else is already taken.

—Oscar Wilde

By being yourself, you put something wonderful in the world that was not there before.

—Edwin Elliot

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

Be YOU. There is nothing sexier than someone who is confident enough to be themselves, quirks and all. It is often your unique nature that separates you from the crowd in the best way possible for your romantic match to notice you.

—Alaric Hutchinson

Of all individuals, the hated, the shunned, and the peculiar are arguably most themselves. They wear no masks whatsoever in order to be accepted and liked; they do seem most guarded, but only by their own hands: as compared to the populace, they are naked.

—Criss Jami

You're born an original—Don't die a copy.

—John Mason

Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't be trapped by dogma—which is living with the results of other people's thinking. Don't let the noise of other's opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become. Everything else is secondary.

—Steve Jobs

The average bright young man who is drafted hates the whole business because an army always tries to eliminate the individual differences in men.

--Andy Rooney

We are all equal in the fact that we are all different. We are all the same in the fact that we will never be the same. We are united by the reality that all colours and all cultures are distinct & individual. We are harmonious in the reality that we are all held to this earth by the same gravity. We don't share blood, but we share the air that keeps us alive. I will not blind myself and say that my black brother is not different from me. I will not blind myself and say that my brown sister is not different from me. But my black brother is he as much as I am me. But my brown sister is she as much as I am me.

—C. JoyBell C.

Now a woman can get married or not as she likes, she doesn't mind. Nobody throws things at her, or sneers. It has allowed women to be themselves, to choose their own future, or their own present; to choose things for themselves and not to be tied up by tradition. They're free agents to act as they want and as they feel they really need to act, without people sneering or people talking. It's a marvelous feeling to feel free to do just what you want to do after being down so long.

--Elizabeth Dean

Nora: Our house has never been anything but a playpen. I have been your doll wife, just as I was Daddy's doll child...

Torwald: First and foremost, you are a wife and mother.

Nora: I no longer believe that. I believe, first and foremost, that I am an individual, every bit as much as you are.

--Henrik Ibsen

I realized everyone around me was wearing a uniform. Black pants, white button-down shirts, green ties. Gotta love the smell of institutional equality in the morning.

—Francesca Zappia

In categories like cars or clothes, brands aren't just signals of quality; they also help us communicate our identities. When somebody totes a Fendi bag or drives a Harley-Davidson chopper, she is sending a message (particularly when doing both at the same time).

—Derek Thompson

That's the key, you know, confidence. I know for a fact that if you genuinely like your body, so can others. It doesn't really matter if it's short, tall, fat or thin, it just matters that you can find some things to like about it. Even if that means having a good laugh at the bits of it that wobble independently, occasionally, that's all right. It might take you a while to believe me on this one, lots of people don't because they seem to suffer from self-hatred that precludes them from imagining that a big woman could ever love herself because they don't. But I do. I know what I've got is a bit strange and difficult to love but those are the very aspects that I love the most! It's a bit like people. I've never been particularly attracted to the uniform of conventional beauty. I'm always a bit suspicious of people who feel compelled to conform. I personally like the adventure of difference. And what's beauty, anyway?

—Dawn French

We have many cases of men committing suicide rather than face their own individuality. I know of no case of a woman who committed suicide because she was gay.

—George Weinberg

The human being cannot live too long in the infantile environment, that is, in the bosom of his family, without serious danger to his psychic health. Life demands from him independence, and he who fails to answer the stern call through childish laziness and timidity is threatened with a neurosis.

--C. G. Jung

Everyone is kneaded out of the same dough but not baked in the same oven.

—Yiddish Proverb

Nobody is absolutely necessary; everybody can be replaced in this world at a minute's notice. While one great man is climbing the hills of fame, his successor is already born, and when he descends the other side, the successor will be at the top of the hill.

This simple truth is never believed, every man hoping that he will form an exception to the rule.

—Blanche Marchesi

The boughs of no two trees ever have the same arrangement. nature always produces individuals; She never produces classes.

--Lydia Maria Child

Understand that the right to choose your own path is a sacred privilege. Use it. Dwell in possibility.

—Oprah Winfrey

You might think that it would be the natural desire of every man to develop as an independent personality, but this does not seem to be true.

—Herbert Read

Every plant is an individual. Wrong again. We are not individuals at all, we are all connected. We are individuals the way each blossom on an apple tree is an individual.

--Dale Pendell

All men are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality.

—Martin Luther King,  
Jr.

Your life is yours and yours alone. Rise up and live it.

—Terry Goodkind

Never retreat. Never explain. Get it done and let them howl.

—Benjamin Jowett

I finally went  
where everyone goes  
and I realized  
I was  
never  
missing  
out.

--Meraaqi

They laugh at me because I'm different. I laugh at them because they're all the same.

—Kurt Cobain

The one thing that you have that nobody else has is you. Your voice, your mind, your story, your vision. So write and draw and build and play and dance and live as only you can.

—Neil Gaiman

The philosophical idea that there are no more distances, that we are all just one world, that we are all brothers, is such a drag! I like differences.

—Brian Eno

Never let oneself be guided by the opinion of one's contemporaries. Continue steadfastly on one's way.

—Gustav Mahler

Eagles fly alone, but sheep flock together.

—Polish Proverb

Today, the one common feature in American secular culture is its celebration of the self that breaks away from the constrictions of the family and the state, and, in its greatest expressions, from all limits entirely. The great American poem is Whitman's 'Song of Myself.' The great American essay is Emerson's 'Self-Reliance.' The great American novel is Melville's *Moby Dick*, the tale of a man on a quest so lonely that it is incomprehensible to those around him. American culture, high and low, is about self-expression and personal authenticity. Franklin Delano Roosevelt called individualism 'the great watchword of American life.'

--Stephen Marche

The consuming desire of most human beings is deliberately to plant their whole life in the hands of some other person. I would describe this method of searching for happiness as immature. Development of character consists solely in moving toward self-sufficiency.

--Quentin Crisp

Surely there is a time to submit to guidance and a time to take one's own way at all hazards.

—Thomas Huxley

Read, every day, something no one else is reading. Think, every day, something no one else is thinking. Do, every day, something no one else would be silly enough to do. It is bad for the mind to be always part of unanimity.

—Christopher Morley

Let's face it. We live in a command-based system, where we have been programmed since our earliest school years to become followers, not individuals. We have been conditioned to embrace teams, the herd, the masses, popular opinion—and to reject what is different, eccentric or stands alone. We are so programmed that all it takes for any business or authority to condition our minds to follow or buy something is to simply repeat a statement more than three or four times until we repeat it ourselves and follow it as truth or the best trendiest thing. This is called 'programming'—the frequent repetition of words to condition us how to think, what to like or dislike, and who to follow.

--Suzy Kassem

A man who trims himself to suit everybody will soon whittle himself away.

—Charles M. Schwab

Most people want so desperately to be an individual yet are so easily shaped by the media.

--Criss Jami

Nothing in the world makes people so afraid as the influence of independent-minded people.

—Albert Einstein

All greatness of character is dependent on individuality. The man who has no other existence than that which he partakes in common with all around him, will never have any other than an existence of mediocrity.

—James F. Cooper

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

—Lawana Blackwell

Solitude is strength; to depend on the presence of the crowd is weakness. The man who needs a mob to nerve him is much more alone than he imagines.

—Paul Brunton

Literary experience heals the wound, without undermining the privilege, of individuality. There are mass emotions which heal the wound; but they destroy the privilege....But in reading great literature I become a thousand men and yet remain myself....Here, as in worship, in love, in moral action, and in knowing, I transcend myself; and am never more myself than when I do.

—C. S. Lewis

I mingle with my peers or no one, and since I have no peers, I mingle with no one.  
—Ignatius J. Reilly

The best day of your life is the one on which you decide your life is your own. No apologies or excuses. No one to lean on, rely on, or blame. The gift is yours—it is an amazing journey—and you alone are responsible for the quality of it. This is the day your life really begins.

—Bob Moawad

The one thing that you have that nobody else has is you. Your voice, your mind, your story, your vision. So write and draw and build and play and dance and live as only you can.

—Neil Gaiman

ONE...

One tree can start a forest;  
One smile can begin a friendship;  
One hand can lift a soul;  
One word can frame the goal;  
One candle can wipe out darkness;  
One laugh can conquer gloom;  
One hope can raise your spirits;  
One touch can show you care;  
One life can make the difference;  
Be that one today.

—Internet Meme

To be successful, one has to be one of three bees—the queen bee, the hardest working bee, or the bee that does not fit in.

—Suzy Kassem

There is...hope for any person who wants to remain an individual. He can assert himself and refuse to conform. He'll be on his own, that's true, but while he will not have the security enjoyed by those who do conform, there will be no limits to what he may achieve.

—J. Paul Getty

If you are 1 in a million there are 7000 people just like you.

—Internet Meme

We are at that age that balances between independence and conferring with your friends about every miniscule decision you make. I've never liked that part of adolescence.

—Tarryn Fisher

The young always have the same problem—how to rebel and conform at the same time. They have now solved this by defying their parents and copying one another.

—Quentin Crisp

Loneliness is the human condition. Cultivate it. The way it tunnels into you allows your soul room to grow. Never expect to outgrow loneliness. Never hope to find people who will understand you, someone to fill that space. An intelligent, sensitive person is the exception, the very great exception. If you expect to find people who will understand you, you will grow murderous with disappointment. The best you'll ever do is to understand yourself, know what it is that you want, and not let the cattle stand in your way.

—Janet Fitch

Your body type shouldn't dictate your success. Remarkable dancers come in many different packages. As with any pursuit in life, it's up to you to make the most with whatever it is you've been given. So treat your body, your instrument, with care. Learn to love it and respect it. It is one of the unique things about you that makes you, you.

—Francisco Gella

I think one of the most important things they should understand is that every single student has their own hopes and dreams. For some it may be to be on the honor roll all through high school, go to Harvard, and grow up to be a very 'successful' person. For others, it may just be not to flunk out of high school. You need to embrace everyone's wants. That doesn't mean that you should give more attention to those with higher hopes. Just work with each one and encourage them to do their best.

—Anonymous Middle  
School Student  
quoted by Nancy  
Doda & Trudy  
Knowles

I'm not waiting for a hero. I saved myself long ago. I don't need someone to complete me. I am whole alone. I just want a weirdo to go on adventures with. Someone who will dance with me, kiss me when I least expect it and make me laugh. That's it.

—Brooke Hampton

Increasingly, Americans are pursuing a selfish individualism that is inconsistent with strong families and strong communities. This movement is fueled by the media...which suggests that personal happiness is the highest good and that it can be achieved by pursuing pleasure and material goods. This message stands in stark contrast to the traditional Judeo-Christian values of community and self-sacrifice for the welfare of others.

—Peter Uhlenberg and  
David Eggebeen

All of us, no matter who we are, have this basic need to identify ourselves as somebody, as a separate, unique, distinct human being—our self-image, our self-concept, whatever you want to call it. There is nothing complicated about this. It's me in distinction to you, and you in distinction to me. From the time we are born until the time we die, we struggle to gain and to maintain for ourselves this feeling as an identified person. We are somebody.

—William Glasser

I never saw being different in and of itself as the point to being Goth—dressing different from most others, maybe, but the point to me was to get together with people who liked the same music and clothes, or at least very similar music and clothes, and go to clubs, go to movies, go to coffee-houses and hold poetry readings and, in general, just have some good harmless fun. Did I look like a dork? Sure, but so did everybody else in the club. We weren't being different, at least not all of us, we just were different and the point was to stop bitching about being different and just have fun.

—Ruadhán J. McElroy

I never said it was easy to find your place in this world, but I'm coming to the conclusion that if you seek to please others, you will forever be changing because you will never be yourself, only fragments of someone you could be. You need to belong to yourself, and let others belong to themselves too. You need to be free and detached from things and your surroundings. You need to build your home in your own simple existence, not in friends, lovers, your career or material belongings, because these are things you will lose one day. That's the natural order of this world. This is called the practice of detachment.

—Charlotte Eriksson

I cherished her individuality, that spark of independence no child should lose to life's restrictions and parameters.

—Truddi Chase

Violet will be a good color for hair at just about the same time that brunette becomes a good color for flowers.

—Fran Lebowitz

If you have gone a whole week without being disobedient, you are doing yourself and your organization a disservice.

—Tom Peters

The library might have been the first place I was ever given autonomy.

—Susan Orlean

$6 + 3 = 9$  but so does  $5 + 4$ . The way you do things isn't always the only way to do them. Respect other people's way of thinking.

—Internet Meme

YOU didn't disappoint your parents. Your parents held rigid expectations and never adjusted them even when it was clear they didn't fit you. Children grow in all directions. It's not your fault if your parents weren't prepared to grow with you.

—Internet Meme

Autism: It's not an illness. It's a different way of being human.

—[www.facebook.com/autismteachings](http://www.facebook.com/autismteachings)

Popcorn is prepared in the same pot, in the same heat, in the same oil, and yet, the kernels do not pop at the same time. Don't compare your child to other children. Their turn to pop is coming.

—Internet Meme

Eat well, grow strong and continue to be beautiful. You are not defined by someone else's ignorance.

—Langston Hughes

...we're just as complex as men, and not all of us get along, and that's okay. We can work in a space and be really good at our jobs and not have everybody be best friends and have slumber parties. Let's kill that, okay? We're all individuals.

—Charlize Theron

For though my faith is not yours and your faith is not mine, if we are each free to light our own flame, together we can banish some of the darkness of the world.

—Rabbi Lord Jonathan  
Sacks

A study of women's magazines by the sociologists Francesca Cancian and Steven L. Gordon found that from 1900 to 1979, themes of putting family before self dominated in the 1950s: 'Love means self-sacrifice and compromise.' In the 1960s and '70s, putting self before family was prominent: 'Love means self-expression and individuality.' Men absorbed these cultural themes, too. The master trend in Baby Boomer culture generally was liberation—'Free Bird,' 'Born to Run,' 'Ramblin' Man.'

—David Brooks

When Arnold M. Ludwig, an adjunct psychiatry professor at Brown University, examined the lives of more than 1,000 eminent people—including Frida Kahlo, Jean-Paul Sartre, and John Lennon—for his book *The Price of Greatness*, he found that creative types, such as artists and writers, were more likely than, say, business people to be considered 'odd or peculiar' as children, and more likely than public officials or soldiers to be considered 'different' as adults.

—Olga Khazan

You don't have to explain why you want what you want, do what you do, love what you love, need what you need. You are allowed to live a life some people don't understand.

Laura McKowen

There is a story behind every person. There is a reason why they are the way they are. Think about that, and respect them for who they are.

—Angel Chernoff

If you want to know what makes you unique, sit for caricature.

—*theChive*

People get built different. We don't have to figure it out. We just have to respect it.

—Princess Bubblegum,  
*Adventure Time*

You have to be odd to be number one.

—Dr. Seuss

Fearlessness means taking the first step, even if you don't know where it will take you. It means being driven by a higher purpose, rather than by applause. It means knowing that you reveal your character when you stand apart, more than when you stand with the crowd.

—Chadwick Boseman

Westerners are hyper-individualistic and hyper-mobile, whereas just about everyone else in the world was and still is enmeshed in family and more likely to stay put. Westerners obsess more about personal accomplishments and success than about meeting family obligations (which is not to say that other cultures don't prize accomplishments, just that it comes with the package of family obligations).

Westerners identify more as members of voluntary social groups—dentists, artists, Republicans, Democrats, supporters of a green Party—than of extended clans.

—Judith Shulevitz

Stay true to yourself. An original is worth more than a copy.

—Suzy Kassem

'Finding yourself' is not really how it works. You aren't a ten-dollar bill in last winter's coat pocket. You are also not lost. Your true self is right here, buried under cultural conditioning, other people's opinions and inaccurate conclusions you drew as a kid that became your beliefs about who you are. 'Finding yourself' is actually returning to yourself. An unlearning, an excavation, a remembering who you were before the world got its hands on you.

—Emily McDowell

Blessed are the weird people—poets, misfits, writers, mystics, painters and troubadours, for they teach us to see the world through different eyes.

—Jacob Nordby

I believe in teaching people to be individuals, and to understand other individuals.

—E. M. Forster

Sometimes the people around you won't understand your journey. They don't need to. It's not for them.

—Joubert Botha

We're all a little weird, and life's a little weird. And when we find someone whose weirdness is compatible with ours, we join up with them and fall in mutual weirdness and call it love.

—Dr. Seuss

No two children make the same response to any school situation. Differences of heredity, physical maturity, intelligence, motor skills, health, experiences with parents, siblings, playmates; consequent attitudes, motives, drives, tastes, fears—all these and more enter into production of each child's unique reaction. Children vary in their minds and personalities as much as in their appearance.

—Goodwin Watson

We are sun and moon, dear friend; we are sea and land. It is not our purpose to become each other; it is to recognize each other, to learn to see the other and honor him for what he is: each the other's opposite and complement.

—Hermann Hesse

One of the most important of life's lessons is to learn independence, to understand freedom. This means independence from attachments, from results, from opinions, and from expectations. Breaking attachments leads to freedom, but breaking attachments does not mean abandoning a loving and meaningful relationship, a relationship that nourishes your soul. It means ending dependency on any person or thing. Love is never a dependency.

—Brian L. Weiss

Do not compare yourselves to others. Be true to who you are.

—Daisaku Ikeda

You were born to be you, not anyone else. So love and honor who you are; that's the greatest gift you give yourself.

—Tracey Smith

I dress the way I want. I don't pretend to be someone I'm not.

—Britney Spears

The age of conformity is over. Anytime I wear anything..., people are like, where did you get that?

—Shaudi Lynn

The function of a child is to live his/her own life, not the life that his/her anxious parents think he/she should live, nor a life according to the purpose of the educators who thinks they knows best.

—A. S. Neill

Independence is my happiness, and I view things as they are, without regard to place or person; my country is the world, and my religion is to do good.

—Thomas Paine

Men are not created equal in the sense some people would have us believe-some people are smarter than others, some people have more opportunity because they're born with it, some men make more money than others, some ladies make better cakes than others-some people are born gifted beyond the normal scope of most men.

—Harper Lee

Children, even when very young, have the capacity for inventive thought and decisive action. They have worthwhile ideas. They make perceptive connections. They're individuals from the start: a unique bundle of interests, talents, and preferences. They have something to contribute. They want to be a part of things. It's up to us to give them the opportunity to express their creativity, explore widely, and connect with their own meaningful work.

—Lori McWilliam Pickert

One of the essential problems for education is that most countries subject their schools to the fast-food model of quality assurance when they should be adopting the Michelin model instead. The future for education is not in standardizing but in customizing; not in promoting groupthink and deindividuation but in cultivating the real depth and dynamism of human abilities of every sort.

—Ken Robinson

I dreamed I stood in a studio  
And watched two sculptors there.  
The clay they used was a young child's mind,  
They fashioned it with care.

One was a Teacher—  
The tools he used were books, music, and art.  
One was a Parent with a guiding hand,  
With a gentle loving heart.

Day after day the teacher toiled,  
With touch that was deft and sure;  
While the parent labored by his side  
To polish and smooth it over.

And when at last their task was done,  
They were proud for what they had wrought  
For the things they molded into the child  
Could neither be sold or bought.

Each agree he might have failed  
If he had worked alone  
For behind the parent stood a school  
And behind the teacher a home.

--Ray A. Lingenfelter

As one goes through life, one learns that if you don't paddle your own canoe, you don't move.

—Katherine Hepburn

Education should be the process of helping everyone to discover his uniqueness.

—Leo Buscaglia

Differences abound! Race, creed, color, gender, national origin, handicap, age, familial status, socio-economics, education, politics, religion, geography, and job status. Does that list look like a poster ad for the ACLU? Add in our vastly different life experiences and things really start to get interesting.

—Susan C. Young

Individual identities and national destinies were shaped by the tripod of history, geography, and philosophy.

—Patrick Mendis

You have a unique gift to offer this world. Be true to yourself, be kind to yourself, read and learn about everything that interests you and keep away from people who bring you down. When you treat yourself kindly and respect the uniqueness of those around you, you will be giving this world an amazing gift... YOU!

—Steve Maraboli

No person, no matter how beloved, can ever truly understand us.

—Donna Tartt

The downfall of the attempts of governments and leaders to unite mankind is found in this—in the wrong message that we should see everyone as the same. This is the root of the failure of harmony. Because the truth is, we should not all see everyone as the same! We are not the same! We are made of different colours and we have different cultures. We are all different! But the key to this door is to look at these differences, respect these differences, learn from and about these differences, and grow in and with these differences. We are all different. We are not the same. But that's beautiful. And that's okay. In the quest for unity and peace, we cannot blind ourselves and expect to be all the same. Because in this, we all have an underlying belief that everyone should be the same as us at some point. We are not on a journey to become the same or to be the same. But we are on a journey to see that in all of our differences, that is what makes us beautiful as a human race, and if we are ever to grow, we ought to learn and always learn some more.

—C. JoyBell C.

If you're lucky enough to find a way of life you love, you have to find the courage to live it.

—John Irving

Cherish your solitude. Take trains by yourself to places you have never been. Sleep out alone under the stars. Learn how to drive a stick shift. Go so far away that you stop being afraid of not coming back. Say no when you don't want to do something. Say yes if your instincts are strong, even if everyone around you disagrees. Decide whether you want to be liked or admired. Decide if fitting in is more important than finding out what you're doing here.

—Eve Ensler

Learn to be happy alone. Rely upon your own energies, and so not wait for, or depend on other people.

—Thomas Davidson

The greatest gifts you can give your children are the roots of responsibility and the wings of independence.

—Denis Waitley

If you are different, you are isolated, not only from people of your own age but from those of your parents' generation and from your children's generation too. They'll never understand you and they'll be shocked no matter what you do. But your grandparents would probably be proud of you and say: 'There's a chip off the old block,' and your grandchildren will sigh enviously and say: 'What an old rip Grandma must have been!' and they'll try to be like you.

—Margaret Mitchell

I am different & it has cost me many people. But I'm always myself. It is better to lose others than to lose your-self to fit-in.

—<https://veeroesquotes.com>

A different version of you exists in the minds of everyone who knows you.

—*theChive*

Compare yourself only with yourself. You don't know others' full story, and there's no need to feel guilty for not being as good as them, or feeling justified in being 'better' or 'worse' in any area. We all walk our own path, and we all have our own lessons and challenges to face. The more you focus on you, the better you will become.

—Doe Zantamata

Every child is a unique human being who grows at his or her individual rate —except in schools.

—Jim Grant

When you measure your growth, make sure to only measure your today self by your past self. If you compare your relationships, your success, or your anything against anyone else, you are not being fair to you. Everyone has a different path, a different pace, and different challenges to face along the way.

—Doe Zantamata

The child who refuses to travel in the father's harness, this is the symbol of man's most unique capability. 'I do not have to be what my father was. I do not have to obey my father's rules or even believe everything he believed. It is my strength as a human that I can make my own choices of what to believe and what not to believe, of what to be and what not to be.'

—Frank Herbert

When God made you, He threw away the mold. There never has been or ever will be another person just like you. So you are an original, a meticulously designed instrument. That's great! But you will never perform, live or achieve above the value you attribute to yourself.

—Unknown

The main obstacle to empathy is our persistent belief that everybody is exactly like us.

—John Powell

We who lived in concentration camps can remember the men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. They may have been few in number, but they offer sufficient proof that everything could be taken from a man but one thing: the last of his freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way.

—Victor E. Frankl

It is a good feeling to know that I am the only one of my kind in the history of the world.

—Eddy Feigner

Don't keep forever on the public road, going only where others have gone. Leave the beaten track occasionally and drive into the woods. You will be certain to find something you have never seen before. Of course it will be a little thing, but do not

ignore it. Follow it up, explore all around it; one discovery will lead to another, and before you know it you will have something worth thinking about to occupy your mind. All really big discoveries are the results of thought.

—Alexander Graham  
Bell

100,000 lemmings can't be wrong.

—Unknown

Don't compromise yourself. You are all you've got.

—Janis Joplin

Every society honors its live conformists and its dead troublemakers.

—Mignon McLaughlin

Miss Ogilvy had found as her life went on that in this world it is better to be one with the herd, that the world has no wish to understand those who cannot conform to its stereotyped pattern.

—Radclyffe Hall (1926)

She had for so many years been trying to be like other people, that she was now like nothing in heaven or earth.

—Mary Webb

Society's the mother of convention.

—Carolyn Wells

There are no words more obscene than 'I can't live without you.'

—Sally Miller Gearhart

With the rise of industrialism, words like 'normal' and 'defective,' words that had once only been used to refer to things, began to be used to refer to people....In the industrial age, a new degree of uniformity was expected of people.

—Anne Finger

Diversity is the most basic principle of creation. No two snowflakes, blades of grass or people are alike.

—Lynn Maria Laitala

It is to the eccentrics that the world owes most of its knowledge.

—Rose Macaulay

I have a led a free, wondering life for so long now that I should find myself quite incapable of settling down...Women like myself can neither bring happiness into a domestic life, nor (even under the most desirable circumstances), find it there.

—Margaret Fountaine  
(1904)

The content of the curriculum should never exclude the realities of the very students who must intellectually wrestle with it. When students study all worlds except their own, they are miseducated.

—Johnnetta B. Cole

We already have so much pressure towards sameness through radio, film and comic outside the school, that we can't afford to do a thing inside that is not toward individual development.

—Sylvia Ashton-Warner

Equalizing opportunity through universal higher education subjects the whole population to the intellectual mode natural only to a few. It violates the fundamental egalitarian and principal of respect for the differences between people.

—Caroline Bird

We were like a lot of clocks...all striking different hours, all convinced we were telling the right time.

—Susan Ertz

Nothing fruitful ever comes when plants are forced to flower in the wrong season.

—Bette Bao Lord

You can't push a wave onto the shore any faster than the ocean brings it in.

—Susan Strasberg

'Who does she think she is?'

Well, it appears she is someone living her life unconcerned with who you think she is.

—Brendon Burchard

The fact that we are human beings is infinitely more important than all the peculiarities that distinguish human beings from one another.

—Simone de Beauvoir

The crucial differences which distinguish human societies and human beings are not biological. They are cultural.

—Ruth Benedict

Society...is tolerant of crimes, and long suffering with dullness, but it shows no mercy to those who are different from other people.

—Geraldine Jewsbury  
(1845)

The only useful answer to the question ‘Who is smarter, a man or a woman?’ is, Which man and which woman?

—Estelle Ramey

There are many trails up the mountain, but in time they all reach the top.

—Anya Seton

Most of the men or women who have contributed to our civilization or our culture have been vilified in their day....As we denounce the rebellious, the non-conformists, so we reward mediocrity so long as it mirrors herd standards.

—Tallulah Bankhead

Every effort for progress, for enlightenment, for science, for religious, political, and economic liberty, emanates from the minority, and not from the mass.

—Emma Goldman

My mother and I could always look out the same window without ever seeing the same thing.

—Gloria Swanson

Do you know what it’s like to feel wrong twenty-four hours a day? Do you know what it’s like to be disapproved of, not only for what you do and say and think but for what you are?

—Joyce Rebeta-Burditt

Pioneering is the work of individuals.

—Susanne K. Langer

There is a law which decrees that two objects may not occupy the same place at the same time—result: two people cannot see things from the same point of view, and the slightest difference in angle changes the thing seen.

—Mildred Aldrich

The only real security is not insurance or money or a job, not a house and furniture paid for, or a retirement fund, and never is it another person. It is the skill and humor and courage within, the ability to build your own fires and find your own peace.

—Audrey Sutherland

Let's dare to be ourselves, for we do that better than anyone else can.

—Shirley Briggs

Get rid of the tendency  
to judge yourself  
above, below, or  
equal to others.

—Abhirupa– Nanda  
(6th Century B.C.)

A child should be allowed to take as long as she needs for knowing everything about herself, which is the same as learning to be herself. Even twenty-five years if necessary, or even forever. And it wouldn't matter if doing things got delayed, because nothing is really important but being oneself.

—Laura Riding

Being solitary is being alone well: being alone luxuriously immersed in doings of your own choice, aware of the fullness of your own presence rather than the absence of others.

—Alice Koller

The true solitary...will feel that he is himself only when he is alone; when he is in company he will feel that he perjures himself, prostitutes himself to the exactions of others; he will feel that time spent in company is time lost; he will be conscious only of his impatiens to get back to his true life.

—Vita Sackville-West

Not to be alone—ever—is one of my ideas of hell, not a day when I have had no solitude at all in which 'to catch up with myself' I find mentally, physically and spiritually exhausting.

—Miss Read,  
*Village Diary*

I understand hermits, but not people who can't understand hermits.

—Jessamyn West

I am an incorrigible devotee to solitude, and am never so cheerful, I believe, or so unruffled by small difficulties as when I'm alone. There's a sort of obligation to be polite and pleasant to yourself when nobody else is around.

—Susan Hale (1907)

What is repugnant to every human being is to be reckoned always as a member of a class and not as an individual person.

—Dorothy L. Sayers

Fashion is general; style is individual.

—Edna Woolman Chase  
and Ilka Chase

Style is something peculiar to one person; it expresses one personality and one only; it cannot be shared.

—Freya Stark

Loving life is easy when you are abroad. Where no one knows you and you hold your life in your hands all alone, you are more master of yourself than it at any other time.

—Hannah Arendt

Children from ten to twenty don't want to be understood. Their whole ambition is to feel strange and alien and misinterpreted so that they can live austere in some stone tower of adolescence, their privacies unviolated.

—Phyllis McGinley

Nature never repeats herself, and the possibilities of one human soul will never be found in another.

—Elizabeth Cady  
Stanton (1892)

Since you are like no other being ever created since the beginning of Time, you are incomparable.

—Brenda Ueland

In order to be irreplaceable one must always be different.

—Coco Chanel

You are vowing to stay together—you are not vowing to stay the same.

—*BuzzFeed.com*

Young people want to look like peas in a pod, and there is no use trying to make them different.

—Ilka Chase

It's when I'm fat that I'm happy. People think, Oh, there's something wrong with her. She's putting on weight. I'm like, 'Oh, no! I'm sorry, but that represents happiness in my emotional world.' For me, when I'm skinny is usually when I'm not doing well. If you gauge your life on what other people think, you're going to be in a constant state of panic trying to please everyone. People should just concentrate on their own lives and their own health and their own happiness, and whatever that looks like for you, be happy with it.

—Kelly Clarkson

We live in a day and age where people make it IMPOSSIBLE for women, men, anyone to embrace themselves exactly how they are. Diversity is sexy! Loving yourself is sexy! You know what is NOT sexy? Misogyny, objectifying, labeling, comparing, and body-shaming!

—Ariana Grande

You'll never find another me. Not sure if that's a good thing or a bad thing, but it's the truth.

—<https://americasbestpics.com>

Keep yourself intact—don't give up yourself to be 'the couple.' You're an individual in a partnership, with important qualities that are yours alone to share in that partnership.

—*BuzzFeed.com*

So many walk through this life trying to fit in. The truth is, Darling, you were always meant to stand out.

—Mona Lee

Your journey is not the same as mine, and my journey is not yours, but if we meet on a certain path, may we encourage each other.

—Internet Meme

In the end, people will judge you anyway. So don't live your life impressing others—live your life impressing yourself.

—Eunice Camacho  
Infante

Be brave enough to always, always, always do the right thing even when others don't.

—<https://americasbestpics.com>

Every day it is your responsibility to better yourself. You don't need anyone's approval on how you choose to live your life. Don't compare your path with those around you, just do YOU and be happy.

—Sarah Moussa

As a small child, Katherine Anne Porter (*Pale Horse, Pale Rider; Ship of Fools*) ran away from home constantly. Her folks always found her in short order. When she was old enough, she ran for real, because she wanted to see the world. 'The thing is to accept your own life and not try to live someone else's life,' she said. We must face our own nature.

—Elizabeth Sims

Standing for right when it is unpopular is a true test of moral character.

--Margaret Chase Smith

I am happy to be me. I may not be perfect but I am honest, loving and happy. I never try to be anything that I'm not and I am not here to impress anyone else.

—[themotivationhotel.com](http://themotivationhotel.com)

Never explain yourself to anyone. You don't need anyone's approval. Live your life and do what makes you happy.

—Internet Meme

You are the determining factor in your future. Don't let others be your judge and jury with their pity and negative thoughts or feeling. Know that you are here for a reason. Recognize, develop, and use the resources you do have. Others see the surface; you know your heart.

—Zig Ziglar

Don't let someone else's opinion of you become your reality.

—Les Brown

Be courageous. Challenge orthodoxy. Stand up for what you believe in. When you are in your rocking chair talking to your grandchildren many years from now, be sure you have a good story to tell.

—Amal Clooney

There is a vitality, a life force, an energy, a quickening that is translated through you into action, and because there is only one of you in all time, this expression is unique. And if you block it, it will never exist through any other medium and will be lost.

—Martha Graham

You make a choice: continue living your life feeling muddled in this abyss of self-misunderstanding, or you find your identity independent of it. You draw your own box.

—Meghan Markle

You define your own life. Don't let other people write your script.

—Oprah Winfrey

At the end of the day, whether or not those people are comfortable with how you're living your life doesn't matter. What matters is whether you're comfortable with it.

—Dr. Phil

People tell you the world looks a certain way. Parents tell you how to think. Schools tell you how to think. TV. Religion. And then at a certain point, if you're lucky, you realize you can make up your own mind. Nobody sets the rules but you. You can design your own life.

—Carrie Ann Moss

I am thankful for all of those who said NO to me. It's because of them I'm doing it myself.

—Albert Einstein

College is the best fresh start the world will give you. You are entering a world where there is no Prom Queen, there is no 'outcasts area,' and you can fairly easily avoid the people who made high school terrible—even in a small town. The pressure that comes with being popular can go, the isolation of being different matters less. Often, I see students come in with a lot of baggage from the social torture or expectation of high school, but college is your chance to figure out who you are away from the people you spent the last 4 to 13 years with. By not allowing that pressure to fuel you, you're going to be able to stick out and find the confidence to be you.

—Raylyn Paquin

Stay close to people that make you feel like it's good to be yourself.

—Internet Meme

You will teach them to fly, but they will not fly your flight.  
You will teach them to dream, but they will not dream your dream.  
You will teach them to live, but they will not live your life.  
Nevertheless, in every flight, in every life, in every dream, the print of the way you taught them will remain.

—Mother Teresa

Just be yourself. Let people see the real, imperfect, flawed, quirky, weird, beautiful, magical person that you are.

—Mandy Hale

The forces of the times seem to be conspiring to squeeze individuality and spontaneity from us. We compete for the same symbols of business and success. We are careful to conform to the kinds of behavior approved by our peers. We are wary of others who don't look like our kind of people. We tend to judge people by their labels. And all too often we judge people on the basis of the status symbols they display. All this is hardly a credit to us as a people. We profess to be guided in our attitudes by the body of ideals set forth by our Founding Fathers. The Founding Fathers would wish us to be individualists, freethinkers, independents in mind and spirit.

—Vance Packard

Run your own race. Sometimes we get caught up in what other people think we should be doing, or we get caught up in judgment or comparison of what others are doing. And the bottom line is, you have to just run your own race and do what's best for you. And you're the only person who can steer that. Guide that and know that.

—Elena Delle Donne

If you're a kid who has an identity that's not very represented in your offline world —say, you're the only Goth kid, you're the only violin player, you're the only gay kid —then your social network is probably critically important to your mental health. There are kids out there for whom social media has probably saved their lives.

—Megan Moreno, M.D.

When she Transformed into a butterfly, the caterpillars spoke not of her beauty, but of her weirdness. They wanted her to change back into what she had always been. But now she had wings.

—Dean Jackson

Conformity is killing our creativity.

—Henry Porter

My generation fought very hard for feminism, and we fought very hard to not be labeled as you had to have a husband or you had to be in a relationship, or you were somehow not a cool chick. And now I am seeing that start to come around again, where people say to you, ‘Well, what do you mean, you don’t have a boyfriend? You don’t want to have one? You don’t want to be married?’ And you’re like, ‘Well, no, I don’t, actually. I’m fine.’ And they find a lot of reasons why you’re not fine. But it just seems to be coming back. Being able to take care of myself is something that my mom really instilled in me. I can remember her always saying, ‘If nothing else, I will teach you to be independent.’

—Stevie Nicks

**Original**, n A thing of singular or unique character; a person who is different from other people in an appealing or interesting way; a person of fresh initiative or inventive capacity.

—Adam M. Grant

Originality brings more bumps in the road, yet it leaves us with more happiness and a greater sense of meaning.

—Adam M. Grant

Individualism had become prized above all, resulting in a false conflation of freedom with a lack of civic duty and a refusal to bear minor inconvenience.

—Scott Galloway

Great creators are born with a biological immunity to risk. They’re wired to embrace uncertainty and ignore social approval; they simply don’t worry about the costs of non-conformity the way the rest of us do. They’re programmed to be iconoclasts, rebels, revolutionaries, troublemakers, mavericks, and contrarians who are impervious to fear, rejection, and ridicule.

—Adam Grant

Originality is what everybody wants, but there’s a sweet spot. If it’s not original enough, it’s boring or trite. If it’s too original, it may be hard for the audience to understand. The goal is to push the envelope, not tear the envelope.

—Rob Minkoff

Being different isn’t a bad thing. It means you’re brave enough to be yourself.

—Luna Lovegood

When you write the story of your life, don’t let anyone else hold the pen.

—Internet Meme

The razor blade is sharp but can't cut a tree, and the axe is strong but can't cut hair. Everyone is important according to his/her own unique purpose.

—*PeacefulmindPeacefulLife.com*

Life is the most difficult exam. Many people fail because they try to copy others, not realizing that everyone has a different question paper.

—Internet Meme

The decline of cursive: writing is a technology, I must add that it's an art form too, a thing of beauty regardless of skill level or perfection of form. It's a wondrous visual reminder of individuality and adds an element of artistry and humanness to everyday life.

Recently, I was scribing gift notes at a retailer in New York City and a teenage boy watched over my shoulder curiously as I used an oblique dip pen and inkwell. I was shocked when he asked what language I was writing in: I realized that to kids who haven't learned script, I may as well have been writing in cuneiform.

—Rita Polidori O'Brien

I was a third grade teacher, and one of the goals of that grade was to transition the students from printing to cursive....Despite the rote instruction each child received, every student organically stylized their own penmanship. Some wrote in concise, blocky letters; others were more florid and ornate....The loss of cursive will be a loss of individuality that today's students won't even know they've suffered.

—Rebecca Lee

If you feel like you don't fit into the world you inherited it is because you were born to help create a new one.

—Ross Caligiuri

And while you may not be everyone's cup of tea, you don't have to be. Tea has never apologized for not being coffee.

—Kirsten Corley

It takes a strong fish to swim against the current. Even a dead one can float with it.

—John Crowe

Normality is a paved road: It's comfortable to walk, but no flowers grow on it.

—Vincent Van Gogh



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