

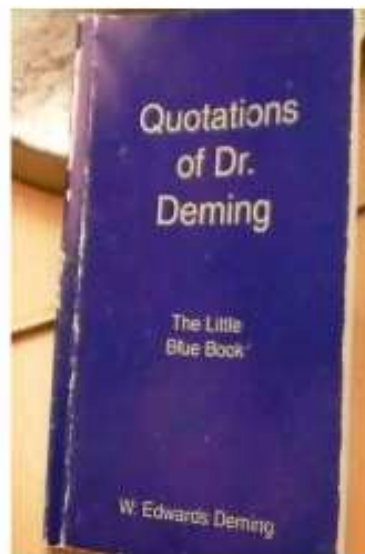
# Quotations of Dr. Deming

## *The Little Blue Book*

W. Edwards Deming

Published by Sundial Press  
(Fort Lauderdale) in 1994  
“We record the sunny hours”

Don't buy this book!  
This second edition is available as  
an ebook on Scribd.com,  
as an audio book (read in 10-minute  
increments) via YouTube,  
a photo book and an audio CD  
(TheEbookman@gmail.com).



## The Second Edition

These quotations by Dr. Deming appear in this book as part of an on-going effort to spread awareness of the use of statistics and the role of variation in management. The purpose of this book is to reach educators, teachers and the people they work with. Profits from the sale of the book support the distribution of this book to schools, industrial and commercial management and educational leaders. Your purchase of two books allows the publisher to donate another book to a library, a school or a manager in crisis. This file also appears on scribd.com for free download. (So why would you buy the book? Because your mom, like our moms, doesn't want to read an ebook.) If you want to use these quotes in your own edition of Deming's quotes, please consider the concept of Creative Commons: work with us to get these words out to the general public. Most of the net proceeds from the sale of formats of this work are invested in giving away additional copies. Photos that appear in the book are from Creative Commons (wikipedia.org) and a portion of the proceeds from the sale of the book (and the income that comes from any advertising related to the youtube channel) goes to support wikipedia.org (shared with paying for the free distribution of the book to people and libraries).

## Introduction

The purpose of this book of quotations is neither to summarize Dr. Deming's work nor to "popularize" his ideas by giving the reader a quick overview. This book does not give you the "essence" of Deming. Rather, the purpose of compiling these quotes is to stir your interest to learn more. **Why does Deming advocate the end of merit pay? Why must managers understand terms like "statistical control" and "variation"?** You won't find complete answers here, just quotations for you to meditate on and to ponder. The page references will speed your self-education. Yes, today's world of sound bites, briefings, news summaries and shortened attention spans make Dr. Deming's work hard to communicate to a generation growing up on MTV and the Internet and to a work force committed to intense adversarial competition. Rather than try to chop Deming's philosophy of "managing the system" into 20-second sound bites, we have selected quotes that will raise your interest to spend a half hour or more to learn more about the subject.

## The 14 Points

We decided to include just three of Dr. Deming's famous 14 points. If you are moved to find the list of the 14 points and the seven diseases, then *The Little Blue Book* has achieved its main purpose: to motivate you to read *Out of the Crisis* and other tomes that explain the Deming philosophy of management.

We have not included all of the 14 points and we have omitted the extensive explanations of each point that Deming, his disciples and interpreters have invested many years in developing. This *Little Blue Book* will get you started.

## *The Editors*

## The Little Blue Book

Without a cultural revolution in management, quality control will not produced the desired effects in America. W. Edwards Deming, *Out of the Crisis*, p. 148

In his foreword to the second edition of *Quotations From Chairman Mao Tse-Tung*, Lin Piao exhorted his readers to "have specific problems in mind, study and apply his [Mao's] words in a creative way, combine study with application." The reader of this little book is encouraged to apply the same advice to Dr. Deming's words.

Students of Chinese history will recall the phrase "cultural revolution" and a certain little red book intended to provide the guiding principles for modernizing a country of one billion people. Unlike Deming, whose work empowers those who understand his philosophy, Mao Tse-tung (Zedong) perverted the phrase "cultural revolution" so that

those two words continue to revive painful memories in millions of survivors of that ill-conceived plan.

We hope that these quotations from Dr. Deming's work will inspire you to join the larger "cultural revolution" in management. This revolution will change not only you, your colleagues, your employees and your neighbors, but also billions of people around the globe, including those who studied Chairman Mao's little red book and failed to find fulfillment. "Peace through economic prosperity" is Dr. Deming's promise to those who heed his call for the pursuit of quality. Let's begin.

*The Editors*

**Communication**

Break down barriers between departments. People in research, design, sales and production must work as a team, to foresee problems of production and in use that may be encountered with the product or service. [Out 24]

**Competition**

Economists are leading us down the wrong path. They tell us that fierce competition is the solution. We worry about increasing market share and we try to kill off colleagues in the same industry, instead of making better products.

**Customers**

The customer is the most important part of the production line. Without him, there is no production line. Improvement of quality envelopes the entire production line, from incoming materials to the consumer, and redesign of the product and service for the future. [World 24]

Price has no meaning except in terms of the product. But that is not enough. Good and uniform quality have no meaning except with reference to the consumer's needs. [World 65]

**Education**

I find a general fear of education. People are afraid to take a course. It might not be the right one. My advice is take it. Find the right one later. ... You never know what could be used, what could be needed. He that thinks he has to be practical is not going to be here very long. Who knows what is practical? Help people to improve. I mean everybody. [Method 84]

**Evaluation**

Most of us assume that if we don't evaluate you, you won't be motivated to work better. So we interview you and measure you, compare you to others, and try to place you in a ranking. Instead we need to promote self-esteem, joy in work and pride in what we do, so that we encourage people to innovate and contribute to the job. If we destroy you, you are humiliated. Ranking you destroys you.

**Fear**

Fear takes a horrible toll. Fear is all around, robbing people of their pride, hurting them, robbing them of a chance to contribute to the company. It is unbelievable what happens when you unloose fear. [Method 73]

**Improvement**

The only reason to carry out a test is to improve a process, to improve the quality and quantity of the next run or of next year's crop. Important questions in science and industry are how and under what conditions observations may contribute to a rational

decision to change or not to change a process to accomplish improvement. A record of observations must accordingly contain all the information that anyone might need in order to make his own prediction. [World 99]

A company that is healthy and doing well is in excellent position to improve management, product and service, thus to contribute to the economic welfare of itself and to the rest of us. Moreover, it has the greatest obligation to improve. A monopoly is in fact in the best position to improve year by year, and has the greatest obligation to do so. A company that is on the rocks can think only of survival. [New 6]

Putting out fires is not improvement. Finding a point out of control, finding the special cause and removing it, is only putting the process back to where it was in the first place. It is not improvement of the process. [Method 67]

We're losing ground because what we are doing is wrong, even though we work very hard and give our best effort.

### **Joy in Work**

I love my work. It's fun for me. I wish American management to keep learning and growing and I wish to keep learning and sharing with them. [World 13] *This was Dr. Deming's reply when he was asked why he spent five to seven days a week traveling, teaching, consulting and giving four-day seminars to hundreds of students.*

### **Knowledge**

Who is it that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? (Job 38:2) [Out 1]

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. (Hosea 4:6) [Out 97]

For in much wisdom is great grief; and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow. (Ecclesiastes 1:16) [Out 371]

Profound knowledge\*\* of a system comes from outside, rarely from the inside. Have you ever found someone who has profound knowledge inside an organization? I never have.

*\*\*The understanding needed to improve a system.*

### **Leadership**

Drive out fear, so everybody may work effectively for the company. [Out 23]

Eliminate work standards (quotas) on the factory floor. Substitute leadership.

Eliminate management by objective. Eliminate management by numbers and numerical goals. Abolish the merit system and the ranking system. Substitute

leadership. [Out 24]

Judge each part of a system by its contribution to the system, not for its individual performance. Each part is responsible for the health and well-being of the whole system.

### **Learning**

Learning is not compulsory.

Survival is not compulsory.

### **Management**

My theory of management says that every person gains when the system is optimized.

Management must always improve the system. Do what is best for the whole system; don't do things the way they have always been done. Remember: you can't have impact unless you break away from the system. You must be outside of the system.

It is easy to manage a business in an expanding market, and easy to suppose that economic conditions can only grow better and better. In contrast with expectations, we find, on looking back, that we have been on an economic decline for three decades. It is easy to date an earthquake, but not a decline. [New 5]

The manager should be a leader. He should understand how his work and the work of his people fit into the system. Optimization of a system is the first job of a leader.

Recognize that all people are different, try to fit each one in what he does best, what he takes joy in doing.

Most people think of management as a chain of command. My theory says that the system is like an orchestra, not an army. Every one in an orchestra supports the other players. Each player watches not only the conductor, but also each other and the whole system. The system needs a conductor, not a general. It needs someone who harmonizes the talents and abilities of each part of the system. Each player in the orchestra knows that he is part of a system, even when he plays solo. he is not there to attract attention to himself. He succeeds when he supports the other players.

Without a cultural revolution in management, quality control circles will not produce the desired effects in America. Nor can anyone guarantee that job security for the rank and file would be enough to produce high productivity and product quality. However, without management's commitment to the personal welfare of its workers, it will be impossible to inspire employees' interest in company productivity and product quality. With guaranteed security, management's job becomes far more difficult and challenging. [Out 148]



## **Merit Pay**

See **Evaluation**

## **Obstacles**

Barriers against realization of pride of workmanship may in fact be one of the most important obstacles to reduction of cost and improvement of quality in the United States. [Out 83]

## **Optimization**

Labor and management should focus on optimizing the system. For any discussion between buyer and seller or suppliers and retailers, the rule is the same. If your principal goal in a negotiation is to protect yourself, you've already lost and so has everyone else. You gain most when you work with others to improve the system.

Any group should have as its aim optimization over time of the larger system that the group operates in. Anything less than optimization of the whole system will bring eventual loss to every component in the system. [New 59]

## **Patience**

How poor are they that have not patience.  
Iago to Roderigo, Shakespeare's Othello, II, iii [Out 29]

## **A Plea for Blood**

There are two kinds of blood in the blood bank, good and bad. [My physician] Dr. Burchell used three units of good blood on me. Bad blood, he said, is a last resort. People like my friends and your friends can give good blood, and that is about the only source thereof. Blood from a regular donor that takes pay for it is almost dependably pretty well washed up, like the donor himself, if I understand Dr. Burchell correctly. In other words, good blood comes from friends and their friends. Money cannot buy it: it is not for sale. I may have garbled some of the medical language here, but Dr. Burchell's point was very clear. He and other surgeons need good blood. Any type will do as replacement. In short, I owe three pints of good blood, and there is only one way to replace them. Money won't do it. I had not appreciated these critical requirements. Maybe this plea will bring friends to offer blood. [World 142]

## **Productivity**

Improve constantly and forever the system of production and service, to improve quality and productivity and thus constantly decrease costs. [Out 23]

## **Profits**

Don't depend on short-term profits as a measure of a system's health. They often don't point to future performance of management. It's easy to report a higher profit by

reducing research and postponing maintenance, but the system suffers.

Paper profits do not make the pie bigger. They give you a bigger piece. You take it from somebody else. It doesn't help the society. [Method 91]

Dividends and paper profits, the yardstick by which managers of money and heads of companies are judged, do not improve the competitive position of a company or of American industry. Paper profits do not make bread: improvement of quality and productivity do. They make a contribution to better material living for all people, here and everywhere. [Out 21]

### **Protectionism**

Dependence on protection by tariffs and laws to "buy American" only encourages incompetence. [Out xi]

If some manufacturers in my own country would meet competition with effort and spend less time on lobbies to boost tariffs and to lower trade quotas, they might have less to worry about Japanese competition and could give some of the rest of us the benefit of better quality and lower prices. many people say that they believe in free enterprise in competition, but what they often mean is competition for the other fellow, not for themselves. Now in my own case, I believe in free enterprise, and I am not afraid of Japanese statisticians, English statisticians, French statisticians, or any others. If one of them is doing a better job, then the thing to do is go over there, or bring him to my own country, and find out how he does it. I don't know of any statistician's lobby to try to keep out foreign statisticians. The more of them we import, the better off we are. [World 43-44]

### **Quality**

Why is it that productivity increases as quality improves? Less rework. Not so much waste. Quality to the production worker means that his performance satisfies him, provides to him pride of workmanship. [Out 1]

End the practice of awarding business on the basis of price tag. instead, minimize total cost. Move toward a single supplier of any one item, on a long-term relationship of loyalty and trust. [Out 23]

Japanese management learned in 1950 . . . that the best solution to improvement of incoming materials is to make a partner of every vendor, and to work together with him on a long-term relationship of loyalty and trust. [Out 43]

Barriers against realization of pride of workmanship may in fact be one of the most important obstacles to reduction of cost and improvement of quality in the United States. [Out 83]

Quality begins at the top. . . . Quality of product and of service can be no better than the intent of top management. The only way a company can achieve success would be for the top management to be committed to the course of action. [World 22]

Cease dependence on inspection to improve quality. Eliminate the need for inspection on a mass basis by building quality into the product in the first place. [Out 23]

Work with your vendor to improve his incoming quality. Establish a long-term relationship with him for continual improvement, ever better and better quality, with lower and lower costs. Both you and he will win. [World 10]

### **Ranking**

See **Evaluation**.

### **Responsibility**

It is no longer socially acceptable to dump employees onto the heap of unemployment. Loss of market and resulting unemployment are not foreordained. They are not inevitable. They are man-made. [Out ix]

The greatest waste in America is failure to use the abilities of people. One need only listen to a tape of a meeting with production workers to learn about their frustrations and about the contribution that they are eager to make. Anyone would be impressed to observe how articulate most production workers are, in spite of criticisms of our schools. [Out 53]

### **Shewhart, William A. 1891-1967**

Another half century may pass before the full spectrum of Dr. Shewhart's contributions has been revealed in liberal education, science and industry. [World 53]

### **Statistics**

There are conferences almost any day in this country on the subject of productivity, mostly concerned with gadgets and measures of productivity. As William E. Conway said, measurements of productivity are like accident statistics. They tell you that there is a problem, but they don't do anything about accidents. This book [*Out of the Crisis*] is an attempt to improve productivity, not just to measure it. [Out x]

The application of statistical principles and techniques in all stages of production are directed toward the economic manufacture of a product that is useful and has a market. [World 42]

A process is in statistical control when it is no longer afflicted with special causes. The

performance of a process that is in statistical control is predictable. [World 100]

A professional statistician will not follow methods that are indefensible, merely to please someone, nor to support inferences based on such methods. he ranks his own name and profession as more important than convenient assent to interpretations not warranted by statistical theory. . . . His career as an expert witness will shatter in shipwreck if he indicates concern over which side of the case the results seem to favor.

“As a statistician, I couldn’t care less, “ is the right attitude in a legal case, or in any other report. [World 106]

Most statisticians can recall instances in which informal advice backfired. It is the same in any professional line. A statistician that tries to be a good fellow and give advice under adverse circumstances is in practice and has a client, whether he intended it or not; he will later on find himself accountable for the advice. [World 120]

### **Transformation**

Long-term commitment to new learning and new philosophy is required of any management that seeks transformation. The timid and the fainthearted, and people that expect quick results, are doomed to disappointment. [Out x]

Put everybody in the company to work to accomplish the transformation. The transformation is everybody’s job. [Out 24]

### **Variation**

Some leaders forget an important mathematical theorem that if 20 people are engaged in a job, two will fall in the bottom ten percent, no matter what. it is difficult to overthrow the law of gravitation and the laws of nature. the important problem is not the bottom ten percent, but who is statistically out of line and in need of help. [Out 56]

Thousands of people understand that investigation of ups and downs within the control limits creates trouble, increases variation, causes severe loss. These same people forget the basic scientific principles that they have learned [when they go onto] the factory floor; those same scientific principles apply to people. People are the most important asset of any company. [Method 248]

What statistical methods do is to point out the existence of special causes. A point beyond limits on a control chart, or a significant result in an experiment or test, indicates almost certainly the existence of one or more special causes. Points in control, or showing no significance, indicate that only common causes of variation remain. [World 46]

Management has the obligation to focus attention on common causes of variability and wrong average level . . . . Common causes of variability are often as important as

specific causes. Common causes affect all machines and all operators. Only management can change a common cause; the worker cannot. No matter how well an operator or foreman does his work, his efforts may be ineffective if he is handicapped by poor light, raw material that is too variable or otherwise unsuitable, or by any other common cause. This is why management must continually accept the responsibility to find common causes, and to eliminate them if economically feasible. [World 247]

### **Work**

Anyone with a job is entitled to pride of workmanship. [World 254]

### **Other quotations**

Wisdom sounds foolish to fools.

Dionysius to Cadmus in Euripides' *The Bacchae* [Out 486]

Is it the bell that rings,  
is it the hammer that rings,  
or is it the meeting of the two that rings?  
Japanese poem [Out 177]

### **Another compilation of quotes**

"Quality is everyone's responsibility."

"A system can not understand itself."

"All anyone asks for is a chance to work with pride."

"A system must be managed. It will not manage itself."

"Innovation comes from the producer - not from the customer."

"If you do not know how to ask the right question, you discover nothing."

"The worker is not the problem. The problem is at the top! Management!"

"Defects are not free. Somebody makes them, and gets paid for making them."

"It is not enough to do your best; you must know what to do, and then do your best."

"If you can't describe what you are doing as a process, you don't know what you're doing."

"The average American worker has fifty interruptions a day, of which seventy percent have nothing to do with work."

"Profit in business comes from repeat customers, customers that boast about your project or service, and that bring friends with them."

"Experience by itself teaches nothing...Without theory, experience has no meaning. Without theory, one has no questions to ask. Hence without theory there is no learning."

"Foremost is the principle that the purpose of consumer research is to understand the customer's needs and wishes, and thus design product and service that will provide better living for him in the future. A second principle is that no one can guess the future loss of business from a dissatisfied customer..."

"What is a system? A system is a network of interdependent components that work together to try to accomplish the aim of the system. A system must have an aim. Without an aim, there is no system. The aim of the system must be clear to everyone in the system. The aim must include plans for the future. The aim is a value judgment. (We are of course talking here about a man-made system.)"

Found on <http://www.wisdom-of-the-wise.com/W-Edwards-Deming.htm>

### **Acknowledgements**

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### **Sources**

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All uncited quotations in this book were made by Dr. Deming in classroom situations.

If you have a favorite Deming quote that doesn't appear in this book, please send it to the editors at [TheEbookman.com](http://TheEbookman.com) with your postal address. Your suggestion will be considered for inclusion in a future edition (and for an update of the [scribd.com](http://scribd.com) file). If the quote is used, you will receive a free copy of the next edition.

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ebook and send it to your friends and colleagues. You are part of the transformation when you spread the scripture.

## **Endnotes**

In 1992 Richard Stockton Conger, a political science student at the University of Hawaii in Honolulu, compiled a collection of quotations by looking through his notes from lectures by Deming. His 48-page book measured 11 cm by 11 cm and it had a blue cover. The current editors in 1994 obtained permission letters and reissued the book in a smaller format (smaller than a 3" by 5" card) of 72 pages, calling it "the Little Blue Book." In 2010 the document was placed on scribd.com with the purpose of sharing the work with people who are concerned about improving the quality of management, services and products.

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*About the editors of the Second Edition:* We admire Deming's work and through this quote book we hope to share our passion and respect for his thoughts. We learned more by using these quotes and we hope your thinking will evolve, too. Write to us with your comments and suggestions for improving the next edition of this book.

## **Other Topics**

Bluefin Tuna

[bigmarinefish.com/bluefin](http://bigmarinefish.com/bluefin)

I will avoid eating all types of tuna (just to be sure).

I will ask politicians for a ban on selling tuna (the ban can expire after ten years, enough time for the tuna stocks to recover).

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libraries).

Drive out fear.

(One of Deming's 14 points)

