

A Quotes

Uttered by Professor Conway during the MAT 217: Honors Linear Algebra course. Listed in chronological order.

1. “Why read a textbook by a mediocre mathematician when you have the real thing standing in front of you?”
2. “You can call my head $(3, 4, 5)$. It’s been called other things.”
3. “If I weren’t modest, I’d be perfect. Modesty is my only vice.”
4. “Some of you are disgustingly hatless.”
5. “I am a subspace of B as well as A . I get around.”
6. “We’re not practical people—at least, I’m not. We’re theoretical people.”
7. “Lying is a good, healthy exercise.”
8. “I had many important decisions in my life: Should I marry this young lady or that one?... I seem to have gotten them all wrong.”
9. “At the risk of boring you to death—which would be rather nice, since my teaching job would be over...”
10. “Even you—your tiny little brains—can check this.”
11. “I became senile at the age of 16.”
12. “‘May we?’ ‘Mais oui!’”
13. “You lot have become cleaner, less fuzzy, and generally nicer-looking.”
14. “Penny’s Atrocious Behavior”
15. “Some things should not be told to small people like you.”
16. “Despite appearances, I’m only human... Why am I human!? I don’t know why I’m human.”
17. “BANG! BANG! BANG! And everything in the space is dead.”
18. “I might have tripped and splattered on the floor.”
19. “These vectors don’t leak blood or anything when they die.”

20. “The difference between 100% and 102% is quite small—I forget what it is.”
21. “That, of course, was my fiendishly clever plan.”
22. “Positive-definite conjugate-symmetric sesquilinear form. It rolls nicely off the tongue, if you’ve had enough of some alcoholic beverage.”
23. “I always love it when I’m lecturing on advanced mathematics and I have to say one plus one equals two. It gives me a pleasant delight.”
24. “My colleague Richard Guy, who is 84, and I spent a week . . . trying to decide whether the 99-point case was solvable. It was one of the most hilarious weeks I’ve ever spent.”
25. “I’m a competent mathematician, on occasion.”
26. “I have a feeling that the more I say, the more confused you are.”
27. “I have a lot of friends—at least, I think I have a lot of friends—among the professional magicians of this country.”
28. “The audience at these Martin Gardner meetings consists of one-half professional mathematicians, one-half professional magicians, and one-half weirdos. You can deduce that there is a lot of overlap.”
29. “You shall realize that I am completely incompetent.”
30. “If you push a cat a certain way, it tends to resist. . . Vectors are simpler than cats.”
31. “Quaquaversal quadrimagifier”