

Collected quotes

Peter Rowlett

“Mathematics is not about numbers, equations, computations, or algorithms: it is about understanding.” — Bill Thurston.

“Many persons who have not studied mathematics confuse it with arithmetic and consider it a dry and arid science. Actually, however, this science requires great fantasy.” — Sophia Kovalevsky.

“The formulation of a problem is often more essential than its solution, which may be merely a matter of mathematical or experimental skill. To raise new questions, new possibilities, to regard old problems from a new angle, requires creative imagination and marks real advances.” — Albert Einstein and Leopold Infeld, *The Evolution of Physics* (1938).

“Confused is of course the best state a mathematician can be in; the struggle out of that state is the primary drive for progress.” — Dror Bar-Natan.

“Being wrong isn’t a bad thing like they teach you in school. It is an opportunity to learn something.” — Richard Feynman.

“I enjoy being surprised by mathematics and its intrinsic difficulty. The moment I enjoy best is when the pieces of the puzzle fall into one coherent whole.” — Katrin Wendland.

“There is not much difference between the delight a novice experiences in cracking a clever brain teaser and the delight a mathematician experiences in mastering a more advanced problem. Both look on beauty bare – that clean, sharply defined, mysterious, entrancing order that underlies all structure.” — Martin Gardner.

“The only thing I am interested in using mathematics for is to have a good time and to help others do the same.” — Paul Lockhart.

“That’s how we built our pyramids, left our footprints on the moon, and recorded our multiplatinum album Abbey Road. Not by outgrowing foolishness, but by refusing to. The secret to our brilliance is that we never stop learning, and the secret to our learning is that we never stop playing.” — Ben Orlin, *Math Games With Bad Drawings* (2022).