

333

WITTIEST
QUOTABLE
QUOTES



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Quotes

Jakub Marian

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Foreword

People say that a picture is worth a thousand words, but sometimes a mighty quotation is worth more than a thousand pictures. Words have the ability to express thoughts, and also the power to make us laugh. It is when these two abilities are skilfully combined that a special kind of quotes that we so adore emerges.

This book contains a selection of 333 such quotations, carefully selected in a strict editorial process—they are mostly short, intelligent, funny, often sharp and sarcastic, and most importantly, quotable.

There are many books on the market, as well as freely accessible websites, that will allow you to find quotes related to a given subject. You'll find thousands or even tens of thousands of quotes there, but most of them are of mediocre quality and hardly any of them can be used in a conversation, in a speech, or in a written essay.

That's why I decided to fight my way through this jungle of quotes and compile

the best of them in a book that can be read from cover to cover. I believe that dividing the quotes up in categories would make reading the book rather dull (I'd compare it to eating the main course and all the sides separately instead of in a delicious mix), so I decided not to do so. If you want to find a quote and you know approximately what the quote was about, it is generally easier to find it online using a search engine rather than trying to locate the source where you read the quote for the first time.

Also, great care has been put into finding the original author of each quote. If the original author of a quote remains in obscurity, he or she is listed as Anonymous. If a quote is attributed to an author by modern sources (even if contemporary sources are missing) the name written here accords with this modern attribution.

I wish you a pleasant reading experience and hope you will enjoy reading the book as much as I enjoyed writing it.

Jakub Marian
(the editor)

How to quote

Of course, you cannot just blurt out a quote whenever you feel like it. For a quote to have the desired effect, it must be properly introduced. One way of introducing a quote, especially if its author is unknown or not notable, is using the phrase “a wise man/woman once said”.

If you happen to know the author’s occupation and it is related to the quote’s content, you can refer to them using their occupation, e.g. “a German philosopher once wrote” or “an American journalist once said”. This is an especially useful tool when the author’s nationality is to be emphasized.

When the author is notable enough, it’s usually best to introduce the quotation using his or her name, e.g. “Mark Twain once said”, “In the words of Mark Twain”, “It was Mark Twain who said”, “There’s a beautiful quote by Mark Twain”.

If you don’t know the source of the quote you want to cite at the moment, it’s usually best to admit it and introduce it by some-

thing like “there’s a great quote on the topic, but I can’t remember who said it”. You can also try and misattribute it to enhance the credibility of the quote, as in the following example:

*If you don’t know the source of a quote,
you can always make it sound better by
attributing it to me.*

— Mark Twain

Of course, Mark Twain never said that—the quote was made up by me to illustrate the power of misattribution. However, I **discourage** *consciously* misattributing quotes, as it is both unethical and you can alienate those who knew it was a misattribution.

Sometimes, however, an obvious misattribution can be used for a comic effect or to reinforce the message of the quote, as in:

*Don’t believe everything you
read on the Internet.*

— Abraham Lincoln

But don’t worry; you will find no such misattributions in this book.

Quotes

I always have a quotation for everything—it saves original thinking.

— *Dorothy L. Sayers*



They laughed when I said I was going to be a comedian... They are not laughing now.

— *Bob Monkhouse*



Illegal aliens have always been a problem in the United States. Ask any Indian.

— *Robert Orben*

He had a mind so fine no idea could violate it.

— *T. S. Eliot*



I've had a perfectly wonderful evening, but this wasn't it.

— *Groucho Marx*



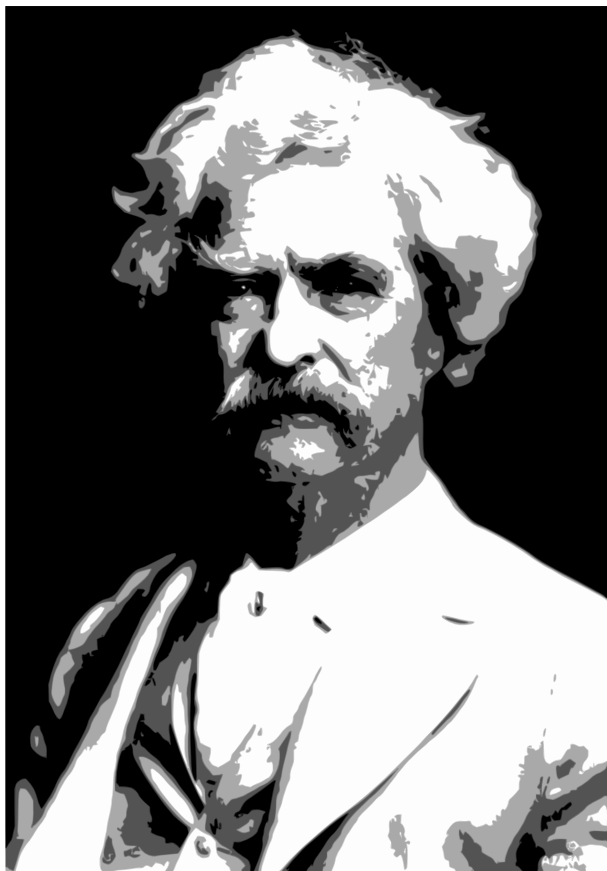
If you're too open-minded, your brains will fall out.

— *Lawrence Ferlinghetti*



Somebody actually complimented me on my driving today. They left a little note on the windscreen. It said: 'Parking fine'.

— *Tommy Cooper*



*Giving up smoking is the easiest
thing in the world. I know because
I've done it thousands of times.*

— Mark Twain

California is a fine place to live—if you happen to be an orange.

— *Fred Allen*



Sex without love is a meaningless experience, but as far as meaningless experiences go, it's pretty damn good.

— *Woody Allen*



If governments are involved in covering up the knowledge of aliens then they are doing a much better job of it than they seem to do at anything else.

— *Stephen Hawking*



Atheism is a non-prophet organization.

— *George Carlin*

I always keep a supply of stimulant handy in case I see a snake—which I also keep handy.

— *W. C. Fields*



Writing about music is like dancing about architecture.

— *Anonymous*



‘Do you pray for the senators, Dr. Hale?’
‘No, I look at the senators and pray for the country.’

— *Edward Everett Hale*
(*American Unitarian clergyman*)



A bargain is something you don’t need at a price you can’t resist.

— *Franklin Jones*

Last year I gave several lectures on ‘Intelligence and the Appreciation of Music Among Animals’. Today I am going to speak to you about ‘Intelligence and the Appreciation of Music Among Critics’. The subject is very similar.

— *Erik Satie*



I once heard a Californian student in Heidelberg say, in one of his calmest moods, that he would rather decline two drinks than one German adjective.

— *Mark Twain*



Don’t go around saying the world owes you a living. The world owes you nothing. It was here first.

— *Mark Twain*

I refuse to think of them as chin hairs. I
think of them as stray eyebrows.

— *Janette Barber*



In England, justice is open to all—like the
Ritz Hotel.

— *James Mathew*
(*Irish Judge*)



You know everybody is ignorant, only on
different subjects.

— *Will Rogers*



The length of a film should be directly
related to the endurance of the human
bladder.

— *Alfred Hitchcock*

Whenever you find yourself on the side of the majority, it is time to pause and reflect.

— *Mark Twain*



A dress has no meaning unless it makes a man want to take it off.

— *Françoise Sagan*



Is Moby Dick the whale or the man?

— *Harold Ross*



The most beautiful words in the English language are not 'I love you' but 'It's benign'.

— *Woody Allen*



*If we knew what it was we were
doing, it would not be called
research, would it?*

— Albert Einstein

I have noticed that the people who are late are often so much jollier than the people who have to wait for them.

— *E. V. Lucas*



If I were two-faced, would I be wearing this one?

— *Abraham Lincoln*



My dad was the town drunk. Usually that's not so bad, but New York City?

— *Henny Youngman*



The difference between life and the movies is that a script has to make sense, and life doesn't.

— *Joseph L. Mankiewicz*

Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit;
wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.

— *Miles Kington*



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

— *Woody Allen*



By an unnamed professor at Ohio University: I
am returning this otherwise good typing
paper to you because someone has printed
gibberish all over it and put your name at
the top.

— *Quoted in New Scientist, 1996*

Millions saw the apple fall, but Newton was the one who asked why.

— *Bernard M. Baruch*



Being powerful is like being a lady. If you have to tell people you are, you aren't.

— *Margaret Thatcher*



The most difficult thing in the world is to know how to do a thing and to watch someone else do it wrong without comment.

— *T. H. White*



Happiness is good health and a bad memory.

— *Ingrid Bergman*

Never criticize Americans. They have the best taste that money can buy.

— *Miles Kington*



See, the problem is that God gives men a brain and a penis, and only enough blood to run one at a time.

— *Robin Williams*



Right now I'm having amnesia and déjà vu at the same time. I think I've forgotten this before.

— *Steven Wright*



To err is human—but it feels divine.

— *Mae West*

The depressing thing about tennis is that no matter how good I get, I'll never be as good as a wall.

— *Mitch Hedberg*



Of a dinner for Nobel Prize laureates at the White House: Probably the greatest concentration of talent and genius in this house except perhaps those times when Thomas Jefferson ate alone.

— *John F. Kennedy*



The Norwegian language has been described as German spoken underwater.

— *Anonymous*



When we talk to God, we're praying. When God talks to us, we're schizophrenic.

— *Jane Wagner*

Ladies, if a man says he will fix it, he will.
There's no need to remind him every six
months about it.

— *Anonymous*



Wife: Cooking! Cleaning! Why should
women do it?

Husband: You're quite right—let's get an au
pair girl.

— *Mel Calman*



Don't talk unless you can improve the
silence.

— *Jorge Luis Borges*



*When asked what he would like to see on his
tombstone:* Keep off the grass.

— *Peter Ustinov*

It's not that I'm afraid to die, I just don't want to be there when it happens.

— *Woody Allen*



The photograph is not quite true to my own notion of my gentleness and sweetness of nature, but neither perhaps is my external appearance.

— *A. E. Housman*



The only reason some people get lost in thought is because it's unfamiliar territory.

— *Paul Fix*



'My idea of an agreeable person,' said Hugo Bohun, 'is a person who agrees with me.'

— *Benjamin Disraeli*

My inclination to go by the Air Express is confirmed by the crash they had yesterday, which will make them more careful in the immediate future.

— *A. E. Housman*



Insanity is hereditary. You get it from your children.

— *Sam Levenson*



I go to the theatre to be entertained, I want to be taken out of myself, I don't want to see lust and rape and incest and sodomy and so on, I can get all that at home.

— *Alan Bennett*



You can learn many things from children. How much patience you have, for instance.

— *Franklin P. Adams*

After a while, marriage is a sibling relationship—marked by occasional, and rather regrettable, episodes of incest.

— *Martin Amis*



There was laughter in the back of the theatre, leading to the belief that someone was telling jokes back there.

— *George S. Kaufman*
(*American playwright*)



I think the worst time to have a heart attack is during a game of charades.

— *Demetri Martin*



If you can't be a good example, then you'll just have to be a horrible warning.

— *Catherine Aird*

At the age of six I wanted to be a cook. At seven I wanted to be Napoleon. And my ambition has been growing steadily ever since.

— *Salvador Dali*



The only person entitled to use the imperial ‘we’ in speaking of himself is a king, an editor, and a man with a tapeworm.

— *Robert G. Ingersoll*



I like work; it fascinates me. I can sit and look at it for hours.

— *Jerome K. Jerome*



In 1969 I gave up women and alcohol. It was the worst 20 minutes of my life.

— *George Best*

I'm tired of all this nonsense about beauty
being only skin-deep. That's deep enough.
What do you want—an adorable pancreas?

— *Jean Kerr*



Nostalgia isn't what it used to be.

— *Anonymous*



Opera is when a guy gets stabbed in the back
and, instead of bleeding, he sings.

— *Ed Gardner*



Millions long for immortality who don't
know what to do with themselves on a rainy
Sunday afternoon.

— *Susan Ertz*

Whoever said ‘it’s not whether you win or lose that counts’ probably lost.

— *Martina Navrátilová*



I intend to live forever. So far, so good.

— *Steven Wright*



Do unto others before they do unto you.

— *Anonymous*



There was the actor who put in his will that he wanted to be cremated and ten percent of his ashes thrown in his agent’s face.

— *Harry Richman*

All pro athletes are bilingual. They speak English and profanity.

— *Gordie Howe*



On the Atkins diet: You die of a heart attack but so what? You die thin.

— *Bob Geldof*



Why do born-again people so often make you wish they'd never been born the first time?

— *Katharine Whitehorn*



If you're not failing every now and again, it's a sign you're not doing anything very innovative.

— *Woody Allen*



*You can get much farther with a
kind word and a gun than you can
with a kind word alone.*

— Al Capone

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