

# Abraham Verghese

## Quotes

*Thinking, Country, Heart, Years, Physicians, Believe, Men, Destiny, Feelings,  
Cancer, Beautiful, School, People, Inspiration, Broken, Ears, Emergencies,  
Medicine, Motivation, Patient*

Wasn't that the definition of home? Not where you are from, but where you are wanted

~Abraham Verghese

A rich man's faults are covered with money, but a surgeon's faults are covered with earth.

~Abraham Verghese

When I wake to the gift of yet another sunrise my first thought is to rouse him and say, I owe you the sight of morning.

~Abraham Verghese

Tell us please, what treatment in an emergency is administered by ear?"....I met his gaze and I did not blink. "Words of comfort," I said to my father.

~Abraham Verghese

Though I am fascinated by knowledge, I am even more fascinated by wisdom.

~Abraham Verghese

The most important innovation in medicine to come in the next 10 years: the power of the human hand.

~Abraham Verghese

No blade can puncture the human heart like the well-chosen words of a spiteful son.

~Abraham Verghese

Students undergo a conversion in the third year of medical school - not pre-clinical to clinical, but pre-cynical to cynical.

~Abraham Verghese

We know the average American physician interrupts their patient in 14

seconds.

~Abraham Verghese

You live it forward, but understand it backward.

~Abraham Verghese

To be around someone whose self-confidence is more than what our first glance led us to expect is seductive.

~Abraham Verghese

Geography is destiny.

~Abraham Verghese

I joke, but I only half joke, that if you come to one of our hospitals missing a limb, no one will believe you till they get a CAT scan, MRI, or orthopedic consult.

~Abraham Verghese

In writing, as in medicine, there are no short cuts. You need stamina.

~Abraham Verghese

I was taking care of people my age who were dying. The constant feeling, hearing from them, was that life is transient and can end very quickly, so don't postpone your dreams.

~Abraham Verghese

We come unbidden into this life, and if we are lucky we find a purpose beyond starvation, misery, and early death which, lest we forget, is the common lot.

~Abraham Verghese

Your job is to preserve yourself, not to descend into their hole. It's a relief when you arrive at this place, the point of absurdity, because then you are free, you owe them nothing.

~Abraham Verghese

He was teaching me how to die, just as he'd taught me how to live.

~Abraham Verghese

The world turns on our every action, and our every omission, whether we know it or not.

~Abraham Verghese

Life, too, is like that. You live it forward, but understand it backward. It is only when you stop and look to the rear that you see the corpse caught under your wheel.

~Abraham Verghese

There is a point when grief exceeds the human capacity to emote, and as a result one is strangely composed-

~Abraham Verghese

What treatment in an emergency is administered by ear?

~Abraham Verghese

Patients know in a heartbeat if they're getting a clumsy exam.

~Abraham Verghese

She felt the familiar calmness of an emergency, but she understood the falseness of that feeling, now that it was her life at stake.

~Abraham Verghese

He had so many ways of climbing into the tree house in his head, escaping the madness below, and pulling the ladder up behind him.

~Abraham Verghese

Make something beautiful of your life.

~Abraham Verghese

I'm a great believer in geography being destiny.

~Abraham Verghese

I believe in black holes. I believe that as the universe empties into nothingness, past and future will smack together in the last swirl around the drain.

~Abraham Verghese

When you win, you often lose, that's just a fact. There's no currency to straighten a warped spirit, or open a closed heart, a selfish heart.

~Abraham Verghese

I was angry with myself because I still loved her, or at least I loved that dream of our togetherness. My feelings were unreasonable, irrational, and I couldn't change them. That hurt.

~Abraham Verghese

By visiting patients in their home, by helping them come to terms with their illness, I could heal when I could not cure.

~Abraham Verghese

If 'ecstasy' meant the sudden intrusion of the sacred into the ordinary, then it had just happened to me.

~Abraham Verghese

She died chasing greatness and never saw it each time it was in her hand, so she kept seeking it elsewhere, but never understood the work required to get it or to keep it.

~Abraham Verghese

We're losing a ritual. We're losing a ritual that I believe is transformative, transcendent, and is at the heart of the patient-physician relationship.

~Abraham Verghese

What did it say when a man had fewer clothes than books?

~Abraham Verghese

Literature is a beautiful way of keeping the imagination alive, of visiting worlds you would never have time to in your day-to-day life. It keeps you abreast of a wider spectrum of human activities.

~Abraham Verghese

The bottom line: health care reform is about the patient, not about the physician.

~Abraham Verghese

The only way to know where you are is by where you have just been.

~Abraham Verghese

Pray tell us, what's your favorite number?

~Abraham Verghese

When a man is a mystery to himself you can hardly call him mysterious.

~Abraham Verghese

Ignorance was just as dynamic as knowledge, and it grew in the same proportion.

~Abraham Verghese

Be careful! Travel expands the mind and loosens the bowels.

~Abraham Verghese

It was all I had, all I've ever had, the only currency, the only proof that I was alive. Memory.

~Abraham Verghese

That's the funny thing about America--the blessed thing. As many

people as there are to hold you back, there are angels whose humanity makes up for all the others. I've had my share of angels.

~Abraham Verghese

She had always assumed that she would have years to sort out the meaning of life... As she bent over the child she realized that the tragedy of death had to do entirely with what was left unfulfilled.

~Abraham Verghese

Life for the Italians was what it was, no more and no less, an interlude between meals

~Abraham Verghese

We are all fixing what is broken. It is the task of a lifetime. We'll leave much unfinished for the next generation.

~Abraham Verghese

...guilt leads to righteous action, but rarely is it the right action.

~Abraham Verghese

The crookedness of the serpent is still straight enough to slide through the snake hole.

~Abraham Verghese

Not only our actions, but also our omissions, become our destiny.

~Abraham Verghese

Another day in paradise' was his inevitable pronouncement when he settled his head on his pillow. Now I understand what that meant: the uneventful day was a precious gift.

~Abraham Verghese

How we treat the least of our brethren,... that's the measure of this country.

~Abraham Verghese

I love to read poetry but I haven't written anything that I'm willing to show anybody.

~Abraham Verghese

Being the first born gives you great patience.

~Abraham Verghese

I always wondered if the good people who send us bibles really think that hookworm and hunger are healed by scripture? Our patients are illiterate.

~Abraham Verghese

In an emergency, what treatment is given by ear? Words of Comfort.

~Abraham Verghese

Yesterday misspent can't be recall'd  
Vanity makes beauty contemptible  
Wisdom is more valuable than riches.

~Abraham Verghese

God will judge us, Mr. Harris, by--by what we did to relieve the suffering of our fellow human beings. I don't think God cares what doctrine we embrace.

~Abraham Verghese

My sense is that the wonderful technology that we have to visualize the inside of the body often leaves physicians feeling that the exam is a waste of time and so they may shortchange the ritual.

~Abraham Verghese



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