

# Adam Gopnik

## Quotes

*Thinking, Writing, People, Art, Coffee, Mind, Men, Practice, Giving, New York,  
Ideas, Long, Trying, Past, Heart, Believe, Book, Littles, Joy, Eye*

After all, spinning is its own reward. There wouldn't be carousels if it weren't so.

~Adam Gopnik

The scale and the brutality of our prisons are the moral scandal of American life.

~Adam Gopnik

We breathe in our first language, and swim in our second.

~Adam Gopnik

The special virtue of freedom is not that it makes you richer and more powerful but that it gives you more time to understand what it means to be alive.

~Adam Gopnik

The loneliness of the expatriate is of an odd and complicated kind, for it is inseparable from the feeling of being free, of having escaped.

~Adam Gopnik

Frauds master our minds; magicians, like poets and lovers, engage them in a permanent maze of possibilities.

~Adam Gopnik

Sometimes having a good time can be the outward evidence of a deep re-thinking.

~Adam Gopnik

What drives innovation is abundance and ease, not the pressure of scarcity.

~Adam Gopnik

Cooking is the showy side of domesticity.

~Adam Gopnik

Nothing in a graduate degree in art history prepares you for the eloquence of the eraser.

~Adam Gopnik

Wit and puns aren't just décor in the mind; they're essential signs that the mind knows it's on, recognizes its own software, can spot the bugs in its own program.

~Adam Gopnik

I rush to add that I find the Web infinitely useful for rustling up information, settling arguments or locating the legends of rock stars.

~Adam Gopnik

Fanaticism comes in as many flavors as there are human beings.

~Adam Gopnik

Lose your schematic conventions by finding some surprising symbol or shape in the welter of shades, and draw that.

~Adam Gopnik

Over all, there are now more people under *correctional supervision* in America-more than six million-than were in the Gulag Archipelago under Stalin at its height.

~Adam Gopnik

I still think the best classic meal in New York is a coffee-shop breakfast - you sort of can't skip it.

~Adam Gopnik

Love, like light, is a thing that is enacted better than defined: we know it afterward by the traces it leaves on paper.

~Adam Gopnik

I try to turn a written thing, when I'm in trouble with it, into a spoken

thing: I start imagining what I would say to someone if I were trying to tell the story or make the argument.

~Adam Gopnik

I think I'm more intensely opinionated when I speak; more agreeably balanced when I write.

~Adam Gopnik

Of all the unexpected things in contemporary literature, this is among the oddest: that kids have an inordinate appetite for very long, very tricky, very strange books about places that don't exist...

~Adam Gopnik

Protein was the most valued ingredient 250 years ago: It was the rarest thing. Now the rarest thing we have is time: time to cook and time to eat.

~Adam Gopnik

All tastes have the quality of being in some way artificial and invented. The secret of life is to have enough detachment from your tastes and your values to see that they are a little bit absurd.

~Adam Gopnik

Good editorial writing has less to do with winning an argument, since the other side is mostly not listening, than with telling the guys on your side how they ought to sound when they're arguing.

~Adam Gopnik

New York has always been a place where it is possible to have memories without the experience that conventionally precede them.

~Adam Gopnik

Music is a current of hard choices made to seem easy by the mind.

~Adam Gopnik

Dinner with water is dinner for prisoners

~Adam Gopnik

American long for a closed society in which everything can be bought, where laborers are either hidden away or dressed up as nonhumans, so as not to be disconcerting. This place is called Disney World

~Adam Gopnik

If you're being attacked from all sides, it's possible you're doing something right; it's also possible that you are doing everything wrong.

~Adam Gopnik

I think that we're always drawn - particularly sophisticated people - are always drawn to the idea of simplicity.

~Adam Gopnik

What we eat is the one simplest way to declare who we are - the table reflects our values with a clarity that few other theaters of human behaviour possess.

~Adam Gopnik

Leafing through Forbes or Fortune [magazine]s is like reading the operating manual of a strangely sanctimonious pirate ship

~Adam Gopnik

Big writers become a kind of shared climate.

~Adam Gopnik

In bookstores, my stuff is usually filed in the out-of-the-way, additional interest sections.

~Adam Gopnik

The coffee shop is a great New York institution, but it has terrible coffee. And the more traditional coffee shops are trying to catch up with

more sophisticated coffee drinkers.

~Adam Gopnik

Art without accomplishment becomes a form of faith, sustained more by the intensity of its common practice than by the pleasure it gives to its adherents in private.

~Adam Gopnik

In the New Yorker library, I have long been shelved between Nadine Gordimer and Brendan Gill; an eerie little space nestled between high seriousness of purpose and legendary lightness of touch.

~Adam Gopnik

I don't think there's any question journalists have become targets, but then I think that - that anyone who tries to practice liberty becomes a target of fanatics.

~Adam Gopnik

Often the block [in writing] comes from the wall of words that keep out the simplicity of sense.

~Adam Gopnik

Someone once said that the joy is not in writing but in having written. I can't say I find that to be true, though I understand the sentiment.

~Adam Gopnik

I don't miss the obligation to be opinionated, but I do regret the chance to share a joy.

~Adam Gopnik

Drawing need not be the bones of art, but skill must always be the skeleton of accomplishment.

~Adam Gopnik

You can't have a decent food culture without a decent coffee culture:  
the two things grow up together.

~Adam Gopnik

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