

# Alfred North Whitehead

## Quotes

*Science, Math, Ideas, Men, Adventure, Art, Thinking, Philosophy, Past, Real, Doe, May, Religion, Life, Education, Mind, Self, Inspirational, Facts, Civilization*

No one who achieves success does so without acknowledging the help of others. The wise and confident acknowledge this help with gratitude.

~Alfred North Whitehead

The art of progress is to preserve order amid change and to preserve change amid order.

~Alfred North Whitehead

If a dog jumps into your lap, it is because he is fond of you; but if a cat does the same thing, it is because your lap is warmer.

~Alfred North Whitehead

There are no whole truths: All truths are half-truths.

~Alfred North Whitehead

Not ignorance, but ignorance of ignorance, is the death of knowledge.

~Alfred North Whitehead

Religion is the last refuge of human savagery.

~Alfred North Whitehead

Philosophy begins in wonder. And, at the end, when philosophic thought has done its best, the wonder remains.

~Alfred North Whitehead

...the self-satisfied dogmatism with which mankind at each period of its history cherishes the delusion of the finality of existing modes of knowledge.

~Alfred North Whitehead

Knowledge shrinks as wisdom grows.

~Alfred North Whitehead

Symbolism is no mere idle fancy or corrupt degeneration: it is inherent

in the very texture of human life.

~Alfred North Whitehead

From the very beginning of his education, the child should experience the joy of discovery.

~Alfred North Whitehead

The tragedy of the world is that those who are imaginative have but slight experience, and those who are experienced have feeble imaginations.

~Alfred North Whitehead

The point about zero is that we do not need to use it in the operation of daily life. No one goes out to buy zero fish.

~Alfred North Whitehead

We think in generalities, but we live in detail.

~Alfred North Whitehead

Speech is human nature itself, with none of the artificiality of written language.

~Alfred North Whitehead

Ideas won't keep. Something must be done about them.

~Alfred North Whitehead

How the past perishes is how the future becomes.

~Alfred North Whitehead

I put forward as a general definition of civilization, that a civilized society is exhibiting the five qualities of Truth, Beauty, Adventure, Art, Peace.

~Alfred North Whitehead

It requires a very unusual mind to undertake the analysis of the obvious.

~Alfred North Whitehead

Art attracts us only by what it reveals of our most secret self.

~Alfred North Whitehead

Art is the imposing of a pattern on experience.

~Alfred North Whitehead

Art is the imposing of a pattern on experience, and our aesthetic enjoyment is recognition of the pattern.

~Alfred North Whitehead

The chief error in philosophy is overstatement.

~Alfred North Whitehead

When you're average, you're just as close to the bottom as you are the top.

~Alfred North Whitehead

It takes an extraordinary intelligence to contemplate the obvious.

~Alfred North Whitehead

Inventive genius requires pleasurable mental activity as a condition for its vigorous exercise

~Alfred North Whitehead

The pursuit of mathematics is a divine madness of the human spirit.

~Alfred North Whitehead

The deepest definition of youth is life as yet untouched by tragedy.

~Alfred North Whitehead

The foundation of reverence is this perception, that the present holds within itself the complete sum of existence, backwards and forwards, that whole amplitude of time, which is eternity.

~Alfred North Whitehead

Everyone is a philosopher. Not everyone is good at it.

~Alfred North Whitehead

Wisdom alone is true ambition's aim, wisdom is the source of virtue and of fame; obtained with labour, for mankind employed, and then, when most you share it, best enjoyed.

~Alfred North Whitehead

It is in literature that the concrete outlook of humanity receives its expression.

~Alfred North Whitehead

Algebra is the intellectual instrument which has been created for rendering clear the quantitative aspects of the world.

~Alfred North Whitehead

The motive of success is not enough.

~Alfred North Whitehead

True courage is not the brutal force of vulgar heroes, but the firm resolve of virtue and reason.

~Alfred North Whitehead

In formal logic, a contradiction is the signal of defeat, but in the evolution of real knowledge it marks the first step in progress toward a victory.

~Alfred North Whitehead

The antithesis between a technical and a liberal education is fallacious.

There can be no adequate technical education which is not liberal, and no liberal education which is not technical.

~Alfred North Whitehead

Thus the negative perception is the triumph of consciousness.

~Alfred North Whitehead

The absolute pacifist is a bad citizen; times come when force must be used to uphold right, justice and ideals.

~Alfred North Whitehead

Religion will not regain its old power until it can face change in the same spirit as does science.

~Alfred North Whitehead

I would be a billionaire if I was looking to be a selfish boss. That's not me.

~Alfred North Whitehead

Philosophy is the product of wonder.

~Alfred North Whitehead

The study of mathematics is apt to commence in disappointment.

~Alfred North Whitehead

The vastest knowledge of today cannot transcend the buddhi of the Rishis in ancient India; and science in its most advanced stage now is closer to Vedanta than ever before.

~Alfred North Whitehead

Every really new idea looks crazy at first.

~Alfred North Whitehead

The science of pure mathematics, in its modern developments, may

claim to be the most original creation of the human spirit.

~Alfred North Whitehead

Vedanta is the most impressive metaphysics the human mind has conceived.

~Alfred North Whitehead

Human life is driven forward by its dim apprehension of notions too general for its existing language.

~Alfred North Whitehead

Seek simplicity, and distrust it.

~Alfred North Whitehead

Education should turn out the pupil with something he knows well and something he can do well.

~Alfred North Whitehead

It is a safe rule to apply that, when a mathematical or philosophical author writes with a misty profundity, he is talking nonsense.

~Alfred North Whitehead

What is morality in any given time or place? It is what the majority then and there happen to like and immorality is what they dislike.

~Alfred North Whitehead

It is more important that a proposition be interesting than that it be true.

~Alfred North Whitehead

Fundamental progress has to do with the reinterpretation of basic ideas.

~Alfred North Whitehead

Great people plant trees they'll never sit under.

~Alfred North Whitehead

Human nature loses its most precious quality when it is robbed of its sense of things beyond, unexplored and yet insistent.

~Alfred North Whitehead

Rationalism is an adventure in the clarification of thought.

~Alfred North Whitehead

Without adventure civilization is in full decay.

~Alfred North Whitehead

The purpose of education is not to fill a vessel but to kindle a flame.

~Alfred North Whitehead

Education which is not modern share the fate of all organic things which are kept too long.

~Alfred North Whitehead

The vitality of thought is in adventure. Ideas won't keep. Something must be done about them. When the idea is new, its custodians have fervor, live for it, and if need be, die for it.

~Alfred North Whitehead

Intelligence is quickness to apprehend as distinct form ability, which is capacity to act wisely on the thing apprehended.

~Alfred North Whitehead

Apart from God every activity is merely a passing whiff of insignificance.

~Alfred North Whitehead

After you understand about the sun and the stars and the rotation of the earth, you may still miss the radiance of the sunset.



~Alfred North Whitehead

Fertilization of the soul is the reason for the necessity of art.

~Alfred North Whitehead

Everything of importance has been said before by somebody who did not discover it.

~Alfred North Whitehead

Our reasonings grasp at straws for premises and float on gossamers for deductions.

~Alfred North Whitehead

A Unitarian is a person who believes in at most one God.

~Alfred North Whitehead

Civilizations can only be understood by those who are civilized.

~Alfred North Whitehead

Algebra reverses the relative importance of the factors in ordinary language.

~Alfred North Whitehead

Civilization advances by extending the number of important operations which we can perform without thinking of them.

~Alfred North Whitehead

With the sense of sight, the idea communicates the emotion, whereas, with sound, the emotion communicates the idea, which is more direct and therefore more powerful.

~Alfred North Whitehead

The 'silly question' is the first intimation of some totally novel development.

~Alfred North Whitehead

Spoken language is merely a series of squeaks.

~Alfred North Whitehead

Value is coextensive with reality.

~Alfred North Whitehead

Religion is what a person does in his solitariness.

~Alfred North Whitehead

Learning is often spoken of as if we are watching the open pages of all the books which we have ever read, and then, when occasion arises, we select the right page to read aloud to the universe.

~Alfred North Whitehead

Education with inert ideas is not only useless; it is above all things harmful.

~Alfred North Whitehead

Dogmatism is the anti-Christ of learning.

~Alfred North Whitehead

You think the world is what it looks like in fine weather at noon day; I think it is what it seems like in the early morning when one first wakes from deep sleep.

~Alfred North Whitehead

Almost all new ideas have a certain aspect of foolishness when they are first produced.

~Alfred North Whitehead

The guiding motto in the life of every natural philosopher should be, seek simplicity and distrust it.

~Alfred North Whitehead

I consider Christian theology to be one of the great disasters of the human race.

~Alfred North Whitehead

The ultimate metaphysical ground is the creative advance into novelty.

~Alfred North Whitehead

Mathematics as a science, commenced when first someone, probably a Greek, proved propositions about "any" things or about "some" things, without specifications of definite particular things.

~Alfred North Whitehead

Seek simplicity but distrust it.

~Alfred North Whitehead

The task of a university is the creation of the future, so far as rational thought and civilized modes of appreciation can affect the issue.

~Alfred North Whitehead

Life is an offensive, directed against the repetitious mechanism of the Universe.

~Alfred North Whitehead

An enormous part of our mature experience cannot not be expressed in words.

~Alfred North Whitehead

But you can catch yourself entertaining habitually certain ideas and setting others aside; and that, I think, is where our personal destinies are largely decided.

~Alfred North Whitehead

There are no whole truths: all truths are half-truths. It is trying to treat them as whole truths that plays to the devil.

~Alfred North Whitehead

What we perceive as the present is the vivid fringe of memory tinged with anticipation.

~Alfred North Whitehead

In a certain sense, everything is everywhere at all times. For every location involves an aspect of itself in every other location. Thus every spatio-temporal standpoint mirrors the world

~Alfred North Whitehead

Life is complex in its expression, involving more than percipience, namely desire, emotion, will, and feeling.

~Alfred North Whitehead

A clash of doctrine is not a disaster, it is an opportunity.

~Alfred North Whitehead

A science which hesitates to forget its founders is lost.

~Alfred North Whitehead

I always feel that I have two duties to perform with a parting guest: one, to see that he doesn't forget anything that is his; the other, to see that he doesn't take anything that is mine.

~Alfred North Whitehead

The greatest invention of the nineteenth century was the invention of the method of invention.

~Alfred North Whitehead

Every philosophy is tinged with the coloring of some secret imaginative background, which never emerges explicitly into its train of reasoning.

~Alfred North Whitehead

**Common sense is genius in homespun.**

~Alfred North Whitehead

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