

# Alison Gopnik

## Quotes

*Children, Kids, Thinking, Baby, People, Husband, Mean, Brain, Parent,  
Technology, Growing Up, Real, Mother, Years, Long, Childhood, Caring,  
Support, Teaching, Play*

I'm afraid the parenting advice to come out of developmental psychology is very boring: pay attention to your kids and love them.

~Alison Gopnik

Because we imagine, we can have invention and technology. It's actually play, not necessity, that is the mother of invention.

~Alison Gopnik

What's it like to be a baby? It's like being in love in Paris for the first time after you've had three double espressos.

~Alison Gopnik

The more obsessively we focus on what a particular food is going to do for us, the less healthy we've become. Simple pleasures become complicated.

~Alison Gopnik

Adults often assume that most learning is the result of teaching and that exploratory, spontaneous learning is unusual. But actually, spontaneous learning is more fundamental.

~Alison Gopnik

The brain is highly structured, but it is also extremely flexible. It's not a blank slate, but it isn't written in stone, either.

~Alison Gopnik

Animals are certainly more sophisticated than we used to think. And we shouldn't lump together animals as a group. Crows and chimps and dogs are all highly intelligent in very different ways.

~Alison Gopnik

On the Web we all become small-town visitors lost in the big city.

~Alison Gopnik

The largest and most powerful computers are still no match for the smallest and weakest humans.

~Alison Gopnik

Babies and young children are like the research and development division of the human species, and we grown-ups are production and marketing.

~Alison Gopnik

What teenagers want most of all are social rewards, especially the respect of their peers.

~Alison Gopnik

Texts and e-mails travel no faster than phone calls and telegrams, and their content isn't necessarily richer or poorer.

~Alison Gopnik

We don't measure the quality of our other relationships by how well the other person turns out, for instance whether my husband is a better person after 10 years than he was when I first met him.

~Alison Gopnik

If parents are the fixed stars in the child's universe, the vaguely understood, distant but constant celestial spheres, siblings are the dazzling, sometimes scorching comets whizzing nearby.

~Alison Gopnik

It turns out to be much easier to simulate a grandmaster chess player than it is to simulate a 2-year-old.

~Alison Gopnik

Being a grandmother is a wonderful thing, so my advice is skip the children. Go straight to the grandchildren.

~Alison Gopnik

Caring, whether for children or the dying, shouldn't be instrumental. It should be an intrinsic, moral good.

~Alison Gopnik

One of the most distinctive evolutionary features of human beings is our unusually long, protected childhood.

~Alison Gopnik

Ineffective or weak brain connections are pruned in much the same way a gardener would prune a tree or bush, giving the plant a desired shape.

~Alison Gopnik

To support the people we care about is intrinsic, it is not instrumental. It's not something we do because we're hoping to get some other outcome.

~Alison Gopnik

Adults tend to think they have much free will. Kids younger than six are less sure. They may be more realistic!

~Alison Gopnik

We don't wife our husbands and we don't child our parents.

~Alison Gopnik

Becoming an adult means leaving the world of your parents and starting to make your way toward the future that you will share with your peers.

~Alison Gopnik

We fear death so profoundly, not because it means the end of our body, but because it means the end of our consciousness - better to be a spirit in Heaven than a zombie on Earth.

~Alison Gopnik

Developmental scientists like me explore the basic science of learning by designing controlled experiments.

~Alison Gopnik

The best scientific way to discover if one factor influences another is to do a controlled experiment.

~Alison Gopnik

The radio was an improvement on the telegraph but it didn't have the same exponential, transformative effect.

~Alison Gopnik

What happens when children reach puberty earlier and adulthood later? The answer is: a good deal of teenage weirdness.

~Alison Gopnik

Owning our past allows us to own our future.

~Alison Gopnik

Childhood is a fundamental part of all human lives, parents or not, since that's how we all start out. And yet babies and young children are so mysterious and puzzling and even paradoxical.

~Alison Gopnik

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