

# Annie Dillard Quotes

*Writing, Book, Thinking, Children, Life, World, Men, Mind, People, Inspirational,  
Beautiful, Way, Hands, Light, Real, Years, Doe, Trying, Believe, Eye*

How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives.

~Annie Dillard

No one escapes the wilderness on the way to the promised land.

~Annie Dillard

At a certain point, you say to the woods, to the sea, to the mountains, the world, Now I am ready. Now I will stop and be wholly attentive. You empty yourself and wait, listening.

~Annie Dillard

A schedule defends from chaos and whim. It is a net for catching days. It is a scaffolding on which a worker can stand and labor with both hands at sections of time.

~Annie Dillard

As a life's work, I would remember everything - everything, against loss. I would go through life like a plankton net.

~Annie Dillard

Experiencing the present purely is being empty and hollow; you catch grace as a man fills his cup under a waterfall.

~Annie Dillard

According to Inuit culture in Greenland, a person possesses six or seven souls. The souls take the form of tiny people scattered throughout the body.

~Annie Dillard

The answer must be, I think, that beauty and grace are performed whether or not we will or sense them. The least we can do is try to be there.

~Annie Dillard

I had been my whole life a bell, and never knew it until at that moment I was lifted and struck.

~Annie Dillard

The dedicated life is worth living. You must give with your whole heart.

~Annie Dillard

If we listened to our intellect, we'd never have a love affair... or go into business. You've got to jump off cliffs and build your wings on the way down.

~Annie Dillard

Then why did you tell me?

~Annie Dillard

Ecstasy, I think, is a soul's response to the waves holiness makes as it nears.

~Annie Dillard

I alternate between thinking of the planet as home - dear and familiar stone hearth and garden - and as a hard land of exile in which we are all sojourners.

~Annie Dillard

The secret is not to write about what you love best, but about what you, alone, love at all.

~Annie Dillard

You do not have to sit outside in the dark. If, however, you want to look at the stars, you will find that darkness is necessary. But the stars neither require nor demand it.

~Annie Dillard

Every live thing is a survivor on a kind of extended emergency bivouac.

~Annie Dillard

We live in all we seek.

~Annie Dillard

We are here to abet creation and to witness to it, to notice each other's beautiful face and complex nature so that creation need not play to an empty house.

~Annie Dillard

I couldn't unpeach the peaches.

~Annie Dillard

Why do we people in churches seem like cheerful, brainless tourists on a packaged tour of the Absolute?

~Annie Dillard

Hone and spread your spirit till you yourself are a sail, whetted, translucent, broadside to the merest puff.

~Annie Dillard

There is no shortage of good days. It is good lives that are hard to come by.

~Annie Dillard

The sea pronounces something, over and over, in a hoarse whisper; I cannot quite make it out.

~Annie Dillard

Whenever there is stillness there is the still small voice, God's speaking from the whirlwind, nature's old song, and dance.

~Annie Dillard

The life of sensation is the life of greed; it requires more and more. The

life of the spirit requires less and less.

~Annie Dillard

She read books as one would breathe air, to fill up and live.

~Annie Dillard

We are here on the planet only once, and might as well get a feel for the place.

~Annie Dillard

You can't test courage cautiously.

~Annie Dillard

What a hideout: Holiness lies spread and borne over the surface of time and stuff like color.

~Annie Dillard

Your work is to keep cranking the flywheel that turns the gears that spin the belt in the engine of belief that keeps you and your desk in midair.

~Annie Dillard

The real and proper question is: why is it beautiful?

~Annie Dillard

We are most deeply asleep at the switch when we fancy we control any switches at all.

~Annie Dillard

Caring passionately about something isn't against nature, and it isn't against human nature. It's what we're here to do.

~Annie Dillard

It should surprise no one that the life of the writer - such as it is - is colorless to the point of sensory deprivation. Many writers do little else

but sit in small rooms recalling the real world.

~Annie Dillard

I wake expectant, hoping to see a new thing.

~Annie Dillard

Spend the afternoon. You can't take it with you.

~Annie Dillard

You search, you break your heart, your back, your brain, and then-and only then-it is handed to you.

~Annie Dillard

Make connections; let rip; and dance where you can.

~Annie Dillard

Knowing you are alive is watching on every side your generation's short time falling away as fast as rivers drop through air, and feeling it hit.

~Annie Dillard

Appealing workplaces are to be avoided. One wants a room with no view, so imagination can meet memory in the dark.

~Annie Dillard

An Eskimo shaman said, Life's greatest danger lies in the fact that man's food consists entirely of souls.

~Annie Dillard

Why are we reading, if not in hope of beauty laid bare, life heightened and its deepest mystery probed?

~Annie Dillard

Art is like an ill-trained Labrador retriever that drags you out into traffic.

~Annie Dillard

Our life is a faint tracing on the surface of mystery.

~Annie Dillard

Adverbs are a sign that you've used the wrong verb.

~Annie Dillard

The way we live our days, is the way we live our lives.

~Annie Dillard

There is a muscular energy in sunlight corresponding to the spiritual energy of wind.

~Annie Dillard

The point of going somewhere like the Napo River in Ecuador is not to see the most spectacular anything. It is simply to see what is there.

~Annie Dillard

No, the point is not only does time fly and do we die, but that in these reckless conditions we live at all, and are vouchsafed, for the duration of certain inexplicable moments, to know it.

~Annie Dillard

You can't test courage cautiously, so I ran hard and waved my arms hard, happy.

~Annie Dillard

I do not so much write a book as sit up with it, as a dying friend. I hold its hand and hope it will get better.

~Annie Dillard

These are our few live seasons. Let us live them as purely as we can, in the present.

~Annie Dillard

As soon as beauty is sought not from religion and love, but for pleasure, it degrades the seeker.

~Annie Dillard

I cannot cause light; the most I can do is try to put myself in the path of its beam.

~Annie Dillard

A schedule defends from chaos and whim. A net for catching days.

~Annie Dillard

He is careful of what he reads, for that is what he will write. He is careful of what he learns, for that is what he will know.

~Annie Dillard

You can serve or you can sing, and wreck your heart in prayer, working the world's hard work.

~Annie Dillard

I would like to live. . . open to time and death painlessly, noticing everything, remembering nothing, choosing the given with a fierce and pointed will.

~Annie Dillard

Time is the warp and matter the weft of the woven texture of beauty in space, and death is the hurling shuttle.

~Annie Dillard

The extravagant gesture is the very stuff of creation.

~Annie Dillard

I break up through the skin of awareness a thousand times a day, as dolphins burst through seas, and dive again, and rise, and dive.

~Annie Dillard



Anything you do not give freely and abundantly becomes lost to you.

~Annie Dillard

The dear, stupid body is as easily satisfied as a spaniel.

~Annie Dillard

I'd seen a great many partial eclipses, but a partial eclipse has the same relation to a total eclipse as flirting with a man does to marrying him. It's completely different.

~Annie Dillard

Every book has an intrinsic impossibility, which its writer discovers as soon as his first excitement dwindles.

~Annie Dillard

I would like to learn, or remember, how to live.

~Annie Dillard

If we were to judge nature by common sense or likelihood, we wouldn't believe the world existed.

~Annie Dillard

We wake, if ever at all, to mystery.

~Annie Dillard

I am a fugitive and a vagabond, a sojourner seeking signs.

~Annie Dillard

We are here to bring to consciousness the beauty and power that are around us and to praise the people who are here with us.

~Annie Dillard

The universe was not made in jest but in solemn incomprehensible earnest.

~Annie Dillard

When I teach, I preach. I thump the Bible. I exhort my students morally. I talk to them about the dedicated life.

~Annie Dillard

Wherever we go, there seems to be only one business at hand - that of finding workable compromises between the sublimity of our ideas and the absurdity of the fact of us.

~Annie Dillard

The mind itself is an art object ... The mind is a blue guitar on which we improvise the song of the world.

~Annie Dillard

We teach our children one thing only, as we were taught: to wake up. We teach our children to look alive there, to join by words and activities the life of human culture on the planet

~Annie Dillard

Just think: in all the clean, beautiful reaches of the solar system, our planet alone is a blot; our planet alone has death.

~Annie Dillard

Johnston's books are beautifully written and among the funniest I have ever read.

~Annie Dillard

What is a house but a bigger skin, and a neighborhood map but the world's skin ever expanding?

~Annie Dillard

I can't dance anymore. Total knee replacements. I can't do anything anymore.

~Annie Dillard

I am a frayed and nibbled survivor in a fallen world, and I am getting along. I am aging and eaten and have done my share of eating too.

~Annie Dillard

Nothing moves a woman so deeply as the boyhood of the man she loves.

~Annie Dillard

When you write, you lay out a line of words. Soon you find yourself deep in new territory.

~Annie Dillard

How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives. What we do with this hour and with that one, is what we are doing.

~Annie Dillard

At its best, the sensation of writing is that of any unmerited grace. It is handed to you, but only if you look for it.

~Annie Dillard

I woke in bits, like all children, piecemeal over the years. I discovered myself and the world, and forgot them, and discovered them again.

~Annie Dillard

Aim for the chopping block. If you aim for the wood, you will have nothing. Aim past the wood, aim through the wood; aim for the chopping block.

~Annie Dillard

I think it would be well, and proper, and obedient, and pure, to grasp your one necessity and not let it go, to dangle from it limp wherever it takes you.

~Annie Dillard

Nature's silence is its one remark, and every flake of world is a chip off that old mute and immutable block.

~Annie Dillard

I cannot imagine a sorrier pursuit than struggling for years to write a book that attempts to appeal to people who do not read in the first place.

~Annie Dillard

I breathed the air of history all unaware, and walked oblivious through its littered layers.

~Annie Dillard

Our life is a faint tracing on the surface of mystery, like the idle, curved tunnels of leaf miners on the face of a leaf

~Annie Dillard

The world knew you before you knew the world.

~Annie Dillard

We are here to witness the creation and to abet it.

~Annie Dillard

Every spring he vowed to quit teaching school, and every summer he missed his pupils and searched for them on the streets.

~Annie Dillard

The surest sign of age is loneliness.

~Annie Dillard

Our family was on the lunatic fringe. My mother was always completely irrepressible. My father made crowd noises into a microphone.

~Annie Dillard

Landscape consists in the multiple, overlapping intricacies and forms that exist in a given space at a moment in time.

~Annie Dillard

I woke at intervals until . . . the intervals of waking tipped the scales, and I was more often awake than not.

~Annie Dillard

The sensation of writing a book is the sensation of spinning, blinded by love and daring.

~Annie Dillard

### **Related Links:**

- Writing Quotes
- Book Quotes
- Thinking Quotes
- Children Quotes
- Life Quotes
- World Quotes
- Men Quotes
- Mind Quotes
- People Quotes
- Inspirational Quotes
- Beautiful Quotes
- Way Quotes
- Hands Quotes
- Light Quotes
- Real Quotes
- Years Quotes
- Doe Quotes
- Trying Quotes
- Believe Quotes
- Eye Quotes