

Barbara Ehrenreich

Quotes

*War, Thinking, Men, People, Jobs, America, Children, Class, Work, Ideas,
Country, Mean, Long, Years, Military, Views, Real, Atheism, Attitude, Positive
Thinking*

For anyone worn down, The Impossible Will Take a Little While is a bracing double cappuccino.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

Considering the absence of legal coercion, the surprising thing is that men have for so long, and, on the whole, so reliably, adhered to what we might call the breadwinner ethic.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

Exercise is the yuppie version of bulimia.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

No matter that patriotism is too often the refuge of scoundrels. Dissent, rebellion, and all-around hell-raising remain the true duty of patriots.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

The 'working poor,' as they are approvingly termed, are in fact the major philanthropists of our society.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

There is a vast difference between positive thinking and existential courage.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

No one should be incarcerated for debt or squeezed for money they have no chance of getting their hands on.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

Poverty is not a character failing or a lack of motivation. Poverty is a shortage of money.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

Personally, I can't see why it would be any less romantic to find a husband in a nice four-color catalogue than in the average downtown

bar at happy hour.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

Marriage is socialism among two people.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

The one regret I have about my own abortions is that they cost money that might otherwise have been spent on something more pleasurable, like taking the kids to movies and theme parks.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

Middle-class-led reform movements, from the Progressive Era to the War on Poverty, have been marred by an elitist distance from the would-be beneficiaries of reform.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

Money does not bring happiness' - only the wherewithal, perhaps, to endure its absence.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

It is the marketplace that calls most clearly for men to be softer, more narcissistic and receptive, and the new man is the result.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

Take motherhood: nobody ever thought of putting it on a moral pedestal until some brash feminists pointed out, about a century ago, that the pay is lousy and the career ladder nonexistent.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

To be homeless in America is to live like a fugitive. The destitute are our own native-born "illegals."

~Barbara Ehrenreich

Of all the nasty outcomes predicted for women's liberation... none was

more alarming, from a feminist point of view, than the suggestion that women would eventually become just like men.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

Lenders, including major credit companies as well as payday lenders, have taken over the traditional role of the street-corner loan shark, charging the poor insanely high rates of interest.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

in our culture, the professional, and largely white, middle class is taken as a social norm - a bland and neutral mainstream - from which every other group or class is ultimately a kind of deviation.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

Jesus: a wine-guzzling vagrant and precocious socialist.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

we are reaching the point, if we have not passed it already, where the largest public housing program in America will be our penitentiary system.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

A cynic might conclude that the real purpose of the \$500 million-a-year implant business is the implantation of fat in the bellies and rumps of underemployed plastic surgeons.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

The Republican Party: a few million gun-toting, Armageddon-ready Baptists.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

In fact, there is clear evidence of black intellectual superiority: in 1984, 92 percent of blacks voted to retire Ronald Reagan, compared to only 36 percent of whites.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

Natural selection, as it has operated in human history, favors not only the clever but the murderous.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

The failure to think positively can weigh on a cancer patient like a second disease.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

We who officially value freedom of speech above life itself seem to have nothing to talk about but the weather.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

America is addicted to wars of distraction.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

At best the family teaches the finest things human beings can learn from one another generosity and love. But it is also, all too often, where we learn nasty things like hate, rage and shame.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

Roman Catholicism: a hundred million people bowing down before a flesh-hating, elderly celibate.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

We need a kind of feminism that aims not just to assimilate into the institutions that men have created over the centuries, but to infiltrate and subvert them.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

Medical debts are the number-one cause of bankruptcy in America.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

no job, no matter how lowly, is truly 'unskilled.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

Imagine spending four billion years stocking the oceans with seafood, filling the ground with fossil fuels, and drilling the bees in honey production - only to produce a race of bed-wetters!

~Barbara Ehrenreich

Upscale young men seem to go for the kind of woman who plays with a full deck of credit cards.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

There is the fear, common to all English-only speakers, that the chief purpose of foreign languages is to make fun of us. Otherwise, you know, why not just come out and say it?

~Barbara Ehrenreich

Whether you work outside the home or not, never tell them [your children] that being a mommy is your 'job.' Being a mommy is a relationship, not a profession.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

There's more pressure on women to be chirpy and perky.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

My Turn is the distilled bathwater of Mrs. Reagan's life. It is for the most part sweetish, with a tart edge of rebuke, but disappointingly free of dirt or particulate matter of any kind.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

Like many other women, I could not understand why every man who changed a diaper has felt impelled, in recent years, to write a book about it.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

Marriage probably originated as a straightforward food-for-sex deal among foraging primates. Compatibility was not a big issue, nor, of course, was there any tension over who would control the remote.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

That's free enterprise, friends: freedom to gamble, freedom to lose. And the great thing - the truly democratic thing about it - is that you don't even have to be a player to lose.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

That's the really neat thing about Dan Quayle, as you must have realized from the first moment you looked into those lovely blue eyes: impeachment insurance.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

Employers have gone away from the idea that an employee is a long-term asset to the company, someone to be nurtured and developed, to a new notion that they are disposable.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

Personally, I have nothing against work, particularly when performed, quietly and unobtrusively, by someone else. I just don't happen to think it's an appropriate subject for an 'ethic.'

~Barbara Ehrenreich

For the millions of us who live glued to computer keyboards at work and TV monitors at home, food may be more than entertainment. It may be the only sensual experience left.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

Heads of state are notoriously ill prepared for their mature careers; think of Adolf Hitler (landscape painter), Ho Chi Minh (seaman), and our own Ronald Reagan.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

The psychological trauma of losing a job can be as great as the trauma of a divorce. It creates a lot of anger and emotional hardship. People may become quite depressed.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

The secret of the truly successful ... is that they learned early in life how not to be busy.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

the fastest-growing brand of religion is of the magical 'name it and claim it' variety, in which the deity exists only to meet one's immediate, self-identified needs.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

If there is no God or no evidence of God and certainly no evidence of a very morally engaged god, then whatever has to be done has to be done by us.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

Transcendent Oneness does not require self-examination, self-help, or self-work. It requires self-loss.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

It seems to me that there must be an ecological limit to the number of paper pushers the Earth can sustain.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

Given the cultural barriers to intersex conversation, the amazing thing is that we would even expect women and men to have anything to say to each other for more than ten minutes at a stretch.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

if you search the bible, you will find no reference to birth control or gay marriage, and you will not find a word, strangely, about stem cell

research. I have searched.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

Labor is like motherhood to most of our political leaders: a calling so fine and noble that it would be sullied by talk of vulgar, mundane things like pay.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

war is, in some not yet entirely defined sense, a self-replicating pattern of behavior, possessed of a dynamism not unlike that of living things.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

People tend to judge presidents on how the economy performs, and yet we don't expect them to have the power to do much about it. Or we don't want them to exercise that power, if they were to have it.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

Feminists have not tried to "destroy the family". We just thought the family was such a good idea that men might want to get involved in it too.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

Both chronic, long-term poverty and downward mobility from the middle class are in the same category of things that America likes not to think about.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

What you don't necessarily realize when you start selling your time by the hour is that what you're really selling is your life.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

I'm not a nice person.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

When you watch television, you never see people watching television. We love television because it brings us a world in which television does not exist.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

If you can attribute your success entirely to your own mental effort, to your own attitude, to some spiritual essence that you have that is better than other peoples, then that must feel pretty good.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

You can turn away the Mexicans, the African-Americans, the teenagers and other suspect groups, but there's no fence high enough to keep out the repo man.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

The urge to transform one's appearance, to dance outdoors, to mock the powerful and embrace perfect strangers is not easy to suppress."

--Barbara Ehrenreich, *Dancing in the Streets*, 260.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

War cannot be used as a means to prevent or abolish wars. ... The idea of a war to prevent war is one of its oldest, and cruelest, tricks.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

You still don't like the idea of gay marriage? Then, as my friend, the economist Julianne Malveaux, says: Don't marry a gay person. Case closed, problem solved.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

Even when uttered by Democrats, "middle class" often sounds like a mealymouthed way of saying, "Us, and not them," where "them" includes poor people, snake handlers and those with pierced tongues.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

Ineluctably, the insults inflicted in one war call forth new wars of retaliation, which may be waged within months of the original conflict or generations later.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

Wars produce warlike societies, which in turn make the world more dangerous for other societies, which are thus recruited into being war-prone themselves.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

The truth is, many things are worth doing only in the most slovenly, halfhearted fashion possible, and many other things are not worth doing at all.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

So even though I consider myself a fairly upbeat person, energetic and things like that, I never do very well on happiness tests.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

Whenever people can access deities directly without the intervention of a religious hierarchy, they don't need to have hierarchy so much.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

The nation was not founded by habitual groupthinkers. But it stands a fair chance of being destroyed by them.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

When I was born, my father was a copper miner in Butte, Montana. It was a hard-core, blue-collar situation.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

Warriors make wars, but it is also true that, in what has so far been an endless reproductive cycle, war makes warriors.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

If God cares about our puny species, then disasters prove that he is not all-powerful; and if he is all-powerful, then clearly he doesn't give a damn.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

As anyone knows who has ever had to set up a military encampment or build a village from the ground up, occupations pose staggering logistical problems.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

while everything else in our lives has gotten simpler, speedier, more microwavable and user-friendly, child-raising seems to have expanded to fill the time no longer available for it.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

Yes. I think the anti-Wal-Mart is Costco, which pays much better and has much better health benefits and which is profitable and offers low prices.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

But our culture is in truly bad shape if we have come to define respecting something as the failure to set it on fire.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

James Bond in his Sean Connery days ... was the first well-known bachelor on the American scene who was not a drifter or a degenerate and did not eat out of cans.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

Experimental science is fascinating, but I don't want to do it. I want other people to do it, and I'll read about it.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

The fact is that heterosexual sex for most people is in no way free of

the power relations between men and women.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

Cheerfulness, up to and including delusion and false hope, has a recognized place in medicine.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

A lot of what we experience as strength comes from knowing what to do with weakness. Nickel and Dimed On (Not) Getting By in America

~Barbara Ehrenreich

When our children are old enough, and if we can afford to, we send them to college, where ... the point is to acquire the skills not of positive thinking but of critical thinking.

~Barbara Ehrenreich

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