

# David Whyte

## Quotes

*Want, World, Art, Inspirational, Thinking, Way, Doe, Self, Loss, Silence,  
Journey, Identity, Eye, Conversation, Real, Looks, Courageous, People, Soul,  
Waiting*

What if the world is holding its breath - waiting for you to take the place that only you can fill?

~David Whyte

Sometimes it takes darkness and the sweet confinement of your aloneness to learn anything or anyone that does not bring you alive is too small for you.

~David Whyte

The antidote to exhaustion isn't rest. It's wholeheartedness.

~David Whyte

Gratitude arises from paying attention, from being awake in the presence of everything that lives within and without us.

~David Whyte

To have a firm persuasion in our work - to feel that what we do is right for ourselves and good for the world at exactly the same time - is one of the great triumphs of human existence.

~David Whyte

Sometimes everything has to be inscribed across the heavens so you can find the one line already written inside you.

~David Whyte

Our work is to make ourselves visible in the world. This is the soul's individual journey, and the soul would much rather fail at its own life than succeed at someone else's.

~David Whyte

Enough. These few words are enough. If not these few words, this breath. If not this breath, this sitting here. This opening to the life we have refused again and again. Until now. Until now.

~David Whyte

I want to know if you know how to melt into that fierce heat of living falling toward the center of your longing.

~David Whyte

The courageous conversation is the one you don't want to have.

~David Whyte

What you can plan is too small for you to live. What you can live wholeheartedly will make plans enough for the vitality hidden in your sleep.

~David Whyte

If in your mind it was possible to take a year's sabbatical from work to reassess your life, what would you do and where would you go?

~David Whyte

There's a fierce practicality and empiricism which the whole imaginative, lyrical aspect of poetry comes from.

~David Whyte

Courage is the measure of our heartfelt participation with life, with another, with a community, a work, a future.

~David Whyte

You must learn one thing. The world was made to be free in. Give up all the other worlds Except the one in which you belong.

~David Whyte

I want to know if you are willing to live, day by day, with the consequence of love.

~David Whyte

The moment you've uttered the exact dimensionality of your exile, you're already turning towards home.

~David Whyte

There is a lovely root to the word humiliation - from the latin word humus, meaning soil or ground. When we are humiliated, we are in effect returning to the ground of our being.

~David Whyte

To be human is to become visible while carrying what is hidden as a gift to others.

~David Whyte

I believe that human beings are desperate, always, to belong to something larger than themselves.

~David Whyte

Start close in, don't take the second step or the third, start with the first thing close in, the step you don't want to take.

~David Whyte

We are the only species on earth capable of preventing our own flowering.

~David Whyte

Honesty is reached through the doorway of grief and loss.

~David Whyte

Put down the weight of your aloneness and ease into the conversation.

~David Whyte

Inside everyone is a great shout of joy waiting to be born.

~David Whyte

Whether we stay or whether we go - to be courageous is to stay close to the way we are made.

~David Whyte

I want to know if you are prepared to live in the world with its harsh need to change you. If you can look back with firm eyes saying this is where I stand.

~David Whyte

What is precious inside us does not care to be known by the mind in ways that diminish its presence.

~David Whyte

Anything that does not bring you alive is too small for you.

~David Whyte

Art is the act of triggering deep memories, of what it means to be fully human.

~David Whyte

There is no house like the house of belonging.

~David Whyte

To feel abandoned is to deny the intimacy of your surroundings.

~David Whyte

Being a good parent will necessarily break our hearts as we watch a child grow and eventually choose their own way, even through many of the same heartbreaks we have traversed.

~David Whyte

Vulnerability is not a weakness but a faculty for understanding.

~David Whyte

A sure sign of a soul-based workplace is excitement, enthusiasm, real passion; not manufactured passion, but real involvement. And there's

very little fear.

~David Whyte

The greatest tragedy is to live out someone else's life thinking it was your own.

~David Whyte

Your great mistake is to act the drama as if you were alone.

~David Whyte

The frail, vulnerable sounds of which we are capable seem to be essential to a later ability to roar like a lion without scaring everyone to death.

~David Whyte

Heartbreak is how we mature... There is almost no path a human being can follow that does not lead to heartbreak.

~David Whyte

To remember the other world in this world is to live in your true inheritance.

~David Whyte

The price of our vitality is the sum of all our fears

~David Whyte

Shedding the carapace we have been building so assiduously on the surface, we must by definition give up exactly what we thought was necessary to protect us from further harm.

~David Whyte

The severest test of work today, is not of our strategies, but of our imaginations and identities.

~David Whyte

The fear of loss, in one form or another, is the motivator behind all conscious and unconscious dishonesties.

~David Whyte

I returned to poetry as a more precise way to describe the world, more precise than science.

~David Whyte

We shape our self to fit this world and by the world are shaped again

~David Whyte

The truth about our own modest contribution might immobilize us: much easier then, to tell ourselves a story about how much we make our own reality.

~David Whyte

When I recite poems onstage, I put myself into the very personal struggle and it grants tremendous perspective. At the same time you get another perspective on the poem you're reciting.

~David Whyte

Genius is becoming something you were all along.

~David Whyte

Poetry is the art of overhearing ourselves say things from which it is impossible to retreat.

~David Whyte

Everyone casts a shadow. Everyone has a relationship with the fearful unknown.

~David Whyte

For the personality, bankruptcy or failure may be a disaster. For the

soul, it may be grist for its strangely joyful mill, and a condition it has been secretly engineering for years.

~David Whyte

What we strive for in perfection is not what turns us into the lit angel we desire what disturbs and then nourishes has everything we need.

~David Whyte

Absent the edge, we drown in numbness.

~David Whyte

But what would that be like feeling the tide rise out of the numbness inside

~David Whyte

Poetry for me has been a long pilgrimage, a journey and a growing relationship with the unknown.

~David Whyte

The marvelous thing about a good question is that it shapes our identity as much by the asking as it does by the answering.

~David Whyte

What you plan is too small for you to live.

~David Whyte

It might be liberating to think of human life as informed by losses and disappearances as much as by gifted appearances, allowing a more present participation and witness to the difficulty of living.

~David Whyte

A real conversation always contains an invitation. You are inviting another person to reveal herself or himself to you, to tell you who they are or what they want.



~David Whyte

A soul-based workplace asks things of me that I didn't even know I had. It's constantly telling me that I belong to something large in the world.

~David Whyte

Poetry is a street fighter. It has sharp elbows. It can look after itself. Poetry can't be used for manipulation; it's why you never see good poetry in advertising.

~David Whyte

Alertness is the hidden discipline of familiarity.

~David Whyte

By definition, poetry works with qualities and dynamics that mainstream society is reluctant to face head-on. It's an interesting phenomenon that by necessity, poetry is just below the radar.

~David Whyte

The great poems are not about experience, but are the experience itself, felt in the body.

~David Whyte

Shyness means you are in the hallway of a greater presence. You just don't know how to take the conversation another step. It's a lovely indication.

~David Whyte

It is the province of poetry to be more realistic and present than the artificial narratives of an outer discourse, and not afraid of the truthful difficulty of the average human life.

~David Whyte

Poetry is a break for freedom.

~David Whyte

It doesn't interest me if there is one God or many gods. I want to know if you belong or feel abandoned. If you know despair or can see it in others.

~David Whyte

The outlaw is the radical, the one close to the roots of existence. The one who refuses to forget their humanity and, in remembering, helps everyone else remember, too.

~David Whyte

If I don't have time for the writing, it's because I'm not making that time. It's really just a question of whether you want to or not, whether you feel you deserve to write or not.

~David Whyte

A good poem looks life straight in the face, unflinching, sincere, equal to revelation through loss or gain.

~David Whyte

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