

Doris Lessing Quotes

*People, Thinking, Writing, Book, Men, War, Years, Children, Dream, World,
Reading, Women, Mean, Country, Giving, Long, Eye, Real, Cat, Way*

We use our parents like recurring dreams, to be entered into when needed.

~Doris Lessing

A simple grateful thought turned heavenwards is the most perfect prayer.

~Doris Lessing

Whatever you're meant to do, do it now. The conditions are always impossible.

~Doris Lessing

If a fish is the movement of water embodied, given shape, then cat is a diagram and pattern of subtle air.

~Doris Lessing

Every child has the capacity to be everything.

~Doris Lessing

Any human anywhere will blossom in a hundred unexpected talents and capacities simply by being given the opportunity to do so.

~Doris Lessing

What's terrible is to pretend that second-rate is first-rate. To pretend that you don't need love when you do; or you like your work when you know quite well you're capable of better.

~Doris Lessing

Things are not quite so simple always as black and white.

~Doris Lessing

There is nothing more boring for an intelligent woman than to spend endless amounts of time with small children.

~Doris Lessing

You have to be grown up, really grown up, not merely in years, to understand your parents.

~Doris Lessing

Trust no friend without faults, and love a woman, but no angel.

~Doris Lessing

That is what learning is. You suddenly understand something you've understood all your life, but in a new way.

~Doris Lessing

Argument does not teach children or the immature. Only time and experience does that.

~Doris Lessing

In university they don't tell you that the greater part of the law is learning to tolerate fools.

~Doris Lessing

It is terrible to destroy a person's picture of himself in the interests of truth or some other abstraction.

~Doris Lessing

As you get older, you don't get wiser. You get irritable.

~Doris Lessing

Envy has always hidden behind moral indignation.

~Doris Lessing

It is my belief that children are full of understanding and know as much as and more than adults, until they are about seven, when they suddenly become stupid, like adults.

~Doris Lessing

Think wrongly, if you please, but in all cases think for yourself.

~Doris Lessing

Small things amuse small minds.

~Doris Lessing

I didn't go to school much, so I taught myself what I knew from reading.

~Doris Lessing

Parents should leave books lying around marked "forbidden" if they want their children to read.

~Doris Lessing

It is the mark of great people to treat trifles as trifles and important matters as important.

~Doris Lessing

A public library is the most democratic thing in the world. What can be found there has undone dictators and tyrants.

~Doris Lessing

There is only one real sin and that is to persuade oneself that the second best is anything but second best.

~Doris Lessing

Hitler admired Stalin, quite properly seeing himself as a mere infant in crime compared to his great exemplar.

~Doris Lessing

The great secret that all old people share is that you really haven't changed in seventy or eighty years. Your body changes, but you don't change at all. And that, of course, causes great confusion.

~Doris Lessing

I wanted to write about my mother as she should have been if she had not been messed up by World War I.

~Doris Lessing

The Nobel Prize is run by a self-perpetuated committee. They vote for themselves and get the world's publishing industry to jump to their tune.

~Doris Lessing

In the writing process, the more a story cooks, the better.

~Doris Lessing

You know, when I was a girl, the idea that the British Empire could ever end was absolutely inconceivable. And it just disappeared, like all the other empires.

~Doris Lessing

I always hated Tony Blair, from the beginning.

~Doris Lessing

If you read, you can learn to think for yourself.

~Doris Lessing

We spend our lives fighting to get people very slightly more stupid than ourselves to accept truths that the great men have always known.

~Doris Lessing

People are just cannibals unless they leave each other alone.

~Doris Lessing

I have a daughter and two grand-daughters and a great grandson in Africa, in Cape Town.

~Doris Lessing

What is a hero without love for mankind.

~Doris Lessing

The freedom of women was achieved by two things: One, the Pill. Two... by labour-saving devices like the washing machine. By science, not feminism.

~Doris Lessing

we have not yet developed a system of education that is not a system of indoctrination.

~Doris Lessing

Every spendthrift passion has its attendant courtiers.

~Doris Lessing

I am interested only in stretching myself, on living as fully as I can.

~Doris Lessing

So love is rest? The cosy corner? The little nook? Sometimes it ought to be. Sometimes it is.

~Doris Lessing

You only learn to be a better writer by actually writing.

~Doris Lessing

Borrowing is not much better than begging; just as lending with interest is not much better than stealing.

~Doris Lessing

What matters most is that we learn from living.

~Doris Lessing

Humanity's legacy of stories and storytelling is the most precious we have. All wisdom is in our stories and songs. A story is how we

construct our experiences.

~Doris Lessing

I am a person who continually destroys the possibilities of a future because of the numbers of alternative viewpoints I can focus on the present.

~Doris Lessing

I treasure solitude. One doesn't have to have human contact.

~Doris Lessing

There is no doubt fiction makes a better job of the truth.

~Doris Lessing

It's lovely to have money to give away - that's the bonus of winning the Nobel.

~Doris Lessing

Advice to young writers? Always the same advice: learn to trust our own judgment, learn inner independence, learn to trust that time will sort the good from the bad- including your own bad.

~Doris Lessing

Women often get dropped from memory, and then history.

~Doris Lessing

I'm sure that everybody feels a kind of permanent anguish about what's going on in the world.

~Doris Lessing

You have to give up a great deal of life, your personal life, to be a writer.

~Doris Lessing

Capable people do not understand incapacity; clever people do not understand stupidity.

~Doris Lessing

Pleasure resorts are like film stars and royalty... embarrassed by the figures they cut in the fantasies of people who have never met them.

~Doris Lessing

Our society is dependent on some precarious mechanisms, and they are very dicey. They can easily collapse.

~Doris Lessing

What is charm then? The free giving of a grace, the spending of something given by nature in her role of spendthrift ... something extra, superfluous, unnecessary, essentially a power thrown away.

~Doris Lessing

There are no laws for the novel. There never have been, nor can there ever be.

~Doris Lessing

Art is the Mirror of our betrayed ideals.

~Doris Lessing

Laughter is by definition healthy.

~Doris Lessing

I'll be pleased when I'm dead. That will let me off worrying about all these wars.

~Doris Lessing

For there is never any way to go but in.

~Doris Lessing

The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious; but the lips of a fool will swallow up himself.

~Doris Lessing

People who love literature have at least part of their minds immune from indoctrination. If you read, you can learn to think for yourself.

~Doris Lessing

Words. Words. I play with words, hoping that some combination, even a chance combination, will say what I want.

~Doris Lessing

Intelligence forbids tears.

~Doris Lessing

I am so happy to be communicating with people on this newest of new wavelengths which to some older people must seem like a kind of magic.

~Doris Lessing

Curse not the king, no not in thy thought; and curse not the rich in thy bedchamber, for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter.

~Doris Lessing

As the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them.

~Doris Lessing

And then, not expecting it, you become middle-aged and anonymous. No one notices you. You achieve a wonderful freedom. It is a positive thing. You can move about unnoticed and invisible.

~Doris Lessing

Wisdom is better than weapons of war; but one sinner destroyeth much good.

~Doris Lessing

There is a great line of women stretching out behind you into the past, and you have to seek them out and find them in yourself and be conscious of them.

~Doris Lessing

We, as a society, can't tolerate very much difference.

~Doris Lessing

All I do is give interviews and spend time being photographed.

~Doris Lessing

My major aim was to shape a book which would make its own comment, a wordless statement: to talk through the way it was shaped.

~Doris Lessing

There's an unconscious bias in our society: girls are wonderful; boys are terrible. And to be a boy, or young man, growing up, having to listen to all this, it must be painful.

~Doris Lessing

Literature is analysis after the event.

~Doris Lessing

I write because I've always written, can't stop. I am a writing animal. The way a silk worm is a silk-producing animal.

~Doris Lessing

I wanted to highlight that whole dreadful process in book publishing that 'nothing succeeds like success.'

~Doris Lessing

Africa gives you the knowledge that man is a small creature, among other creatures, in a large landscape.

~Doris Lessing

When I started, there were no big interviews, no television, no profiles and all that. The publishers were quite shockingly uncommercial, but they did look after their writers.

~Doris Lessing

This is an inevitable and easily recognizable stage in every revolutionary movement: reformers must expect to be disowned by those who are only too happy to enjoy what has been won for them.

~Doris Lessing

I have to conclude that fiction is better at 'the truth' than a factual record.

~Doris Lessing

The worst superstition is to consider our own tolerable.

~Doris Lessing

The youth do not see the old. They are not programmed to see the old, who are cancelled, negated, wiped out.

~Doris Lessing

How boring these emotions are that we're caught in and can't get free of, no matter how much we want to.

~Doris Lessing

I'm not one of those writers that sits worrying about posthumous fame.

~Doris Lessing

September 11 was terrible, but if one goes back over the history of the IRA, what happened to the Americans wasn't that terrible.

~Doris Lessing

It's amazing what you find out about yourself when you write in the first person about someone very different from you.

~Doris Lessing

With a library you are free, not confined by temporary political climates. It is the most democratic of institutions because no one - but no one at all - can tell you what to read and when and how.

~Doris Lessing

I've won all the prizes in Europe, every bloody one. I'm delighted to win them all, the whole lot.

~Doris Lessing

When you're young you think that you're going to sail into a lovely lake of quietude and peace. This is profoundly untrue.

~Doris Lessing

All sanity depends on this: that it should be a delight to feel heat strike the skin, a delight to stand upright, knowing the bones moving easily under the flesh.

~Doris Lessing

Coincidences are God's way of remaining anonymous.

~Doris Lessing

Time and distance from the first and second world wars doesn't seem to lessen their horrors.

~Doris Lessing

Space or science fiction has become a dialect for our time.

~Doris Lessing

Remember that the book which bores you when you are twenty or thirty will open doors for you when you are forty or fifty - and vice versa. Don't read a book out of its right time for you.

~Doris Lessing

For the last third of life there remains only work. It alone is always stimulating, rejuvenating, exciting and satisfying.

~Doris Lessing

Men are restless, adventurous. Women are conservative - despite what current ideology says.

~Doris Lessing

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