

Ernest Becker

Quotes

Men, Animal, Self, Order, Real, Lying, Guilt, Mean, Victory, Denial Of Death, Existential, Burden, Evil, Destiny, Love, War, Existentialism, Reality, People, Creativity

People create the reality they need in order to discover themselves

~Ernest Becker

If everyone lives roughly the same lies about the same thing, there is no one to call them liars. They jointly establish their own sanity and themselves normal.

~Ernest Becker

War is a sociological safety valve that cleverly diverts popular hatred for the ruling classes into a happy occasion to mutilate or kill foreign enemies.

~Ernest Becker

The artist takes in the world, but instead of being oppressed by it, he reworks it in his own personality and recreates it in the work of art.

~Ernest Becker

The road to creativity passes so close to the madhouse and often detours or ends there.

~Ernest Becker

What man really fears is not so much extinction, but extinction with insignificance.

~Ernest Becker

Man's natural and inevitable urge to deny mortality and achieve a heroic self-image are the root causes of human evil.

~Ernest Becker

Ecological devastation is the excrement, so to speak, of man's power worship.

~Ernest Becker

Horror alone brings peace of mind.

~Ernest Becker

Each society is a hero system which promises victory over evil and death.

~Ernest Becker

It is fateful and ironic how the lie we need in order to live dooms us to a life that is never really ours.

~Ernest Becker

What does it mean to be a self-conscious animal? The idea is ludicrous, if it is not monstrous. It means to know that one is food for worms.

~Ernest Becker

Guilt results from unused life, from the unlived in us.

~Ernest Becker

To live fully is to live with an awareness of the rumble of terror that underlies everything.

~Ernest Becker

Modern man is drinking and drugging himself out of awareness, or he spends his time shopping, which is the same thing.

~Ernest Becker

Man cannot endure his own littleness unless he can translate it into meaningfulness on the largest possible level.

~Ernest Becker

Once you base your whole life striving on a desperate lie, and try to implement that lie, you instrument your own undoing.

~Ernest Becker

Men use one another to assure their personal victory over death.

~Ernest Becker

The irony of man's condition is that the deepest need is to be free of the anxiety of death and annihilation; but it is life itself which awakens it, and so we must shrink from being fully alive.

~Ernest Becker

For man, maximum excitement is the confrontation of death and the skillful defiance of it by watching others fed to it as he survives transfixed with rapture.

~Ernest Becker

Genuine heroism for man is still the power to support contradictions, no matter how glaring or hopeless they may seem.

~Ernest Becker

Love is the problem of an animal.

~Ernest Becker

Better guilt than the terrible burden of freedom and responsibility.

~Ernest Becker

The manager asks how and when; the leader asks what and why - Warren Bennis, Leadership Guru It is not so much that man is a herd animal, said Freud, but that he is a horde animal led by a chief

~Ernest Becker

All power is in essence power to deny mortality.

~Ernest Becker

The man of knowledge in our time is bowed down under a burden he never imagined he would ever have: the overproduction of truth that cannot be consumed.

~Ernest Becker

To live is to play at the meaning of life...The upshot of this . . . is that it teaches us once and for all that childlike foolishness is the calling of mature men.

~Ernest Becker

One of the main reasons that it is so easy to march men off to war is that each of them feels sorry for the man next to him who will die.

~Ernest Becker

the best existential analysis of the human condition leads directly into the problems of God and faith

~Ernest Becker

Obviously, all religions fall far short of their own ideals.

~Ernest Becker

We are gods with anuses.

~Ernest Becker

Relationship is thus always slavery of a kind, which leaves a residue of guilt.

~Ernest Becker

Love is the problem of an animal who must find life, create a dialogue with nature in order to experience his own being.

~Ernest Becker

We might say that psychoanalysis revealed to us the complex penalties of denying the truth of man's condition, what we might call the costs of pretending not to be mad.

~Ernest Becker

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