

Frans de Waal

Quotes

*Animal, Empathy, Strong, Apes, People, Needs, War, Mean, Morality, Males,
Eye, Two, Order, Chimpanzees, Children, Men, Social, Mother, Poor,
Compassion*

To endow animals with human emotions has long been a scientific taboo. But if we do not, we risk missing something fundamental, about both animals and us.

~Frans de Waal

The enemy of science is not religion... . The true enemy is the substitution of thought, reflection, and curiosity with dogma.

~Frans de Waal

If we look straight and deep into a chimpanzee's eyes, an intelligent self-assured personality looks back at us. If they are animals, what must we be?

~Frans de Waal

If you ask anyone, what is morality based on? These are the two factors that always come out: One is reciprocity, a sense of fairness, and the other one is empathy and compassion.

~Frans de Waal

Darwin wasn't just provocative in saying that we descend from the apes - he didn't go far enough. We are apes in every way, from our long arms and tailless bodies to our habits and temperament.

~Frans de Waal

Perhaps it's just me, but I am wary of any persons whose belief system is the only thing standing between them and repulsive behavior.

~Frans de Waal

We are territorial, power-hungry and even more brutal than chimpanzees.

~Frans de Waal

The possibility that empathy resides in parts of the brain so ancient that we share them with rats should give pause to anyone comparing

politicians with those poor, underestimated creatures.

~Frans de Waal

We are by far the most contradictory of all primates. An animal with this much internal conflict has never lived on this earth.

~Frans de Waal

Socialism cannot function, because its economic reward structure is contrary to human nature.

~Frans de Waal

Female bonobos form a strong sisterhood. They rule through female solidarity.

~Frans de Waal

You need to indoctrinate empathy out of people in order to arrive at extreme capitalist positions.

~Frans de Waal

Religion may have become a codification of morality, and it may fortify it, but it's not the origin of it.

~Frans de Waal

Studies of reconciliation in primates have demonstrated that if the relationship value increases between two parties they are more willing to make peace.

~Frans de Waal

The sturdiest pillars of human morality are compassion and a sense of justice.

~Frans de Waal

It wasn't God who introduced us to morality; rather, it was the other way around. God was put into place to help us live the way we felt we ought

to.

~Frans de Waal

Dogmatists have one advantage: they are poor listeners.

~Frans de Waal

Competitiveness is just as much a part of our nature as empathy. The ideal, in my view, is a democratic system with a social market economy, because it takes both tendencies into account.

~Frans de Waal

In humans, the family prevents infanticide. Next to language, the core family, consisting of a mother, a father and children, is the greatest difference between us and other primates.

~Frans de Waal

The evolutionary struggle for survival is really a self-serving series of blows and stabs, and yet it can lead to extremely social animals like dolphins, wolves or, for that matter, primates.

~Frans de Waal

You should know as much as you can about the human species if you have a hand in designing human society.

~Frans de Waal

Male bonobos really don't fit the human male ideal.

~Frans de Waal

If both parties have a stake in the other, the chances of them killing each other are going to be reduced.

~Frans de Waal

We justify the inequalities by saying some people are just better and smarter than others and the strong should survive and the poor can die

off.

~Frans de Waal

Armies are a purely human invention. Most soldiers who go to war nowadays don't even do it because they're inherently aggressive.

~Frans de Waal

If you want to design a successful human society you need to know what kind of animal we are. Are we a social animal or a selfish animal? Do we respond better when we're solitary or living in a group?

~Frans de Waal

Humanity is actually much more cooperative and empathic than [it's] given credit for.

~Frans de Waal

The hamadryas baboon is a harem holder where one male mates with multiple females.

~Frans de Waal

Personally, I think it is possible to build a society that is moral on a nonreligious basis, but the jury is still out on that.

~Frans de Waal

Humans have a lot of pro-social tendencies.

~Frans de Waal

In Africa, we have the bush meat trade, which means that, on a very large scale, animals are being killed in the forests and sold in the cities as a luxury food.

~Frans de Waal

If I were God, I'd work on the reach of empathy.

~Frans de Waal

The primate laugh is given in playful contexts, and as such has a strong similarity to the human laugh.

~Frans de Waal

Male chimpanzees have an extraordinarily strong drive for dominance. They're constantly jockeying for position.

~Frans de Waal

Exclusive homosexuality is not very common in nature.

~Frans de Waal

When someone brutally kills someone else, we call him "animalistic." But we consider ourselves "human" when we give to the poor.

~Frans de Waal

Wild groups of chimpanzees attack their enemies like gangs. What they completely lack, precisely because of their strong territorial behavior, is a friendly relationship with their neighbors.

~Frans de Waal

The chimpanzees could tear me apart in no time. They're many times stronger than we are.

~Frans de Waal

Science is not inherently good.

~Frans de Waal

Robin Hood had it right. Humanity's deepest wish is to spread the wealth.

~Frans de Waal

The role of inequity in society is grossly underestimated. Inequity is not good for your health, basically.

~Frans de Waal

A chimpanzee who is really gearing up for a fight doesn't waste time with gestures but just goes ahead and attacks.

~Frans de Waal

There is little evidence that other animals judge the appropriateness of actions that do not directly affect themselves.

~Frans de Waal

The thinking is that we started evolving language not by speaking but by gesturing.

~Frans de Waal

Chimpanzees, typically, kiss and embrace after fights. They first make eye contact from a distance to see the mood of the others. Then they approach and kiss and embrace.

~Frans de Waal

I describe in 'Chimpanzee Politics' how the alpha male needs broad support to reach the top spot. He needs some close allies and he needs many group members to be on his side.

~Frans de Waal

I think we need to start thinking about grounding our moral systems in our biology.

~Frans de Waal

When it comes to social interaction, the chimpanzees appear to be just as intelligent as we are.

~Frans de Waal

I'm personally a nonbeliever, so I'm struggling with if we really need religion.

~Frans de Waal

It is well known that apes in the wild offer spontaneous assistance to each other, defending against leopards, say, or consoling distressed companions with tender embraces.

~Frans de Waal

I call the notion that we are nothing but killer apes the Beethoven fallacy. Beethoven was disorganized and messy, and yet his music is the epitome of order.

~Frans de Waal

Morality, after all, has nothing to do with selflessness. On the contrary, self-interest is precisely the basis of the categorical imperative.

~Frans de Waal

When we are bad, we are worse than any primate that I know. And when we are good, we are actually better and more altruistic than any primate that I know.

~Frans de Waal

Human morality is unthinkable without empathy.

~Frans de Waal

There's actually a lot of evidence in primates and other animals that they return favors.

~Frans de Waal

Empathy probably started out as a mechanism to improve maternal care. Mammalian mothers who were attentive to their young's needs were more likely to rear successful offspring.

~Frans de Waal

The fact that the apes exist and that we can study them is extremely important and makes us reflect on ourselves and our human nature. In that sense alone, you need to protect the apes.

~Frans de Waal

People want to work with somebody who feels shame, who worries about the perceptions of others. Dishonesty is something we don't like in others.

~Frans de Waal

The more self-aware an animal is, the more empathetic it tends to be.

~Frans de Waal

We would much rather blame nature for what we don't like in ourselves than credit it for what we do like.

~Frans de Waal

War is evitable if conditions are such that the costs of making war are higher than the benefits.

~Frans de Waal

Future benefits rarely figure in the minds of animals.

~Frans de Waal

Although elephants are far more distantly related to us than the great apes, they seem to have evolved similar social and cognitive capacities.

~Frans de Waal

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