

# Grace Paley

## Quotes

*Writing, People, Children, Mean, Long, Thinking, Stories, Sometimes, Lying,  
Believe, Book, Years, Knows, Jobs, World, Mind, Art, Kids, Eye, Mother*

Let us go forth with fear and courage and rage to save the world.

~Grace Paley

People will sometimes say, "Why don't you write more politics?" And I have to explain to them that writing the lives of women IS politics.

~Grace Paley

Write what will stop your breath if you don't write.

~Grace Paley

Today's wars are about oil. But alternate energies exist now - solar, wind - for every important energy-using activity in our lives. The only human work that cannot be done without oil is war.

~Grace Paley

Sometimes you find that what is most personal is also what connects you most strongly with others.

~Grace Paley

Sometimes, walking with a friend, I forget the world.

~Grace Paley

Women should stick together. Didn't you learn anything yet?

~Grace Paley

All that is really necessary for survival of the fittest, it seems, is an interest in life, good, bad or peculiar.

~Grace Paley

Literature, fiction, poetry, whatever, makes justice in the world. That's why it almost always has to be on the side of the underdog.

~Grace Paley

I lived in a house in the East Bronx, a totally Jewish neighborhood on

East 172nd Street. You didn't see Christians much, although one lived next door. We thought they were kind of a minority.

~Grace Paley

The only recognizable feature of hope is action.

~Grace Paley

I write for the still, small possibility of justice.

~Grace Paley

Waves, once they land on the beach, are not reversible.

~Grace Paley

You come to doing what you do by not being able to do something.

~Grace Paley

To be modest means that you have something to be modest about.

~Grace Paley

It's a terrible thing to die young. Still, it saves a lot of time.

~Grace Paley

I believe in a kind of fidelity to your own early ideas; it's a kind of antagonism in me to prevailing fads.

~Grace Paley

You become a writer because you need to become a writer - nothing else.

~Grace Paley

But what's a writer for? The whole point is to put yourself into other lives, other heads-writers have always done that. If you screw up, so someone will tell you, that's all.

~Grace Paley

I liked the education. I liked people learning things all around me and I liked going to people's classes.

~Grace Paley

Rosiness is not a worse windowpane than gloomy gray when viewing the world.

~Grace Paley

I was a fantastic student until ten, and then my mind began to wander.

~Grace Paley

I don't believe civilization can do a lot more than educate a person's senses.

~Grace Paley

Art's too long and life's too short.

~Grace Paley

The word career is a divisive word. It's a word that divides the normal life from business or professional life.

~Grace Paley

You know the mind is an astonishing, long-living, erotic thing.

~Grace Paley

Good talkers are people who use interesting language and have a lot of energy in speech and who also listen.

~Grace Paley

I really believe one of the jobs of a writer is to stretch as far as you can into other voices.

~Grace Paley

That heartbreaking moment when you finish an amazing book, and you

are forced to return to reality.

~Grace Paley

Hindsight, usually looked down upon, is probably as valuable as foresight, since it does include a few facts.

~Grace Paley

For me, the meaning of life is the next generation.

~Grace Paley

The wrong word is like a lie jammed inside the story.

~Grace Paley

In the park I met other women and I started to get interested in their lives. I developed a lot of pressure to talk about women's lives, and children's lives, too. Children interest me tremendously.

~Grace Paley

There isn't a story written that isn't about blood and money. People and their relationship to each other is the blood, the family. And how they live, the money of it.

~Grace Paley

What we owe men is some freedom from their part in a murderous game in which they kick each other to death with one foot, bracing themselves on our various comfortable places with the other.

~Grace Paley

I read a lot. I liked a tremendous number of poets and writers. The person whose work I liked the most was Joyce.

~Grace Paley

I might write four lines or I might write twenty. I subtract and I add until I really hit something I want to do. You don't always whittle down,

sometimes you whittle up.

~Grace Paley

Well, you have children so you know: little children little troubles, big children, big troubles - it's a saying in Yiddish. Maybe the Chinese said it too.

~Grace Paley

Paul Goodman was not ahead of his time but IN his time.

~Grace Paley

Write from what you know into what you don't know.

~Grace Paley

We write about what we don't know about what we know.

~Grace Paley

There is a long time in me between knowing and telling.

~Grace Paley

I often see through things right to the apparition itself.

~Grace Paley

Well, by now you must know yourself, honey, whatever you do, life don't stop. It only sits a minute and dreams a dream.

~Grace Paley

Sometimes before people know what they're saying, they already love the language.

~Grace Paley

I begin by writing paragraphs that don't have an immediate relation to a plot. The sound of the story comes first.

~Grace Paley

I should have written more. I should have written more during the period when I just liked so much doing the political work in the streets.

~Grace Paley

It wasn't until I lived in the countryside that I began to understand the life of the countryside and the people in it and trees and water. Just learning about water is an education for a city person.

~Grace Paley

In the end, long life is the reward, strength, and beauty.

~Grace Paley

If you want to do things, do things.

~Grace Paley

I've started many novels, and they all ended on page seven.

~Grace Paley

Everyone, real or invented, deserves the open destiny of life.

~Grace Paley

My vocabulary is adequate for writing notes and keeping journals but absolutely useless for an active moral life.

~Grace Paley

I didn't write any fiction until I was past thirty.

~Grace Paley

The women's movement was coming, but I didn't know it in 1956-1957, when I began to write.

~Grace Paley

No metaphor reinvents the job of the nurture of children except to muddy or mock.

~Grace Paley

I do lots of reading and speaking at many universities about literature and also about politics, which is as much a part of my life as the literature.

~Grace Paley

If I miss anything, it's being able to hang out in the city of New York meeting people and talking to them on the corner.

~Grace Paley

I am very interested in people trying to write because I don't have a big academic background at all.

~Grace Paley

I don't have any degrees. I went to Hunter College one year and New York University another year. It's just on the basis of my books that I've been hired at any of the places I've been.

~Grace Paley

As an older person, I do feel an obligation to tell the story about what was really happening in the fifties, sixties, and seventies, as I saw it.

~Grace Paley

Art is too long, and life is too short.

~Grace Paley

A joke is necessary at this time.

~Grace Paley

To translate a poem from thinking into English takes all night.

~Grace Paley

If you're feminist, it means that you've noticed that male ownership of



the direction of female lives has been the order of the day for a few thousand years, and it isn't natural.

~Grace Paley

Old age is not a good thing. It can be really hard, and those of us who have it a little easier should keep in mind that there are hundreds of thousands of people who are not as well off.

~Grace Paley

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