

# Gregory Bateson Quotes

*Men, Differences, Knows, Believe, Doe, Two, Mind, People, Thinking, Answers,  
Information, Patterns, Perception, Sphinx, Mean, Making A Difference, Matter,  
Levels, World, Numbers*

The major problems in the world are the result of the difference between how nature works and the way people think.

~Gregory Bateson

The meaning of your communication is the response you get.

~Gregory Bateson

But epistemology is always and inevitably personal. The point of the probe is always in the heart of the explorer: What is my answer to the question of the nature of knowing?

~Gregory Bateson

We can never be quite clear whether we are referring to the world as it is or to the world as we see it.

~Gregory Bateson

Yes, metaphor. That's how the whole fabric of mental interconnections holds together. Metaphor is right at the bottom of being alive.

~Gregory Bateson

The creature that wins against its environment destroys itself.

~Gregory Bateson

Information is a difference that makes a difference.

~Gregory Bateson

What is the pattern that connects the crab to the lobster and the primrose to the orchid, and all of them to me, and me to you?

~Gregory Bateson

If a man achieves or suffers change in premises which are deeply embedded in his mind, he will surely find that the results of that change will ramify throughout his whole universe.

~Gregory Bateson

Without context words and actions have no meaning at all

~Gregory Bateson

We are most of us governed by epistemologies that we know to be wrong

~Gregory Bateson

There are times when I catch myself believing that there is such a thing as something; which is separate from something else.

~Gregory Bateson

Wisdom is the intelligence of the system as a whole.

~Gregory Bateson

It takes two to know one.

~Gregory Bateson

The pathology is to want control, not that you ever get it, because of course you never do.

~Gregory Bateson

Numbers are the product of counting. Quantities are the product of measurement. This means that numbers can conceivably be accurate because there is a discontinuity between each integer and the next.

~Gregory Bateson

Let's not pretend that mental phenomena can be mapped on to the characteristics of billiard balls.

~Gregory Bateson

People are going to have to make themselves predictable, or the machines will get angry and kill them.

~Gregory Bateson

Language commonly stresses only one side of any interaction.

~Gregory Bateson

To think straight, it is advisable to expect all qualities and attributes, adjectives, and so on to refer to at least two sets of interactions in time.

~Gregory Bateson

Whatever the ups and downs of detail within our limited experience, the larger whole is primarily beautiful.

~Gregory Bateson

The rules of the universe that we think we know are buried deep in our processes of perception.

~Gregory Bateson

Every move we make in fear of the next war in fact hastens it.

~Gregory Bateson

Official education was telling people almost nothing of the nature of all those things on the seashores, and in the redwood forests, in the deserts and in the plains.

~Gregory Bateson

Some tools of thought are so blunt that they are almost useless; others are so sharp that they are dangerous. But the wise man will have the use of both kinds.

~Gregory Bateson

A man walking is never in balance, but always correcting for imbalance.

~Gregory Bateson

Play is the establishment and exploration of relationship.

~Gregory Bateson

Things have to be done fast in America , and therefore therapy has to be brief.

~Gregory Bateson

The world is indeed only a small tide pool; disturb one part and the rest is threatened.

~Gregory Bateson

Science, like art, religion, commerce, warfare, and even sleep, is based on presuppositions.

~Gregory Bateson

It is to the Riddle of the Sphinx that I have devoted fifty years of professional life as an anthropologist.

~Gregory Bateson

Those who lack all idea that it is possible to be wrong can learn nothing except know-how.

~Gregory Bateson

Science probes; it does not prove.

~Gregory Bateson

The map is not the territory (coined by Alfred Korzybski), and the name is not the thing named.

~Gregory Bateson

All experience is subjective.

~Gregory Bateson

After mastery comes artistry and not before.

~Gregory Bateson

Creative thought must always contain a random component.

~Gregory Bateson

It is, I claim, nonsense to say that it does not matter which individual man acted as the nucleus for the change. It is precisely this that makes history unpredictable into the future.

~Gregory Bateson

A major difficulty is that the answer to the Riddle of the Sphinx is partly a product of the answers that we already have given to the riddle in its various forms.

~Gregory Bateson

Logic is a poor model of cause and effect.

~Gregory Bateson

Perhaps the attempt to achieve grace by identification with the animals was the most sensitive thing which was tried in the whole bloody history of religion .

~Gregory Bateson

Money is always transitively valued. More money is supposedly always better than less money.

~Gregory Bateson

Multiple descriptions are better than one.

~Gregory Bateson

Still more astonishing is that world of rigorous fantasy which we call mathematics.

~Gregory Bateson

Synaptic summation is the technical term used in neurophysiology for those instances in which some neuron C is fired only by a combination of neurons A and B.

~Gregory Bateson

There are many matters and many circumstances in which consciousness is undesirable and silence is golden, so that secrecy can be used as a marker to tell us that we are approaching the holy.

~Gregory Bateson

There are no monotone "values" in biology.

~Gregory Bateson

Information consists of differences that make a difference.

~Gregory Bateson

Logic cannot model causal systems, and paradox is generated when time is ignored [as in logic].

~Gregory Bateson

We are discovering today that several of the premises which are deeply ingrained in our way of life are simply untrue and become pathogenic when implemented with modern technology.

~Gregory Bateson

We do not know enough about how the present will lead into the future.

~Gregory Bateson

It is impossible, in principle, to explain any pattern by invoking a single quantity.

~Gregory Bateson

Logic can often be reversed, but the effect does not precede the cause.

~Gregory Bateson

Rather, for all objects and experiences, there is a quantity that has

optimum value. Above that quantity, the variable becomes toxic. To fall below that value is to be deprived.

~Gregory Bateson

There is a strong tendency in explanatory prose to invoke quantities of tension, energy, and whatnot to explain the genesis of pattern. I believe that all such explanations are inappropriate or wrong.

~Gregory Bateson

No organism can afford to be conscious of matters with which it could deal at unconscious levels.

~Gregory Bateson

Life and 'Mind' are systemic processes.

~Gregory Bateson

Members of weakly religious families get, of course, no religious training from any source outside the family.

~Gregory Bateson

The wise legislator will only rarely initiate a new rule of behaviour; more usually he will confine himself to affirming in law what has already become the custom of the people.

~Gregory Bateson

In the nature of the case, an explorer can never know what he is exploring until it has been explored.

~Gregory Bateson

Surrender to alcohol intoxication provides a partial and subjective shortcut to a more correct state of mind.

~Gregory Bateson

Prediction can never be absolutely valid and therefore science can



never prove some generalization or even test a single descriptive statement and in that way arrive at final truth.

~Gregory Bateson

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