

# Henri Cartier-Bresson Quotes

*Photography, Eye, Photographer, Thinking, Expression, Leica, Reality, World,  
Mean, Heart, Important, Taken, Intuition, Photograph, Vanishing, Giving, Art,  
Drawing, People, Moments*

It is an illusion that photos are made with the camera... they are made with the eye, heart and head.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

One eye of the photographer looks wide open through the viewfinder, the other, the closed looks into his own soul.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

To me, photography is the simultaneous recognition, in a fraction of a second, of the significance of an event.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

Sharpness is a bourgeois concept

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

In photography, the smallest thing can be a great subject. The little, human detail can become a Leitmotiv.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

Photography is a way of shouting, of freeing oneself, not of proving or asserting one's own originality. It's a way of life.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

Oop! The Moment! Once you miss it, it is gone forever.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

For me, the camera is a sketch book, an instrument of intuition and spontaneity.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

Photography is an immediate reaction, drawing is a meditation.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

You just have to live and life will give you pictures.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

It's seldom you make a great picture. you have to milk the cow quite a lot to get plenty of milk to make a little cheese.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

Your eye must see a composition or an expression that life itself offers you, and you must know with intuition when to click the camera.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

Photography is, for me, a spontaneous impulse coming from an ever attentive eye which captures the moment and its eternity.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

To photograph is to hold one's breath, when all faculties converge to capture fleeting reality. It's at that precise moment that mastering an image becomes a great physical and intellectual joy.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

Photographers deal in things which are continually vanishing and when they have vanished there is no contrivance on earth which can make them come back again.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

Photography is not documentary, but intuition, a poetic experience.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

Of all the means of expression, photography is the only one that fixes a precise moment in time.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

Think about the photo before and after, never during. The secret is to take your time. You mustn't go too fast. The subject must forget about you. Then, however, you must be very quick.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

To take photographs is putting one's head, one's eye, and one's heart on the same axis

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

Of course it's all luck.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

It is the photo that takes you. One must not take photos.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

In a portrait, I'm looking for the silence in somebody.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

It is through living that we discover ourselves, at the same time as we discover the world around us.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

The world is being created every minute, and the world is falling to pieces every minute

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

Memory is very important, the memory of each photo taken, flowing at the same speed as the event.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

Life is once. Forever.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

A photographer must always work with the greatest respect for his subject and in terms of his own point of view.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

Your first 10,000 photographs are your worst.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

He made me suddenly realize that photographs could reach eternity through the moment.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

The creative act lasts but a brief moment, a lightning instant of give-and-take, just long enough for you to level the camera and to trap the fleeting prey in your little box.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

One eye looks within, the other eye looks without.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

Photography is like fencing. You must keep your distance, wait, and then thrust.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

During the work, you have to be sure that you haven't left any holes, that you've captured everything, because afterwards it will be too late.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

Photography is only intuition, a perpetual interrogation - everything except a stage set.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

The most difficult thing for me is a portrait. You have to try and put your camera between the skin of a person and his shirt.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

To photograph: it is to put on the same line of sight the head, the eye and the heart.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

I enjoy very much seeing a good photographer working. There's an elegance, just like in a bullfight.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

Thinking should be done before and after, not during photographing.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

A photograph is neither taken or seized by force. It offers itself up. It is the photo that takes you. One must not take photos.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

Everyone has got some preconceptions, but you have to readjust them in front of reality. Reality has the last word.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

I suddenly understood that a photograph could fix eternity in an instant.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

The camera can be a machine gun, a warm kiss, a sketchbook. Shooting a camera is like saying, Yes, yes, yes. There is no maybe. All the maybes should go in the trash.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

What reinforces the content of a photograph is the sense of rhythm - the relationship between shapes and values.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

I am neither an economist nor a photographer of monuments, and I am not much of a journalist either. What I am trying to do more than anything else is to observe life.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

Actually, I'm not all that interested in the subject of photography. Once the picture is in the box, I'm not all that interested in what happens next.

Hunters, after all, aren't cooks.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

Nobody takes photographs, photographs take you.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

We must avoid however, snapping away, shooting quickly and without thought, overloading ourselves with unnecessary images that clutter our memory and diminish the clarity of the whole.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

Photography has not changed since its origin except in its technical aspects, which for me are not important.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

Above all, I craved to seize the whole essence, in the confines of one single photograph, of some situation that was in the process of unrolling itself before my eyes.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

With the one eye that is closed, one looks within, with the other eye that is open, one looks without.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

The photograph itself doesn't interest me. I want only to capture a minute part of reality.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

While we're working, we must be conscious of what we're doing.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

I believe that, through the act of living, the discovery of oneself is made concurrently with the discovery of the world around us.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

There is nothing in this world that does not have a decisive moment.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

Photography is nothing-it's life that interests me.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

All I care about these days is painting. Photography has never been more than a way into painting, a sort of instant drawing.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

Inside movement there is one moment in which the elements are in balance. Photography must seize the importance of this moment and hold immobile the equilibrium of it.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

Culture shock is often felt sharply at the borders between countries, but sometimes it doesn't hit fully until you've been in a place for a long time.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

Human faces are such a world!

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

In whatever one does there must be a relationship between the eye and the heart.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

One has to tiptoe lightly and steal up to one's quarry; you don't swish the water when you are fishing.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

It seems dangerous to be a portrait artist who does commissions for clients because everyone wants to be flattered, so they pose in such a way that there's nothing left of truth.



~Henri Cartier-Bresson

It is by great economy of means that one arrives at simplicity of expression.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

Freedom for me is a strict frame, and inside that frame are all the variations possible.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

And no photographs taken with the aid of flashlight either, if only out of respect of the actual light”even when there isn't any of it.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

In photography, you've got to be quick, quick, quick, quick...Like an animal and a prey.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

In order to give meaning to the world, one has to feel oneself involved in what he frames. This attitude requires concentration, a discipline of mind, sensitivity, and a sense of geometry.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

Pictures should never be posed. They are 'revealed' so must be accepted as they are. Left alone.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

Photographier: c'est mettre sur la meme ligne de mire la tete, l'oeil et le coeur.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

...it is seldom indeed that a composition which was poor when the picture was taken can be improved by reshaping it in the dark room.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

The picture is good or not from the moment it was caught in the camera.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

It's wonderful to be famous as long as you remain unknown.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

For the world is movement, and you cannot be stationary in your attitude toward something that is moving.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

Give me inspiration over information.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

We cannot develop and print a memory.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

Some photographs are like a Chekhov short story or a Maupassant story. They're quick things and there's a whole world in them. But one is unconscious of it while shooting.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

I adore shooting photographs. It's like being a hunter. But some hunters are vegetarians - which is my relationship to photography.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

The camera is for us a tool, not a pretty mechanical toy ... people think far too much about techniques and not enough about seeing.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

They ... asked me: 'How do you make your pictures?' I was puzzled ... I said, I don't know, it's not important.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

In every photographer there is something of a stroller.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

I am a visual man. I watch, watch, watch. I understand things through my eyes.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

I love painting. As far as photography is concerned, I understand nothing.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

Only a fraction of the camera's possibilities interests me - the marvelous mixture of emotion and geometry, together in a single instant.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

Photography appears to be an easy activity; in fact it is a varied and ambiguous process in which the only common denominator among its practitioners is in the instrument.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

The Photography is a chopper which in the eternity seizes the moment which dazzled it.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

Photography is simultaneously and instantaneously the recognition of a fact and the rigorous organization of visually perceived forms that express and signify that fact

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

A photographer is part pick-pocket and part tightrope dancer.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

Reality offers us such wealth that we must cut some of it out on the

spot, simplify. The question is, do we always cut out what we should?

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

Thinking should be done beforehand and afterwards - never while actually taking a photograph.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

What do you think I'm a professor of? The little finger? (On offers of honorary doctorates.)

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

The adventurer in me felt obliged to testify with a quicker instrument than a brush to the scars of the world.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

I am a pack of nerves while waiting for the moment, and this feeling grows and grows and grows and then it explodes, it is a physical joy, a dance, space and time united. Yes, yes, yes, yes!

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

We must respect the atmosphere which surrounds the human being

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

Time runs and flows and only our death succeeds in catching up with it. Photography is a blade which, in eternity, impales the dazzling moment.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

There is no closed figure in nature. Every shape participates with another. No one thing is independent of another, and one thing rhymes with another, and light gives them shape.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

Photographers deal in things which are continuously vanishing.

~Henri Cartier-Bresson

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