

# John Charles Polanyi

## Quotes

*Science, Rights, Use, Human Dignity, Responsibility, Technology, Discovery,  
Dignity, Scientist, Ends, Country, Reality, Freedom, Democracies Have,  
Celebration, Essentials, Idealism, Lying, Democracy, Reason*

The applause is a celebration not only of the actors but also of the audience. It constitutes a shared moment of delight.

~John Charles Polanyi

In nation after nation, democracy has taken the place of autocracy.

~John Charles Polanyi

Science exists, moreover, only as a journey toward truth. Stifle dissent and you end that journey.

~John Charles Polanyi

For science must breathe the oxygen of freedom.

~John Charles Polanyi

Instead, in the absence of respect for human rights, science and its offspring technology have been used in this century as brutal instruments for oppression.

~John Charles Polanyi

Even in the world of molecules the civilising influence of modest restraints is a cause for rejoicing.

~John Charles Polanyi

Science never gives up searching for truth, since it never claims to have achieved it.

~John Charles Polanyi

Science is an enterprise that can only flourish if it puts the truth ahead of nationality, ethnicity, class and color.

~John Charles Polanyi

Human dignity is better served by embracing knowledge.

~John Charles Polanyi

Our assessment of socio-economic worth is largely a sham. We scientists should not lend ourselves to it - though we routinely do. We should, instead, insist on applying the criterion of quality.

~John Charles Polanyi

Discoveries that are anticipated are seldom the most valuable. ... It's the scientist free to pilot his vessel across hidden shoals into open seas who gives the best value.

~John Charles Polanyi

Some dreamers demand that scientists only discover things that can be used for good.

~John Charles Polanyi

Young people ask me if this country is serious about science. They aren't thinking about the passport that they will hold, but the country that they must rely on for support and encouragement.

~John Charles Polanyi

If we treasure our own experience and regard it as real, we must also treasure other people's experience.

~John Charles Polanyi

The eye searches for shapes. It searches for a beginning, a middle, and an end.

~John Charles Polanyi

It takes a trained and discerning researcher to keep the goal in sight, and to detect evidence of the creeping progress toward it.

~John Charles Polanyi

Today, Academies of Science use their influence around the world in support of human rights.

~John Charles Polanyi

Scientists and scholars should constitute themselves as an international NGO of exceptional authority.

~John Charles Polanyi

Individual scientists like myself - and many more conspicuous - pointed to the dangers of radioactive fallout over Canada if we were to launch nuclear weapons to intercept incoming bombers.

~John Charles Polanyi

Authority in science exists to be questioned, since heresy is the spring from which new ideas flow.

~John Charles Polanyi

In education the appetite does indeed grow with eating. I have never known anyone to abandon study because they knew too much.

~John Charles Polanyi

[Intellectual courage is] the quality that allows one to believe in one's judgement in the face of disappointment and widespread skepticism. Intellectual courage is even rarer than physical courage.

~John Charles Polanyi

When, as we must often do, we fear science, we really fear ourselves. Human dignity is better served by embracing knowledge.

~John Charles Polanyi

Science gives us a powerful vocabulary, and it is impossible to produce a vocabulary with which one can only say nice things.

~John Charles Polanyi

Science is a collection of stories, linking characters worthy of notice.

~John Charles Polanyi

Though we explore in a culturally-conditioned way, the reality we sketch

is universal.

~John Charles Polanyi

Reality is no less precious if it presents itself to someone else. All are discoverers, and if we disenfranchise any, all suffer.

~John Charles Polanyi

Though neglectful of their responsibility to protect science, scientists are increasingly aware of their responsibility to society.

~John Charles Polanyi

Nothing is more irredeemably irrelevant than bad science.

~John Charles Polanyi

Idealism is the highest form of reason.

~John Charles Polanyi

A new sense of shared international responsibility is unmistakable in the voices of the United Nations and its agencies, and in the civil society of thousands of supra-national NGOs.

~John Charles Polanyi

Scientia is knowledge. It is only in the popular mind that it is equated with facts.

~John Charles Polanyi

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