

Karen Armstrong Quotes

*Compassion, Religious, People, Christian, Islam, Thinking, World, Mind, Art,
Mean, Ideas, Pain, Reality, Way, Men, Self, Silence, Discipline, Practice,
Creative*

It's a great event to get outside and enjoy nature. I find it very exciting no matter how many times I see bald eagles.

~Karen Armstrong

Look into your own heart, discover what it is that gives you pain and then refuse, under any circumstance whatsoever, to inflict that pain on anybody else.

~Karen Armstrong

Jesus did not spend a great deal of time discoursing about the trinity or original sin or the incarnation, which have preoccupied later Christians. He went around doing good and being compassionate.

~Karen Armstrong

Each of the world religions has its own particular genius, its own special insight into the nature and requirements of compassion, and has something unique to teach us.

~Karen Armstrong

I like silence; I'm a gregarious loner and without the solitude, I lose my gregariousness.

~Karen Armstrong

Compassion is not an option. It's the key to our survival.

~Karen Armstrong

Religious people often prefer to be right rather than compassionate. Often, they don't want to give up their egotism. They want their religion to endorse their ego, their identity.

~Karen Armstrong

Religion isn't about believing things. It's ethical alchemy. It's about behaving in a way that changes you, that gives you intimations of holiness and sacredness.

~Karen Armstrong

I am not interested in the afterlife. Religion is supposed to be about losing your ego, not preserving it eternally in optimum conditions.

~Karen Armstrong

Surely it's better to love others, however messy and imperfect the involvement, than to allow one's capacity for love to harden.

~Karen Armstrong

The hajj is one of the five essential practices of Islam; when they make the pilgrimage to Mecca, Muslims ritually act out the central principles of their faith.

~Karen Armstrong

...there is something wrong with any spirituality that does not inspire selfless concern for others

~Karen Armstrong

Religions don't own compassion; it is a human virtue.

~Karen Armstrong

A theology should be like poetry, which takes us to the end of what words and thoughts can do.

~Karen Armstrong

If we want to create a viable, peaceful world, we've got to integrate compassion into the gritty realities of 21st century life.

~Karen Armstrong

A mode of knowledge rooted in silence and intuitive insight which gives meaning to life but which cannot be explained in rational terms.

~Karen Armstrong

The only way to show a true respect for God is to act morally while ignoring God's existence.

~Karen Armstrong

Compassion is the key in Islam and Buddhism and Judaism and Christianity. They are profoundly similar.

~Karen Armstrong

Like art, religion is an imaginative and creative effort to find a meaning and value in human life.

~Karen Armstrong

We are addicted to our egotism, our likes and dislikes and prejudices, and depend upon them for our own sense of identity.

~Karen Armstrong

Fundamentalists are not friends of democracy. And that includes your fundamentalists in the United States.

~Karen Armstrong

God [is] not the exclusive property of any one tradition. The divine light [cannot] be confined to a single lamp, belonging to the East or the West, but enlightens all human beings.

~Karen Armstrong

Respect only has meaning as respect for those with whom I do not agree.

~Karen Armstrong

The first person to promulgate the Golden Rule, which was the bedrock of this empathic spirituality, was Confucius 500 years before Christ.

~Karen Armstrong

Creation stories had never been regarded as historically accurate; their

purpose was therapeutic. But once you start reading Genesis as scientifically valid, you have bad science and bad religion.

~Karen Armstrong

Here in America, religious people often prefer to be right rather than compassionate. They've lost the Axial Age vision of concern for everybody.

~Karen Armstrong

Pain is something that's common to human life. When we ignore it, we aren't engaging in the whole reality, and the pain begins to fester.

~Karen Armstrong

When you feel compassion, you dethrone yourself from the centre of the world.

~Karen Armstrong

there is no ascent to the heights without prior descent into darkness, no new life without some form of death.

~Karen Armstrong

[T]he family is a school of compassion because it is here that we learn to live with other people. (68)

~Karen Armstrong

There are some forms of religion that are bad, just as there's bad cooking or bad art or bad sex, you have bad religion too.

~Karen Armstrong

The great task of our time is to build a global society, where people can live together in peace

~Karen Armstrong

Often when religious leaders come together, they talk about a particular

sexual ethic, or an abstruse doctrine, as though this, rather than compassion, was the test of spiritual life.

~Karen Armstrong

Geniuses are not always pleasant people.

~Karen Armstrong

At the beginning of the twentieth century, every single leading Muslim intellectual was in love with the west, and wanted their countries to look just like Britain and France.

~Karen Armstrong

All religions are designed to teach us how to live, joyfully, serenely, and kindly, in the midst of suffering.

~Karen Armstrong

There is a danger in monotheism, and it's called idolatry. And we know the prophets of Israel were very, very concerned about idolatry, the worship of a human expression of the divine.

~Karen Armstrong

Islam is a religion of success. Unlike Christianity, which has as its main image, in the west at least, a man dying in a devastating, disgraceful, helpless death.

~Karen Armstrong

Compassion is a practically acquired knowledge, like dancing. You must do it and practice diligently day by day.

~Karen Armstrong

There must be no coercion in matters of faith!

~Karen Armstrong

If we could view Muhammad as we do any other important historical

figure we would surely consider him to be one of the greatest geniuses the world has known.

~Karen Armstrong

If it is not tempered by compassion, and empathy, reason can lead men and women into a moral void.

~Karen Armstrong

Compassion is not feeling sorry for others. It's not soft. It requires an intellectual effort.

~Karen Armstrong

Now I think one of the reasons why religion developed in the way that it did over the centuries was precisely to curb this murderous bent that we have as human beings.

~Karen Armstrong

Ironically, the first thing that appealed to me about Islam was its pluralism. The fact that the Koran praises all the great prophets of the past.

~Karen Armstrong

Storytelling is fine as long as you can encourage people to act on the stories.

~Karen Armstrong

The values of Islam are expressed by Muslims clearly. September 11 changed the world, and put Muslims on the spotlight.

~Karen Armstrong

Buddhists talk about nirvana in very much the same terms as monotheists describe God.

~Karen Armstrong

Religion is not a nice thing. It is potentially a very dangerous thing because it involves a heady complex of emotions, desires, yearnings and fears.

~Karen Armstrong

I'm seeking to make sense of life, looking for its meaning and how we can have a better humanity.

~Karen Armstrong

Compassion is not a popular virtue

~Karen Armstrong

Every fundamentalist movement I've studied in Judaism, Christianity and Islam is convinced at some gut, visceral level that secular liberal society wants to wipe out religion.

~Karen Armstrong

Intelligence doesn't just mean tracking down terrorists; It means finding out what is in people's hearts and minds and discovering the complexity of most issues.

~Karen Armstrong

My greatest solace is my study. If I am deprived of my study, I can become lost, unhappy and unhinged.

~Karen Armstrong

Mohammed was not an apparent failure. He was a dazzling success, politically as well as spiritually, and Islam went from strength to strength to strength.

~Karen Armstrong

We are most creative and sense other possibilities that transcend our ordinary experience when we leave ourselves behind.

~Karen Armstrong

You are your best self when you give yourself away.

~Karen Armstrong

Beethoven's string quartets express pain itself; it is not MY pain.

~Karen Armstrong

We should probably all pause to confront our past from time to time, because it changes its meaning as our circumstances alter.

~Karen Armstrong

Let's use our stories to encourage listening to one another and to hear not just the good news, but also the pain that lies at the back of a lot of people's stories and histories.

~Karen Armstrong

I learned a lot from both, initially Jewish and Muslim theologians that had been missing, perhaps from my rather parochial Catholic upbringing.

~Karen Armstrong

There is nothing in Islam that is more violent than Christianity.

~Karen Armstrong

I remind myself that my pain is not unique. Everybody suffers.

~Karen Armstrong

Sometimes I call myself a freelance, I can't see any one of the great religions as superior to others.

~Karen Armstrong

I used to hate religion, I loathed it in my angry days.

~Karen Armstrong

Many entire nations are marginalised by the more powerful nations.

That is causing imbalance, violence and terror. Women must do their best to introduce another perspective.

~Karen Armstrong

I think I get from my books what other people get from family or a relationship or from prayer.

~Karen Armstrong

You put yourself in the receptive frame of mind with which we approach music or poetry, which you can measure the difference on a neurological scanner.

~Karen Armstrong

The study of the traditions doesn't necessarily make you want to convert to another tradition, but it helps you to see your own differently and expands your outlook.

~Karen Armstrong

I have a very sharp tongue, I'm very impatient, and it's a lifelong struggle.

~Karen Armstrong

If professional religious leaders can [no longer] instruct..., our artists and creative writers can perhaps step into this priestly role and bring fresh insight to our lost and damaged world.

~Karen Armstrong

We are what we are because of the hard work, insights and achievements of countless others.

~Karen Armstrong

Even before 9/11 I was gripped by a sense of dread: our lack of criticism about what we were doing in the Middle East - the slagging off of a whole religious tradition.

~Karen Armstrong

Alas, all traditions lose their primal purity and we all fail our founders.

~Karen Armstrong

I am continually trying to find meaning in the world. If we cannot find some ultimate significance or value in our lives, we fall very easily into despair.

~Karen Armstrong

Compassion doesn't, of course, mean feeling sorry for people, or pity, which is how the word has become emasculated in a way.

~Karen Armstrong

For centuries, the Muslims were able to co-exist perfectly well with Jews and Christians in the Middle East.

~Karen Armstrong

When violence becomes imbedded in a region, then this affects everything. It affects your dreams, your fantasies and relationships, and your religion becomes violent, too.

~Karen Armstrong

Whatever conclusions we reach about the reality of God, the history of this idea must tell us something important about the human mind and the nature of our aspiration.

~Karen Armstrong

I was a lousy nun. I couldn't do it. I couldn't find God. It wasn't suitable for me. It is suitable for very few people.

~Karen Armstrong

I had failed to make a gift of myself to God.

~Karen Armstrong

Religion is hard work. Its insights are not self-evident and have to be cultivated in the same way as an appreciation of art, music, or poetry must be developed.

~Karen Armstrong

My study of religion, which I regard in many ways as an art form, is a search for meaning.

~Karen Armstrong

A gentleman is not born but crafted. He had to work on himself in the same way as a sculptor shaped a rough stone and made it a thing of beauty.

~Karen Armstrong

It is not difficult to find a religious justification for killing.

~Karen Armstrong

Religion starts with the perception that something is wrong.

~Karen Armstrong

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