

# Mary Catherine Bateson Quotes

*Memorable, Thinking, Way, Peace, Done, Understanding, Teacher, Caring,  
Change, Age, Children, People, Life, Games, Inspirational, Past, Coherence,  
Conventions, Animal, Culinary*

Fluidity and discontinuity are central to the reality in which we live.

~Mary Catherine Bateson

We are not what we know but what we are willing to learn.

~Mary Catherine Bateson

The past empowers the present, and the sweeping footsteps leading to this present mark the pathways to the future.

~Mary Catherine Bateson

The human species thinks in metaphors and learns through stories.

~Mary Catherine Bateson

What would it be like to have not only color vision but culture vision, the ability to see the multiple worlds of others.

~Mary Catherine Bateson

There are few things as toxic as a bad metaphor. You can't think without metaphors.

~Mary Catherine Bateson

As you get up in the morning, as you make decisions, as you spend money, make friends, make commitments, you are creating a piece of art called your life.

~Mary Catherine Bateson

Fear is not a good teacher. The lessons of fear are quickly forgotten.

~Mary Catherine Bateson

When parents die, all of the partings of the past are reevoked with the realization that this time they will not return.

~Mary Catherine Bateson

The timing of death, like the ending of a story, gives a changed

meaning to what preceded it.

~Mary Catherine Bateson

Worlds can be found by a child and an adult bending down and looking together under the grass stems or at the skittering crabs in a tidal pool.

~Mary Catherine Bateson

Every loss recapitulates earlier losses, but every affirmation of identity echoes earlier moments of clarity.

~Mary Catherine Bateson

Goals too clearly defined can become blinkers.

~Mary Catherine Bateson

Of any stopping place in life, it is good to ask whether it will be a good place from which to go on as well as a good place to remain.

~Mary Catherine Bateson

Most higher education is devoted to affirming the traditions and origins of an existing elite and transmitting them to new members.

~Mary Catherine Bateson

Caring can be learned by all human beings, can be worked into the design of every life, meeting an individual need as well as a pervasive need in society.

~Mary Catherine Bateson

Sharing is sometimes more demanding than giving.

~Mary Catherine Bateson

The family is changing not disappearing. We have to broaden our understanding of it, look for the new metaphors.

~Mary Catherine Bateson

Human beings do not eat nutrients, they eat food.

~Mary Catherine Bateson

Improvisation can be either a last resort or an established way of evoking creativity.

~Mary Catherine Bateson

The capacity to combine commitment with skepticism is essential to democracy.

~Mary Catherine Bateson

The Christian tradition was passed on to me as a great rich mixture, a bouillabaisse of human imagination and wonder brewed from the richness of individual lives.

~Mary Catherine Bateson

Solutions to problems often depend upon how they're defined.

~Mary Catherine Bateson

...a disgruntled reflection on my own life as a sort of desperate improvisation in which I was constantly trying to make something coherent from conflicting elements to fit rapidly changing settings.

~Mary Catherine Bateson

Human beings tend to regard the conventions of their own societies as natural, often as sacred.

~Mary Catherine Bateson

Often continuity is visible only in retrospect.

~Mary Catherine Bateson

A surprising number of physicians manage to continue to care about persons even after the rigors of medical training.

~Mary Catherine Bateson

In many ways, constancy is an illusion.

~Mary Catherine Bateson

Monotony and repetition are characteristic of many parts of life, but these do not become sources of conscious discomfort until novelty and entertainment are built up as positive experiences.

~Mary Catherine Bateson

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