

# Max Lerner Quotes

*Men, Mean, Literature, America, Ideas, War, Culture, Ethos, Government,  
Democracy, Civilization, Way, Enemy, Principles, Hero, Dream, Teenage,  
Humanity, Science, Competition*

The turning point in the process of growing up is when you discover the core of strength within you that survives all hurt.

~Max Lerner

When you choose the lesser of two evils, always remember that it is still an evil.

~Max Lerner

America is a passionate idea or it is nothing. America is a human brotherhood or it is chaos.

~Max Lerner

A politician wouldn't dream of being allowed to call a columnist the things a columnist is allowed to call a politician

~Max Lerner

Either men will learn to live like brothers, or they will die like beasts.

~Max Lerner

When you are seventeen you aren't really serious.

~Max Lerner

I am neither an optimist nor pessimist, but a possibilist.

~Max Lerner

A President is best judged by the enemies he makes when he has really hit his stride.

~Max Lerner

You may call for peace as loudly as you wish, but where there is no brotherhood there can in the end be no peace.

~Max Lerner

The best thing about lying in bed late is that you learn to distinguish

between first things and trivia, for whatever presses on you has to prove its importance before it makes you move.

~Max Lerner

What counted was not the facts but the fears.

~Max Lerner

Principles-and I have in mind such principles as states' rights or national sovereignty or the free market or pacifism-have a way of drying up while the sap of life goes flowing in another direction.

~Max Lerner

The real sadness of fifty is not that you change so much but that you change so little.

~Max Lerner

Despite the success cult, men are most deeply moved not by the reaching of the goal but by the grandness of the effort involved in getting there - or failing to get there.

~Max Lerner

The politics of surprise leads through the Gates of Astonishment into the Kingdom of Hope.

~Max Lerner

Of the many things we have done to democracy in the past, the worst has been the indignity of taking it for granted.

~Max Lerner

We cannot live by power, and a culture that seeks to live by it becomes brutal and sterile. But we can die without it.

~Max Lerner

There is no crime in the cynical American calendar more humiliating

than to be a sucker.

~Max Lerner

The problem of freedom in America is that of maintaining a competition of ideas, and you do not achieve that by silencing one brand of idea.

~Max Lerner

When evil acts in the world it always manages to find instruments who believe that what they do is not evil but honorable.

~Max Lerner

In the end, as any successful teacher will tell you, you can only teach the things that you are. If we practice racism then it is racism we teach.

~Max Lerner

In our rich consumers' civilization we spin cocoons around ourselves and get possessed by our possessions.

~Max Lerner

We must face what we fear; that is the case of the core of the restoration of health.

~Max Lerner

I have a simple principle for the conduct of life- never to resist an adequate temptation.

~Max Lerner

The tourist who moves about to see and hear and open himself to all the influences of the places which condense centuries of human greatness is only a man in search of excellence.

~Max Lerner

To reject the word is to reject the human search.

~Max Lerner

A people's speech is the skin of its culture.

~Max Lerner

Next to the striking of fire and the discovery of the wheel, the greatest triumph of what we call civilization was the domestication of the human male.

~Max Lerner

The way to prevent war is to bend every energy toward preventing it, not to proceed by the dubious indirection of preparing for it.

~Max Lerner

To deaden yourself against any hurt is to deaden yourself also against the hurt of others.

~Max Lerner

American capitalism has been both overpraised and overindicted. It is neither the Plumed Knight nor the monstrous Robber Baron.

~Max Lerner

The taste of democracy becomes a bitter taste when the fullness of democracy is denied.

~Max Lerner

We demand of our political life greater certainty and greater perfection than we demand of our personal life.

~Max Lerner

Somehow life doesn't always pay off to those who are most insistent.

~Max Lerner

Science itself is a humanist in the sense that it doesn't discriminate between human beings, but it is also morally neutral. It is no better or worse than the ethos with and for which it is used.

~Max Lerner

It is almost as easy to be enervated by triumph as by defeat.

~Max Lerner

It is not science that has destroyed the world, despite all the gloomy forebodings of the earlier prophets. It is man who has destroyed man.

~Max Lerner

Every mob, in its ignorance and blindness and bewilderment, is a League of Frightened Men that seeks reassurance in collective action.

~Max Lerner

The Russians train; they do not dare educate.

~Max Lerner

A world technology means either a world government or world suicide.

~Max Lerner

A religion which has lost its basic conviction about the interconnection of men with men in their common struggles for the human, will never command belief in the realm of the superhuman.

~Max Lerner

It is not the armed forces which can protect our democracy. It is the moral strength of democracy which alone can give any meaning to the efforts at military security.

~Max Lerner

Man's will creates the things that paralyze his brain and brutalize his heart.

~Max Lerner

Small wars are always teetering on the brink of becoming big ones.

~Max Lerner

God is what man finds that is divine in himself. It is the best way man can behave in the ordinary occasions of life, and the farthest point to which man can stretch himself.

~Max Lerner

Every step by which men add to their knowledge and skills is a step also by which they can control other men.

~Max Lerner

There is a hate layer of opinion and emotion in America. There will be other McCarthys to come who will be hailed as its heroes.

~Max Lerner

America shudders at anything alien, and when it wants to shut its mind against any man's ideas it calls him a foreigner.

~Max Lerner

The so-called lessons of history are for the most part the rationalizations of the victors. History is written by the survivors.

~Max Lerner

Do not confuse your vested interests with ethics. Do not identify the enemies of your privilege with the enemies of humanity.

~Max Lerner

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