

Michael Shermer

Quotes

*Believe, Thinking, Science, Religious, Atheist, Moral, Brain, Doe, Stories, World,
Intelligent, Ideas, Religion, Morality, Design, Soul, Spiritual, Mean, Space,
Animal*

Science is not a thing. It's a verb. It's a way of thinking about things. It's a way of looking for natural explanations for all phenomena.

~Michael Shermer

The recent medical controversy over whether vaccinations cause autism reveals a habit of human cognition â€” thinking anecdotally comes naturally, whereas thinking scientifically does not.

~Michael Shermer

Smart people believe weird things because they are skilled at defending beliefs they arrived at for non-smart reasons.

~Michael Shermer

I'm a skeptic not because I do not want to believe, but because I want to know. How can we tell the difference between what we would like to be true and what is actually true? The answer is science.

~Michael Shermer

Religious faith depends on a host of social, psychological and emotional factors that have little or nothing to do with probabilities, evidence and logic.

~Michael Shermer

Humans are, by nature, pattern-seeking, storytelling animals, and we are quite adept at telling stories about patterns whether they exist or not.

~Michael Shermer

But the power of science lies in open publication, which, with the rise of the Internet, is no longer constrained by the price of paper.

~Michael Shermer

I'm a skeptic not because I do not want to believe, but because I want to know.

~Michael Shermer

In comparison, Google is brilliant because it uses an algorithm that ranks Web pages by the number of links to them, with those links themselves valued by the number of links to their page of origin.

~Michael Shermer

Human history is highly nonlinear and unpredictable.

~Michael Shermer

Either the soul survives death or it does not, and there is no scientific evidence that it does.

~Michael Shermer

There is a significant difference between having no belief in a God and believing there is no God.

~Michael Shermer

In the long run, it is better to understand the way the world really is rather than how we would like it to be.

~Michael Shermer

The price of liberty is, in addition to eternal vigilance, eternal patience with the vacuous blather occasionally expressed from behind the shield of free speech.

~Michael Shermer

To be a fully functioning moral agent, one cannot passively accept moral principles handed down by fiat. Moral principles require moral reasoning.

~Michael Shermer

Absolute morality leads logically to absolute intolerance.

~Michael Shermer

Belief is the natural state of things. It is the default option. We just believe. We believe all sorts of things. Belief is natural; disbelief, skepticism, science, is not natural.

~Michael Shermer

Believing that the rustle in the grass is a dangerous predator when it is only the wind does not cost much, but believing that a dangerous predator is the wind may cost an animal its life.

~Michael Shermer

Science is the best tool ever devised for understanding how the world works.

~Michael Shermer

Skepticism is not a position; it's a process.

~Michael Shermer

Mysteries once thought to be supernatural or paranormal happenings - such as astronomical or meteorological events - are incorporated into science once their causes are understood.

~Michael Shermer

We think of our eyes as video cameras and our brains as blank tapes to be filled with sensory inputs.

~Michael Shermer

The concept of God is generated by a brain designed by evolution to find design in nature (a very recursive idea).

~Michael Shermer

A Hubble Space Telescope photograph of the universe evokes far more awe for creation than light streaming through a stained glass window in a cathedral.

~Michael Shermer

We are a fluke of nature, a quirk of evolution, a glorious contingency.

~Michael Shermer

Being a skeptic just means being rational and empirical: thinking and seeing before believing.

~Michael Shermer

Accepting evolution does not force us to jettison our morals and ethics, and rejecting evolution does not ensure their constancy.

~Michael Shermer

Mammals are sentient beings that want to live and are afraid to die. Evolution vouchsafed us all with an instinct to survive, reproduce and flourish.

~Michael Shermer

Myths are stories that express meaning, morality or motivation. Whether they are true or not is irrelevant.

~Michael Shermer

Skepticism is not a position; skepticism is an approach to claims, in the same way that science is not a subject but a method.

~Michael Shermer

In science, if an idea is not falsifiable, it is not that it is wrong, it is that we cannot determine if it is wrong, and thus it is not even wrong.

~Michael Shermer

We do not just blindly concede control to authorities; instead we follow the cues provided by our moral communities on how best to behave.

~Michael Shermer

We know evolution happened because innumerable bits of data from myriad fields of science conjoin to paint a rich portrait of life's

pilgrimage.

~Michael Shermer

When alien abductees recount to me their stories, I do not deny that they had a real experience.

~Michael Shermer

People believe in God because we are pattern-seeking, storytelling, mythmaking, religious, moral animals.

~Michael Shermer

For solving a surprisingly large and varied number of problems, crowds are smarter than individuals.

~Michael Shermer

My thesis is that morality exists outside the human mind in the sense of being not just a trait of individual humans, but a human trait; that is, a human universal.

~Michael Shermer

The whole point of faith, in fact, is to believe regardless of the evidence, which is the very antithesis of science.

~Michael Shermer

So, of course, Gish's presentation was well received, which it would have been the case had he only gotten up and said "praise the Lord" and sat back down.

~Michael Shermer

The actual atoms and molecules that make up my brain and body today are not the same ones that I was born with on September 8, 1954, a half-century ago this month.

~Michael Shermer

In principle, skeptics are neither closed-minded nor cynical. We are curious but cautious.

~Michael Shermer

The fate of the paranormal is to become the normal as our horizons of understanding expand.

~Michael Shermer

But there is only one surefire method of proper pattern recognition, and that is science.

~Michael Shermer

Scientists like Bjorn Lomborg in *The Skeptical Environmentalist* have, in my opinion, properly nailed environmental extremists for these exaggerated scenarios.

~Michael Shermer

Flawed as they may be, science and the secular Enlightenment values expressed in Western democracies are our best hope for survival.

~Michael Shermer

But because we live in an age of science, we have a preoccupation with corroborating our myths.

~Michael Shermer

Are science and religion compatible? It's like, are science and plumbing compatible? They're just two different things.

~Michael Shermer

Conspiracies are a perennial favorite for television producers because there is always a receptive audience.

~Michael Shermer

Skepticism is not a position that you stake out ahead of time and stick

to no matter what.

~Michael Shermer

Dualists hold that body and soul are separate entities and that the soul will continue beyond the existence of the physical body.

~Michael Shermer

Through no divine design or cosmic plan, we have inherited the mantle of life's caretaker on the earth, the only home we have ever known.

~Michael Shermer

Remember always that we are pattern-seeking primates who are especially adept at finding patterns with emotional meaning.

~Michael Shermer

Science is a set of methods designed to describe and interpret observed or inferred phenomenon, past or present, and aimed at building a testable body of knowledge open to rejection or confirmation.

~Michael Shermer

One, I am skeptical of the effectiveness of nutritional supplements.

~Michael Shermer

No single discovery from any of these fields denotes proof of evolution, but together they reveal that life evolved in a certain sequence by a particular process.

~Michael Shermer

I just witnessed an event so mysterious that it shook my skepticism.

~Michael Shermer

Scientific prayer makes God a celestial lab rat, leading to bad science and worse religion.

~Michael Shermer

The human capacity for self-delusion is boundless, and the effects of belief are overpowering.

~Michael Shermer

I care what is actually true, even more than what I hope is true.

~Michael Shermer

The reason is that in a group, individual errors on either side of the true figure cancel each other out.

~Michael Shermer

In science , all conclusions are provisional, subject to new evidence and better arguments, the very antithesis of religious faith.

~Michael Shermer

Since humans are by nature tribal, the overall goal is to expand the concept of the tribe to include ALL members of the species, in a global free society.

~Michael Shermer

Anecdotal thinking comes naturally; science requires training.

~Michael Shermer

Plato wove historical fact into literary myth.

~Michael Shermer

Providentially, learned habits can be unlearned, especially in the context of moral groups.

~Michael Shermer

Machine intelligence of a human nature could be a century away, and immortality is at least a millennium away, if not unattainable altogether.

~Michael Shermer

Because of the complexity of the problem, environmental skepticism was once tenable. No longer. It is time to flip from skepticism to activism.

~Michael Shermer

We want to be open-minded enough to accept radical new ideas when they occasionally come along, but we don't want to be so open-minded that our brains fall out.

~Michael Shermer

Rationality tied to moral decency is the most powerful joint instrument for good that our planet has ever known.

~Michael Shermer

Believers can have both religion and science as long as there is no attempt to make A non-A, to make reality unreal, to turn naturalism into supernaturalism. (125)

~Michael Shermer

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