

# Norman Lear Quotes

*People, Thinking, Kids, Directors, Television, Leadership, Writing, Dad, Country,  
Wanted, Tvs, Stars, White, America, Christian, Long, Would Be, Happiness,  
Responsibility, Giving*

When something is over, it is over.

~Norman Lear

We just may be the most well-informed, yet least self-aware, people in history.

~Norman Lear

It seems to me that any full grown, mature adult would have a desire to be responsible, to help where he can in a world that needs so very much, that threatens us so very much.

~Norman Lear

Originally, with all the shows, we went looking for belly laughs.

~Norman Lear

You know, you throw rocks in the lake and scientists will tell you you're raising the level of the lake, but all you get to see is the ripple.

~Norman Lear

Maybe they continued to agree with Archie Bunker - as I said earlier, you can't change people's minds, but you can get them to think.

~Norman Lear

Life is about having a good time.

~Norman Lear

That's the heart of it: My shows were not that controversial with the American people. They were controversial with the people who think for the American people.

~Norman Lear

In the area we're discussing, leadership begins on Madison Avenue, on the desks and in the offices of people who spend hundreds of millions of dollars buying what will get them ratings.

~Norman Lear

I like getting up in the morning, and I like better having something to do when I get up in the morning.

~Norman Lear

We had two African American writers [Eric Monte and Michael Evans] on the show ['Good Times'] that knew Cabrini Green inside and out, and that's why we set it there.

~Norman Lear

I think America, unfortunately, collectively thinks of itself as the 'chosen people.' To my knowledge, there are no chosen people, we are all human beings.

~Norman Lear

So we gravitated to shows and issues and causes that made people care.

~Norman Lear

Success is how you collect your minutes.

~Norman Lear

If there is a reason to believe in God, it would be the Havana Leaf.

~Norman Lear

I started by writing, with my partner Ed Simmons, a monologue for Danny Thomas, that he performed at Ciro's nightclub in Los Angeles.

~Norman Lear

We are a country of excess. So it's not the violence, per se, but the exacerbation and constant repetition.

~Norman Lear

The American people may not be the best-educated, but they're very wise at heart.

~Norman Lear

The trafficking of sex and violence is comes after the demand for ratings.

~Norman Lear

Granted, the writers, directors, producers, and that community make a great deal of money. But they might be choosing to do a whole lot of other things for the living they make.

~Norman Lear

It crossed our minds early on that the more an audience cared - we were working before, on average, 240, live people. If you could get them caring - the more they cared, the harder they laughed.

~Norman Lear

I think Americans have become a - much more a nation of consumers than citizens.

~Norman Lear

TV that people will never see, that giant international corporations will never touch, will never pay your salary.

~Norman Lear

Nobody doubts my partisanship, but a lot of the activity is nonpartisan.

~Norman Lear

Life goes on pretty much the same way. I've been working on a couple of films on the side. You may see some more. You may even see another television show.

~Norman Lear

When we went on the air, I didn't want to be interrupted for an act-one curtain.

~Norman Lear

I stop and look at traffic accidents. I won't hang around, but when I hear something is terrible, as bad as it is, I've gotta look at it.

~Norman Lear

We all [Ed Simmons, Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis] started together, so there were no rules - anything we wrote became television.

~Norman Lear

The complete control of one party over everything - I would, I think, feel the same way if it were [the Democrats in charge]. It's not the American way.

~Norman Lear

Ed Simmons and I became stars in the emerging medium of television. We were new and fresh, just like TV at the time, so we automatically became 'THE' comedy writers for television.

~Norman Lear

In this nation, leadership is dollars.

~Norman Lear

Power is the goal of religion in general.

~Norman Lear

I think that of most leaders in religion as power brokers. They give orders, in a sense, to an audience every week, and that's where the definition of God starts.

~Norman Lear

America is a country of excess.

~Norman Lear

We had a Judeo-Christian ethic hanging around a couple thousand years that didn't help erase racism at all. So the notion of the little half-hour comedy changing things is something I think is silly.

~Norman Lear

I get a kick out of the fact that people will pick on the writers in California for being responsible for the content. The people seriously responsible for the content are the people who buy it.

~Norman Lear

I never met who I really wanted to meet, and that was Charlie Chaplin.

~Norman Lear

Culturally, I think 'All in the Family' was universal enough to have good timing at any time.

~Norman Lear

Life is about having a good time, and it was a good time. We did some things well and some things poorly, but that was always the case.

~Norman Lear

You're in the business - when you're a writer, producer, director - to get ratings.

~Norman Lear

I was writing for live television. And I said to myself, someday, soon as I can, I have got to do a situation comedy.

~Norman Lear

I got a call from an agent to come to New York City, and write for the 'Ford Star Revue.' Because at the time there wasn't much 'national television'.

~Norman Lear

The movies had a slogan at the time, to distinguish themselves from TV, that said 'movies are better than ever.'

~Norman Lear

As a matter of fact, when people ask where my 'point of view' comes from, it was there in one of the first sketches we wrote for [Dean] Martin and [Jerry] Lewis.

~Norman Lear

Bud [Yorkin] was the kindest and dearest man, and one of the most talented directors there was.

~Norman Lear

I was the laziest white kid my dad ever met.

~Norman Lear

Ratings translate into corporations, corporations that need a profit statement this quarter that's larger than the last.

~Norman Lear

In my 90-plus years, I have lived a multitude of lives.

~Norman Lear

I think somehow I got a sense of the foolishness of the human - my favorite phrase, the foolishness of the human condition.

~Norman Lear

I don't know how you can look back with regret if you're at a moment when everything seems fine.

~Norman Lear

Next up [new TV stars] was [Dean] Martin and [Jerry] Lewis on 'The

Colgate Comedy Hour.'

~Norman Lear

I wanted to work with Bert Lahr [the 'Cowardly Lion' in 'The Wizard of Oz'], and I did.

~Norman Lear

I wanted to meet Bob Hope, and I got to know him pretty well.

~Norman Lear

When I countered that Archie Bunker didn't have to put down a race of people to say that, he replied, 'and you're the dumbest white kid I've ever met.'

~Norman Lear

As H.L. Mencken once said, 'nobody ever when broke underestimating the intelligence of the American people.' Our show [All in the Family] countered that witticism. I think he was wrong.

~Norman Lear

Archie Bunker used to call me 'the laziest white kid he'd ever met.'

~Norman Lear

I think if you're feeling great about where you are, everything that led up to it had to be terrific.

~Norman Lear

If there was a sense of - a bigger sense of responsibility in the various leadership positions in America, things would be not as grotesquely overly done as they are now.

~Norman Lear

I think the greater responsibility, in terms of morality, is where leadership begins.



~Norman Lear

There was no real controversy with All In The Family. That came from the people on the business end.

~Norman Lear

I think what's dangerous is 24 hours a day, 335 channels, or whatever the hell there is. Too much is too much.

~Norman Lear

My dad called me meat head dead from the neck up.

~Norman Lear

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