

# Tom Stoppard Quotes

*Writing, Thinking, People, Play, Men, Art, Mean, Giving, Believe, World, Two,  
Children, Ideas, Order, Eye, Life, Rosencrantz And Guildenstern, Way, Mind,  
Real*

Every exit is an entry somewhere else.

~Tom Stoppard

Skill without imagination is craftsmanship and gives us many useful objects such as wickerwork picnic baskets. Imagination without skill gives us modern art.

~Tom Stoppard

If you associate enough with older people who do enjoy their lives, who are not stored away in any golden ghettos, you will gain a sense of continuity and of the possibility for a full life.

~Tom Stoppard

Words are sacred. If you get the right ones in the right order you can nudge the world a little.

~Tom Stoppard

It's not the voting that's democracy; it's the counting.

~Tom Stoppard

A healthy attitude is contagious but don't wait to catch it from others. Be a carrier.

~Tom Stoppard

To be an artist at all is like living in Switzerland during a world war. To be an artist in Zurich, in 1917, implies a degree of self-absorption that would have glazed over the eyes of Narcissus.

~Tom Stoppard

If you carry your childhood with you, you never become older.

~Tom Stoppard

Give us this day our daily mask.

~Tom Stoppard

It's no trick loving somebody at their best. Love is loving them at their worst.

~Tom Stoppard

Atheism is a crutch for those who cannot bear the reality of God.

~Tom Stoppard

It would have been nice to have had unicorns.

~Tom Stoppard

The colours red, blue and green are real. The colour yellow is a mystical experience shared by everybody.

~Tom Stoppard

We cross our bridges when we come to them and burn them behind us, with nothing to show for our progress except a memory of the smell of smoke, and a presumption that once our eyes watered.

~Tom Stoppard

Because children grow up, we think a child's purpose is to grow up. But a child's purpose is to be a child

~Tom Stoppard

It is not hard to understand modern art. If it hangs on a wall it's a painting, and if you can walk around it it's a sculpture.

~Tom Stoppard

It is better to be quotable than to be honest.

~Tom Stoppard

Maybe Napoleon was wrong when he said we were a nation of shopkeepers... Today England looked like a nation of goalkeepers.

~Tom Stoppard

My whole life is waiting for the questions to which I have prepared answers.

~Tom Stoppard

I still believe that if your aim is to change the world, journalism is a more immediate short-term weapon.

~Tom Stoppard

My life feels, week to week, incomplete to the level of being pointless if I am not in preparation for the next play or, ideally, into it.

~Tom Stoppard

It is a defect of God's humor that he directs our hearts everywhere but to those who have a right to them.

~Tom Stoppard

I am not my body. My body is nothing without me.

~Tom Stoppard

Information is light. Information in itself, about anything, is light.

~Tom Stoppard

The tragedy of journalism is that these are people doing their best work.

~Tom Stoppard

Responsibilities gravitate to the person who can shoulder them.

~Tom Stoppard

Maturity is a high price to pay for growing up.

~Tom Stoppard

It's the best possible time to be alive, when almost everything you thought you knew is wrong.

~Tom Stoppard

When I think of how things could have turned out, I feel as if I've dodged, not just bullets, but 6mm shells.

~Tom Stoppard

If you want to change something by Tuesday, theater is no good. Journalism is what does that. But, if you want to just alter the chemistry of the moral matrix, then theater has a longer half-life.

~Tom Stoppard

We give advice by the bucket, but take it by the grain.

~Tom Stoppard

I write fiction because it's a way of making statements I can disown.

~Tom Stoppard

It's the wanting to know that makes us matter.

~Tom Stoppard

It takes character to withstand the rigours of indolence.

~Tom Stoppard

I read for interest and enjoyment, and when I cease to enjoy it I stop.

~Tom Stoppard

I write plays because dialogue is the most respectable way of contradicting myself.

~Tom Stoppard

Life in a box is better than no life at all, I expect. You'd have a chance at least. You could lie there thinking: Well, at least I'm not dead.

~Tom Stoppard

I don't think I can be expected to take seriously any game which takes less than three days to reach its conclusion.

~Tom Stoppard

We're actors. We're the opposite of people.

~Tom Stoppard

Biography is the mesh through which real life escapes.

~Tom Stoppard

I would join Sisyphus in Hades and gladly push my boulder up the slope if only, each time it rolled back down, I were given a line of Aeschylus.

~Tom Stoppard

It is better of course to know useless things than to know nothing.

~Tom Stoppard

All mystical experience is coincidence; and vice versa, of course.

~Tom Stoppard

How the hell do I know what I find incredible? Credibility is an expanding field... Sheer disbelief hardly registers on the face before the head is nodding with all the wisdom of instant hindsight.

~Tom Stoppard

From principles is derived probability, but truth or certainty is obtained only from facts.

~Tom Stoppard

In the theater there is often a tension, almost a contradiction, between the way real people would think and behave, and a kind of imposed dramaticness.

~Tom Stoppard

A movie camera is like having someone you have a crush on watching you from afar - you pretend it's not there.

~Tom Stoppard

Revolution is a trivial shift in the emphasis of suffering.

~Tom Stoppard

Be happy -- if you're not even happy, what's so good about surviving?

~Tom Stoppard

Imagination without skill gives us contemporary art.

~Tom Stoppard

What a fine persecutionâ€™to be kept intrigued without ever quite being enlightened.

~Tom Stoppard

I'm the kind of person who embarks on an endless leapfrog down the great moral issues. I put a position, rebut it, refute the rebuttal and rebut the refutation. Endlessly.

~Tom Stoppard

The House of Lords, an illusion to which I have never been able to subscribe - responsibility without power, the prerogative of the eunuch throughout the ages.

~Tom Stoppard

One of the nice things about the world of filmmaking is that you make friends in the business.

~Tom Stoppard

The media. It sounds like a convention of spiritualists.

~Tom Stoppard

I write plays because writing dialogue is the only respectable way of contradicting yourself. I put a position, rebut it, refute the rebuttal, and rebut the refutation.

~Tom Stoppard

Beauty is desired in order that it may be befouled; not for its own sake, but for the joy brought by the certainty of profaning it.

~Tom Stoppard

We've traveled too far, and our momentum has taken over; we move idly towards eternity, without possibility of reprieve or hope of explanation.

~Tom Stoppard

James Joyce - an essentially private man who wished his total indifference to public notice to be universally recognized.

~Tom Stoppard

There is truth and falsehood in a comma.

~Tom Stoppard

The truth is always a compound of two half- truths, and you never reach it, because there is always something more to say.

~Tom Stoppard

Eternity's a terrible thought. I mean, where's it all going to end?

~Tom Stoppard

Happiness is equilibrium. Shift your weight.

~Tom Stoppard

Never believe in mirrors or newspapers.

~Tom Stoppard

Audiences know what to expect, and that is all that they are prepared to believe in.

~Tom Stoppard

When we have found all the mysteries and lost all the meaning, we will be alone, on an empty shore.

~Tom Stoppard

The bad end unhappily, the good unluckily. That is what tragedy means.

~Tom Stoppard

Life is a gamble, at terrible odds - if it was a bet you wouldn't take it.

~Tom Stoppard

Pirates could happen to anyone.

~Tom Stoppard

If an idea's worth having once, it's worth having twice.

~Tom Stoppard

Save the gerund and screw the whale.

~Tom Stoppard

There is no one so radical as a man-servant whose freedom of the champagne bin has been interfered with.

~Tom Stoppard

Life in a box is better than no life at all... I expect.

~Tom Stoppard

My work always tried to unite the true with the beautiful; but when I had to choose one or the other, I usually chose the beautiful.

~Tom Stoppard

What did you have in mind? A short, blunt human pyramid?

~Tom Stoppard

Good things, when short, are twice as good.

~Tom Stoppard

Every age thinks it's the modern age, but this one really is. Electricity is going to change everything. Everything!

~Tom Stoppard

Each move is dictated by the previous one--that is the meaning of order

~Tom Stoppard

All your life you live so close to truth, it becomes a permanent blur in the corner of your eye, and when something nudges it into outline it is like being ambushed by a grotesque.

~Tom Stoppard

There must have been a moment, at the beginning, were we could have said -- no. But somehow we missed it.

~Tom Stoppard

I'm a very boring person.

~Tom Stoppard

You can't treat royalty like people with normal perverted desires.

~Tom Stoppard

Rosencrantz: Shouldn't we be doing something--constructive?

Guildenstern: What did you have in mind? ... A short, blunt human pyramid...?

~Tom Stoppard

Well I believe in the desirability of an optimal society.

~Tom Stoppard

We must be born with an intuition of mortality.

~Tom Stoppard

Hell is very likely to be modernization infinitely extended.

~Tom Stoppard

Personally I am in favour of education but a university is not the place for it.

~Tom Stoppard

A genuine love of learning is one of the two delinquencies which cause blindness and lead a young man to ruin.

~Tom Stoppard

I write scenes - often quite long scenes - mainly because I still get seduced into writing six lines where one and a half will do.

~Tom Stoppard

Junk journalism is the evidence of a society that has got at least one thing right, that there should be nobody with the power to dictate where responsible journalism begins.

~Tom Stoppard

We are tied down to a language which makes up in obscurity what it lacks in style.

~Tom Stoppard

I mean, if Beethoven had been killed in a plane crash at twenty-two, the history of music would have been very different. As would the history of aviation, of course.

~Tom Stoppard

I smoke too much whether it's going well or badly. After all these years, I definitely associate having a pen in my hand with having an ashtray just out of eye line.

~Tom Stoppard

He's never known anything like it! But then, he has never known anything to write home about, so this is nothing to write home about.

~Tom Stoppard

I've never written an original piece for film; all the original things I've done are for the stage.

~Tom Stoppard

Sometimes I watch a scene I've written, and occasionally I think, "Oh, for God's sake, shut up."

~Tom Stoppard

There is presumably a calendar date a moment when the onus of proof passed from the atheist to the believer, when, quite suddenly, secretly, the noes had it.

~Tom Stoppard

Fifty-five crystal spheres geared to God's crankshaft is my idea of a satisfying universe. I can't think of anything more trivial than quarks, quasars, big bangs and black holes.

~Tom Stoppard

Words, words. They're all we have to go on.

~Tom Stoppard

It was a different planet in 1967, the Broadway theatre. It had a little ashtray clamped to the back of every seat and the author got 10% of the gross.

~Tom Stoppard

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