

## Humanity: Quotes Collected by Tom Peters

*“Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?”—Mary Oliver*

*“If you ask me what I have come to do in this world, I who am an artist, I will reply: I am here to live my life out loud.”—Émile Zola*

*“[The novel] traced the very ordinary life of a very ordinary woman—a life with few moments of high drama, but which was also remarkable. The extraordinary in the ordinary. It was a theme I often discussed with my students—how we can never consider anybody’s life ‘ordinary,’ how every human existence is a novel with its own compelling narrative. Even if, on the surface, it seems prosaic, the fact remains that each individual life is charged with contradictions and complexities. And no matter much we wish to keep things simple and uneventful, we cannot help but collide with mess. It is our destiny—because mess, the drama we create for ourselves, is an intrinsic part of being alive.”*

—Hannah, from *State of the Union* by Douglas Kennedy

*“Make each day a Masterpiece!”—John Wooden*

*“Make your life itself a creative work of art.”—Mike Ray, *The Highest Goal**

*“Nobody can prevent you from choosing to be exceptional.”—Mark Sanborn, *The Fred Factor**

*“The only thing you have power over is to get good at what you do. That’s all there is; there ain’t no more!”—Sally Field*

*“Self-reliance never comes ‘naturally’ to adults because they have been so conditioned to think non-authentically that it feels wrenching to do otherwise. ... Self-Reliance is a last resort to which a person is driven in desperation only when he or she realizes ‘that imitation is suicide, that he must take himself for better, for worse, as his portion.’”*

—Lawrence Buell, *Emerson*

*“For Marx, the path to social betterment was through collective resistance of the proletariat to the economic injustices of the capitalist system that produced such misshapeness and fragmentation. For Emerson, the key was to jolt individuals into realizing the untapped power of energy, knowledge and creativity of which all people, at least in principle, are capable. He too hated all systems of human oppression; but his central project, and the basis of his legacy, was to unchain individual minds.”—Lawrence Buell, Emerson*

*“All human beings are entrepreneurs. When we were in the caves we were all self-employed ... finding our food, feeding ourselves. That’s where human history began. ... As civilization came we suppressed it. We became labor because they stamped us, ‘You are labor.’ We forgot that we are entrepreneurs.”—Muhammad Yunus*

**“We make our own traps.**

**“We construct our own cage.**

**“We build our own roadblocks.”**

**—Douglas Kennedy, *State of the Union***

*“... the delight of being totally within one’s own element—of identifying fully with one’s work and seeing it as an expression of one’s character ... this affection must be so strong that it persists during leisure hours and even makes its way into dreams ... the mind knows no deadlines or constraints and is open to its inner energies ...”*

**—Robert Grudin, *The Grace of Great Things: Creativity and Innovation***

*“To have a firm persuasion in our work—to feel that what we do is right for ourselves and good for the world at exactly the same time—is one of the great triumphs of human existence.”—David Whyte, *Crossing the Unknown Sea: Work as a Pilgrimage of Identity**

*“This is the true joy of Life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one ... the being a force of Nature instead of a feverish, selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy.”*

**—G.B. Shaw, *Man and Superman***

*“All of our artistic and religious traditions take equally great pains to inform us that we must never mistake a good career for good work. Life is a creative, intimate, unpredictable conversation if it is nothing else—and our life and our work are both the result of the way we hold that passionate conversation.”—David Whyte, *Crossing the Unknown Sea**

*“If I can reduce my work to just a job I have to do, then I keep myself safely away from the losses to be endured in putting my heart’s desires at stake.”*

**—David Whyte, *Crossing the Unknown Sea: Work as a Pilgrimage of Identity***

*“When was the last time you asked, ‘What do I want to be?’”*

—Sara Ann Friedman, *Work Matters*

*“Strive for Excellence. Ignore success.”*—Bill Young, race car driver

*“Do one thing every day that scares you.”*—Eleanor Roosevelt

#### **“HAPPINESS” & “LEISURE” PER ARISTOTLE:**

**HAPPINESS:** *Eudaimonia* ... well-doing, living flourishingly. *Megalopsychos* ... “great-souled,” “magnanimous.” More: respect and concern for others; duty to improve oneself; using one’s gifts to the fullest extent possible; fully aware; making one’s own choices.

**LEISURE:** pursue excellence; reflect; deepen understanding; opportunity to work for higher ends. [“Rest” vs. “leisure.”]

Source: A.C. Grayling, *The Meaning of Things: Applying Philosophy to Life*

*“The antidote to exhaustion is not rest, it is wholeheartedness.”*

—David Whyte, *Crossing the Unknown Sea: Work as a Pilgrimage of Identity*

*“It’s no longer enough to be a ‘change agent.’ You must be a change insurgent—provoking, prodding, warning everyone in sight that complacency is death.”*—Bob Reich

*“Distinct ... or ... Extinct”*—Tom Peters

*“Nobody gives you power. You just take it.”*—Roseanne

*“Well-behaved women rarely make history.”*

—Anita Borg, Institute for Women and Technology

*“To Hell With Well Behaved ... Recently a young mother asked for advice. What, she wanted to know, was she to do with a 7-year-old who was obstreperous, outspoken, and inconveniently willful? ‘Keep her,’ I replied. ... The suffragettes refused to be polite in demanding what they wanted or grateful for getting what they deserved. Works for me.”*—Anna Quindlen

*“You are the storyteller of your own life, and you can create your own legend or not.”*

—Isabel Allende

*“It’s always showtime.”—David D’Alessandro, Career Warfare*

*“Courtesies of a small and trivial character are the ones which strike deepest in the grateful and appreciating heart.”—Henry Clay*

*“Character may be manifested in the great moments, but it is made in the small ones.”*

—Churchill

*“We do no great things, only small things with great love.”—Mother Teresa*

*“I long to accomplish a great and noble task, but it is my chief duty to accomplish humble tasks as though they were great and noble.”—Helen Keller*

*“Wherever there is a human being, there is an opportunity for kindness.”*

—Lucius Annaeus Seneca

*“Three things in human life are important. The first is to be kind. The second is to be kind. And the third is to be kind.”—Henry James*

## PROFITABLE BUSINESS

**K = R = P**

**Kindness = Repet Business = Profit**

**K = R = P**

**Kindness = Employee Retention = Profit**

—Tom Peters

*“One of the secrets of a long and fruitful life is to forgive everybody of everything every night right before going to bed.”—Bernard Baruch*

***“We do no great things, only small things with great love.”***

**—Mother Teresa**

***“I long to accomplish a great and noble task, but it is my chief duty to accomplish humble tasks as though they were great and noble.”***

**—Helen Keller**

*“The deepest human need is the need to be appreciated.”—William James*

*“Appreciative words are the most powerful force for good on earth.”—George W. Crane*

*“The two most powerful things in existence: a kind word and a thoughtful gesture.”*

—Ken Langone

*“One kind word can warm three winter months.” – Japanese Proverb*

*“Employees who don’t feel significant rarely make significant contributions.”*

—Mark Sanborn

*“Every child is born an artist. The trick is to remain an artist.”—Picasso*

*“My wife and I went to a [kindergarten] parent-teacher conference and were informed that our budding refrigerator artist, Christopher, would be receiving a grade of Unsatisfactory in art. We were shocked. How could any child—let alone our child—receive a poor grade in art at such a young age? His teacher informed us that he had refused to color within the lines, which was a state requirement for demonstrating ‘grade-level motor skills.’”*

—Jordan Ayan, AHA!

*“How many artists are there in the room? Would you please raise your hands. FIRST GRADE: En masse the children leapt from their seats, arms waving. Every child was an artist. SECOND GRADE: About half the kids raised their hands, shoulder high, no higher. The hands were still. THIRD GRADE: At best, 10 kids out of 30 would raise a hand, tentatively, self-consciously. By the time I reached SIXTH GRADE, no more than one or two kids raised their hands, and then ever so slightly, betraying a fear of being identified by the group as a ‘closet artist.’ The point is: Every school I visited was participating in the systematic suppression of creative genius.”—Gordon MacKenzie, *Orbiting the Giant Hairball**

*“The key question isn’t ‘What fosters creativity?’ But it is why in God’s name isn’t everyone creative? Where was the human potential lost? How was it crippled? I think therefore a good question might be not why do people create? But why do people not create or innovate? We have got to abandon that sense of amazement in the face of creativity, as if it were a miracle if anybody created anything.”—Abe Maslow*

*“The purpose of professional schools is to educate competent mediocrities.”—Peter Drucker*

**EXUBERANCE: THE PASSION FOR LIFE, BY KAY REDFIELD JAMISON:**

*“The Greeks bequeathed to us one of the most beautiful words in our language—the word -enthusiasm’—en theos—a god within. The grandeur of human actions is measured by the inspiration from which they spring. Happy is he who bears a god within, and who obeys it.”*

—Louis Pasteur

**KRJ:** *“Exuberance is, at its quick, contagious. As it spreads pell-mell through a group, exuberance excites, it delights, and it dispels tension. It alerts the group to change and possibility.”*

*“A leader is someone who creates infectious enthusiasm.”*—Ted Turner

**KRJ:** *“‘Glorious’ was a term [John] Muir would invoke time and again ... despite his conscious attempts to eradicate it from his writing. ‘Glorious’ and ‘joy’ and ‘exhilaration’: no matter how often he scratched out these words once he had written them, they sprang up time and again ...”*

**KRJ:** *“To meet Roosevelt, said Churchill, ‘with all his buoyant sparkle, his iridescence,’ was like ‘opening a bottle of champagne.’ Churchill, who knew both champagne and human nature, recognized ebullient leadership when he saw it.”*

*“At a time of weakness and mounting despair in the democratic world, Roosevelt stood out by his astonishing appetite for life and by his apparently complete freedom from fear of the future; as a man who welcomed the future eagerly as such, and conveyed the feeling that whatever the times might bring, all would be grist to his mill, nothing would be too formidable or crushing to be subdued. He had unheard of energy and gusto ... and was a spontaneous, optimistic, pleasure-loving ruler with unparalleled capacity for creating confidence.”*

—Isaiah Berlin on FDR

*“Churchill had a very powerful mind, but a romantic and unquantitative one. If he thought about a course of action long enough, if he achieved it alone in his own inner consciousness and desired it passionately, he convinced himself it must be possible. Then, with incomparable invention, eloquence and high spirits, he set out to convince everyone else that it was not only possible, but the only course of action open to man.”*—C.P. Snow

*“We are all worms. But I do believe that I am a glow-worm.”*—Churchill on Churchill

*“Before you can inspire with emotion, you must be swamped with it yourself. To convince them, you must yourself believe.”*—Winston Churchill

*“The multitudes were swept forward till their pace was the same as his.”*

—Churchill on T.E. Lawrence

***“He brought back a real joy to music.”—Wynton Marsalis on Louis Armstrong***

***“If you want to build a ship, don’t gather people together to collect wood, and don’t assign them tasks and work, but instead teach them to long for the sea.”***

**—Antoine de Saint-Exupery (*The Little Prince*)**

***“Life is not a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in one pretty and well preserved piece, but to skid across the line broadside, thoroughly used up, worn out, leaking oil, shouting ‘GERONIMO!’”—Bill McKenna, professional motorcycle racer***

***“The object of life’s journey is not to arrive at the grave safely in a well preserved body, but rather to skid in sideways, totally worn out, shouting, ‘Holy Shit, What a Ride!!!’”***

**—Mavis Leyrer (feisty octogenarian, living in Seattle)**

#### **HTSH/HANDS THAT SHAPE HUMANITY: ENGAGE!**

***Commit! Engage! Try! Fail! Get up! Try again! Fail again! Try again! But never, ever stop moving on! Progress for humanity is engendered by those in any station who join and savor the fray by giving one hundred percent of themselves to their modest or immodest dreams! Not by those fearful souls who remain glued to the sidelines, stifled by tradition, awash in cynicism and petrified of losing face or giving offense to the reigning authorities.***

**Key words: *Commit! Engage! Try! Fail! Persist!***

**Source: HTSH/Hands That Shape Humanity, Tom Peters’ contribution of “*most important advice*”—for display at a Bishop Tutu exhibit in South Africa**

***“In Tom’s world, it’s always better to try a swan dive and deliver a colossal belly flop than to step timidly off the board while holding your nose.”—Fast Company, review of *Re-Imagine!****