
QUOTES FROM THE EDGE OF NOWHERE

The Art of Noticing Unnoticed Life Wisdoms

Gary Lewis LeRoy, MD, FAAFP



Preface

An “I” Quote

“Another year in my life has come and gone.”

I suspect you have heard that little voice in your head say something similar on a special occasion like a birthday, anniversary, or a holiday celebration. In my case, the occasion was New Year’s Day. After the festivities of the evening had become a blurred, but delightful memory, I reflected on the numerous times I had heard friends and family talk about their lofty resolutions for the coming year. When asked, my traditional response is simply to say, “My resolution is to just be a better human being than I was the previous year.” My friends and family can quote me each year, because they know what I will say before I even say it.

Preface

On this particular New Year's Day, I found myself thinking of a collection of short quotes I had written down on scraps of paper over the years. These quotes seemed to creep unexpectedly into my consciousness from out of nowhere. Most were generated by something I observed or experienced during my daily work or while interacting with people in real time. For some unknown reason I began to write down these thoughts in an effort to accurately remember them. I eventually began to refer to these thoughts as "I quote" moments. I could not attribute these quotes to any orator past or present. I have since used a few of them in speeches, but most of the quotes have been filed away to be included on my list of things to ponder in later life.

For some unknown reason the mounting number of quotes nagged my spirit more than usual on this particular New Year's Day. I finally yielded to the desire to contemplate the quotes I had collected. I began the journey of taking some of these quotes and sharing them in the form of a book. Unlike the crafting of most books, my experimental design involved selecting 10 of my quotes at random (yes, I placed the 70+ quotes in a cookie jar and randomly selected ten) and a chapter of my book is dedicated to each.

The purpose of this book is to share with the reader my conscious attempt to fulfill my resolution of evolving into a better human through the practical use of the "I quote" wisdom whispered into my subconscious brain. The ethereal force revealing these quotes from the edge of nowhere granted me rare opportunities to sense the constant presence of alternative life directions. Prior to acknowledging the whispers, I had simply elected to listen, write down the message, and just move on doing business as usual.

The fact that you are reading these words indicates that you too may be on a journey to improve your status of life wellbeing. Perhaps you are no longer content with just living life as usual. Maybe you too have several "I quote" messages whispering in your unconscious mind – begging to be recognized and acted upon. Something deep inside the darkest crevices of your human spirit challenges you to search for a more joyfully fulfilled life. Your answers may have always been present; but just been outside of your emotional reach. I hope that after reading this book, or even just a few of the chapters with themes that garner your attention, you will begin the process of creating your own life quotes to live by. Use them as your soul's torchlight to see the way more clearly toward life's most genuine treasures.

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Introduction

Several years ago, my daughters, Julia and Ciara, gave me a birthday gift - an ancient-looking three by five-inch journal. Inside the soft brown, inch-thick leather-bound journal were lined blank pages with nothing on them except for personal messages on the first pages from each of my daughters. The message from my oldest daughter Julia was a reflection on how her “whole mindset” about her life had changed after one year of her college education. She realized that much of what she had learned in college was a reaffirmation of what I had taught her as a concerned parent “...way back when.” There were many opportunities for her mother and me to provide our children with what we suspected were valuable life lessons. While raising children, many unexpected and unrehearsed teachable moments arise. It is impossible

for parents to verify how much of what we say to our children is heard, ignored, or retained. Well, apparently, they both retained more than I had anticipated. Nevertheless, despite our early life warnings, they each needed to verify a variety of these parental life lessons on their own through personal experience. This is a natural part of growing up. How many of us were warned not to touch the hot stove but when the grownups were not looking touched it anyway – or at least came very close – to verify that it really would burn our tiny fingers? Julia wrote, “So, I guess what I’m trying to say is thank you for always being there to give me good advice and to bail me out when I didn’t follow that advice. Thank you for letting me grow up and learn those valuable lessons on my own.”

Julia went on to explain why she and Ciara decided to give me the gift of the little brown journal. They wanted to provide me with a gift that was, “Completely and totally for and about you.” It was a gift given out of love. Its intention was to give me a blank space to write down my thoughts; my frustrations; my inner most secrets; or even just random thoughts arriving out of nowhere during the course of the day. Julia felt it was an important tool for me to use so I could stop for a moment, jot down my thoughts, and clear my head of my soul’s subconscious background noise muffling my ability to function effectively during a busy day.

That little brown journal sat on my desk for years. Both daughters are now college graduates. But I did take their advice and began writing down my random thoughts in the form of “thought quotes,” or what I like to refer to as my “I quotes,” that spring out of nowhere to populate my consciousness with thought provoking wisdom.

Introduction (Continued)

Too many of you have sat through mandatory meetings sponsored by your employer, a non-profit organization, religious affiliated group, school, or alumni association. You name it; you have sat through it. The charge of meeting attendees is to create a mission and/or vision statement. The intent of the mission statement is the adoption of common language used when explaining to others why the organization exists and why it is relevant to the current social environment. As I sit through these exercises, it always amazes me that many of these organizations have existed for years, if not decades, but had never asked themselves two essential questions:

- 1) “Why do we need to exist?”
- 2) “Is what we did in the past still relevant today?”

While many organizations have a mission statement plastered on a wall or filed away in an obscure gray metal filing cabinet, shocking numbers of employees and volunteers have no clue about the true measures of their organization’s success or failure. When the gravity of failure is already pulling an organization toward extinction, initiating a mission statement seminar to maintain market share, improve consumer confidence, increase membership, bolster contributions, create public relevance, or prevent impending demise is inadvisable.

Now, let us take this concept of mission statements to a personal level. Writing a life mission statement is one of many tools used by counselors, psychologists, psychiatrists, and self-help seminar gurus. Employers and organizations ask their employees and volunteers to assist them in creating mission statement language to best define why the organization is relevant. Yet many of those asked to participate in this exercise are personally struggling to understand how to find joy or enduring relevance in their own lives. Before attempting to save others, make certain you first know the instructions on how to save yourself. The underlying message I received from my daughters though the gift of the little brown journal was that they both recognized an essential need for me to save myself. I needed to take a moment to hit life’s pause button. It was great advice that I urge you to consider.

Begin to practice by turning off the television; put away the cell phone and tear up the “to do” list. If you can do this for just 30 minutes a day, it will be a good start on the road toward finding inward joy. During this brief pause, create at least one “I quote” to get you through the day, the month, or the year. Your quote can be a temporary mission statement to lighten an emotional burden, or a torchlight statement that guides you away from the darkest crevices of failure. The important message here is that you internalize the quote(s). Print it on a t-shirt; use it as a screensaver on your computer or phone; put it on a poster; or even imprint it on a message posted on your doorway so you can see it as you leave home each day.

I do not intentionally sit down and think up quotes. They come to me both during the quiet pauses and during the noise of the day. Every quote introduced in this book seemed to stumble into me from out of nowhere. Each quote found me as I was experiencing the routine of my day-to-day, ho-hum life.

I would encourage you to allow quotes to find you as you experience life. When your quote finds you, hit the pause button and write it down. Afterward, take a brief moment to reflect about the reason this life mission quote spoke to you.

I have over seventy of these “I quotes” [they are entitled “I” quotes because they are “my” quotes] that found me over the past 20+ years. What follows are the first 10 quotes I randomly selected to share with you by typing each quote on a scrap of paper and placing them all in my kitchen cookie jar. I drew them from the jar one at a time. I wrote the chapters of this book in the sequence I drew the quotes from the cookie jar. You might think that this is a foolish way to compose a book, but I am a firm believer that life is not always a random sequence of asynchronous events... “Fate has its virtue.” Read the chapters in any sequence your spirit tells you to do so.

Contents

Chapter 1:

“When you awake each morning ask yourself, “What will I do today to improve the world for someone other than myself?” Because the day will surely come when you will awake no more.”

Chapter 2:

“It is difficult to become the voice of reason in a crowded room when you can’t even remember why you are in the room.”

Chapter 3:

“A seed of doubt once planted in a field of obvious truth will grow so rapidly that it obscures reality.”

Chapter 4:

“When we speak about how we feel about an event - this is gossip; when we report on what we think was observed - this is news; when society writes about the residual evidence of the event - this is history. The truth is that only God will ever know the reality of what really happened.”

Chapter 5:

“Destiny and fate will always offer us opportunities to change the status quo.”

Chapter 6:

“The ONLY genuine expert opinion of the future is one given by someone who has been to the future and returned to the present to reveal their personal experience of what tomorrow has in store.”

Chapter 7:

“You have to go past knowledge and truth in the dictionary before you arrive at WISDOM.”

Chapter 8:

“Promise nothing but act as if you have.”

Chapter 9:

“We need to teach our youth to become men and women of great character and how not to simply grow up to be characters.”

Chapter 10:

“Fate has its virtue.”