



Science Says

A Collection of
Quotations on the
History, Meaning
and Practice of
Science





For ourselves, we may take as a basic assumption, clear from a survey of particular cases, that natural things are some or all of them subject to change.

Aristotle



...the universe is but a watch on a larger scale; all its motions depending on determined laws and mutual relation of its parts.

Bernard de Fontenelle (1803)



Scientific principles and laws do not lie on the surface of nature. They are hidden, and must be wrestled from nature by an active and elaborate technique of inquiry.

Jonh Dewey (1920)



Science can only state what is, not what
should be.

Albert Einstein (1950)



The whole of science is nothing more than
a refinement of everyday thinking.

Albert Einstein (1950)



Science, in the very act of solving
problems, creates more of them.

Abraham Flexner (1930)



Natural science does not simply describe and explain nature; it is part of the interplay between nature and ourselves; it describes nature as exposed to our method of questioning.

Werner Heisenberg (1959)



Equipped with his five senses, man
explores the universe around him and calls
the adventure Science.

Edwin Powell Hubble (1954)



What is a scientist? ... We give the name scientist to the type of man who has felt experiment to be a means guiding him to search out the deep truth of life, to lift a veil from its fascinating secrets, and who, in his pursuit, has felt arising within him a love for the mysteries of nature, so passionate as to annihilate the thought of himself.

Maria Montessori (1964)



Science will never be able to reduce the value of a sunset to arithmetic. Nor can it reduce friendship to formula. Laughter and love, pain and loneliness, the challenge of accomplishment in living, and the depth of insight into beauty and truth: these will always surpass the scientific mastery of nature.

Louis Orr (1960)



An experiment is a question which science poses to Nature, and a measurement is the recording of Nature's answer.

Max Planck (1949)



Science is a way of thinking much more than it is a body of knowledge. Its goal is to find out how the world works, to seek what regularities there may be, to penetrate to the connections of things – from subatomic particles, which may be the constituents of all matter, to living organisms, the human social community, and thence to the cosmos as a whole.

Carl Sagan (1979)



The important thing in science is not so much to obtain new facts as to discover new ways of thinking about them.

Sir William Lawrence Bragg (1958)



The fairest thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the fundamental emotion which stands at the cradle of true art and science. He who does not know it and can no longer wonder, no longer feel amazement, is as good as dead, a snuffed-out candle.

Albert Einstein (1930)



The true scientist never loses the faculty of amazement. It is the essence of his being.

Hans Selye (1958)



I have no special talents. I am only
passionately curious.

Albert Einstein (1952)

Imagination is more important than
knowledge. Knowledge is limited;
imagination encircles the world.

Albert Einstein (1952)



One has to have the imagination to think of something that has never been seen before, never been heard of before. At the same time the thoughts are restricted in a straightjacket, so to speak, limited by the conditions that come from our knowledge of the way nature really is. The problem of creating something which is new, but which is consistent with everything which has been seen before, is one of extreme difficulty.

Richard P. Feynman (1963)



There are no foolish questions, and no man becomes a fool until he has stopped asking questions.

Charles Proteus Steinmetz



It would be a poor thing to be an atom in a universe without physicists, and physicists are made of atoms. A physicist is an atom's way of knowing about atoms.

George Wald (1958)



When you have eliminated the impossible,
whatever remains, however improbable,
must be the truth.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1890)



The scientific mind does not so much
provide the right answers as ask the right
questions.

Claude Levi-Strauss (1964)



We live in a society exquisitely dependent
on science and technology, in which hardly
anyone knows anything about science and
technology.

Carl Sagan (1984)



If there is such a thing as luck, then I must be the most unlucky fellow in the world. I've never once made a lucky strike in all my life. When I get after something that I need, I start finding everything in the world that I don't need – one thing after another. I find ninety-nine things that I don't need, and then comes number one hundred, and that – at the very last – turns out to be just what I had been looking for.

Thomas Edison (1932)



You look at science (or at least talk of it) as some sort of demoralising invention of man, something apart from real life, and which must be cautiously guarded and kept separate from everyday existence. But science and everyday life cannot and should not be separated. Science, for me, gives a partial explanation for life. In so far as it goes, it is based on fact, experience and experiment.

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Quotations on Science
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