

A photograph of a garden scene. In the center, a white gazebo with a gabled roof sits atop a small hill. A path leads up to it. In the foreground, a pond reflects the sky and the surrounding trees. The trees are mostly bare, suggesting a cool season. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

# Quotes to Inspire Work and Life

Jenni Murphy-Scanlon

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I have put together this book of ‘Quotes to Inspire’, because I personally find quotes inspiring. In a short sentence or two, they rationalize, motivate and reinforce. When I began publishing monthly ezines for my subscribers five years ago, I included a relevant quote each time. Sometimes people respond to the quote as much as to the articles and other information. That tells me there are lots of people out there who also appreciate quotes. I hope that you will enjoy this collection and find them uplifting and motivating..

Other ‘Quotes to Inspire’ Books at date of publication:

Quotes to Inspire Strategic Thinking

# **HAPPINESS**

**It doesn't have to be just a fleeting feeling;  
It can be a way of life**



“The best way to cheer yourself up is to try to cheer somebody else up.”

~Mark Twain

You probably know someone who could use a friendly voice right now. Increase your own happiness quotient by offering a bit to someone else.

“What a wonderful life I've had! I only wish I'd realized it sooner.”

~Colette

The lens through which we view life is often more important to our state of happiness than the events we experience. Change your view and you might change your world.

“Happiness is like a butterfly which, when pursued, is always beyond our grasp, but, if you will sit down quietly, may alight upon you.”

~Nathaniel Hawthorne

You can't “find” happy. You can't “buy” happy. You can't “steal” or “borrow” happy. You can only “be” happy.



“Most folks are about as happy as they make up their minds to be.”

~Abraham Lincoln

If you're waiting around for the perfect circumstances to show up before you give yourself permission to be happy then invest wisely in your chair—you're gonna be there awhile.

“We tend to forget that happiness doesn't come as a result of getting something we don't have, but rather of recognizing and appreciating what we do have.”

~Frederick Koenig

If you scoff at a slice of bread because your eye is on the loaf, you're not likely to ever be happy and satiated.

“One joy scatters a hundred griefs.”

~Chinese Proverb

“Remember that the happiest people are not those getting more, but those giving more.”

~H. Jackson Brown Jr

“The essence of philosophy is that a man should so live that his happiness shall depend as little as possible on external things.”

~Epictetus

Many people who are monetarily wealthy are also miserable. There are many more that are happy though they straddle the line of poverty.

“For every minute you are angry, you lose sixty seconds of happiness.”

~Author Unknown

Do any of us really have spare moments to spend being anything but happy?

# **ACTION**

**Without doing, without action, all  
opportunities are lost.**

“Well done is better than well said.”

~Benjamin Franklin

The best idea and the best expression of it amount to nothing without action to back them up.



“Trust only movement. Life happens at the level of events, not of words. Trust movement.”

~Alfred Adler

Words are important. But for them to be effective they must be spoken, written, or shared. So without action, they are simply meaningless.

“Remember, people will judge you by your actions, not your intentions. You may have a heart of gold - but so does a hard-boiled egg.”

~Author Unknown

“I thought about getting you a present,” will never be a substitute for actually doing it.

“People may doubt what you say, but they will believe what you do.”

~Lewis Cass

One small step is worth more than a thousand steps planned.

“Take time to deliberate; but when the time for action arrives, stop thinking and go in.”

~Napoleon Bonaparte

You don't have to take action blindly—but act you must if anything is to ever be accomplished.

“Contemplation often makes life miserable. We should act more, think less, and stop watching ourselves live.”

~Chamfort

It is much better to regret the things you’ve done in your life than it is to regret your failure to take action.

“It is not only what we do, but also what we do not do, for which we are accountable.”

~Moliere

Man's inaction costs us all.

“Great acts are made up of small deeds.”

~Lao Tzu

Nobody is saying you have to do everything.  
Just that you have to do *something*.



# **PERFECTION**

**Its pursuit is a major downer.**

“A man would do nothing if he waited until he could do it so well that no one could find fault.”

~John Henry Newman

A job done well is worth more than a perfect plan.

“Gold cannot be pure, and people cannot be perfect.”

~Chinese Proverb

If you demand or expect perfection from yourself or others, you will spend much of your life disappointed.

“Use what talents you possess; the woods would be very silent if no birds sang except those that sang best.”

~Henry van Dyke

You don't have to be the best singer in the choir to join in the song of life or to delight others with your voice.

“Done is better than perfect.”

~Donna Kozik

You can always go back and fill in the details later. Don't allow your quest for perfection to paralyze you from taking action.

“Try as hard as we may for perfection, the net result of our labors is an amazing variety of imperfectness. We are surprised at our own versatility in being able to fail in so many different ways.”

~Samuel McChord Crothers

Behind perfectionism lurks fear of failure. But failing is one of our most valuable learning tools. It creates a path to improvement.

“I cling to my imperfection, as the very essence of my being.”

~Anatole France

When you embrace your “perfect imperfection” you signal to the universe you understand that it is our flaws that make us unique and that the design equalizes humanity.



“To escape criticism, do nothing, say nothing, be nothing.”

~Elbert Hubbard

We are own worst critics. Fear of criticism masquerades as perfectionism and yet it's not likely someone else is going to think less of you than what you think of yourself.

“Artists who seek perfection in everything are those who cannot attain it in anything.”

~Gustave Flaubert

Impossible things can be achieved when we surrender our death-grip on perfect results.

# **PERSEVERANCE**

**Imagine telling a toddler who is learning to walk, “You’re no good at this—you should quit.”**

“When the world says, ‘Give up,’ hope  
whispers, ‘Try one more time.’

~Author Unknown

Helen Keller didn’t quit. Why should you?

“Consider the postage stamp: its usefulness consists in the ability to stick to one thing till it gets there.”

~Josh Billings

If everyone gave up on the things that seem impossible, nothing amazing would ever be accomplished.

“Nobody trips over mountains. It is the small pebble that causes you to stumble. Pass all the pebbles in your path and you will find you have crossed the mountain.”

~Author Unknown

Everyone climbs the stairs one step at a time. You don't have to see the landing to put one foot in front of the other.

“He conquers who endures.”

~Persius

You were born with the instinct to persevere  
and most of your limitations are self-imposed.



“The drops of rain make a hole in the stone not by violence but by oft falling.”

~Lucretius

If you want to know what perseverance in action looks like, check out some of those weeds coming up through the cracks in the sidewalk.

“One may go a long way after one is tired.”

~French Proverb

The best baseball player misses the ball half the time. It is because he perseveres that he ever hits the ball at all.

“Most people never run far enough on their first wind to find out they've got a second.”

~William James

Apply at least the same effort to your goals that you would were you trying to swim ashore.

“Look at a stone cutter hammering away at his rock, perhaps a hundred times without as much as a crack showing in it. Yet at the hundred-and-first blow it will split in two, and I know it was not the last blow that did it, but all that had gone before.”

~Jacob A. Riis

You could be one swing away from reaching your goal. Are you sure you want to quit now?

# **WORRY**

**It's kind of silly if you stand back from it.**

“Drag your thoughts away from your troubles... by the ears, by the heels, or any other way you can manage it.”

~Mark Twain

What you focus on expands—worry included.

“People become attached to their burdens sometimes more than the burdens are attached to them.”

~George Bernard Shaw

Constant worry is one of those unproductive habits that should be replaced with positive action.

“Worry often gives a small thing a big shadow.”

~Swedish Proverb

Better to spend your energy creating resolutions than to spend it nursing your worries.



“That the birds of worry and care fly over your head, this you cannot change, but that they build nests in your hair, this you can prevent.”

~Chinese Proverb

If you give worry a comfortable seat he is not likely to get up and leave any time soon. In fact, he will probably invite his friends, doubt and despair, over for a feast.

“We can easily manage if we will only take, each day, the burden appointed to it. But the load will be too heavy for us if we carry yesterday's burden over again today, and then add the burden of the morrow before we are required to bear it.”

~John Newton

Many today's are wasted worrying about yesterday and tomorrow's problems.

“As a rule, what is out of sight disturbs men's minds more seriously than what they see.”

~Julius Caesar

There are much better tasks to apply your imagination to than the task of worrying.

“Worry is a complete cycle of inefficient thought revolving about a pivot of fear.”

~Author Unknown

When you put your fears to bed, worry gets evicted.

“My life has been full of terrible misfortunes most of which never happened.”

~Michel de Montaigne

Imagination and worry should never be dance partners.

I trust these quotes have uplifted you, inspired you and even made you smile at times. One of the delights of quotes is in finding that others have the same challenges and joys as we do. One of the others is in remembering that we can succeed, just as others have.

If you would like to discuss anything related to this book, please feel welcome to get in touch with me at [jenni@strategies-direct.com](mailto:jenni@strategies-direct.com).

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