

QUOTATIONS ABOUT DEATH AND SUICIDE

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Death and Dying

I don't want to achieve immortality through my work. I want to achieve it through not dying.

Woody Allen. [1]

Either this man is dead or my watch has stopped.

Groucho Marx [3]

We must laugh before we are happy, for fear of dying without having laughed at all.

Jean de la Bruyère [8]

I can't die. It would ruin my image.

Jack Lalanne

I'd hate to die twice. It's so boring.

Richard Feynman, on his deathbed.

Death is kind to men when it comes not during the sweet but the bitter years; then, indeed, it is often prayed for.

Boethius [4]

Many men on the point of an edifying death would be furious if they were suddenly restored to health.

Cesare Pavese [8]

Death never takes the wise man by surprise; he is always ready to go.

Jean de la Fontaine [6]

Mrs. Allonby: They say, Lady Hunstanton, that when good Americans die they go to Paris.

Lady Hunstanton: Indeed? And when bad Americans die, where do they go to?

Lord Illingworth: Oh, they go to America.

Oscar Wilde [7]

Don't think yourself health. Health will be immortality, this life will be a long sickness.

St. Augustine [4]

I don't believe in an after life, but I'm bringing along a change of underwear.

Woody Allen [1]

It's not that I'm afraid to die. I just don't want to be there when it happens.

Woody Allen [1]

It wasn't the cough that carried him off, it was the coffin they carried him off in.

unattributed

Is life worth living? That depends on the liver.

unattributed.

To change one's habits has the smell of death

Portuguese proverb [8]

Nothing is certain but death and taxes.

various

Misers are very kind people: they amass their wealth for those who wish their death.

Stanislaus, King of Poland [8]

Give up fearing death; it is at all times foolish to miss life's pleasures for fear of death.

Disticha Moralia [4]

Since it is not granted to us to live long, let us transmit to posterity some memorial that we have at least lived.

Pliny the Younger [4]

If you wish to live, you must first attend your own funeral.

Katherine Mansfield [2]

Those who have endeavored to teach us to die well have taught few to die willingly.

Dr. Samuel Johnson [8]

If we really want to live, we'd better start at once to try;

If we don't it doesn't matter, we'd better start to die.

Wystan Hugh Auden [7]

We are condemned

To kill time:

Thus we die

Bit by bit.

Octavio Paz [7]

Better to suffer than to die; that is mankind's motto.

Jean de la Fontaine [7]

Men after death...are understood worse than men of the moment, but *heard* better.
Nietzsche [8]

Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep;
If I should die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take.
Anonymous [7]

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at the close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.
Dylan Thomas [6]

Be ashamed to die until you have won some victory for humanity.
Horace Mann [7]

I die adoring God, loving my friends, not hating my enemies, and detesting superstition.
Voltaire [7]

I want to die young at a ripe old age.
Ashley Montague [2]

I don't feel as if I'm living unless I'm killing myself.
Russell Hoban [2]

But thousands die, without this or that.
Die, and endow a college, or a cat.
Alexander Pope [7]

So slowly, slowly raise she up,
And slowly she came nigh him,
And when she drew the curtain by –
“Young man, I think you're dying”
Anon [6]

If anyone pities the dead, he must also pity those who have not been born.
Seneca [4]

Do not promise yourself a long life; wherever you go, death goes too, like your body's
shadow.
Terentianus Naurus [4]

Life begins when a person first realizes how soon it ends.
Marcelene Cox [2]

Nothing is so deceptive as human life, nothing is so treacherous. Heaven knows! Not one of us would have accepted it as a gift, were it not given to us without our knowledge.
Seneca [4]

Let's drink, death is inevitable.
Seneca the Elder [4]

She never was really charming till she died.
Terrence [2]

I have just been informed that Monsieur _____ is dead. He was a staunch patriot, a talented writer, a loyal friend, a devoted husband and father – provided he is really dead.
Voltaire [2]

I don't think anyone should write his autobiography until after he's dead.
Samuel Goldwyn [2]

If I could drop dead right now, I'd be the happiest man alive.
Samuel Goldwyn [2]

Pale death with impartial foot knocks at the doors of poor men's hovels and king's palaces.
Horace [4]

Beware! To touch these wires is instant death. Anyone found doing so will be prosecuted:
public sign, unattributed [2]

Death is not natural for a state as it is for a human being, for whom death is not only necessary, but frequently even desirable.
Cicero [4]

Those who survived the San Francisco earthquake said, "Thank God, I'm still alive." But, of course those who died, their lives will never be the same again.
Senator Barbara Boxer [2]

Death is fortunate for the child, bitter to the young man, too late for the old.
Syrus [4]

It's funny the way most people love the dead. Once you are dead, you are made for life.
Jimi Hendrix [2]

And now a record by Glenn Miller, who became a legend in his own time by his untimely death.
Nicholas Parsons [2]

The late F. W. H. Myers used to tell how he asked a man at a dinner table what he thought would happen to him when he died. The man tried to ignore the question, but, on being pressed, replied, "Oh well, I suppose I shall inherit eternal bliss, but I wish you wouldn't talk about such unpleasant subjects."

Bertrand Russell [2]

Death is nature's way of telling you to slow down.

unattributed [3]

The Bells of Hell go ting-a-ling-a-ling
For you but not for me
O, Death where is thy sting-a-ling-a-ling
O, grave, they victory?

Brendan Behan [3]

My exit is the result of too many entrées.

Richard Monckton Milnes [3]

I refused to attend his funeral! But I wrote a very nice letter explaining that I approved of it.

Mark Twain [3]

While there's death, there's hope.

Harold Laski [3]

Death is a very dull, dreary affair. And my advice to you is to have nothing whatsoever to do with it.

Somerset Maugham [3]

Since we have to speak well of the dead, let's knock them while they're alive.

John Sloan [3]

It's not pining, it's passed on. This parrot is no more. It's ceased to be. It's expired. It's gone to meet its maker. This is a late parrot. It's a stiff. Bereft of life, it rests in peace. It would be pushing up daisies if you hadn't nailed it to the perch. It's rung down the curtain and joined the choir invisible. It's an ex-parrot.

John Cleese [3]

"Waldo is one of those people who would be enormously improved by death," said Clovis.

H. H. Monroe [3]

All I desire for my own burial is not to be buried alive.

Earl of Chesterfield [8]

The fence around a cemetery is foolish, for those inside can't come out and those outside don't want to get in.

Arthur Brisbane [3]

It is death, and not what comes after death, that men are generally afraid of.

Samuel Butler [8]

Many people's tombstones should read, "Died at 30. Buried at 60."

Nicholas Murray Butler [3]

[Lord] Trawley and I have been dead these two years; but we don't choose to have it know.

Philip Dormer Stanhope [3]

You live and learn...then you die and forget it all.

Noël Coward [3]

Death is that after which nothing is of interest

V. V. Rozinov [8]

Death destroys a man, but the idea of death saves him

E. M. Forster [8]

The fear of death follows from the fear of life. A man who lives fully is prepared to die at any time.

Mark Twain

It is a curious thing, the death of a loved one. We all know that our time in this world is limited, and that eventually all of us will end up underneath some sheet, never to wake up. And yet it is always a surprise when it happens to someone we know. It is like walking up the stairs to your bedroom in the dark, and thinking there is one more stair than there is. Your foot falls down, through the air, and there is a sickly moment of dark surprise as you try and readjust the way you thought of things.

Lemony Snicket

I found myself thinking about President William McKinley, the third American president to be assassinated. He lived for several days after he was shot, and towards the end, his wife started crying and screaming, "I want to go too! I want to go too!" And with his last measure of strength, McKinley turned to her and spoke his last words: "We are all going."

John Green

I have often wished myself dead, but well under my blanket, so that neither death nor man could hear me.

George Christoph Lichtenberg [8]

Every man's life ends the same way. It is only the details of how he lived and how he died that distinguish one man from another.

Ernest Hemingway

Make sure to send a lazy man for the Angel of Death

Yiddish proverb [8]

It's better to die laughing than to live each moment in fear.

Michael Crichton

Every parting gives a foretaste of death; every re-meeting a foretaste of the resurrection. That is why even people who are indifferent to each other rejoice so much if they meet again after twenty or thirty years of separation.

Arthur Schopenhauer [8]

It is better to burn out than to fade away.

Kurt Cobain

I've never known a person to live to 100 or more to be remarkable for anything else.

Josh Billings [8]

Death is a stripping away of all that is not you. The secret of life is to "die before you die" and find that there is no death.

Eckhart Tolle

When the time comes to die, make sure that all you have left to do is die!

Jim Elliot

Human nature is so ill disposed toward those in interesting situations, that a young person who either marries or dies is sure to be kindly spoken of.

Jane Austen [8]

Sometimes dead is better.

Stephen King

I look back to where my life had been. It's always risky to think of letting go. That's why this is the perfect ending. Nothing left to reconcile.

Loretta Ellsworth

When a man takes to his bed, nearly all his friends have a secret desire to see him die; some to prove that his health is inferior to their own, others in the disinterested hope of being able to study a death agony.

Charles Baudelaire [8]

To the well-organized mind, death is but the next great adventure.

J.K. Rowling

There is no cure for birth and death save to enjoy the interval.

George Santayana [8]

Death always wins.

Kelly Creagh

We only live once. We all have an expiration date after that we will never come again. I am not saying that to make you sad. I am saying that so you can cherish each moment in your life and be grateful that you are here and you are special.

Pablo

One is hard put to stop being dead

M. M. Pardi [5]

All men are born truthful and die liars.

Marquis de Vauvenargues [8]

But there, everything has its drawbacks, as the man said when his mother-in-law died, and they came down on him for the funeral expenses.

Jerome K. Jerome [5]

Death has got something to be said for it;
There's no need to get out of bed for it,
Wherever you may be,
They bring it to you, free.

Kingsley Amis [5]

I went to Rosie's funeral,
I heard the preacher say,
"Here lies the shell,
The nut has passed away."

[5]

When you come past my grave
And I am dead and rotten,
Just hold your nose
And keep on trottin'.

[5]

This be the verse you grave for me
"Here he lies when he longed to be"
Home is the sailor, home for the sea
And the hunter home from the hill.

Robert Louis Stevenson [5]

She should have died hereafter;

There would have been a time for such a word.

William Shakespeare

To be or not to be; that is the question

William Shakespeare

To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
 Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
 To the last syllable of recorded time,
 And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
 The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
 Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
 That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
 And then is heard no more: it is a tale
 Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
 Signifying nothing.

William Shakespeare

I'm lookin' funny in my eyes
 And I believe I'm fixin' to die

Booker T. Washington

He had been, he said, an unconscionable time dying; but he hoped that they would excuse it. (King Charles II)

Macaulay [6]

Were the happiness of the next world as closely apprehended as the felicities of this, it were a martyrdom to live

Sir Tomas Browne [6]

Nowhere probably is the more true feeling, and nowhere worse taste, than in a churchyard.

Benjamin Jowett [8]

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
 Old Time is still a'flying,
 And this same flower that smiles today
 Tomorrow will be dying.

Robert Herrick [7]

Live as you will have wished to have live when you are dying.

Christian Gellert [7]

There was sun enough for lazing upon beaches,
 There was fun enough for far into the night.
 But I'm dying now and done for,
 What on earth was all the fun for?
 For I'm old and ill and terrified and tight.

- John Betjeman [6]
- If we must die, let it not be like hogs
Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot.
If we must die, O let us die nobly.
- Claude McKay [7]
- A man's dying is more the survivors' affair than his own
- Thomas Mann [7]
- The long habit of living indisposeth us for dying.
- Sir Thomas Browne [6]
- Truth sits upon the lips of dying men
- Matthew Arnold [6]
- If hath been often said, that it is not death, but dying, which is terrible.
- Henry Fielding [6]
- Let me die in a tavern so that the wine may be near my dying mouth
- The Archpoet [7]
- Every day we are changing, every day we are dying, and yet we fancy ourselves
immortal.
- St. Jerome [7]
- Good, to forgive;
Best, to forget!
Living, we fret;
Dying, we live
- Robert Browning [6]
- 'Tis not the dying for a faith that's so hard, Master Harry – every man of every nation
has done that – 'tis the living up to it that's difficult.
- William Makepeace Thackeray [6]
- The ancients dreaded death: the Christian can only fear dying.
- Julius & Augustus Hare [6]
- Vital spark of heav'nly flame!
Quit, oh quit, this mortal frame:
Trembling, hoping, ling'ring flying,
Oh the pain, the bliss of dying!
- Alexander Pope [7]
- I am dying with the help of too many physicians.
- Alexander the Great [3]

Quick! Serve the desert! I think I'm dying.

Paulette Brillat-Savarin [3]

If this is dying, then I don't think much of it.

Lytton Strachey [3]

No one on his deathbed ever said, "I wish I had spent more time on my business."

Arnold Zack [3]

This wallpaper'll be the death of me – one of us'll have to go."

Oscar Wilde [3]

I have always figured that there two ways to go. You can die from living or you can die from just dying.

Bison Dele

Dying

Is an art, like everything else.

I do it exceptionally well.

I do it so it feels like hell.

I do it so it feels real.

I guess you could say I've a call.

Sylvia Plath (Lady Lazarus)

On Hearing of the Death of Others

Good career move.

Gore Vidal on Truman Capote's death [3]

He must have been an incredibly good shot.

Noël Coward on hearing of a friend's suicide [3]

It's tragic that Howard Hughes had to die to prove that he was alive.

Walter Kane [3]

Suicide

I was suicidal, and would have killed myself, but I was in analysis with a strict Freudian, and if you kill yourself they make you pay for the lessons you miss:

Woody Allen [1]

Suicide is about life, being in fact the sincerest form of criticism life gets.

Wilfred Sheed [2]

There is no refuge from confession but suicide; and suicide is confession.

Daniel Webster [7]

If destruction be our lot we must ourselves be its author and finisher. As a nation of free men we must live through all time or die by suicide

Abraham Lincoln [7]

It has been said...that there are few situations in life that cannot be honourably settled, and without loss of time, either by suicide, a bag of gold, or by thrusting a despised antagonist over the edge of a precipice upon a dark night.

Kai Lung's Golden Hours (Ernest Bramah) [6]

The strangest whim has seized me...After all I think I will not hang myself today:.

G. K. Chesterton [3]

Yet a time may come when a poet or any person
Having a long life behind him, pleasure and sorrow,
May fancy life comes to him with love and says:
We are friends enough now for me to give you death;
Then he may commit suicide, then he may go.

Stevie Smith [7]

Suicide is a belated acquiescence in the opinion of one's wife's relatives.

H. L. Mencken [3]

They tell us that Suicide is the greatest piece of Cowardice... That Suicide is wrong; when it is quite obvious that there is nothing in this world to which every man has a more unassailable title than to his own life and person.

Arthur Schopenhauer

Suicide is a form of murder - premeditated murder. It isn't something you do the first time you think of doing it. It takes getting used to. And you need the means, the opportunity, the motive. A successful suicide demands good organization and a cool head, both of which are usually incompatible with the suicidal state of mind.

Susanna Kaysen

Suicide sometimes proceeds from cowardice, but not always; for cowardice sometimes prevents it; since as many live because they are afraid to die, as die because they are afraid to live.

Charles Caleb Colton

However great a man's fear of life, suicide remains the courageous act, the clear-headed act of a mathematician. The suicide has judged by the laws of chance—so many odds against one that to live will be more miserable than to die. His sense of mathematics is

greater than his sense of survival. But think how a sense of survival must clamor to be heard at the last moment, what excuses it must present of a totally unscientific nature.

Graham Greene

It's not worth the bother of killing yourself, since you always kill yourself too late.

Emil Cioran

The relatives of a suicide hold it against him that, out of consideration for their reputation, he did not remain alive.

Friedrich Nietzsche [6]

The thought of suicide is a great consolation: by means of it one gets successfully through many a bad night.

Friedrich Nietzsche [7]

I don't break the law made for crooks, when I take away my own property - thus I am not obliged to conform to the law made for murderers when I deprive myself of my own life

Michel de Montaigne

There is but one truly serious philosophical problem and that is suicide

Albert Camus

Despair and suicide are the result of certain fatal situations for those who have no faith in immortality, its joys and sorrows.

Gérard de Nerval [7]

That shabby corner of God's allotment where He lets the nettles grow, and where all unbaptized infants, notorious drunkards, suicides, and others of the conjecturally damned are laid.

Thomas Hardy [7]

Suicide: murder in the 180th degree

Karl Menninger

Ennui has made more gamblers than avarice, more drunkards than thirst, and perhaps as many suicides as despair.

Charles Caleb Colton [8]

Suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem

Unattributed but perhaps Edwin Shneidman

'Cause suicide is painless
it brings on many changes
and I can take or leave it if I please.
...and you can do the same thing if you please.

Johnny Mandel & Mike Altman

Razors pain you;
 Rivers are damp;
 Acids stain you;
 And drugs cause cramp/
 Guns aren't lawful;
 Nooses give;
 Gas smells awful;
 You might as well live

Dorothy Parker (1926)

He slapped at his chest, as he sat on that bough
 Singing "Willow, titwillow, titwillow"
 And a cold perspiration bespangled his brow
 Oh, willow, titwillow, titwillow
 He sobbed and he sighed, and a gurgle he gave
 Then he plunged himself into the billowy wave
 And an echo arose from the suicide's grave
 "Oh, willow, titwillow, titwillow"

Gilbert & Sullivan

Whenever Richard Cory went down town,
 We people on the pavement looked at him:
 He was a gentleman from sole to crown,
 Clean favored, and imperially slim.

And he was always quietly arrayed,
 And he was always human when he talked;
 But still he fluttered pulses when he said,
 "Good-morning," and he glittered when he walked.

And he was rich – yes, richer than a king –
 And admirably schooled in every grace:
 In fine, we thought that he was everything
 To make us wish that we were in his place.

So on we worked, and waited for the light,
 And went without the meat, and cursed the bread;
 And Richard Cory, one calm summer night,
 Went home and put a bullet through his head.

Edwin Arlington Robinson

Murder

And, dying, bless the hand that gave the blow.

John Dryden [7]

When we want to read of deeds that are done for love, whither do we turn? To the murder column; and there we are rarely disappointed.

George Bernard Shaw [2]

Outside of the killings, Washington has one of the lowest crime rates in the country

Mayor Marion Barry [2]

Capital punishment is our society's recognition of the sanctity of human life.

Senator Orrin Hatch [2]

Television has brought murder back into the home – where it belongs”

Alfred Hitchcock [3]

Murder, like talent, seems occasionally to run in families

George Henry Lewes [8]

Murderer: one who is presumed innocent until he is proved insane.

Oscar Wilde [3]

To kill a human being is, after all, the least injury you can do him

Henry James [6]

The world is drenched in mutual slaughter...Held to be a crime when committed by individuals, homicide is called a virtue when committed by the state.

St. Cyprian [4]

One to destroy, is murder by the law;
And gibbets keep the lifted hand in awe;
To murder thousand takes a specious name,
War's glorious art, and gives immortal fame.

Edward Young [7]

One murder made a villain,
Millions, a hero.

Beilby Porteus [7]

War its thousand slays, Peace, its ten thousands.

Beilby Porteus [7]

If once a man indulges himself in murder, very soon he comes to think little of robbing; and from robbing he comes next to drinking and Sabbath-breaking, and from that to incivility and procrastination.

Thomas de Quincey [7]

Murder will out

Cervantes [7]

An honourable murderer, if you will;
For naught I did in hate, but all in honour

Shakespeare [7]

Every murderer is probably somebody's old friend.

Agatha Christie [7]

We are mad, not only individually, but nationally. We check manslaughter and isolated murders; but what of war and the much vaunted crime of slaughtering whole peoples?

Lucius Annaeus Seneca [7]

Martyrdom

Not the punishment but the cause makes the martyr.

St. Augustine [4]

How fortunate in death [those who fell for their country], of all the ways of paying this common debt to nature, the most to be desired!

Cicero [4]

Saint and martyr rule from the tomb

T. S. Eliot [7]

All have not the gift of martyrdom

John Dryden [7]

I am very fond of truth, but not at all of martyrdom.

Voltaire [7]

Perhaps there is no happiness in life so perfect as the martyr's

O'Henry [7]

Martyrs create faith, faith does not create martyrs.

Miguel de Unamuno [7]

Men reject their prophets and slay them, but they love their martyrs and honor those whom they have slain.

Fedor Dostoevski [7]

The blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church

Tertullian [7]

The tyrant dies and his rule is over; the martyr dies and his rule begins

Sören Kierkegaard [8]

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