

## Leonardo da Vinci quotations

perche la minestra si fredda...because the soup is getting cold.

signature: Leonardo Vinci discepolo della sperientia...disciple of experience...

Those who fall in love with practice without science are like a sailor who enters a ship without a compass.

“Better a small certainty, than a big lie.”

I am not to be accused of idleness.

Do you not know that our soul is composed of harmony?

I have been hindered ... simply by want of time.

Even though I may not know, like them, how to cite the authors, it is a much greater and more worthy thing to bring to bear the results of experience, teacher of their teachers. These puffed up, pompous fellows get about clothed and adorned not by their own efforts but by those of others; and to me they won't allow the benefit of my own exertions; and if they despise me as an inventor, how much more blameworthy are they who are not inventors but merely flourishers and retailers of the work of others.

Whoever in discussion adduces authority uses not intellect but memory.

There are men who deserve to be called nothing but passages for food because nothing else is served by them.

Intellectual passion drives out sensuality.

...my subjects require for their exposition experience rather than the words of others.

The desire to know is natural to good men.

Every action in nature takes place in the shortest possible way.

I never tire of being useful.

Surrounding things transmit their images to the senses and the senses transfer them to the Sensation. Sensation sends them to the Common Sense, and by it they are stamped upon the memory.

Do not mock me, reader, if we here make great leaps from subject to subject.

Here is revealed the experience that gives birth to certainty.

If you are mindful that old age has wisdom for its food, you will so exert yourself in youth that your old age will not lack sustenance.

Although human genius through various inventions makes instruments corresponding to the same ends, it will never discover an invention more beautiful nor more ready nor more economical than nature because in her inventions nothing

is lacking and nothing is superfluous.

Remember that your bird should have no other model than the bat.

Learning without a liking for it stills the mind and retains nothing that it takes in.

For in truth great love is born of great knowledge of the thing loved.

Now do you not see that the eye embraces the beauty of the whole world?

I am not poor. He is poor, rather, who desires many things.

The truth has such excellence that by praising little things it makes them noble.

All our knowledge has its origin in our perceptions.

Painting is born of nature.

Science is the observation of things possible, whether present or past; prescience is the knowledge of things which may come to pass, though but slowly. (via Shlain)

All evil leaves sadness in one's memory, except the supreme evil, death, which destroys memory along with life. (via Shlain)

Where flame cannot live, no animal that draws breath can live." (oxygen!)

Make yourself a master of perspective, then acquire perfect knowledge of the proportions of men and other animals.

Man has great power of speech, but what he says is mostly vain and false; animals have little, but what they say is useful and true.

[You should] withdraw apart, the better to study the forms of natural objects...remain solitary, ...intent on studying and considering those things which continually appear ... and furnish material to be carefully stored in the memory.

Alone you are all yourself, with a companion you are half yourself.

...as a well spent day brings happy sleep, so life well used brings happy death.

A painter above all must keep his mind as clear as the surface of a mirror.

...just as iron rusts from disuse...so our intellect wastes unless it is kept in use.

The water you touch in a river is the last of that which has passed, and the first of that which is coming. Thus it is with time present.

There shall be wings!

If the accomplishment be not for me, 'tis for some other.

It will seem as though nature should extinguish the human race, for it will be useless to the world and will bring destruction to all created things. via L Shlain

The desire to know is natural to good men.

Study the science of art and the art of science.

"*Saper Vedere*—knowing how to see" who have ears and hear nothing;

"Music: The shaping of the invisible."

No human investigations can be called true science without going through mathematical tests.

on worship:

People talk to people who perceive nothing, who have open eyes and see nothing; they talk to them and receive no answer; they adore those who have ears and hear nothing; they burn lamps for those who do not see.

On Michelangelo: "You should not make all the muscles of the body too conspicuous ...otherwise you will produce a sack of walnuts rather than a human figure."

Learn diligence before speedy execution.

Once you have tasted flight you will walk the Earth with your eyes toward the sky. For there you have been and there you long to return."

If you would be healthy, observe this advice:  
Eat only when hungry, and let light fare suffice.  
Chew all your food well, and this rule always follow:  
Well cooked and simple be all that you swallow.  
On leaving the table, a good posture keep,  
And after your luncheon do not yield to sleep.  
Let little and often be your rule for wine,  
But not between meals or when waiting to dine.  
Visits to the privy should not be postponed...  
as quoted by Michael White

Things that happened many years ago often seem close and nearby to the present, and many things that happened recently seem as ancient as the bygone days of youth.  
in Codex Atlanticus

Experiments never deceive. It is our judgment that deceives itself because it expects results which experiments refuse.

The grandest of all books, I mean the Universe, stands open before our eyes.

...the more you write at length, minutely, the more you will confuse the mind of the reader.

Strive to preserve your health in which you will be the more successful the more you are wary of physicians.

...that deceptive opinion by means of which...a living is made from fools. (on astrologers)

When besieged by ambitious tyrants, I find a means of offence and defense in order to preserve the chief gift of nature, which is liberty.

While I thought I was learning how to live, I was really learning how to die.

....confused things kindle the mind to great inventions.

Do not interfere with matters of the eyes trying to get them through the ears.

da vinci on deathbed: Tell me, did anything get done?

discepolo della sperienza

Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication.

The greatest deception men suffer is from their own opinions.

There are three classes of people: those who see, those who see when they are shown, those who do not see.

Art is never finished, only abandoned.

Art and science are disciplines that must walk together hand in hand.

Constancy. Not who begins but he who perseveres.

Men of lofty genius sometimes accomplish the most when they work least, for their minds are occupied with their ideas and the perfection of their conceptions, to which they afterwards give form. [on procrastination]

First I shall do some experiments before I proceed farther, because my intention is to cite experience first and then with reasoning show why such experience is bound to operate in such a way. And this is the true rule by which those who speculate about the effects of nature must proceed.

When besieged by ambitious tyrants I find a means of offense and defense in order to preserve the chief gift of nature, which is liberty. ...Death rather than loss of liberty. The goldfinch brings spurge [a poisonous plant] to its young when they are imprisoned in a cage. It is better to die than to lose one's freedom." (via Shlain)

"It had long since come to my attention that people of accomplishment rarely sat back and let things happen to them...  
...they went out and happened to things."

Leonardo da Vinci

**quoted by da Vinci** in Windsor codex – from Dante's Inferno:

Lying in a featherbed will not bring you fame,  
nor staying beneath the quilt,  
and he who uses up his life without achieving fame  
leaves no more vestige of himself on earth  
than smoke in the air or foam upon the water."

**Quotes by others about Leonardo:**

“Leonardo’s strong comic streak is another striking example of the association between creativity and the ability to appreciate and to create humor....the ability to manipulate contradiction and to create paradox, which are basic to humor, are also an integral part of the creative process.”

Rhoda L Fisher

Fritz Capra: “Leonardo never thought of the body as a machine.”

Peter Donaldson: ", " Italian for persistent rigor

Da Vinci via Steve Allen: Meeting of Minds, Shows 21, 22:

Anyone who relies on authority is using his memory, not his understanding.  
The act of investigation – understanding – became the powerful emotional experience.  
The paintings were commissioned. Only my sketches were created with total freedom.  
...arriving at the opening of a great cavern ...there was suddenly awakened in me two emotions, fear and longing – fear of the dark threatening cave, and longing to see whether some marvelous thing lay inside.

"There are things in this world that I understand and you don't."

Captain Janeway to Leonardo, StarTrek Voyager Concerning Flight

"My mind would be too small."

Leonardo in response to Capt Janeway's sparrow question.

"Can you accept there that there may be certain realities beyond the limits of your comprehension?" Captain Janeway, StarTrek Voyager Four, #179, 1997

"I cannot accept that – and I would be fooled." says Leonardo.

from Paracelsus, 1530s quoted by Leonardo:

“He who wishes to explore Nature must tread her books with his feet. Writing is learned from letters but Nature from land to land. One Land, one page. This is the Codex Naturae, thus must its pages be turned.”

Stefan Klein on Leonardo:

"A good scientist approaches nature the way a caricaturist approaches the features of a politician: Both simplify and overdraw their objects until the essence clearly emerges."

"...science is the business of disengaging yourself from the obvious.

Even the most self-assured spirits can hesitate to wage a solitary battle against the universally accepted dogmas promoted by the renowned scholars of their era."

...his notebooks repeatedly referred to the destruction of nature by man."

"We want answers; he posed questions."

"Driven by curiosity, he worked for the sheer pleasure of understanding the world."

Michael White: "Leonardo was always short of paper."

Mark E Rosheim: "...never, never underestimate Leonardo da Vinci."

Arthur C Clarke (in Sam Magruder): "...the sole evidence of a security leak from the future appears to be the notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci."

Giorgio Vasari: "In the course of philosophizing on nature...Leonardo formed such heretical ideas that no religion could be reconciled with them; evidently he wanted to be a philosopher more than a Christian."

"The heavens often rain down the richest gifts on human beings, but sometimes with lavish abundance, they bestow upon a single individual beauty, grace, and ability so that he surpasses all other men."

Charles Nicholl on Leonardo's aging: "...the marker of an old man in exile, prey to the random offerings of memory."

"The cage is empty; the mind has flown."

Kenneth Clark: "Mystery to Leonardo was a shadow, a smile and a finger pointing into darkness."

"...the most relentlessly curious man in history."

Daniel J Boorstin: "No other artist bequeathed so copious a record of his thoughts and yet told us so little of himself."

Martin Kemp: "He brainstormed on paper."

"...no one ever used the tools of visual representation more compellingly and with more inventiveness to communicate the eternally fresh thrill of visual insight, as we learn to 'see' in the sense of 'to understand'. ...he instinctively knows how to draw us into his world of sensory delight and how to feed our eyes and our intellects to just the right degree, while leaving room for us to bring what we can to the completion of the cycle of communication between the thing, the artist, and the spectator."

"Great artists know how to do just enough to entice us into the game of completing their image. They know when to stop spelling everything out."

"...his artistic productions are more than art—that they are part of a vision embracing a profound sense of the interrelatedness of things. The full complexity of life in the context of the world is somehow implied when he characterises any of its constituent parts.... I believe that his vision of the totality of the world as a kind of single organism does speak to us with particular relevance today."

Chris Wise: "He was a curiosity junkie."

Sigmund Freud: "He was like a man who awoke too early in the darkness, while the others are all still asleep."

David Bull "...painting was almost too easy for him."

William A. Emboden: "Leonardo's ... manners were irreproachable and his demeanor was such that he was admired ... He rood as well as any horseman and had a noble bearing in his carriage. He had mastered the building and playing of the lute and sang with a most pleasant voice. He was remarkably handsome, of a fine physique and a

noble face. His dress was always simple but elegant, and his magnanimity was known throughout the court."

"This solitary researcher transcended all of the thinkers and artists of the late 15th and early 16th centuries in obliterating boundaries between time and space, mass and the energetics inherent in mass."

"Time, rather than history, was of interest to Leonardo."

"...once a thought was comprehended by Leonardo, it was sufficiently exploited to allow him to move on into new realms of endeavor."

"...he was one of the great pioneers of plant studies."

"This is no idler but a man destined to find a beauty in these symbols of complex relationships that are the passages in the labyrinth of an incredible mind, ... the harmony of interwoven ideas."

"In showing the diminution of sound Leonardo used the analogy of the scent of flowers."

"...Leonardo had mastered Latin ..."

"...he captures a moment in time with full knowledge of all of the transiency, succession and variation inherent in time ... [giving] a mysterious force to all of Leonardo's portrayals of nature. They can never be static."

"...sought to give permanence to nature, and at the same time to portray its dynamics."

William A Emboden

Walter Isaacson:

re da Vinci:

Vision without execution is hallucination.

...a mind dancing with nature...the cross-disciplinary brilliance...

mood swings and attention-deficit disorder.

...an apocalypse that begins with water and ends with fire.

...the basis for his creativity was an enthusiasm for interweaving diverse disciplines.

He wanted to know everything there was to know about everything that could be known.

...his mind could dance magically, and sometimes frenetically, back and forth across the smudgy line that separates reality from fantasia.

p. 216:

via Francesco Melzi:

"The loss of such a man is mourned by all. for it is not in the power of Nature to create another."

from Intro to the Method of L da Vinci, 1994:

"Once rigour is established a positive liberty becomes possible..."

"Is there anything that resists the lure of the senses, the dissipation of ideas, the fading of memories, the slow variation of the organism, the incessant and multiform activities of the universe?"

"...the author himself...is unable to give any account of the lines he has followed, that he is the wielder of a power he does not understand..."

that psychical postulate which in our consciousness resembles the principle of inertia in mechanics...

It was reserved for Faraday to rediscover the method of Leonardo as applied to physical science....

it is hopeless illusion to think that one can produce in the minds of others the fantasies of one's own mind...

I ... think it unworthy ... to write solely out of enthusiasm. Enthusiasm is not the writer's state of mind...

But no revelations for Leonardo...

Leonardo...attains...a steadily more perfect mastery over his own nature; unceasingly he modifies his ideas, unceasingly looks closer, unceasingly elaborates his notes... He plays with things, he grows bolder...His craving not to leave anything unexamined... renews his strength and the cohesion of his life..."

**allen steve character quotes from Meeting of Minds series**

**Series #1- 4; Shows # 1 - 24 also Jayne Meadows**

**da Vinci: Shows 21, 22 of Series and Volume 4.**

[One] must be born in a time, place, and circumstances in which one's gifts can be brought to flower. It was my good fortune to grow up in *la bella citta de Firenze*... The act of procreation...is so disgusting that human beings would soon die out if it were not a traditional custom... Anyone who relies on authorities is using his memory, not his understanding... I found that the more thoroughly I understood something the less I was inclined to love or to hate. The act of investigation - understanding - became the powerful emotional experience... I often attended to small matters in order to earn a living...