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The **1,400 Greatest**
Quotes of All Time
in 140 Characters
or Less



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Brevity is the soul of wit.

Compiled and Edited by
Sayre Van Young
Marin Van Young

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Table of Contents

[Title Page](#)

[Dedication](#)

[Acknowledgements](#)

[Introduction](#)

[Acceptance](#)

[Advice](#)

[Advice in General](#)

[Bad Advice](#)

[Damned Good Advice See also Words to Live By](#)

[Age & Aging](#)

[Being Younger](#)

[Being Older](#)

[Youth vs. Age](#)

[Anger See also Arguments & Fighting](#)

[Animals](#)

[Cats](#)

[Dogs](#)

[Dogs & Cats](#)

[Other Animals](#)

[Appearance, Personal See also Clothes & Fashion](#)

[Arguments & Fighting See also Anger](#)

[Art & Artists](#)

[The Arts \(in general\) See also Art & Artists; Books; Dancing; Movies; Music](#)

[Bitching & Moaning](#)

[Books](#)

[Booorrring! \(boring people, boring situations\)](#)

[Bummer See also Problems. See also whatever strikes you as a bummer: Anger; ...](#)

[Bad Dates](#)

[Bathroom Issues](#)

[Car Problems](#)

[Dental Stuff](#)

[Farts & Farting](#)

[Fired!](#)

[Flying](#)

[Hangovers](#)

[Housecleaning](#)

[Jury Duty](#)

[Lawsuits](#)

[Mosquitoes](#)

[Parking](#)

[Periods/PMS](#)

[Plumbing Problems](#)

[Seasickness](#)

[Taxes](#)

[Bumper Stickers](#)

[About Bumper Stickers](#)

[Great Bumper Stickers](#)

[Calmness](#)

[Cell Phones](#)

[Change](#)

[Children](#)

[The Good](#)

[The Bad](#)

[Pregnancy](#)

[Childbirth](#)

[Babies](#)

[Childhood](#)

[Teenagers](#)

[Parents & Parenthood](#)

[Clothes & Fashion](#)

[Clutter](#) See also [Simplicity](#)

[Computers](#) See also [Internet](#)

[Consistency](#)

[Cooks & Cooking](#)

[Courage](#) See also [Fear](#)

[Creativity & Inspiration](#)

[Dancing](#)

[Death & Dying](#)

[Determination & Persistence](#)

[Diets & Dieting](#) See also [Food](#); [Meals](#)

[Digestion & Indigestion](#)

[Dining Out](#) See also [Entertaining](#)

[Divorce](#)

[Dreams & Wishes](#) See also [Sleep & Sleeping—Dreaming](#)

[Alcoholic](#)

[Nonalcoholic](#)

[Driving & Traffic](#) See also [Bummer—Parking](#)

[Drugs](#)

[Dumb...Dumber...Dumbest](#)

[Education](#)

[Entertaining](#)

[Parties \(dinner parties, cocktail parties, party parties\)](#)

[Houseguests & Visitors](#)

[Etiquette](#)

[Exercise](#)

[Family See also Children](#)

[Farewells](#)

[Fear See also Courage](#)

[Food See also Cooks & Cooking; Diets & Dieting; Meals; Vegetarians & Vegetarianism](#)

[Forgiveness](#)

[Friends & Enemies](#)

[Friends](#)

[Enemies](#)

[Frustration](#)

[Future See also Past](#)

[Gay...So Very Gay](#)

[Gossip](#)

[Gratitude](#)

[Guilt](#)

[Happiness & Joy](#)

[Health See also Digestion & Indigestion](#)

[Hobbies](#)

[Home](#)

[Hope](#)

[Humility \(or Not\)](#)

[Insults & Name-calling See also Dumb...Dumber...Dumbest](#)

[Internet](#)

[Jealousy](#)

[Jobs & Work See also Bummer—Fired!](#)

[Job Applications & Interviews](#)

[Karma](#)

[Kindness](#)

[Laziness](#)

[Leaders & Leadership](#)

[Lies & Liars](#)

[Life & Living](#)

[Loneliness &/or Solitude](#)

[Love & Loving](#)

[Marriage](#)

[Meals](#)

[Breakfast](#)

[Lunch](#)

[Dinner](#)

[Memory & Memories](#)

[Men](#)

[Money](#)

[Movies](#)

[Music](#)

[Nature](#)

[Past See also Future](#)

[Patience \(or Not\)](#)

[Politics & Politicians](#)

[Problems \(in general\) See also Bummer](#)

[Procrastination](#)

[Punctuality](#)

[Rejoinders & Replies](#)

[Relationships See also Friends & Enemies; Marriage; etc.](#)

[Religion & Spirituality](#)

[Revenge](#)

[Risk & Chance](#)

[Sadness](#)

[Sex & Passion](#)

[Shopping](#)

[Silence](#)

[Simplicity See also Clutter](#)

[Singlehood See also Bummer—Bad Dates](#)

[Sleep & Sleeping](#)

[Mornings](#)

[Evenings](#)

[Nights](#)

[Naps](#)

[Not Enough](#)

[Dreaming](#)

[Snoring](#)

[Smoking](#)

[Pro](#)

[Con](#)

[Sports See also Exercise](#)

[Baseball](#)

[Basketball](#)

[Boxing](#)

[Fishing](#)

[Football](#)

[Golf](#)

[Jogging](#)

[Lacrosse](#)

[Skiing](#)

[Swimming](#)

[Tennis](#)

[Stress](#)

[Success & Failure](#)

[Success](#)

[Failure](#)

[Success & Failure](#)

[Technology \(in general\)](#) See also [Cell Phones](#); [Computers](#); [Internet](#)

[Temptation](#)

[Time](#)

[Travel & Adventure](#) See also [Bummer—Flying](#)

[The Good](#)

[The Bad](#)

[Twitter Advice](#)

[Uh-Oh](#)

[Vegetarians & Vegetarianism](#)

[War & Peace](#)

[Weather](#)

[Women](#)

[Words to Live By](#) See also [Advice—Damned Good Advice](#)

[Worry](#)

[*Selected Bibliography*](#)

[*Other Books from Ulysses Press*](#)

[*About the Authors*](#)

[*Copyright Page*](#)

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in 140 Characters
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Compiled and Edited by
**Sayre Van Young
Marin Van Young**



Ulysses Press

Dedication:

Thank you...you know who you are. —*Anonymous*

Acknowledgments

...for which I pay 'em a thousand thanks...

William Shakespeare

Our thanks to Will Marston and Susan Huish, for suggesting some great Dumb...Dumber...Dumbest lines; to Andrea Mullarky and Carole Leita for offering some Words to Live By; to Ethel Manheim and Sunny Adler for providing several of their (and our) favorite quotes; to Wendie Vermillion for a quote that kept us going; to Cathy McAuliffe and Anita Schriver, for support and encouragement...and some great meals together. The Ulysses folks were and are wonderful to work with—especially Kellie Reed (who got us into this), Lauren Harrison (who kept us from embarrassing ourselves), Judi Metzener (who made it all read well), and Claire Chun (who, as usual, held everything together).

And as always, our grateful thanks to Diane Davenport. Words fail us.

Introduction

A proper collection of quotations is the whole world digested.

Terri Guillemets

First, some caveats. Like what's with this "greatest" business? Well, we wanted to call this book *Some Quotes That Made Us Smile or Think, That Perfectly Summed Up Something We Felt, Are 140 Characters or Less, and That You Might Like Too*. But our publisher nixed that idea (even though it was exactly 140 characters long).

We figured a "greatest" quote is something like "Fourscore and seven years ago." But it turns out that a lot of great quotes just aren't very tweetable. Either they're too long-windedly noble ("We hold these truths to be self-evident") or they lose their nobility by shortening ("2 B or not 2 B"). So we broadened our definition.

We thought of those moments when the perfect quote would come in handy, something to describe what we're thinking, wishing, needing, avoiding, forgetting, or seeing. And then we went out and collected the pithy wisdom of everyone from Plato to Monty Python.

In these pages, you'll find plenty of grand tweetable topics like Art, Consistency, Loneliness, Marriage, and Simplicity. But you'll also find comments about daily life: bitching and moaning, cell phones, clutter, dieting, naps, traffic, finding a bathroom—and dozens of other subjects.

As to the arrangement of all these wise nuggets—really, where would you put a quote like "After all, computers crash, people die, relationships fall apart. The best we can do is breathe and reboot. Technology? Death? Relationships? Persistence? We used our best judgment and counted on your willingness to wander.

Incidentally, there are a bazillion quote books out there. The print ones we depended on are in the Bibliography (as are some great websites). And if 1,400 quotes aren't enough and you head to the quote books, be forewarned: They're arranged by exciting topics like Agriculture or Founding Fathers or Urban Affairs, which are great for term papers, but not so great for life—or Twitter.

Every quote here fits Twitter's 140-character limit, including attribution—though we relied on ampersands to make a few lengthy ones fit. Information in brackets isn't counted; it's just to give you a little more background. And do you really need to know that Goethe's full name is Johann Wolfgang von Goethe? We thought not.

Speaking of giving credit—many people have said many of the same great things, sometimes so many that the only possible way to credit the quote is "Anonymous." For movies and TV shows, we've credited the speaker, not the screenwriter; for plays and books, we've credited the author.

Now we've come to the end of our lengthy ramble. Don't worry, the information in the rest of the book is much more concise. And while these "greatest" quotes may not all be studied in school or spouted in speeches, we hope you'll find some that perfectly express your feelings. After all, when that happens, isn't it the greatest?

—Sayre Van Young and Marin Van Young

How amazing it would be if somehow Oscar
Wilde and Mae West could Twitter from the
grave....

Dita Von Teese

Acceptance

The concept of “acceptance” is closely related to saying “Whatever,” but some of these quotes will bring a little more panache to your tweets.

It is what it is.

Anonymous

It'll be what it'll be.

Anonymous

Everyone must row with the oars he has.

English proverb

The sun will set without your help.

Anonymous

To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven.

Bible [modified a bit by Pete Seeger]

One cannot collect all the beautiful shells on the beach.

Anne Morrow Lindbergh

Everyone is in the best seat.

John Cage

You're going to have more rejection than acceptance.

Barry Mann

Ya gotta do what ya gotta do.

Sylvester Stallone [in the movie Rocky]

Sometimes a cigar is just a cigar.

Sigmund Freud

Everybody is all right, really.

Winnie the Pooh [A. A. Milne]

Happiness can exist only in acceptance.

George Orwell

Sometimes you just gotta say “what the fuck.”

Tom Cruise [in the movie Risky Business]

And that's the way it is.

Walter Cronkite

Adventure See Travel & Adventure

Advice

Advice in General

I always pass on good advice. It is the only thing to do with it. It is never of any use to oneself.

Oscar Wilde

Advice is what we ask for when we already know the answer but wish we didn't.

Erica Jong

The best way to give advice to your children is to find out what they want, and then advise them to do it.

Harry S Truman

Never advise anyone to go to war or to marry.

Spanish proverb

Accept good advice gracefully—as long as it doesn't interfere with what you intended to do in the first place.

Gene Brown

Good advice is often annoying. Bad advice never is.

French proverb

Bad Advice

Do as we say and not as we do.

Giovanni Boccaccio [*Use the original Italian for that special touch: Fate quello che noi diciamo non quello che noi facciamo.*]

Damned Good Advice See also Words to Live By

Keep breathing.

Sophie Tucker

Whether you believe you can do a thing or not, you are right.

Henry Ford

Say little and do much.

Talmud

Don't compromise yourself. You are all you've got.

Janis Joplin

Trust in Allah, but tie up your camel.

Arabian proverb

Love your neighbor, but don't pull down the fence.

Swiss/German proverb

Never under any circumstances take a sleeping pill and a laxative on the same night.

Dave Berry

Remember that a kick in the ass is a step forward.

Anonymous

No matter who you are or what you plan to do, learn to type!

Liz Smith

You were born an original. Don't die a copy.

John Mason

Whatever you are, be a good one.

Abraham Lincoln

Never mistake motion for action.

Ernest Hemingway

More hustle, less bustle.

Anonymous

Trust everybody, but cut the cards.

Finley Peter Dunne

When you reach the top, keep climbing.

Zen saying

I always skate to where the puck is going, not where it's been.

Wayne Gretsky

Be yourself. Everyone else is already taken.

Oscar Wilde

Do what you can, with what you have, where you are.

Theodore Roosevelt

Freedom lies in being bold.

Robert Frost

Follow your bliss.

Joseph Campbell

Only dead fish swim with the stream.

Anonymous

Sometimes you have to be a bitch to get things done.

Madonna

Nothing can bring you peace but yourself.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give.

Winston Churchill

If it ain't broke, don't fix it.

Anonymous

Details are always vulgar.

Oscar Wilde

Out of sight, out of mind.

Old English saying

Oh, grow up!

Joan Rivers

Remember—wherever you go, there you are.

Anonymous [i.e., said in some form by many, from Confucius to Buckaroo Banzai]

Age & Aging

Being Younger

You are only young once, and that excuse won't last forever.

Anonymous

It is better to waste one's youth than to do nothing with it at all.

Georges Courteline

It takes courage to grow up and turn out to be who you really are.

e. e. cummings

The only way to stay young is to avoid older people.

James D. Watson

All would live long, but none would be old.

Benjamin Franklin

Being Older

When I was young I loved truth, justice, and liberty, and now that I'm older I love truth, justice, liberty, and crabmeat.

Anonymous

I recently turned 60. Practically a third of my life is over.

Woody Allen

I have more prescriptions than subscriptions.

Anonymous

Old age is no place for sissies.

Bette Davis [among many others, including Henry Louis Mencken and Art Linkletter]

Middle age is the time when a man is always thinking that in a week or two he will feel as good as ever.

Don Marquis

Old age is always 15 years older than I am.

Bernard Baruch

I've aged.... I'm getting lines in my face. I look like a brand-new, steel-belted radial tire.

Maggie Smith [in the movie California Suite]

When you win, you're an old pro. When you lose, you're an old man.

Charlie Conerly

I'm at an age when my back goes out more than I do.

Phyllis Diller

Inside every older person is a younger person wondering what the fuck happened.

Anonymous

One of the delights known to age, and beyond the grasp of youth, is that of Not Going.

J. B. Priestley

Like a fine wine, I'm not getting older, I'm becoming more complex.

Anonymous

Youth vs. Age

Old and young, we are all on our last cruise.

Robert Louis Stevenson

The young sow wild oats, the old grow sage.

Winston Churchill

The old believe everything; the middle-aged

suspect everything; the young know everything. ***Oscar Wilde***

The young man knows the rules, but the old man knows the exceptions.

Oliver Wendell Holmes

Air Travel See Bummer—Flying

Alcohol See Drinks & Drinking

Anger See also Arguments & Fighting

We boil at different degrees.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Don't get your knickers in a knot. Nothing is solved and it just makes you walk funny.

Kathryn Carpenter

When a man angers you, he conquers you.

Toni Morrison

Please be patient. At the moment I'm too angry to tell you how angry I am.

Ashleigh Brilliant

Anger is only one letter short of danger.

Anonymous

I'm as mad as hell, and I'm not going to take this anymore!

Peter Finch [in the movie Network]

The best answer to anger is silence.

Anonymous

No man can think clearly when his fists are clenched.

George Jean Nathan

Anger is a sign that something needs to change.

Mark Epstein

Get mad, then get over it.

Colin Powell

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