

10 Challenging Quotes from a 20th Century Classic

Richard Weaver's *Ideas Have Consequences* (1948) is considered one of the best nonfiction books of the 20th century. In it, Weaver diagnoses problems of the modern age, explores their origins, and offers some potential cures. His University of Chicago colleague Paul Tillich described it as "Brilliantly written, daring and radical... It will shock, and philosophical shock is the beginning of wisdom."

Weaver tended to be more a man of paragraphs than one-liners. However, to potentially whet your appetite to read *Ideas Have Consequences*, here are 10 quotations from the book that particularly stand out:

1. "If words no longer correspond to objective realities, it seems no great wrong to take liberties with words."
2. "Man is constantly being assured that he has more power than ever before in history, but his daily experience is one of powerlessness."
3. "How can men who disagree about what the world is for agree about any of the minutiae of daily conduct?"
4. "The area of privacy has been abandoned because the definition of person has been lost; there is no longer a standard by which to judge what belongs to the individual man."

5. "There was a time when the elder generation was cherished because it represented the past; now it is avoided and thrust out of sight for the same reason."

6. "The comity of peoples in groups large or small rests not upon this chimerical notion of equality but upon fraternity, a concept which long antedates it in history because it goes immeasurably deeper in human sentiment. The ancient feeling of brotherhood carries obligations of which equality knows nothing."?

7. "Yet the prevailing conception is that education must be such as will enable one to acquire enough wealth to live on the plane of the bourgeoisie. That kind of education does not develop the aristocratic virtues. It neither encourages reflection nor inspires a reverence for the good."

8. "The fallacy of technology, which is the conclusion that because a thing can be done, it must be done."

9. "An ancient axiom of politics teaches that a spoiled people invite despotic control."

10. (On the lack of historical knowledge) "It has been well said that the chief trouble with the contemporary generation is that it has not read the minutes of the last meeting."