

# 14 Nuggets of Wisdom from Wendell Berry

Wendell Berry (b. 1934) combines knowledge and experience better than most intellectuals, having divided his time between writing and farming for much of his life. He is the author of more than 40 books of nonfiction, fiction, and poetry, including such notable ones as *The Unsettling of America* and *Hannah Coulter*. He is known as a staunch defender of sustainable agriculture and a critic of the globalized economy.

Here are 15 of his more memorable quotes:

1. "If people lose their ability to feed themselves, how can they be said to be free?"
2. "You can best serve civilization by being against what usually passes for it."
3. "The ability to speak exactly is intimately related to the ability to know exactly."
4. "When the possessions and households of citizens are no longer honored by the acts, as well as the principles, of their government, then the concentration camp ceases to be one of the possibilities of human nature and becomes one of its likelihoods."
5. "Don't own so much clutter that you will be relieved to see your house catch fire."
6. "If we are serious about peace, then we must work for it as

ardently, seriously, continuously, carefully, and bravely as we have ever prepared for war.”

7. “Do unto those downstream as you would have those upstream do unto you.”

8. “If you can control a people’s economy, you don’t need to worry about its politics; its politics have become irrelevant.”

9. “Much protest is naive; it expects quick, visible improvement and despairs and gives up when such improvement does not come.”

10. “I think we must be careful about too easily accepting, or being too easily grateful for, sacrifices made by others, especially if we have made none ourselves.”

11. “Never forget: We are alive within mysteries.”

12. “Teachers are everywhere. What is wanted is a learner.”

13. “The global economy is built on the principle that one place can be exploited, even destroyed, for the sake of another place.”

14. “And the world cannot be discovered by a journey of miles, no matter how long, but only by a spiritual journey, a journey of one inch, very arduous and humbling and joyful, by which we arrive at the ground at our own feet, and learn to be at home.”